

Cabinet AGENDA

DATE: Wednesday 15 January 2014

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Committee Rooms 1 & 2,
Harrow Civic Centre

MEMBERSHIP

Chairman: Councillor Susan Hall (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment)

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor Kamaljit Chana	Business and Enterprise
Councillor Tony Ferrari	Finance
Councillor Stephen Greek	Planning, Development and Regeneration
Councillor Manji Kara	Community and Culture
Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane	Deputy Leader, Adults and Housing
Councillor Janet Mote	Children and Schools
Councillor Paul Osborn	Communications, Performance and Resources
Councillor Simon Williams	Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Stephen Wright	Property and Major Contracts

Non Executive Cabinet Members (non voting):

Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar	Leader of the Independent Labour Group
Councillor David Perry	Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Graham Henson	Labour Group

(Quorum 3, including the Leader and/or Deputy Leader)

Contact: Daksha Ghelani, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 020 8424 1881 E-mail: daksha.ghelani@harrow.gov.uk

AGENDA - PART I

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence (if any).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests arising from business to be transacted at this meeting from:

- (a) all Members of the Cabinet; and
- (b) all other Members present.

3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 34)

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 December 2013 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

4. PETITIONS

To receive any petitions submitted by members of the public or Councillors.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS *

To receive any public questions received in accordance with paragraph 16 of the Executive Procedure Rules.

Questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received and there be a time limit of 15 minutes.

[The deadline for receipt of public questions is 3.00 pm, Friday 10 January 2014. Questions should be sent to publicquestions@harrow.gov.uk

No person may submit more than one question].

6. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS *

To receive any Councillor questions received in accordance with paragraph 17 of the Executive Procedure Rules.

Questions will be asked in the order agreed with the relevant Group Leader by the deadline for submission and there be a time limit of 15 minutes.

[The deadline for receipt of Councillor questions is 3.00 pm, Friday 10 January 2014].

7. KEY DECISION SCHEDULE JANUARY 2014 - MARCH 2014 (Pages 35 - 52)

8. REPORTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OR SUB-COMMITTEES

(a) Progress on Scrutiny Projects: (Pages 53 - 54)

For consideration.

(b) Customer Care Scrutiny Review: (Pages 55 - 82)

Reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

9. SCHOOL EXPANSION PROGRAMME (Pages 83 - 100)

Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Families.

COMMUNITY, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

10. HARROW'S LOCAL ACCOUNT 2012-13 (Pages 101 - 150)

Information Report of the Corporate Director of Community, Health and Wellbeing.

11. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS PEER REVIEW (Pages 151 - 180)

Report of the Director of Adult Social Services.

ENVIRONMENT AND ENTERPRISE

KEY 12. BRENT AND HARROW - JOINT TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE (Pages 181 - 188)

Report of the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise.

RESOURCES

KEY 13. HARROW HELP SCHEME REVIEW (Pages 189 - 284)

Report of the Corporate Director of Resources.

KEY 14. REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE DEBT RECOVERY POLICY (Pages 285 - 364)

Report of the Corporate Director of Resources.

KEY 15. CALCULATION OF BUSINESS RATES TAX BASE FOR 2014-2015 (Pages 365 - 374)

Report of the Corporate Director of Resources.

KEY 16. PROJECT MINERVA (Pages 375 - 430)

Report of the Corporate Director of Resources.

KEY 17. COUNCIL INSURANCE RENEWALS 2014 (Pages 431 - 440)

Report of the Director of Finance and Assurance.

KEY 18. SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE (Pages 441 - 448)

Report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services.

19. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

20. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential information in breach of an obligation of confidence, or of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:

<u>Agenda Item No</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
22	Project Minerva	Information under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
23	Council Insurance Renewals 2014	Information under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

AGENDA - PART II

21. PROJECT MINERVA (Pages 449 - 454)

Appendices to the report the Corporate Director of Resources.

22. COUNCIL INSURANCE RENEWALS 2014 (Pages 455 - 458)

Appendices to the report of the Director of Finance and Assurance.

* DATA PROTECTION ACT NOTICE

The Council will audio record items 5 and 6 (Public and Councillor Questions) and will place the audio recording on the Council's website, which will be accessible to all.

[Note: The questions and answers will not be reproduced in the minutes.]

Deadline for questions	3.00 pm on Friday 10 January 2014
Publication of decisions	Thursday 16 January 2014
Deadline for Call in	5.00 pm on 23 January 2014
Decisions implemented if not Called in	24 January 2014

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CABINET MINUTES

12 DECEMBER 2013

Chairman: * Councillor Susan Hall

Councillors:

* Kam Chana	* Janet Mote
* Tony Ferrari	* Paul Osborn
* Stephen Greek	* Simon Williams
* Manji Kara	* Stephen Wright
* Barry Macleod-Cullinane	

**Non Executive
Non Voting
Councillors:**

* Graham Henson	* David Perry
Thaya Idaikkadar	

**In attendance:
(Councillors)** William Stoodley Minute 735

* Denotes Member present

[**Note:** The items were taken in the order set out on the agenda. However, as was customary, the minutes are set out in the following order: Formal Business; Recommendations to Council on substantive items; Discussions and decisions on the remaining substantive items. Agenda items 10, 11 and 12 (Minutes Nos. 740-742 refer) were considered together by Cabinet but the minutes sets out the discussions separately on each of the items.]

730. Apologies for Absence

None received from Cabinet Members.

731. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interest was declared:

Agenda Item 5 – Public Question 5

During consideration of the question, Councillor Susan Hall declared a non pecuniary interest in that she owned a business in Wealdstone. She would remain in the room whilst the question was answered.

732. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the special meeting held on 18 November 2013 and the ordinary meeting held on 21 November 2013 be taken as read and signed as a correct records.

733. Petitions

(1) Alfriston Avenue/Fernbrook Drive - Petition

Councillor Kairul Marikar presented a petition signed by 50 residents with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned residents of Alfriston Avenue and Fernbrook Drive urge Harrow Council to resurface the roads and pavements of our streets, add street bumps and improve the street lighting. The reasons why we are calling for action is because of the following:

- The pavements are dangerous, with people tripping up on them, and are a hassle if you have a push chair.
- The roads are in a poor state of repair and urgently need to be resurfaced.
- The street light provisions are inadequate and residents do not feel safe walking the streets late at night.
- Without street bumps cars can speed down the road, which is a danger to children who may be playing on the street.”

RESOLVED: That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment for consideration.

(2) Ashridge Gardens, Pinner – Petition

Councillor Janet Mote presented a petition signed by 32 residents with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned, want Harrow Council to: provide a long term permanent solution to fix the poor state of the road and pavements of Ashridge Gardens in Pinner. As this road is used by both the residents

and regular pedestrians accessing the short cut, we do not believe this is just a residential issue, but a wider issue that affects everyone using these facilities.”

RESOLVED: That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment.

(3) Local Safety Parking – Kenton Park Avenue – Petition

Councillor Yogesh Teli presented a petition signed by 30 residents with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned residents of Harrow, ask Harrow Council to improve the safety of the residents, motorists and pedestrians by implementing a double yellow line at the sharp 90 degree bend in Kenton Park Avenue, between house numbers 41-55. The motorists park in such a way that it makes it difficult for the residents to come out of their

driveway, the Council bin collection vehicle getting obstructed and it also impedes the road visibility. There have been many incidents, thankfully, none have been fatal and we request the Council to act now and not wait for a fatality before addressing issues and concerns of the residents.

We urge Harrow Council to take all the points into consideration as well as the strong views and wishes of the residents since safety of all users is of paramount importance.”

RESOLVED: That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment.

(4) Planning Application on Anmer Lodge and Surface Level Car Park in Stanmore

Mr John Williams, Chairman of the Stanmore Society, presented a petition signed by 24 people with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned, would respectfully request that the deadline for submission of the planning application on Anmer Lodge and surface level car park in Stanmore be extended well into 2014 in order to give Notting Hill Housing and the Council more time to get this right.

Furthermore, we would respectfully request that the Council give consideration to the sale price of the freehold interest to Notting Hill Housing in so far as the viability is concerned, so that a reduction in the number of residential units would be possible.”

RESOLVED: That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment, the Director of Planning and the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Regeneration for consideration.

734. Public Questions

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

1.

Questioner: Jackie Hooper

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

Question: “Employment for people experiencing mental health problems is a stated priority of Harrow’s Health & Well-being Strategy and therefore what supported permitted work opportunities does Harrow Council offer for mental health service users?”

[Note: Supported Permitted Work is a DWP approved scheme allowing people in receipt of welfare benefits to work and earn income.]

Answer: Harrow is one of the most important, high performing boroughs when it comes to stated employment for people with severe mental health and health issues. The borough offers a range of options directly and through its partners and contracted providers.

Wiseworks, in particular, offers people work experience, sometimes through permitted earnings and provides a range of personalised support to helping people to access the work and to develop the workplace skills. There are central Council services also working in this area in addition to Wiseworks and we have also been working with Wiseworks and helping to secure Lottery funding to further employment and support services.

The Council is providing some funding for your own organisation, Mind in Harrow, which I think is important and we are trying to work with other third sector organisations, Rethink Mental Illness, along with Hug and various others.

CNWL also runs activities, so we are trying to open up the door and to take it seriously. It is an important area and one that we want to make sure that we are getting right, rather than getting wrong and neglecting, as it tended to be forgotten too often in the past. So we want to take it forward and try to see what we can do and to improve things.

Supplemental Question: How does the Council offer advice and support for mental health service users when they apply for permitted support work that complied with the DWP and rules?

Supplemental Answer: Currently the Council is looking to work with the sector to try and find out how it can better provide that support.

Now, I am not a particular expert on that element of support but I have been talking to Raksha Pandya, the next questioner. We are going to set up a meeting to go through and perhaps we can include that as a part of the discussion: to make sure that we have offers there to take you through and then figure out, not just explain to you but also seeing what we can do to communicate to Mind, to the other organisations within Harrow how it is that we are working and how we could perhaps improve. Perhaps we can actually sit down with you and the other organisations to ensure that what we want to do is the right thing and that it is addressing your needs correctly, rather than what we think are the needs.

I am not an expert on that particular element of it but I think if we take it forward in that way, we can ensure that we do what is right and, with our limited funding, we make sure it goes as far as possible, rather than simply putting it where we perhaps otherwise ought not to be doing, rather than hitting the things that we should be doing.

2.

Questioner: Raksha Pandya, MIND in Harrow

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

Question: What has been the progress of the Harrow Council commissioned NDTi Mental Health Personalisation Project in terms of the number of people who have engaged with project to date compared to their contracted targets?

Answer: So far NDTi have consulted something like 42 people to date. There is not actually a target for numbers of people to consult, what we have been asking is not to set up targets for them in the contract and this is what Mind bid for initially as well, but we said we did not actually want targets. We did not want to have output. What we wanted to do is to achieve outcomes and so the contract was specified about improving a number of

different elements:

- Firstly, to ensure that the experience and outcomes of people who have got mental health issues and mental health concerns are improved.
- Secondly, to make sure that their accessing of Harrow social care is improved.
- Thirdly, to ensure that their personal budgets have been accurately and efficiently assessed, allocated and supported so that they are getting the support that they are due in the right way and getting the right things that they need to go forward.
- Fourthly, we are also looking to make sure that learning is gathered through this sort of process about the services that people wish to buy through greater, and more extension of, personalisation.
- Finally, there is an improved understanding, we hope, of personalisation and the self directed support amongst our mental health professionals in the area. So we want to widen that element out including the care co-ordinators and consultant psychiatrists.

So those are really much the substance of the contract. Rather than actually total numbers of people to consult with, it is actually trying to make sure that we are consulting the right people.

Now I think that 42 is perhaps on the lower side and I think we ought to be trying to raise it up and I am asking officers to actually make sure that that is followed up and checked on. We do need to push them to widen that pool because whilst it is not chasing numbers, it actually improves the quality of the work, if you have a larger pool of people that you have drawn from. So I share your concern on that.

Supplemental Question: I am disappointed to have to ask this as a supplementary.

At 17 October Cabinet meeting, we asked you about the total contract value of the project paid to NDTi to date and the current cost to Harrow for each person consulted and asked you, as a Portfolio Holder, do you regard these as good value for money. You replied "I do

not have that data to hand and will get back to you in the next few days". Why has this not happened and you proposed to meet with Mind? Will you commit a time to do this?

Supplemental Answer: My apologies, and that will not happen again. Secondly, yes I will commit to find the time and I promise to call you in the morning to set up said time and am happy to try to arrange that next week so that we can go through these details. In terms of the amount, I do not have that to hand, that particular figure. Sorry.

3.

Questioner: Mr M Talukder

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Question: "Can you please explain why you have implemented a caveat on a political decision when you were the opposition party this relates to the decision to overturn Parks locking; the caveat you unilaterally placed on this service, is only funding for 2013/14 which was not part of the political decision to reinstate this service?"

Written Answer: (Questioner was not present at the meeting) The original decision to cease the parks locking service as part of the 2013/14 budget was subsequently reversed by Cabinet in September of this year. Our administration then sourced the funding to allow the service to continue in its current format for the remainder of 2013/14, allowing sufficient time for the service to review operational requirements to most efficiently deliver the service in the future.

Although there is still pressure to realise the savings within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which we inherited, you will note from our draft budget that we have committed to the future of the service by finding additional funding for it for 2014/15.

4.

Questioner: Mr Davis Searles

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Question: "You state that your administration has implemented and supports a fairer Council; can you please explain why operational staff at Central Depot does not receive training especially when Agency staff across the Council

are lawfully entitled thus receiving more beneficial employment opportunities against those that have been directly employed in the Council for more than TEN Years thus substantially disadvantaging staff in obtaining redeployment opportunities.”

Answer:

This is not the case. We continue to train operational staff in areas related to their job roles, specific service needs and further development.

Whilst this training is carefully controlled to meet budget and service needs, it also supports development of staff enabling them to progress as opportunities arise. Positions are filled on a fair basis in accordance with the Council’s Employment Policies which seek to minimise redundancies and directly employed staff are given priority consideration for redeployment.

Recent and current examples of training for operational staff at the Depot include:

- training of refuse loaders on driving large goods vehicles;
- training for drivers to increase or maintain their licence level;
- sports grounds maintenance;
- 1st line supervisor training to drivers;
- national vocational training in management techniques.

Additional to that, I often used to go down to the Depot for staff meetings and we were constantly giving out certification to members of staff for different training that they had undertaken and they were all receiving these certificates. So I do not recognise your comments.

Supplemental Question:

Can you please explain why the administration is misleading the residents stating that the administration will protect front line staff, yet in reality the front line staff have taken the brunt of staffing reductions?

The facts are that approximately 36+ front line operational positions are to be cut while management positions are to be cut by a diminutive amount, when compared to the front line. This is in the Towards Excellent programme which you directly intervened into.

Supplemental Answer: I asked many questions about that because anybody that knows knows that I was not happy with PRISM. I have made my thoughts on PRISM very clear. I do not recognise what you are saying about the front line staff going and I have asked numerous people to make sure that our front line is being invested in. A sum of £500,000 has gone into front line services and we are hoping to put that money through on the budget for next year. There are so many more people working on the front line as is evidenced by residents telling me that they can see so many more people on the front line. It was not this administration that removed money from front line services and that is a fact.

Mr Searles: With all due respect Councillor, the additional staff that we are seeing out on the street are agency staff. As part of this project we are going to lose 24 grounds maintenance, 12 refuse staff and 3 park keepers. Now these are areas which you profess in the press to be of high importance to you but the figures do not play that out. We have agency staff now, we have been understaffed and we are now losing more staff – 24 from grounds maintenance, 12 from refuse and 3 park keepers.

Cllr Hall: Refuse may well be because of route optimisation which is not being done at the moment. I am quite happy to have a meeting with you to discuss these issues separately but in reality, this administration has put a great deal of money into front line services.

Thank you for your questions.

5.

Questioner: Mrs J Lawrence-Ricketts

Asked of: Councillor Kamaljit Chana, Portfolio Holder for Business and Enterprise

Question: “Can you tell me what activities were promoted in Harrow by Harrow Council on the “Small Business Saturday” last week to help local traders and reinforce the benefits of local trading?”

Answer: Thank you for your question.

Small Business Saturday took place on 7 December. This was a national event backed by the Department of Business, Innovation & Skills, and the Department for Communities and Local Government and promoted by the business community, including the Federation of

Small Businesses. The Council works with the West London branch of the Federation of Small Businesses and took a role in promoting Small Business Saturday to both traders and residents, including distribution of a pack of information for businesses, which were received on 26 November and distributed the following day.

Activities undertaken by Harrow Council included:

- General support to the campaign through press releases, newsletters, and social media. This comprised of:
 - dedicated web page promoting the day and encourage businesses to take part;
 - press releases to highlight campaign and commitment by Harrow Council;
 - articles in the electronic Business newsletter sent to over 1,000 local businesses registered on the Business Directory; and also
- Information promoting campaign sent to local businesses
 - online to Harrow in Business and North West London Chamber of Commerce;
 - information packs were dropped off to Traders Association representatives (this in Pinner, Stanmore, North Harrow, Hatch End and so on) to encourage them to promote this amongst their members to get involved. Those interested in taking part were signposted to the campaign organisers;
 - the Federation of Small Businesses advised that packs were distributed to traders on the High Road in Harrow Weald.

**Mrs
Lawrence-
Ricketts:**

That all sounds well and good but nothing was done in Wealdstone. My business is in Wealdstone. It is in the In Shops and they will be closing down and several other traders have lost their livelihood.

I have also noticed that you have made a statement in the Harrow Observer that you are helping us and you have never been to the In Shops and we have never met you. So I was quite shocked to see that statement in the press.

Cllr Chana: Can I come back to you on that point?

Our Head of Economic Development has written to the In Shops for them to reconsider closure. The department has met with, have had 4 meetings with In Shops and in fact, they take the lead because in fact the officers are the full time staff that are able to advise on In Shop.

I have had a letter from your Chairman. I have spoken to him on the phone twice. I have spoken with him. So I dispute the fact that I have not been in contact.

I am leaving the actual advice with the Economic Development team and I am quite confident in them and the work that they are doing to support the In Shops.

So we are actively trying to support but it is an issue between the landlord and the tenants.

735. Councillor Questions

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

1.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources

Question: "Two Cabinet meetings ago, I raised the issue of detrimental comments made by a Mrs Melanie Lewis about a former Council Officer, Mr Andrew Trehern, on the public website "iHarrow". I was assured the accusations made in those comments are totally false and that they should be taken down.

At the time of writing this question those comments are still up on the "iHarrow" website. Why is it that, even after I have brought this to your Administration's attention, still nothing has been done after all this time about these libellous comments about Mr Trehern?"

Answer: I am not entirely sure what I am supposed to do. We have made our position clear. Paul Boakes from iHarrow was here at that meeting. We had made our position clear to him at that time.

I have to say I am very reluctant to get into the business of censoring local press or to try and make undue threats towards them. We make it clear we think that allegation is a false allegation. We think it is potentially

libellous.

As the publisher, he should be aware that he is liable for that, and my advice to him is to take it down as was Councillor Hall's advice. However, he runs his website and he can do what he likes.

Supplemental Question: I have to say I am astonished, amazed and quite frankly disappointed by that answer.

Firstly, Legal Services had no hesitation in swooping on Paul Boakes' iHarrow site when other libellous comments were deemed to be made and getting them redacted and even the Head of Corporate Estate, Phillip Loveland-Cooper, mentioned in the Whitchurch Licensing meeting in public that he was getting very tired of his officers being libelled and slandered.

Other comments have been acted upon within minutes of them going up. It is not true to say there is nothing you can do except look at it and hope that Paul Boakes takes it down. If I can quote your Deputy Leader's favourite catchphrase "what is going on here?"? You are the administration. You are in charge of the Council. There is a libellous comment about a former employee which is detrimental to this Council's service in the public domain and you are telling me that all you can do is say "well Paul was in the room when we mentioned it should be taken down and that is it", when in other circumstances action has been taken.

It is a contradiction in terms here. I am not having a go at you and altruistically I have got nothing to win. I am not Andrew Trehern. It does not bother me.

Supplemental Answer: You say, barely asking a question.

Look, first of all, this statement was made whilst you were in charge as an Independent Labour administration and did not do anything.

Secondly, whilst previous administrations may be prepared to spend large amounts of taxpayers' money going after local papers, I am not prepared to do that. I do not recognise the statement you made about us, as a Council, going after local papers, certainly since I have been a Portfolio Holder.

I do not believe it is something we should do, except in exceptional circumstances and I do not believe this is one of those circumstances.

[Councillor Stoodley makes a remark.]

I think it is important that you do not make the allegation at a public meeting because you are then making a slanderous comment.

2.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Question: "Do you believe that there is enough incentive, that enough is being done, to teach people to take care of, respect and appreciate their public realm?"

Answer: We are certainly trying because it is vital.

We have established the new Community Engagement team, which provides a link between a number of divisions within the Environment & Enterprise Directorate and the wider community and they are really trying. They are going round sorting out our recycling. That is part of their jobs and also attracting additional Neighbourhood Champions which I am pleased about.

As you know, we are desperately trying to get the Neighbourhood Champions Scheme up to 2,000 before we go into the purdah period. If we have one person in every single street that is watching out for these things, it is a very powerful message.

We have also re-launched the Weeks of Action and Secure Streets initiatives which involves a lot of work with the Police and the Fire Brigade because we do believe that if we, as a Council, show that we are passionate about making sure that we look after the streets, then hopefully that will have a knock-on effect to our residents. It is the bad behaviour of residents throwing litter and spitting that costs our taxpayers a fortune to clear up.

So I can see where you are coming from and I completely agree with you. We are certainly doing as much as we can.

Supplemental Question: I was finished here one night in October and I just roughly got to the tube station and the boarding by First National House, there were half a dozen lads there. One of them decided to relieve himself, which I thought was pretty gross. Just as he did, a policeman

fortunately came pedalling along on his pushbike, spotted him, told him to stop. I thought something is going to happen now, at which point the policeman just pedalled off.

So my supplementary question is: are you happy with the fact that when people are urinating on the public realm, the Police catch them and then do nothing about it? Or like me, do you think perhaps there should be a power to have on the spot fines like Councillor Idaikkadar was advocating? Or even just the inconvenience of being taken down to the Police Station to give name, address and details? I find that incredible and if there is anything you can do with your contacts in the Police, perhaps we could have a change of policy on that because now his 5 mates think that that is okay.

Supplemental Answer: Urinating on the public realm is certainly not what I would think was in any which way acceptable.

We are looking at Enfield Council's spot fines because spot fining is not as easy as it would seem. I have talked to PC Simon Evans about this because if we can use uniformed people to spot fine, then I think it is a way forward because this sort of behaviour is outrageous. So leave it with me, we are looking at different projects that are cost effective and will stop people doing these terrible things in public.

Thank you for bringing it to my attention.

3.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Stephen Wright, Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "Do you feel you can justify all the items of property that you currently propose to sell?"

Answer: Yes. The 2013-14 Property Disposal Programme was fully considered and reviewed prior to its approval at Cabinet on 17 October 2013 and as you might recall, it was largely unchanged from that previously proposed by your administration.

Supplemental Question: I do recall that. The devil was in the detail of my question when I asked "all the items of property".

There are 2 public lavatories listed for sale on that property and I was just wondering with respect to the

previous question, whether or not it might be an idea that would give the Police and on the spot fine or uniformed people a much better excuse to stop people relieving themselves in the streets if there are lavatories round the corner, whereas if you sell them off and close them, that is going to make things a lot more awkward, all round.

Supplemental Answer: I agree with you.

The only problem is that the 2 lavatories that are being sold were not anywhere near that particular scene, so they would not have been an awful lot of good.

Bear in mind that those toilets, one has been closed for 5 years and the other has been closed for over 15 years and there is a tremendous amount of anti social behaviour there. I am sure you will agree with me that it is far better for those properties to be sold and for residential properties to be built on them. We do need them in Harrow.

4.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Kamaljit Chana, Portfolio Holder for Business and Enterprise

Question: "At the time of writing this question (27/11/13) the President of the North West London Chamber of Commerce, Ms Carole Marblestein, has informed me that she has not heard from you and indeed has not even heard of you!

Bearing in mind that you are the Holder for this newly and especially created Portfolio, would you please explain why, after two whole months, you have not bothered to get in touch with one of the most significant business organisations in our Borough?"

Answer: The North West London Chamber of Commerce is one of many business membership organisations in Harrow. The Chamber have 2 members that meet quarterly with the Economic Development Officer for Business and the last meeting was 3 December.

Since coming into office as Portfolio Holder for Business and Enterprise, I have engaged directly with businesses and with those business membership groups that have had clear propositions.

This has included the Stanmore Chamber of Trade, the Pinner Traders' Association and the Federation of Small Businesses, who each had clear activities that they wanted to take forward with some Council support.

I have:

- gone directly to the workplace of local traders in the Town Centre and Station Road;
- I have personally visited over 100 businesses directly during their working hours to speak with them directly and discuss their issues and concerns;
- engaged directly with some of the largest employers;
- networked with new and established local businesses, business support organisations including Harrow Business and other business partners at the Harrow Means Business Event on 15 October which was over here in the Civic Centre, the Chamber.

In the New Year, a direct campaign and engagement of new businesses and with our largest business rate payers will commence.

Both the North West London Chamber of Commerce and Harrow in Business were briefed by officers of the plans for the New Year at the meeting on 3 December.

Supplemental Question: Be that as it may, the lady to my right apparently has not heard from you, the President of the London Chamber of Commerce has not heard from you.

Are you sure you can handle your role and do you have enough spare time to give it the dedication and attention that it deserves because if not, perhaps you should consider either giving up the day job or alternatively handing over the Portfolio Holder to somebody who does have the time to give it the attention it so deserves?

Supplemental Answer: (answer provided by Cllr Hall) There are 5,000 businesses in Harrow. I could not possibly want a Portfolio Holder for Business that works harder than Councillor Kamaljit Chana. Clearly with 5,000 businesses and us only having been in power just over 80 days, I could not expect even Superman to visit all of those in that time.

I am extremely proud of Councillor Kamaljit Chana as my Business Portfolio Holder and he absolutely does have the time and the inclination and the capability to do the job.

5.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

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

Question: "As you know, because I copied you in on the email, one of our Borough's citizens complained to me about the appalling damp in her privately rented flat, the rent for which is paid for through housing benefit.

Can you please explain why we are using such appalling landlords, why we are not using our registered landlord scheme or, if he is a member then how did he qualify with such an appallingly damp property, and what plans your department has to avoid this happening in the future?"

Written Answer provided, as requested by the questioner:

The property you refer to was let via the Council's Help2Let scheme and, as usual, was inspected before the letting. It was in good condition when the tenant moved into the property in 2011.

We do not have a licensing or registration scheme for private landlords but they are encouraged to join the London Landlord Accreditation scheme. We are in regular contact with our Help2Let landlords, hold landlord forums and offer training and advice.

In this case, the tenant approached the Council's Housing Advice service in April 2013 about damp in her home. The matter was referred to Environmental Health again – they had previously been involved in 2012, when the damp and mould was treated, and they had closed the case as the problem had been dealt with.

With the recurrence of damp, a Housing Adviser has now taken on the case.

Environmental Health colleagues are once again involved and should be able to determine whether the damp is due to a structural defect, or the way the family occupy the property or possibly a combination of both.

At our request the landlord has been co-operating to

remedy the problem, and has fitted more ventilators and given the tenant money to tackle the mould. Any property can suffer serious condensation problems if there is insufficient ventilation especially if clothes are dried indoors.

Environmental Health will be going back to the property to make a further assessment of the situation, accompanied by the landlord.

We have also offered to assist the tenant with moving if she wishes this. We'll pay a deposit, first month's rent and letting agency fees, for any alternative affordable private rented accommodation she finds.

6.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Janet Mote, Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools

Question: "With respect to my previous question, the tenant of the flat concerned has a Doctor's certificate confirming that both she and her two children contracted pneumonia almost certainly as a result of the damp living conditions. What machinery do you have in place for safeguarding children from living in unhealthy conditions when it is our own Council paying the rent for them to live like that?"

Written Answer provided, as requested by the questioner:

The fact a tenant receives Housing Benefit to help pay the rent doesn't affect the powers that the Council can exercise or affect their rights

We always address a resident's concerns regarding their properties when they are brought to our attention and will try to work with the landlord to remedy any disrepair. We aim to do this by agreement, offering advice and practical assistance, which can include small grants, if the landlord can't afford the repair. If this fails, we use enforcement powers through Environmental Health. Whilst most repairs are the landlord's responsibility, repairs arising from tenant damage or neglect are the tenant's responsibility.

Damp is widely recognised as having an adverse effect on health, which is why we take it seriously. This includes work with landlords and advising tenants at our tenant training sessions on steps they can take to avoid condensation problems.

In the event that the children have an allocated social worker already, we would liaise closely with health

colleagues (health visitor, school nurse, GP or paediatrician) to ensure that the children were getting the right services, and to ensure that we assisted with any applications for alternative housing if this was a viable option.

In the event that the children do not have an allocated social worker, the family could be referred for an Early Intervention Service or to access an early help offer through a children's centre depending on the ages of the children. This would include support around staying healthy and could include direct access to health professionals through the children's centres.

7.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Question: "If the post of Chief Executive is being deleted, should we not be reconsidering the position of Assistant Chief Executive or the post has also been deleted?"

Answer: Although Michael Lockwood, the current Chief Executive, decided to leave the Council at the end of February, no decision has been made to delete the post of Chief Executive as yet.

I can confirm that the post of Assistant Chief Executive was deleted in the senior management restructure agreed by Cabinet in December 2011. The duties and responsibilities of that post were incorporated into the new post of Corporate Director of Resources.

So you have to pay more attention Councillor Stoodley. Obviously you were not at that Cabinet meeting.

8.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Question: Since the Council is introducing cashless parking with e-permits starting in December, why can't the trial of 20 minutes free parking continue across the Borough?

Answer: I thought this was an odd question to be honest because this is totally different.

The cashless parking system provides an alternative online means of payment for pay and display parking and parking permits via the e-permits. However, the provision of free parking concessions is not related to the cashless parking system because the arrangement involves no payment for the first 20 minutes of parking. Cabinet have reviewed the impact of 20 minutes free parking in a trial undertaken in Rayners Lane and decided that it was not suitable in its current form for wider use across the borough due to the significant financial impact and you have been around for those discussions. So I am sure you know that inside out. I feel I do anyway.

Supplemental Question: As a professional and competent politician yourself, I am sure you realise that some things just do not go away and our question on this is, is it not the case that the cashless parking with e-permits stops people continually taking tickets? Therefore that being the reason for stopping the 20 minutes free parking, the reason has gone and you therefore have no reason now to reintroduce it because you have got these wonderful machines that stop the repeat taking?

Supplemental Answer: We are looking into a completely different way of producing 20 minutes free parking across the borough that would be a far better system. I am looking into that at the moment, getting the figures. We have got to do something that benefits the residents, does not cost an absolute fortune and stops fraud altogether. So that is being looked into as I have undertaken to do.

Cllr Stoodley: Is the e-ticketing part of it, what you are looking into?

Cllr Hall: As soon as it is sorted out, I will come to you with a grin on my face knowing that we have sorted it out properly.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

736. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy - Mid-year Review 2013/14

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which set out the mid-year review of Treasury Management activities for 2013/14. It was noted that Treasury Management operation ensured that cash flow was adequately planned, with surplus money being invested with low risk counterparties. It also ensured that adequate liquidity was provided before consideration was given to optimisation of investment return. Another function of the Treasury Management service was to fund the Council's Capital Programme.

Cabinet considered the report and resolved to recommend appropriately to February 2014 full Council meeting and to ask the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee to consider and review the report.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the minimum credit criterion for The Royal Bank of Scotland be amended from F1 to F2 as discussed in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the half year Treasury Management Activity (TMA) for 2013/14 be noted;
- (2) the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee consider and review the report;

Reason for Recommendation/Decision: To promote effective financial management and comply with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations 2003 and other relevant guidance. To be informed of Treasury Management Activities and performance.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation to Council.]

RESOLVED ITEMS

737. Key Decision Schedule - December 2013 to February 2014

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Key Decision Schedule for December 2013.

738. Progress on Scrutiny Projects

RESOLVED: To receive and note the progress of scrutiny projects.

739. Key Decision - School Expansion Programme

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools introduced the report, which set out the outcomes of the statutory consultation on the proposals to expand Whitefriars Community School by one form of entry and to extend the age range to make provision for secondary aged pupils. The report also included an update on Phase 2 of the Primary School Expansion Programme and increased the intake in the primary phase.

The Portfolio Holder added that the Council had received £12.4m for the project under the government's Targeted Basic Need Programme (TBNP),

and the funding had to be spent and places made available by September 2015. She added that this was an exciting project which would enhance school provision in Harrow and help regenerate the areas around the schools.

Cabinet was informed that whilst the responses received to the consultation were not high, the majority were in support of the proposal. The Portfolio Holder was grateful of the support from Whitefriars School. The Director of Children and Families responded to a question from a non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member in relation to the location of pupil referral unit(s). She informed Cabinet that alternative sites were being explored, including associated costs and any Basic Needs Funding.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the outcomes of the statutory consultation be noted;
- (2) the publication of statutory notices to expand permanently and extend the age range of Whitefriars Community School to include provision for secondary aged pupils be agreed.

Reason for Decision: To fulfil the Council's statutory duties to provide sufficient school places in its area.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

740. Key Decision - Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Regeneration introduced the report, which summarised the responses received to the consultation and how these had informed the final Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was being proposed for adoption. The proposal included the amendment of the conservation area boundaries for the Little Common and Old Church Lane Conservation Area and new Article 4(2) directions were proposed for Old Church Lane, Stanmore Hill, Kerry Avenue and Canons Park Conservation Areas.

The Portfolio Holder added that the possibility of a re-evaluation of the Conservation Area to include Cavendish Road and Dorset Drive, as suggested at the Local Development Framework Panel, would be explored separately.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), attached as appendix 2 to the report, be approved;

- (2) the representations received to public consultation on the draft Stanmore and Edgware Conservations Areas SPD, provided at Appendix 1 to the report, and the Council's response to the individual comments made be noted;
- (3) it be noted that the conservation area boundaries for the Little Common Conservation Area and Old Church Lane Conservation Area had been altered, and new Article 4(2) Directions had been proposed for Old Church Lane, Stanmore Hill, Kerry Avenue and Canons Park Conservation Areas;
- (4) authority be delegated to the Divisional Director of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, to make typographical corrections and any other necessary non-material amendments to the SPD prior to its formal publication.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that when adopted the Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas SPD would be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SPD would also provide useful guidance to relevant Council departments when dealing with issues relating to Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

741. Key Decision - Locally Listed Buildings Supplementary Planning Document

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Regeneration introduced the report, which proposed the adoption of the Locally Listed Buildings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to aid owners and occupiers of these buildings to conserve these important heritage assets in Harrow. He referred to the deputation received at the Local Development Framework Panel and that the deputees' suggestions had been taken on board and incorporated in the SPD.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the representations received to public consultation on the draft Locally Listed Buildings SPD, provided at Appendix 1 to the report, and the Council's response to the individual comments made, be noted;
- (2) the Local Development Framework Panel's recommendations at appendix 2 to the report be noted, including the amendments made to the SPD in response to the recommendations set out in the body of the report;
- (3) the Locally Listed Buildings SPD, attached as Appendix 3 to the report, be adopted.

Reason for Decision: To afford weight to the SPD as a material planning consideration.

To set out best practice guidance and advice to the owners and occupiers of Locally Listed Buildings to acknowledge the contribution these buildings made to Harrow's character and to promote the continue preservation of these significant local heritage assets.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

742. Authority Monitoring Report

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Regeneration introduced the report, which set out the Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. The AMR monitored the effectiveness of the implementation of local planning policies and production of Harrow's new Local Plan. He added that it was intended to analyse all the indicators, and confirmed that all data entry had now been completed. He thanked officers for having completed the significant amount of work involved in the preparation of the AMR.

The non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Members asked questions relating to the reported performance during March 2013, including any involvement of the Mayor of London on the issue of the provision of new homes, the New Homes Bonus, the Kodak site and its relationship with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and how the longer term achievements would be prioritised and help to shape the forthcoming budget.

In response the Portfolio Holder and the Divisional Director of Planning stated that:

- the New Homes Bonus was not something that the Council was able to control. The Council supported all growth and the CIL would bring in an excess of £1m per annum to support infrastructure and growth;
- in relation to the Kodak site, the £10m of the infrastructure would be delivered through Section 106 money. The site would not be subject to the Council CIL payments. The changes in the government's Autumn Statement did not affect the use and provision of Section 106 money;
- the majority of the targets were being achieved which was a reflection on the excellent work of the officers and the economic improvements nationally. Work was in progress in cases where the targets were proving to be a challenge. There was an issue over the quality of improvement of open spaces and this was being addressed through the Green Grid Policy, including CIL and Section 106 money;

- the effect of recent permitted development changes was hard to quantify. Whilst there were new proposals for permitted development extension, the market had not seen a significant reduction in householder planning applications. There was an issue over the conversion of office buildings to residential properties. It was difficult to put a figure on the offset in real income but it was likely to be in the region of £150k of fees being forgone. Because of the relatively short period since these changes, the statistics in relation to officer permitted development were still being captured, the situation was dynamic and sampling was being done. Reliable indicators would be available at a later stage.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Authority Monitoring Report 2012/13, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for publication on the Council's website;
- (2) authority be delegated to the Divisional Director of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, to make further minor changes to the Authority's Monitoring Report prior to publication.

Reason for Decision: To comply with the requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

743. Key Decision - Draft HRA Budget 2014/15, Draft MTFS 2015/16 to 2017/18, Draft HRA Capital Budget 2014/15 to 2017/18

The Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing introduced the report, which set out the Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2015/16 to 2017/18. He added that the HRA was in 'good health' since the introduction of the reforms by government, as it allowed Councils to do more to improve the quality of their estates. He explained that the Retail Price Index (RPI) was 3.2% in September, which had resulted in a proposed average rent increase of 5.1% for 2014/15. There would be no increase in garage rents pending finalisation of the Garage Strategy Review. Additionally, a proposal from the Tenants', Residents' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum (TLRCF) meeting held on 11 December 2013 to introduce a pilot scheme in which estate residents and voluntary groups paid a reduced rate for hire of community halls would be explored and reflected in the budget.

The Portfolio Holder responded to questions from the non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Members who asked about his involvement in the HRA Budget process. He explained that he had taken a longer term view at the nature of the HRA, including how the Capital Work Programme and that the structure of the debt was being maintained. Additionally, it was important

the double-entry system was done on a 4-year basis/programme cycle and he intended to roll this out in order to save money.

A non-voting non-Executive Member enquired about the Portfolio Holder's vision as he felt that the report did not set out a strategic view and the key priorities, including how stakeholders would be consulted. The same Member referred to recent government announcements on the Right to Buy Scheme and enquired about its impact on the HRA. The Portfolio Holder replied, as follows:

- the TLRCF had been consulted the previous evening, which he had reported upon;
- the impact on the HRA was difficult to predict and was dependant on the change in relation to the Retail Price Index (RPI) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as future rent increases would be based on the CPI;
- there was a need to lobby the government to ensure better outcomes, and look at revaluing the housing stock and abolish the cap imposed. Currently, there was a requirement to service the debt;
- he was examining ways in which there would be a sharing of services, including the carrying out back office functions for Housing Associations. Additionally, new build schemes were being explored, including the leveraging of money by working with other organisations, as it would help to finance the remainder of the development and increase the income stream.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft HRA Budget be approved for consultation;
- (2) the proposed increase of 5.1% to housing rent charges for 2014/15, resulting in an average rent of £112.43 per week for 2014/15 be approved for consultation;
- (3) the proposed increases in facility and water charges set out in appendices 4 and 5 to the report be approved for consultation;
- (4) the draft four year Capital Programme be approved for consultation;
- (5) with final approval being sought from Cabinet and Council in February 2014;
- (6) the government's proposals to change national rent policy from 2015/16 onwards be noted.

Reason for Decision: To publish the draft HRA Budget and Capital Programme for consultation.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

744. Key Decision - Calculation of Council Tax Base for 2014/15

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which set out the requirements placed on the Council to formally calculate the Council Tax Base and to pass this information to precepting authorities by 31 January 2014. The requirement was to set the Tax Base by between 1 December 2013 and 31 January 2014.

RESOLVED: That, having considered the information given in the report, the following be agreed:

- (a) the Band D equivalent number of taxable properties be calculated as shown in accordance with the government regulations;
- (b) the provision for uncollectable amounts of Council Tax for 2014-2015 be agreed at 2.50% producing an expected collection rate of 97.50%;
- (c) subject to (a) & (b) above, a Council Tax Base for 2014-2015 of **78,550** Band D equivalent properties (being 80,565 x 97.50%) be approved, allowing for payment in lieu of Ministry of Defence properties.

Reason for Decision: To fulfil the Council's statutory obligation to set the Council Tax Base for 2014-2015.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

745. Key Decision - Calculation of Business Rates Income for 2014/15

The Portfolio Holder requested that the report be withdrawn, as the government's recent Autumn Statement had changed the rules on the Calculation of Business Rates Income for 2014/15. A revised report would be submitted to Cabinet in January 2014.

RESOLVED: That the report be withdrawn and a revised report be submitted to the next Cabinet meeting.

[Call-in does not apply].

746. Key Decision - Draft Revenue Budget 2014/15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which set out the draft Revenue Budget for 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2014/15 to 2016/17, with the report on the budget returning to Cabinet in February 2014 prior to the final approval by Council. The Portfolio

Holder added that £30m savings had to be identified and shortfalls had to be addressed. He was critical of the way the savings and the shortfalls had been handled by the previous administration(s) and outlined the savings that had not been achieved previously. As a result, the new administration was presenting a modest set of proposals in order to ensure that the budget was fair.

The non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Members were critical of the proposed reduction in the welfare contingency budget and the message this sent out to residents. They enquired about the long term strategy, in view of the possible changes in welfare entitlement. They also asked about the proposed freeze on the Council Tax for 2014/15 which one of them considered to be irresponsible, claiming it was electioneering, which would create problems for future administrations. He was of the view that at some point the Council Tax would need to be increased and that this proposal could increase the deficit for future years with rate payers having to pay in later years.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance stated that the claims against the welfare contingency budget had been modest and a £1m contingency was still available to help mitigate the impact of welfare changes. He added that the new administration would go as far as to say that it would freeze or reduce Council Tax during the next administration should it be elected. The Portfolio Holder explained that the argument put forward by a non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member that as prices generally went up he expected the Council Tax to go up as well was an invalid one, as it did not equate with the inflation figures which were 5% and 1.3% in 2012/13 and 2013/14 respectively. He added that well established practices on spending would ensure that officers were compelled to manage budgets and confirmed that the new administration would reduce or freeze Council Tax in future years.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the amount of money that was spent on servicing the debt on the £250m Capital Budget, which had risen during by £10m under the previous administration(s). This issue needed to be resolved.

The Leader of the Council stated that her administration would freeze or reduce Council Tax at every opportunity and it was the way this administration would be moving forward; which was warmly received by her colleagues.

The Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources added that Harrow had one of the highest Council Taxes in London and there had been a time when a Labour administration had increased Council Tax by 21% and still had run out of money. It was important that budgets were controlled and managed appropriately, with Value for Money being a key driver. The Portfolio Holder stated that the administration would "Listen" to the residents' views as part of the budget consultation process instead of the "Let's Talk" approach taken by the previous administration(s) which continued with the implementation of proposals that the residents had not supported, such as the outsourcing of the libraries. In response, a non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member cited the example of what he felt was the administration's lack of proper consultation on the post of the Chief Executive. He considered the budget to be unfair and that the previous Labour administration's priority had

been to centre the budget around the people of Harrow. He enquired about the long term plans of the new administration in respect of the budget.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing paid tribute to the work done by officers, including his most recent predecessor as Housing Portfolio Holder. He added that the role of the Councillors was to develop and innovate services and he cited examples of Re-ablement and My Community e-Purse as fine examples of such work. It was important that the social care fund was used to support services and that services provided helped to improve outcomes and the quality of life. A strategic goal was to focus on needs and provide choice to the users.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance stated that the administration was “Working for a Cleaner, Safer and Fairer Harrow” and had increased the Adult Social Care budget and provided additional social workers. It would therefore not take any lessons from the previous administration(s), particularly in regard to the “fair agenda”. The Leader of the Council added that this was not a reckless budget as was being insinuated by the non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Members, and challenged them on whether it was reckless to have cleaner and safer streets, which was one of the new administration’s priorities.

The Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources explained how people would engage with the consultation process which would be conducted through various Committees and the Council’s website. There would be extensive consultation on the budget which would reflect residents’ priorities. The Leader of the Council stated that she had made representations in regard to the settlement that the Council received from the government and would continue to lobby on this important matter.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft budget for 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as set out in appendix 3 to the report, be approved for general consultation including an anticipated 0% Council Tax increase;
- (2) the current remaining budget gaps of £19.481m in 2015/16 and £18.612m in 2016/17 be noted;
- (3) the draft Public Health Budget for 2014/15, as set out in Appendix 5 to the report, be approved;
- (4) the statutory changes to schools funding for 2014/15 be noted and the proposed arrangements for the 2014/15 school funding formula as set out in Appendix 6 to the report be approved;
- (5) the sum of £239,219 be approved as Harrow’s contribution to the London Grant Scheme in 2014/15;
- (6) a Capital Financing Risk Reserve be established to allow for delays in capital receipts in the current financial year.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Council publishes a draft budget for 2014-15.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

747. Key Decision - Draft Capital Programme 2014/15 to 2017/18

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which set out the proposed Capital Programme for 2014/15 to 2017/18 for consultation. The report also set out the Council's proposals for Capital investment over the 4-year period, including a substantial investment of £248m in infrastructure on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) services.

The Portfolio Holder added that a rigorous regime was applied when setting the Programme and that it did not include vanity projects. He responded to various questions, including a question on consultation and confirmed that consultation would be carried out in a traditional manner and on individual projects as it was difficult for residents to appreciate and identify various projects within an overarching theme. The Director of Finance and Assurance explained that the Council was paying off more of its debt.

RESOLVED: That the draft Capital Programme, as detailed within Appendix 1, be approved for consultation, with the final version being presented at the February 2014 meeting of Cabinet.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Council to have an approved Capital Programme for 2014-15 to 2017-18 and to enable preparation work to be undertaken for future years.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

748. Key Decision - Revenue and Capital Monitoring for Quarter 2 as at 30 September 2013

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which set out the Council's revenue and capital monitoring position as at 30 September 2013.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Revenue and Capital forecast outturn position at the end of Quarter 2, September 2013, be noted;
- (2) the Capital virement detailed in paragraphs 49 and 50 of the report be noted.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that Cabinet was updated on the forecast revenue and capital financial position for 2013/14 and that budget virements were agreed in line with Financial Regulations.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

[Call-in does not apply].

749. Key Decision - Collection Fund 2013/14

Cabinet received a report of the Director of Finance and Assurance, which set out the estimated financial position on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2014 and how it was shared amongst the constituent precepting bodies and the government.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) an estimated surplus of £2,095,937 on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2014 of which £1,676,274 was the Harrow share be noted;
- (2) an amount of £1,676,274 be transferred to the General Fund in 2014/15.

Reason for Decision: To be informed of the Council's statutory obligation to make an estimate of the surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund by 15 January 2014. Approval to the recommendations set out was a major part of the annual budget review process.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

750. Procurement of Banking Services

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, including a confidential appendix, which set out the project management and procurement tender process undertaken for the provision of Banking Services.

RESOLVED: That, having taken into account appendix 1 in respect of the supply of banking services for the term of five years beginning on 1 April 2014 and ending on 31 March 2019 with an option to extend for a period of up to a further two years to 31 March 2021, the Royal Bank of Scotland be awarded the contract for the supply of banking services for the term of five years beginning on 1 April 2014 and ending on 31 March 2019 with an option to extend for a period of up to a further two years to 31 March 2021.

Reason for Decision: The Council's current banking contract was due to expire in March 2014. In compliance with the Council's Standing Orders, an open tendering procedure had been followed and, based on the results, a decision has been made to award the contract to the most economically advantageous tender.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

751. Strategic Performance Report - Quarter 2

The Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources introduced the report, which summarised the Council and service performance for Quarter 2 against key measures and drew attention to areas requiring action. He identified the following three main challenges facing the Council:

- Children's Services – that he had been assured that the position in relation to the number of referrals was appropriate. He was concerned about the outcome of the recent Ofsted Inspection which was awaited;
- IT Transformation – the Transformation Programme was significantly behind schedule and he was personally dealing with certain issues directly with the provider, Capita, and how issues could be mitigated;
- Clean Streets – the previous administrations had set unachievable targets with reduced budgets. As a result, the streets were not kept clean, and increased litter and graffiti were also an issue. The new administration had put money back into street cleaning so that the issues could be addressed.

The Portfolio Holder responded to questions from a non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member and pointed out that the new administration had inherited a budget framework from the previous administration(s), including targets set. The new administration would set out its priorities in the Corporate Plan and the budget as it moved forward and would focus on areas which residents had identified as their priorities. He added that this administration was looking at the whole performance management infrastructure as the current one was backward looking and reflective of the old Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). He re-iterated that poor target setting under the previous administration(s) had been particularly unhelpful. There was a need for the performance management infrastructure to be focused and forward looking and the data supplied for the quarter that was under consideration.

RESOLVED: That Portfolio Holders continue working with officers to achieve improvement against identified key challenges.

Reason for Decision: To be informed of performance against key measures and to identify and assign corrective action where necessary.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 8.36 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR SUSAN HALL
Chairman

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London Borough of Harrow

KEY DECISION SCHEDULE (JANUARY 2014 - MARCH 2014)

MONTH: January

The following is a list of Key Decisions which the Authority proposes to take at the above Cabinet meeting. The list may change over the next few weeks. A further notice, by way of the Cabinet agenda, will be published no less than 5 clear days before the date of the Cabinet meeting, showing the final list of Key Decisions to be considered at that meeting.

A Key Decision is a decision by the Executive which is likely to:

- (i) result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area of two or more wards or electoral divisions of the Borough.

A decision is significant for the purposes of (i) above if it involves expenditure or the making of savings of an amount in excess of £1m capital expenditure or £500,000 for revenue expenditure or, where expenditure or savings are less than the amounts specified above, it constitute more than 50% of the budget attributable to the service in question.

Decisions which the Cabinet intends to make in private

The Cabinet hereby gives notice that it may meet in private after its public meeting to consider reports which contain confidential information. The private meeting of the Cabinet is open only to Members of the Cabinet, other Councillors and Council officers.

Reports relating to decisions which the Cabinet will take at its private meeting are indicated in the list of Key Decisions below with the reasons for the decision being made in private where appropriate. The Schedule also contains non-Key Decisions which involve Cabinet having to meet in private. Any person is able to make representations to the Cabinet if he/she believes the decision should instead be made in the public Cabinet meeting. If you want to make such representations please contact Democratic & Electoral Services. You will then be sent a response in reply to your representations. Both your representations and the Cabinet's/Leader's response will be published on the Council's website <http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/mgListPlans.aspx> at least 5 clear days before the Cabinet meeting.

The Cabinet/Leader will be considering a report prepared by the relevant Directorate. The report together with any other documents (unless they contain exempt information) will be available for inspection 5 clear days before the decision is taken by Cabinet/Leader from Daksha Ghelani, Senior Democratic Services Officer, on 020 8424 1881 or by contacting daksha.ghelani@harrow.gov.uk or by writing to Democratic & Electoral Services, Harrow Council, Civic Centre PO Box 2, Station Road, Harrow, HA1 2UH or on the Council's website. Copies may be requested but a fee will be payable. Reports to be considered at the Cabinet's public meeting will be available on the Council's website 5 clear days before the meeting.

The KDS looks 3 meetings ahead and will be published 28 clear days before the Decision Date / Period of Decision.

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
JANUARY 2014						
Review of Harrow Help & Emergency Relief Scheme (ERS)	To note the pilot outcomes and review and agree to continue with scheme beyond the 1 year pilot	Cabinet	15 January 2014	Councillor Tony Ferrari Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources fern.silverio@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8736 6818	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices
Corporate Debt Collection	To note work done to date and agree the corporate debt recovery policy	Cabinet	15 January 2014	Councillor Tony Ferrari Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources fern.silverio@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8736 6818	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices
Council Insurance Renewals 2014	Approval of the recommendation to enter into a contract for the	Cabinet	15 January 2014	Councillor Tony Ferrari Simon George,	Part exempt	Agenda Report and any related appendices

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
	provision of property and liability insurance for the Council			Director of Finance and Assurance karen.vickery@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8424 1995	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	
Project Minerva: Findings and Recommendations	To approve the recommendations of Project Minerva in relation to the forward plans for the Resources Directorate in order to achieve savings from 2015/16.	Cabinet	15 January 2014	Councillor Tony Ferrari and Paul Osborn Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources rob.bonneywell@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8416 8902	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Agenda Report and any related appendices

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
Trading Standards- Reaffirming Delegations	For Cabinet to agree the reaffirmation of the delegation to LB Brent to conduct the Trading Standards Functions and agree delegations to Corporate Director Environment and Enterprise to conclude the commercial arrangements in conjunction with Legal Services	Cabinet	15 January 2014	Councillor Susan Hall Caroline Bruce, Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise venetia.reid-baptiste@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8424 1492	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices
Senior Management Structure	To consider the outcome of the consultation on the proposal to delete the post of the Chief Executive	Cabinet	15 January 2014	Councillor Susan Hall Hugh Peart, Director of Legal and Governance Services hugh.peart@harrow.gov.uk	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
				Tel: 020 8424 1287		
Calculation of Business Rates Tax Base for 2014-2015	To approve the Council's NDR Tax Base for 2014-15	Cabinet	15 January 2014	Councillor Tony Ferrari Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources fern.silverio@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8736 6818	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices
FEBRUARY 2014						
Council Fees and Charges	Agree the Fees & Charges to be implemented from the dates indicated in the report	Cabinet	13 February 2014	Councillor Tony Ferrari Simon George, Director of Finance and Assurance steve.tingle@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8420 9384	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
Buildings Insurance for Residential Leaseholders	Approval of the recommendation to enter into a three-year contract for the provision of buildings insurance for residential leaseholders	Cabinet	13 February 2014	Councillors Barry Macleod-Cullinane and Tony Ferrari Simon George, Director of Finance and Assurance karen.vickery@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 0208 424 1995	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Agenda Report and any related appendices
Risk Based Verification (RBV) Policy for Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support Assessments	Implementation of RBV supports the savings requirement within the Resources Directorate. Adopting the policy will reduce the necessity for benefit claimants to produce original	Cabinet	13 February 2014	Councillor Tony Ferrari Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources fern.silverio@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8736 6818	Part exempt Any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.	Agenda Report and any related appendices

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
	documents to support their claim and reduce claimant contact					
Financial Hardship Fund	To agree and adopt the Financial Hardship Fund Policy, assessment criteria and award process	Cabinet	13 February 2014	Councillor Tony Ferrari Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources fern.silverio@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8424 1881	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices
Harrow Mutual Support Network Contract Award	Agreement to enter into contract	Cabinet	13 February 2014	Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane Paul Najsarek, Acting Head of Paid Service, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing tim.miller@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8736 6330	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Agenda Report and any related appendices

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
Corporate Plan - 2014/15	Sets out the Policy direction and key priorities for the year ahead.	Cabinet Council	13 February 2014 27 February 2014	Councillor Susan Hall Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources alex.dewsnap@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8416 8250	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices
Joint West London Waste Plan: Submission Document	That Cabinet be requested to recommend that the Council approve the draft West London Waste Plan for a minimum six-week public consultation period in March – April 2014 and, subject to representations, submission to the Secretary of	Cabinet	13 February 2014	Councillor Stephen Greek Caroline Bruce, Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise matthew.paterson@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8736 6082	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices: Draft West London Waste Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation Document; WLWP: Issues and Options Consultation document (January 2009); WLWP: Proposed Sites and Policies Consultation Document

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
	<p>State for Examination in Public.</p> <p>Delegate authority to the Divisional Director of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, to make minor modification to the draft plan as are necessary for factual correctness and in response to representations received.</p>					(February 2011)
Capital Programme 2014-15 to 2017-18	Recommend the Capital Programme to Council for approval	Cabinet Council	13 February 2014 27 February 2014	Councillor Tony Ferrari Simon George, Director of Finance	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices: Summary Capital Programme

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
				and Assurance steve.tingle@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 02 8420 9384		
Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2014-15 to 2016-17	To recommend to Council the revenue budget to enable the Council Tax to be set for 2014-15; To approve the MTFS	Cabinet Council	13 February 2014 27 February 2014	Councillor Tony Ferrari Simon George, Director of Finance and Assurance dawn.calvert@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8424 1393	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices: Budget and MTFS proposals and related appendices
Housing Revenue Account Budget 2014-15, Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-16 to 2017-18, and HRA Capital Budget 2014-15 to 2017-18	1. To approve the HRA Budget and MTFS; 2. To approve the proposed rent increase; 3. To	Cabinet Council	13 February 2014 27 February 2014	Councillors Tony Ferrari and Barry Macleod-Cullinane Simon George, Director of Finance and Assurance Paul Najsarek, Acting Head of Paid Service, Corporate Director, Community Health	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices: Housing Revenue Account Budget 2014-15, Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-16 to 2017-18, and HRA Capital Budget 2014-15 to 2017-18

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
	<p>approve the proposed increases in Fees & Charges;</p> <p>4. To approve the HRA capital budget 2014-15 to 2017-18</p> <p>5. To recommend that Council approve:</p> <p>(a) The HRA budget 2014-15 and MTF 2015-16 to 2017-18</p> <p>(b) The HRA capital budget 2014-15 to 2017-18</p>			<p>and Wellbeing dave.roberts@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8420 9678,</p>		
Recruitment Process Contract (Non-Key but part Exempt)	Approval sought to enter into a contract with Per Temps to	Cabinet	13 February 2014	Councillor Paul Osborn Tom Whiting,	Part exempt	Agenda Report and any related appendices

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
	deliver an online recruitment system integrating permanent recruitment processing with the Per Temps Agency Worker ordering System (PAWS)			Corporate Director of Resources jon.turner@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8424 1225	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	
Harrow Community Learning Strategy	Approval of the Harrow Community Learning Strategy 2013-15	Cabinet	13 February 2014	Councillor Manjji Kara Marianne Locke, Divisional Director, Community & Culture geoff.trodd@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8416 8805	Open	Agenda Report and any related appendices: Harrow Community Learning Strategy
MARCH 2013						
Entering into a Contract to	Approval sought to enter into a	Cabinet	13 March 2014	Councillors Susan Hall, Barry	Open	Agenda Report and any related

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
<p>deliver ECO funded improvements to homes in Harrow</p>	<p>contract with British Gas to deliver ECO funded energy efficiency measures to dwellings in the borough</p>			<p>Macleod-Cullinane, Stephen Wright Caroline Bruce, Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise Paul Najsarek, Acting Head of Paid Service, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing paul.mullins@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8424 1473</p>		<p>appendices</p>
<p>Small Grant and Outcome Based Grant Recommendation 2014-15</p>	<p>Approval of Grant Funding Recommendations</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>13 March 2014</p>	<p>Councillor Manji Kara Paul Najsarek, Acting Head of Paid Service, Corporate Director, Community Health and Wellbeing kashmir.takhar@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8420</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Agenda Report and any related appendices</p>

Subject	Nature of decision	Decision Maker	Decision date / Period of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted
				9331		

HARROW COUNCIL CABINET 2013/14
CONTACT DETAILS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Portfolio	Councillor	Address	Telephone no.	Email
Leader, Community Safety & Environment	Susan Hall	Conservative Group Office, Room 102 PO Box 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07860 742093 Group Office: (020) 8424 1852	Email: susan.hall@harrow.gov.uk
Deputy Leader, Adults & Housing	Barry Macleod- Cullinane	Conservative Group Office, Room 102 PO Box 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07976 712611 Group Office: (020) 8424 1852	Email: barry.macleod-cullinane@harrow.gov.uk
Business & Enterprise	Kam Chana	Conservative Group Office, Room 102 PO Box 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07779 133457 Group Office: (020) 8424 1852	Email: kamajit.chana@harrow.gov.uk
Children & Schools	Janet Mote	Conservative Group Office, Room 102 PO Box 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07970 672958 Group Office: (020) 8424 1852	Email: janet.mote@harrow.gov.uk

Portfolio	Councillor	Address	Telephone no.	Email
Communications, Performance and Resources	Paul Osborn	Conservative Group Office, Room 102 PO Box 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Home: (020) 7692 7188 Group Office: (020) 8424 1852	Email: paul.osborn@harrow.gov.uk
Community & Culture	Manji Kara	Conservative Group Office, Room 102 PO Box 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07919 016535 Group Office: (020) 8424 1852	Email: manji.kara@harrow.gov.uk
Finance	Tony Ferrari	Conservative Group Office, Room 102 PO Box 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07914 961035 Group Office: (020) 8424 1852	Email: tony.ferrari@harrow.gov.uk
Health & Wellbeing	Simon Williams	Conservative Group Office, Room 102 PO Box 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07796 580010 Group Office: (020) 8424 1852	Email: simon.williams@harrow.gov.uk
Planning, Development & Regeneration	Stephen Greek	Conservative Group Office, Room 102 PO Box 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07779 639408 Group Office: (020) 8424 1852	Email: stephen.greek@harrow.gov.uk

Portfolio	Councillor	Address	Telephone no.	Email
Property & Major Contracts	Stephen Wright	Conservative Group Office, Room 102 PO Box 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07899 920133 Group Office: (020) 8424 1852	Email: stephen.wright@harrow.gov.uk

Non Executive Members				
Leader of the Independent Labour Group	Thaya Idaikkadar	Independent Labour Group Office Middlesex Suite North PO Box, 2, Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Home: (020) 8863 2372 Mobile: 07812 028741 Group Office: (020) 8424 1154	Email: thaya.idaikkadar@harrow.gov.uk
Leader of the Labour Group	David Perry	Labour Group Office Room 109, PO Box 2 Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07505 430133 Group Office: (020) 8424 1897	Email: david.perry@harrow.gov.uk
Labour Group Representative	Graham Henson	Labour Group Office Room 109, PO Box 2 Civic Centre Station Road HARROW HA1 2UH	Mobile: 07721 509915 Group Office: (020) 8424 1897	Email: graham.henson@harrow.gov.uk

PROGRESS ON SCRUTINY PROJECTS

Review	Methodology	Type of report	Expected date for report to Cabinet	Comments
Standing Review of the Budget	Standing Review	Regular update reports to O&S and interim, specific topic and final reports to O&S and Cabinet	A report from the review's consideration of the use of capital has been drafted.	Evidence gathered during the lifetime of the project will be used to inform the Question and Answer session on the budget in January 2014. No further projects will be undertaken before the next election, however a final report will be prepared for the Overview and Scrutiny committee in February 2014
Customer Care	Light touch review	Final Report to O&S and Cabinet	January 2014	The report was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny committee on 17 th December. It will be received by Cabinet in January and responded to in February.
Accessible Transport	This project is complete			
NHS Health Checks	Joint light touch review with Barnet	Final Report to O&S/Health and Social Care sub committee and Cabinet	Estimated February/March 2014	This is a joint review between Harrow and Barnet which has considered the arrangements in place for NHS Health Checks. A draft report from the project is being prepared for consideration by both boroughs. Because of the timing of the Question and Answer session on the budget in January, there may be a delay in submitting the report to committee
Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee 'Shaping a Healthier Future'	Joint Committee	Update reports will be provided for O&S/Health and Social Care sub committee and Cabinet (for information)	As required	The Joint Committee met on 3 rd December 2013. It will continue to meet to monitor the implementation of the proposals from 'Shaping a Healthier Future'

Deletion of Chief Executive post	Challenge panel	Final report to O&S and the Leader of the Council	January 2014	The challenge panel took place on 4 th December and a special meeting of Overview and Scrutiny committee on 8 th January 2014 will consider the report from this challenge panel.
Child's Journey Through Care	Postponed but included in the scrutiny work programme 2014/15			

All scrutiny projects will be completed and reported through to cabinet as early as possible in 2014.

Contact: Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny, 020 8420 9387

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

CABINET – 15 JANUARY 2014

REFERENCE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 DECEMBER 2013

REPORT OF THE CUSTOMER CARE SCRUTINY REVIEW

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning which presented the findings of the Customer Care Scrutiny Review Group.

The Chair thanked all those who had participated in the review and, in particular, the Member who had chaired the review group until September 2013. He advised that the starting point for the review had been whilst customer care was improving, there had still been areas of concern. He outlined the project and advised that of the 46 recommendations, only one – recommendation 38 – required a specific Cabinet decision. This recommendation proposed a review of the Council's Complaints process.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations in the report of the Customer Care Scrutiny Review be agreed and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Background Documents:

Draft minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17 December 2013

Contact Officer:

Alison Atherton, Senior Professional Democratic Services

Tel: 020 8424 1266

Email: alison.atherton@harrow.gov.uk

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**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	17 th December 2013
Subject:	Report of the Customer Care Scrutiny Review
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	All areas
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Report of the Customer Care Scrutiny Review: 'Putting the Customer First Customer Care at Harrow Council'

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Recommendations:

Councillors are recommended to:

- I. Consider the report of the Customer Care Scrutiny review
- II. Agree the recommendations included in the report
- III. Refer the review's recommendations to cabinet for consideration

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

The attached report presents the findings of the Customer Care Scrutiny Review Group established by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16th May 2012.

Whilst the council has made significant improvements to customer care, councillors were aware that, despite these improvements there were still areas needing improvement. Residents were still bringing to councillors' attention, cases of poor customer care. In order to undertake its investigation, the review group had five meetings to manage the review concluding on 25th June 2013 and made a series of service observations within the council and visits to other boroughs.

The review group has made 46 conclusions and recommendations and these are listed in section four of the attached report. These are nearly all in line with existing council policy direction and, as a result, do not need specific formal Cabinet decisions before they can be implemented. One exception is recommendation 38 that proposes a review of the council's complaints process. Any resulting move to a two-stage process would require a Cabinet decision to go ahead.

Financial Implications

There are none specific to this report.

Performance Issues

There are none specific to this report.

Environmental Impact

There are none specific to this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are none specific to this report.

Corporate Priorities

The findings of the review support the delivery of all of the Council's corporate priorities.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Lynne Margetts, Service Manager, Scrutiny 020 8420 9387,
lynne.margetts@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None

December 2013

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Putting the Customer First
Customer Care at Harrow Council

Report from the Scrutiny Review

Members of the Review Group

Councillor Paul Osborn (Chairman until September 2013)

Councillor Nana Asante

Councillor Camilla Bath

Councillor James Bond

Councillor Krishna James (until May 2013)

Councillor Jean Lammiman

Councillor Jerry Miles (Chairman from September 2013)

Councillor Chris Mote

Councillor Stephen Wright

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DRAFT

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

As an elected councillor I am delighted that this Scrutiny Review of Customer Care has put the spotlight on Customer Care, the way that Harrow Council deals with requests from residents, businesses and visitors. Like other councils Harrow is under enormous pressure to improve services using limited resources. This review will help the council meet that challenge.

I am particularly pleased that the council has been open and transparent in identifying areas of weakness needing improvement as well the many examples of good quality customer service.

When the Overview and Scrutiny committee commissioned this project, we recognised that there had been significant improvements to the way in which the council communicates with and relates to our customers. At the same time however, we also knew that, whilst our overall policies had improved and there had been a tangible improvement in residents' satisfaction, there were still areas in which we could improve the overall customer experience. It is from this perspective that we have approached this project.

The group is extremely grateful for the help we have received in undertaking this project, and in particular we would like to thank Jonathan Milbourn, Head of Customer Services & Access Harrow, and his staff in Access Harrow for the advice they have given us and for the access they gave to us to the real customer care environment.

We would also like to thank the staff in Libraries, Housing, Street Cleansing and Waste Collection services who allowed us to learn from their experience of working on the front line of service delivery.

We would also like to thank our colleagues in Camden, Croydon and Ealing who gave us the opportunity to understand their own approach to customer care and to learn from their experience.

I would also like to thank Cllr Paul Osborn, who chaired this project until the change in political leadership of the council in September 2013.

Our project is now complete, but we do not believe that this means that the resident experience of service delivery cannot be improved further and we know that our staff are driven by the desire to ensure that all residents receive the best possible service from us. We hope that our recommendations will help them to continue to improve and will encourage them to continue their drive to excellence.

On behalf of the review group, I commend this report.

Councillor Jerry Miles
Chairman of the Review Group

SUMMARY

PREAMBLE

1. Harrow Council is responsible for services that touch the lives of every resident and business in the borough. They meet a wide range of needs, some every week of the year such as waste collection, some at different stages of people's lives such as children's and adult services, some are about ensuring statutory rights or obligations are met, some where participation is entirely voluntary such as parks and leisure facilities and some which help to build and promote the local community.
2. One thing all these services share are customers, the residents and businesses of Harrow as well as visitors who come to shop or see local attractions. This review is about the way Harrow Council handles the many customer requests it receives everyday and the relationships it builds with each of them.
3. Most service requests come from residents, and those have been the main focus of this review. However the principles of customer care apply to all who use Harrow Council services.
4. The review was mainly conducted by elected councillors talking to those involved in running services and observing their delivery. The Review Group also received evidence on customer views and looked at the experience of other councils.

Starting point

5. The review group recognise the degree of progress Harrow Council has already made in customer service. One example is the extent of 'channel shift': changes in the way customers communicate with the council, moving towards more web-based methods and away from using the post or attending in person.
6. An essential part of that is 'My Harrow Account', a personalised internet service that allows individuals to make service requests and payments on line. The council's investment in My Harrow Account is paying off, and there are now about 37,000 individual accounts.
7. Harrow appears to be ahead of other councils in making this transition. The review group noted the frequent visits other councils make to Harrow (over forty in the last twelve months) to learn about how this has been achieved and Harrow's plans to go further.
8. 'Access Harrow' also operates the council's Contact Centre for customer telephone calls and the 'One Stop Shop' for people who need to deal with the council in person as well as responding to emails and web forms. Access Harrow is also responsible for the Council's website and the Corporate Complaints policy.

9. Investment in the Contact Centre has improved the level of service available to customers who telephone the council. Customer agents now have immediate access to a much wider range of service information and are able to give advice to more callers without the need to pass onto other departments. They are also better able to track the progress made on previous enquiries.
10. The improved service offered through the Contact Centre and My Harrow Account has led to a large fall in the number of people needing to attend the One Stop Shop routinely. The first three months in 2013/14 have seen a 53% drop in enquiries compared to last year. that in turn has allowed improvements in service there.

Customer satisfaction

11. Improvements in measures of satisfaction suggest that many customers prefer the newer methods of communication. This is reflected in the most recent performance data for Access Harrow (2012-13 Quarter 4) showing significant improvements.
12. This is also evidenced in Access Harrow recently being chosen as 'Contact Centre of Year' at the 2013 London & South East Call Centre awards ceremony, beating off competition from private sector companies. The award was for the best overall contact centre over 100 seats. The judging criteria included use of technology, staff development & satisfaction, key performance indicators such as speed at which calls are answered (last year 87 per cent of calls were answered within 30 seconds), resolution at the first point of contact, and customer satisfaction.
13. The changes Harrow Council has made in the way it interacts with customers have helped to reduce administrative costs and allowed more money to be put into front-line services. The average cost to the council of dealing with customer telephone calls has dropped significantly in recent years from £2.23 in 2006/7 and 99p eighteen months ago and is now only 80p per contact (September 2013).
14. The review group received evidence of many examples of good customer care provided by staff in the service-delivery departments (sometimes called the 'back office'). These included: a low rate of reported missed bin collections (15 out of 35,000 addresses attended per day); positive feedback for the Civic Amenity Site; comments from members of the public about the Town Centre Street Cleaning Team; and survey information from customers visiting Housing Needs and the borough's Libraries.

HOW THE REVIEW WAS CONDUCTED

Origins

1. Councillors were aware that, despite many improvements in Harrow Council's customer care, there were still areas needing improvement. Residents were still bringing to councillors' attention cases of poor customer care. These often involved communication and keeping customers informed about the progress being made with their request; for example, there was sometimes a lack of clarity in distinguishing between cases where a request would be met but after delay from those where it was not within council policy to meet the request. Councillors were also aware that the ability of Access Harrow to keep customers up to date varied between services and the extent to which Access Harrow had access to all the council's computer systems.

Remit

2. In 2012 Harrow's Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned this review of Customer Care. Its scope was agreed as follows:
 - To gain a picture of Harrow Council's customer care.
 - To be in a position to congratulate those parts of the council that address customers' concerns well.
 - To help those parts of the council that do not address customers' concerns well to correct failings by making suggestions as to how the council can improve its customer care.
 - To ensure that Harrow's customer care systems and culture are as good as they can be.
3. The Committee also set the following measure of success for the review:
 - Increased customer satisfaction with how the council deals with customers' queries so that the customer experience is better as a result of the scrutiny review's recommendations. The review group took as a baseline, the Reputation Tracker score for the measure of how satisfied or dissatisfied residents are with the way Harrow Council runs things:

'Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Harrow Council runs things? 54% of residents asked were very satisfied or satisfied as at May 2013

Definitions

4. At an early stage the review group considered the various aspects of an organisation's relationship with its customers and made the following distinctions:
 - **Customer Service:** the business of meeting customer requests and resolving problems

- **Customer Care:** establishing a relationship with the customer, usually over a longer period (e.g. 'cradle to grave') and embedded in the organisation's culture
- **Customer Satisfaction:** customers' views and feelings towards an organisation that can be measured through a series of snapshots though time to identify trends such as 'improving', 'staying static' or 'failing'.

Key questions

5. The review group agreed the focus for their enquiries should be on the following questions:

- Q1 How does the service measure customer satisfaction?
- Q2 How are performance and complaints data used to improve services?
- Q3 Do service responses vary according to whether the initial contact is face-to-face, by phone, by letter or on line?
- Q4 Does the service keep its own record of complaints and performance measures, and how does this feed into the corporate level?
- Q5 How are customer service standards and outcomes publicised?

Special areas of interest

6. The review also identified the following special areas of interest:

- How far ownership of the customer relationship is shared across the whole council?
- How well the relationship between the main customer contact point (Access Harrow) and service departments is working?
- The impact on customer satisfaction.

Evidence sources

7. As well as briefings from officers on Harrow Council's customer service arrangements and the information systems used to capture customer requests & commission further work the review group's main sources of evidence were as follows:

- Meetings with Access Harrow staff
 - Observations in service-delivery departments
 - Visits to other councils.
8. Review group members also looked at the customer service standards in each council.
9. The project scope is attached to this report as Appendix One.

EVIDENCE GATHERING

HARROW COUNCIL

Complaints case studies

1. Two members of the review group met with an Access Harrow Service Manager on 19th December 2012 to examine a small sample of complaints. The sample had been chosen because of concerns that had already been identified about the way the cases had been handled.
2. The review group members noted the following:
 - The tone used in responses was defensive.
 - Letters sent by the council were incomplete and follow-up letters were needed rather than a single correspondence.
 - It was not clear that an appropriately senior officer had signed off letters.
 - The extent of oversight and investigation from outside the area of complaint was not always clear.
 - There were indications that the corporate procedure for handling complaints was not well understood across the council, beyond the technical aspects of using the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
 - There seemed to be a lack of advice for staff on raising concerns about the progress on a specific complaint.
 - The process for quality assurance was unclear.
 - Where a number of services are involved in investigating a complaint, it was not clear how a response is coordinated.
 - Variations in the way different IT systems record and monitor complaints and their responses can make it difficult to ensure a consistent approach across the council.
 - Access Harrow cannot monitor an issue with a contractor once it has become the contractor's responsibility. Access Harrow only become aware if the customer makes another contact. This means there is no visibility for the council in the resolution or otherwise of residents' complaints.

Call listening

3. Members of the review group each spent an hour sitting alongside Access Harrow customer agent staff monitoring telephone calls from customers. There were two sessions, on 15th & 23rd January 2013, and the calls monitored covered a range of the council's services.

4. The review group was impressed by the knowledge and helpful attitude of staff and by many aspects of the technology they used. The review group's concerns were;
 - The varying extent to which Access Harrow staff were able to deal with calls covering different departments. In areas where Access Harrow's systems were integrated with the relevant service department's IT system customer agents were able to advise callers themselves. In other areas calls had to be handed on. This variation could be confusing for customers who needed to deal with more than one service area.
 - There was some inconsistency in the way customer agents defined an 'avoidable contact'. An 'avoidable contact' is one that the council has caused unnecessarily, for example from failure in meeting a customer's previous request.
 - The number of avoidable contacts is an important performance measure in monitoring how well services are being provided, so inconsistency in its application could give misleading indications.

A special meeting of the Customer Services Working Group

5. Two members of the review group attended the meeting on 18th April 2013 and met staff from all the council's customer-facing departments.
6. The review group members heard about how recent changes to procedures in some areas were progressing. Concerns raised included understanding of the sign-off processes in some departments when work has been completed. There was also an agreed view that it would be helpful if Access Harrow could do more to manage customers' expectations, for example about when a job would be done.

Focus group discussion with Access Harrow staff

7. Four member of the review group met a small group of customer agent staff on 8th May 2013 who dealt with the following service areas:
 - Adult Social Care
 - Housing, Rents & Repairs and Council Tax
 - Public Realm
 - Revenues and Benefits.

8. Issues raised included:

Benefit claim assessment time targets

9. Although the council's 20 working days target to complete Council Tax Benefit assessments is specified in claim forms and letters, many customers – residents and landlords – call to check on the progress of claims.

10. Review group members thought the concept of working days could be difficult to understand, remember and calculate. They suggested instead experimenting with targets that are easier to recall e.g. one month.

Communicating with customers

11. Staff thought this was part of a wider issue. Although council letters were often clear in specifying dates for action and similar information, some members of the public still call for explanation. Council Tax bills are the best example. They state that any payment made between 1st and 17th March will not be reflected in the statement. Despite that, calls about such payments are one of the largest single sources of calls each year.
12. Staff thought that in general letters from the council had improved in clarity, and there is greater use of ordinary language. However there were still many calls from residents seeking clarification particularly for letters referring to individual requests or circumstances, and there had been similar problems some general consultation letters and guidance issued about new procedures. It seemed such explanatory letters could generate more calls even though their aim was to avoid the need for calls to Access Harrow.
13. Staff also said that the Access Harrow One-Stop-Shop continued to receive callers in person who said they were confused what to do after receiving a council letter. These were often older people. Review group members said it would never be possible to avoid all cases of customers needing to speak to a member of council staff in person. The aim should be to make council communications as clear as possible and encourage the public to use the website and My Harrow to find further information. In that way the demand for in-person visits and telephone calls could be kept to a minimum.

Access Harrow working with other departments

14. Review group members emphasised the need for Access Harrow staff to be able to contact all departments quickly and reliably and were concerned about the quality of feedback from other departments to service requests, either from Access Harrow staff or via My Harrow. Systems and processes needed to allow for unpredictable factors such as staff illness.
15. Review group members suggested there could be merit in a system of 'auto escalation or referral' when a staff member was not in the office and/or hadn't responded within a specified time, possibly to Director level. Customers should always be told the expected time it will take to deal with a case. Where managers had not logged into their telephone account and therefore could not be contacted, this should be reported to a senior manager in Access Harrow.

16. Review group members emphasised the importance of always telling the customer the outcome of their service request or other case. Where a request cannot be met because it isn't policy to do so, the customer should be told. The request (or 'ticket') should be closed, not left open. Customers should also be told if it will take longer to deal with a request than the usual/specified time.

Customer expectations

17. Staff thought there were variations in how well the council manages customer expectations. One area is the difference between an 'urgent' case and an 'emergency'. For example, loss of water supply would usually be urgent, but not an emergency requiring immediate action.
18. However it was also important that less urgent or lower priority items are dealt with and not just pushed to the back. It was hoped the new technology projects would give Access Harrow better information on the progress of service requests within Public Realm.

Service observations

19. Review group members met managers and staff from four front-line services:

- Libraries (29th January 2013)
- Housing (14th March 2013)
- Street Cleansing (11th March & 29th April 2013)
- Waste Collection (18th March & 17th April) 2103.

20. Each service area had their own experience of meeting customer need. Libraries had recently moved towards self-service. In Housing a key problem was the separate location of the customer reception area away from the 'One Stop Shop' meaning customers often had to go to and fro between different buildings at the Civic Centre.
21. Street Cleansing is a stretched team trying hard to deliver the level of service residents expect. Staff visibility on the street seemed to have a positive impact on residents' perception of cleanliness even though some parts of the service had been reduced. Although there was not much customer contact during the observed bin collections, resident feedback on Waste Collection was usually positive. The investment in technology to keep better track of bin collection had improved capacity to report & resolve problems. Members' said constituency cases involving 'missed bins' had greatly reduced since its introduction.
22. Members found the attitude of staff in all the services they observed encouraging and positive and welcomed the suggestions for improvements they had received.

VISITS TO OTHER COUNCILS

23. The visits review group members made to other councils provided insights into how those councils were working to improve their own customer service as well as the basis for some of the recommendations in this report. Review group members visited the following councils as part of their review:

Croydon – 21st January 2013	
Graham Cadle	Director of Customer, Transformation and Communication Services
Hayley Lewis	Head of Customer Communications and Strategy Service
Karen Sullivan	Head of Customer Contact Centre

Ealing – 21st January 2013	
Alison Reynolds	Director Customer Services
Helen Shacklock	Assistant Director Customer Services
Louisa Wood	Project Manager, Customer Services

Camden – 25th March 2013	
Councillor Patricia Callaghan	Deputy Leader; Cabinet Member Adult Social Care & Health
Fiona Dean	Assistant Director for Culture and Environment
Barry May	Head of Customer Services

24. The three councils were at different stages in improving their customer services, but the main themes to emerge were the importance of:

- 'Channel shift' in improving customer experience and reducing running costs
- A more transactional focus to their websites
- Raising the profile of complaints, dealing with them positively and using the information gained to change practice and raise performance.

25. Because of the differences in the approaches the councils had taken, other comparisons were harder to make. The specially designed area for one council's equivalent of the 'One Stop Shop' appeared to work well in catering for a large volume of customers; another had focused on bringing teams together and improving quality control to reduce avoidable contacts. The third had made extensive use of customer surveys. The most striking differences were in the way each council handled complaints, especially senior management involvement. All three councils had visited Harrow, in particular to look at My Harrow and linking up IT systems

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

1. The review group recognise that Harrow is fortunate to have a dedicated staff who put customers first, working to improve service for customers. However, the review group also know from their own experience as residents and as councillors that there is scope to go further in raising the quality of the customer experience. This is all the more important in times of tightened financial constraints.
2. The review group approached this topic in a positive context seeking to build on the progress already made. Their conclusions and recommendations are set out below under the following headings:
 1. General
 2. Customer service standards
 3. 'Channel shift'
 4. The council's website
 5. Telephone calls
 6. 'In person' visits
 7. Quality assurance
 8. Customer feedback and complaints
 9. Service contacts: working with 'back office'

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

1. The council should include customer care standards and staff responsibilities in relation to these standards in induction training for new staff
2. The council, and especially its contact centre agents, needs to have a single view of customers that includes all the council's transactions with that person or business.
3. Bringing together staff who deal with customer transactions and joining up the systems they use is essential to improving the quality, speed and reliability of customer service.
4. Customer satisfaction should be a key test for all council services. Feedback should be obtained whenever possible when a case closes.

5. The council should continue to do all it can to exploit taxpayers' investment in My Harrow and expand the services it offers. The council should remind customers that it is quicker and more reliable to contact the council using My Harrow than other routes.
6. Customers should be able to find out easily what is happening to their enquiry or service request and should always be informed when their request has been completed. The My Harrow Account is the best route for this through the personalised alert system.
7. The council needs to do more to ensure all customer service requests are closed and to monitor those cases remaining open for a longer period than usual. All customer requests should be closed on the Customer Relationship Management system when the requested information or service has been completed. Requests that are still open after 30 days should be escalated automatically to the senior manager and portfolio holder and perhaps reported through the Improvement Board process.
8. The council needs to manage customers' expectations better about whether a request will be met. The council should make it clear at the earliest possible stage whether a customer's request can be met, or whether it will be declined because it is not policy to do so. Those cases need to be clearly distinguished from those that are still open and awaiting completion. No case should remain open longer than 60 days.
9. All accepted recommendations should be fully notified and discussed with all council service providers

Customer Service Standards

10. The council should standardise its customer service responses between services
11. The council should publish more information on its performance in meeting its customer service standards, distinguishing those requests submitted using My Harrow from those made via other channels.

'Channel shift'

12. The Council should continue to monitor changing customer preferences for contacting the Council and encourage customers to use the more cost-effective methods of communication and transaction. These could include 'self-service' kiosks and PCs as well as My Harrow Account.

13. The council needs to strike the right balance in encouraging channel migration. It should avoid being too aggressive and provide re-assurance that it aims to take people with it. The council will need to ensure that no one is left behind, for example customers without ready access to IT systems. It is recognised there will always be a need for phone calls or in-person visits for some types of transactions. Access Harrow should continue to offer residents training on the website and My Harrow Account to improve user-confidence.
14. Where possible the council should seek customers' agreement that their details can be shared between council departments. It should be made clear that this will allow the council to achieve a single view of its transactions with customers.
15. The council should review the ways it seeks proof of identity with a view to agreeing a standard approach across all services subject to over-riding national statutory requirements. This review should include an option for residents to agree their electoral roll registration can be used for this purpose.
16. The council should continue to explore other ways to widen customer access through new outlets/service points e.g. using Libraries to deliver more services and to encourage My Harrow take-up.
17. The council should re-invest savings released by channel shift in further website and web form development.

Website

18. The council's website should continue to adopt a 'transactions' focus with less emphasis on promoting news stories about the Council.
19. The council should ensure there are as few web pages as possible that customers need to visit in order to obtain information, request a service or make a payment. The total number of web pages should also be kept to a minimum.
20. The council should continue to investigate the different approaches people use to access information to ensure those using a search engine and therefore skipping the 'home' pages can see key messages.
21. The council's aim should be to make web forms the standard method for customers to make electronic contact and to close down those email accounts used for that purpose.
22. The Council should ensure web forms are as user friendly as possible, avoiding asking for unnecessary information and entering information more than once.

23. While emails continue to be used, the council should introduce software to interrogate emails for faster routing. The management of group email accounts also needs to improve e.g. monitoring the inbox and closing down redundant accounts.
24. The council should give residents the option to upload photos when making a request or reporting an incident (e.g. graffiti).

Telephone calls

25. As a priority, the council needs to clarify 'ownership' of calls that are handed on from Access Harrow to 'back office' departments and who is responsible for answering the customer's request and closing the case.
26. The council should monitor whether managers and staff are logged into their telephone account. Failure to do so can mean it is not possible to contact the person concerned and should be reported to a senior manager in Access Harrow.
27. The council needs to review the way staff apply the definition of 'avoidable contact' so that it is less open to variations in individual interpretation. This might be done in part through listening to a random sample of calls and reviewing how they were categorised.
28. The council needs to do more to examine patterns of repeat calls and to have a clearer view about how such cases should be escalated to supervisors and senior management level.

'In person' visits

29. The council needs to confirm its Civic Centre estate strategy and take advantage of the reduced One-Stop-Shop footfall so that the in-person customer contact points for all services are located together. This needs to be a priority in any longer-term plan to rebuild the Civic Centre.

Quality Assurance

30. The council should continue its programme of 'mystery shopping' and examine the option of using volunteer staff and residents to expand it.
31. The council should do more to exploit the knowledge and experience of frontline staff in improving and extending quality assurance techniques.
32. The council needs to revisit the way it commissions services with the aim that those who commission services ensure robust quality assurance is included.

Customer feedback and complaints

33. The council should encourage customers to give both positive and negative comments on the service they receive wherever possible.
34. When a complaint has been made or something has gone wrong, it is vital to respond positively and politely to regain customer trust as soon as possible and also vital to record the complaint on the complaints system.
35. The aim should be for conversation about resolving a complaint and learning from it rather than contesting responsibility.
36. The council should ensure the timetable for responding to complaints is clear and accessible. It needs to be common across all council services, subject to any overriding national statutory requirements.
37. The council should give complaints a higher profile and improve learning from them. This should involve making complaints more visible within the council and on the website.
38. The council should re-examine the formal process it uses to deal with complaints and those used in other councils and look at the case for moving to a two-stage process rather than the current three stages.
39. The council needs to ensure there is a consistent approach to logging and recording of all complaints and that it includes those submitted outside the standard routes e.g. via a councillor.
40. The council should review the following:
 - The tone used in responses (avoid defensive)
 - The completeness of response letters
 - Oversight/investigation from outside the area that is the subject of the complaint.
41. The council needs to ensure all staff dealing with complaints are trained in the corporate procedure and on the use of the Customer Relationship Management system to ensure accurate reporting.
42. The council needs to clarify how complaints involving more than one service are coordinated.
43. The council needs to review how Access Harrow can monitor the progress of complaints involving an external contractor.

Service contacts: working with ‘back office’

44. Where calls and other cases have been transferred to the ‘back office’ the council needs to ensure there is clear responsibility for telling customers their request will or will not be met. Calls must be closed off so that customers are not left in the dark. Leaving customers to contact a councillor in frustration is the worst option: it shows the system has failed.
45. The council should look at extending to all services the practice in some areas of asking a sample of customers for feedback six weeks after a request has been completed.
46. The council should encourage frontline staff engaged in responding to a service request to ask customers whether there are other related requests that need attention and to report back.

DECISIONS NEEDED

1. The review group’s conclusions and recommendations are in line with existing Council policy direction and, with one exception, do not need formal Cabinet decisions before they can be implemented. The exception is recommendation 38 that proposes a review of the council’s complaints process. A resulting move to a two-stage process would require a Cabinet decision to go ahead.

APPENDIX ONE: CUSTOMER CARE SCRUTINY REVIEW – SCOPE

1	SUBJECT	Customer Care Scrutiny Review
2	COMMITTEE	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
3	REVIEW GROUP	<p>Councillors:</p> <p>Councillor Nana Asante Councillor Camilla Bath Councillor James Bond Councillor Krishna James Councillor Jean Lammiman Councillor Jerry Miles Councillor Chris Mote Councillor Paul Osborn (Chairman) Councillor Stephen Wright</p> <p>Co-optees: To be recruited from the Pool of Advisors</p>
4	AIMS/ OBJECTIVES/ OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain a picture of Harrow Council's customer care. • To be in a position to congratulate those parts of the council that address customers' concerns well. • To help those parts of the council that do not address customers' concerns well to correct failings by making suggestions as to how the council can improve its customer care. • To ensure that Harrow's customer care systems and culture are as good as they can be.
5	MEASURES OF SUCCESS OF REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased customer satisfaction with how the council deals with customers' queries so that the customer experience is better as a result of the scrutiny review's recommendations.
6	SCOPE	At this stage, no areas of scope are to be excluded as all contacts with the council are regarded relevant. As the review progresses in gathering evidence, the review group will refine its focus as appropriate.
7	SERVICE PRIORITIES (Corporate/Dept)	<p>This review relates to all four of the Corporate Priorities 2011/12:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe • United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads • Supporting and protecting people who are most in need • Supporting our Town Centre, our local shopping centres and businesses
8	REVIEW SPONSOR	Tom Whiting, Corporate Director Resources

9	ACCOUNTABLE MANAGER	Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny
10	SUPPORT OFFICER	Guy Fiegehen, Scrutiny Officer
11	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	Scrutiny Team
12	EXTERNAL INPUT	<p>Input from the following may be gauged through the course of the review:</p> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members • Residents and members of the public • Frontline staff involved in delivering customer care on behalf of Harrow Council • Relevant corporate director(s) and service director(s) • Relevant portfolio holder <p>Experts/advisers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Public Scrutiny • Public policy think tanks • Other local authorities
13	METHODOLOGY	<p>Light touch review using;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings from senior managers about local context • Analysis of Access Harrow performance and mystery shopping data • Random screening of recorded calls • Customer journey mapping • Intelligence from members' caseloads and members' complaints system • Benchmarking information from other local authorities and/or the private sector to identify good practice • Visits to leading local authorities in the field and/or private sector companies to share learning • Use press media and social media platforms to gather residents' views and experiences • Surveys of the Residents Panel (questionnaire or focus group) to get wider residents' perspective • Desktop research on previous studies of council customer care e.g. other scrutiny reviews

14	EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS	<p>The council's customer care impacts upon everyone who makes contact with the council. Given the nature of the services that the council provides, it has particular implications for some of the most vulnerable members of the community, as well as more broadly all residents.</p> <p>The review will consider during the course of its work, how equality implications have been taken into account in current policy and practice and consider the possible implications of any changes it recommends.</p> <p>In carrying out the review, the review group will also need to consider its own practices and how it can facilitate all relevant stakeholders in the borough to have their voices heard.</p>
15	ASSUMPTIONS/ CONSTRAINTS	<p>The review will require a long-term commitment from members and officers. Success will depend upon the ability and willingness of officers, partners and stakeholders (as relevant) to participate and contribute fully in this review.</p> <p>Recognition of the current financial context for local authorities and the public sector as a whole should also be considered as part of the review.</p>
16	SECTION 17 IMPLICATIONS	<p>The review will have regard to the possible community safety implications of any recommended changes to policy or practice.</p>
17	TIMESCALE	<p>Evidence gathering in Spring/Summer 2012 with a view to reporting back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2012. <i>[The project was delayed as a result of staff shortages in the Scrutiny Team]</i></p>
18	RESOURCE COMMITMENTS	<p>To be met from existing scrutiny budget. No significant additional expenditure is anticipated.</p>
19	REPORT AUTHOR	<p>Guy Fiegehen/Lynne Margetts, as advised by the review group.</p>
20	REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS	<p>Outline of formal reporting process:</p> <p>To Service/Corporate Director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> throughout the course of the review and when developing recommendations</p> <p>To Portfolio Holder <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> as a witness in the review and when developing recommendations</p> <p>To CSB <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To be confirmed</p> <p>To O&S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 24 October 2012</p> <p>To Cabinet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To be confirmed</p>
21	FOLLOW UP ARRANGEMENTS (proposals)	<p>Review by the Performance and Finance Sub-committee 6 months after the final report has been considered by Cabinet.</p>

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REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	15 January 2014
Subject:	School Expansion Programme
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran, Corporate Director of Children and Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Janet Mote, Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No, as the recommendation is for noting
Enclosures:	Annexe A – Indicative capital costs

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides a quarterly update to Cabinet on the implementation of the school expansion programme.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to note this update on the implementation of the school expansion programme.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duties to provide sufficient school places in its area.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

1. The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient school places for its area. Like many boroughs, Harrow is experiencing significant growth in the pupil population. There are several key strands to the delivery of sufficient school places because an increasing pupil population impacts across primary, secondary and special school provision.

Options considered

2. Cabinet agreed its School Place Planning Strategy in February 2010 to meet the increasing demand for school places that is primarily birth rate driven. In July 2011, Cabinet agreed on a Primary School Expansion Programme as part of the School Place Planning Strategy. The strategy aims to secure sufficient primary school places through the creation of additional permanent places, supplemented by planned bulge classes and contingency bulge classes, opened if required.
3. In July 2013 Cabinet approved the Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework for bringing forward proposals over the next 3-5 years to increase provision for children and young people with special educational needs.
4. In November 2013, Cabinet approved the Secondary School Place Planning Strategy which outlines the proposed approach to increase capacity within the secondary sector by September 2015 for the demand expected by September 2018.

Primary sector

5. Harrow has been opening additional temporary Reception classes since 2009, with an increasing trend in the number of places opened.
6. Phase 1 of the primary school expansion programme was implemented in September 2013 with 8 schools in the borough permanently increasing their Reception intakes. Nine temporary additional Reception classes were also opened.
7. In July 2013, Cabinet agreed that Phase 2 of the Primary School expansion Programme be moved to the statutory process for permanent expansion. The Phase 2 proposals are for schools that would permanently expand in September 2014 or September 2015. Statutory consultations about the expansion of 13 schools were undertaken during the autumn term and in November and December 2013 Cabinet agreed the community primary schools that will have statutory proposals published in January 2014.

8. In the November and December Cabinet reports reference was made to the on-going discussions around the proposal to expand St Anselm's Catholic Primary School.
9. The expansion proposal at St Anselm's Catholic Primary School, a voluntary aided school that was a successful application to the Targeted Basic Need Programme (TBNP), proved to be too complex and challenging to deliver:
 - The initial estimate for the expansion was approx. £4m. The funding level for TBNP projects was not known at the time of submission and the successful bid was awarded £2.01m. When the more detailed feasibility study was completed the cost increased in the region of £6m. Although this scheme would improve the school significantly it is unaffordable within the school expansion programme.
 - The Diocesan Board is unable to make a financial contribution and even if they were this would not resolve the planning issues.
 - The Planners have now informally confirmed that the proposed development of the site is unlikely to secure planning permission. Alternative options would still be unaffordable and there would be remaining compromises on the site.
 - During the consultation process responses revealed concerns from the parents about the impact of the expansion on the school and in particular the playground space, and from local residents about traffic. The scheme would have maximised the playground but unfortunately is unaffordable.
10. Therefore for these combined reasons the expansion will not be progressed. This situation was explained and discussed with the school Governing Body on 5th December 2013.
11. The Education Funding Agency has been informed about the challenges to deliver the St Anselm's project. Harrow has asked whether the funding allocated for the St Anselm's project can be switched to an alternative school that fits the Targeted Basic Need Programme criteria. If there is a positive response to this request from the Education Funding Agency every effort will be made to introduce another school into the Phase 2 expansion. The financial implications are outlined below.
12. The Cabinet report in November 2013 highlighted the need for a third phase of primary school expansions to meet the need from 2016 onwards. Officers are developing contingency options should any Phase 2 proposals not be approved for implementation and this work will start informing options for Phase 3.

Secondary phase

13. As the additional primary pupils progress through to the secondary phase, there will be pressure on the number of secondary school places. A Secondary School Place Planning Strategy was approved by Cabinet at its meeting in November 2013. The strategy outlines three strands in the first phase to meet the increased demand in September 2018. A second phase would be planned for in due course depending on developments. The strategy recognises the contribution of:
- expanding existing schools;
 - the opportunities offered to expand Whitefriars Community School and to develop the Harrow Teachers' Centre site;
 - the Government's free school programme.

Expanding existing high schools

14. The expansion of places at existing Harrow high schools will be part of the solution to meet the increased demand. Successful application was made to the Targeted Basic Need Programme for funding to expand Bentley Wood High School by one form of entry from September 2015. The academy school is admitting 30 additional students in September 2014.

Whitefriars Community School and the Harrow Teachers' Centre

15. Harrow submitted a bid to the Government's Targeted Basic Need Programme (TBNP) for the development of the Whitefriars Community School and Harrow Teachers' Centre site by one form of entry for the primary school and the provision of 750 secondary places plus sixth form. The bid was successful and secured £12.4m funding. In accordance with the TBNP funding conditions the funding has to be spent and the new places available by September 2015. These additional places would contribute to the primary school and secondary school expansion strategies.
16. Statutory consultation to expand Whitefriars Community School and extend the age range to make provision for secondary aged pupils has been undertaken. December Cabinet considered the consultation outcomes and decided to publish statutory proposals with a view to final decision being made in March 2014.
17. Heathland Whitefriars Federation Governing Body has resolved that the two schools will become academy schools and the local authority has received the Academy Orders from the Department for Education (DfE). Discussions are being held with Whitefriars Community School about an appropriate conversion date that facilitates the implementation of this project. It is proposed that a letter will be sent to the Secretary of State to promote actions that allow alignment of the various issues to ensure effective and timely delivery of the project.

Free School Programme

18. The Avanti House primary and secondary phases remain located in Harrow on a temporary basis while the permanent locations are resolved. If the school is permanently located in Harrow this would

make a significant contribution to meeting increased future demand for primary and secondary school places.

19. Two bids for secondary free schools in Harrow are being developed. One by the Harrow High School Headteachers and one by the London Diocese and Bishop Ramsay School. Heathfield private school is closing in Summer 2014 and this site may provide a location for the proposed free schools. The Secretary of State will decide which bids are successful and the location.
20. If successful, it is considered that a new free school would contribute to increasing secondary places in line with the secondary school place planning strategy.

Special Educational Needs

21. With Harrow's population growing there is a corresponding increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. The biggest growth in demand is for pupils with autism. In July 2013 Cabinet agreed its Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework for bringing forward proposals to increase provision for children and young people with special educational needs.
22. Successful applications were made to the Targeted Basic Need Programme to create additional places at three of Harrow's special schools with the most acute pressure points: Woodlands; Kingsley, and; Shaftesbury. Successful applications were also made to create more additionally resourced places at mainstream schools in Harrow, particularly for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder needs: Bentley Wood; St George's, and; West Lodge.
23. St George's Catholic Primary School agreed to the submission of an application to create 12 new additionally resourced provision places at the school for children with autistic spectrum disorder needs or with moderate learning difficulties. In November the school informed Harrow Council that it no longer wished to pursue the project at this time. The school needs to prioritise its focus on other areas at this time following leadership changes at the school. If another school can be identified for new additionally resourced provision, and the Targeted Basic Need Programme funding can be switched, every effort will be made to introduce the school into the programme. Financial implications are outlined below.

Programme implementation

Programme governance and management

24. The Corporate Directors of Children & Families and Environment & Enterprise are putting in place strong governance, programme management and community engagement processes for delivery of the programme to tight timescales and conditions. A Programme Board has been established and the Children's Capital Project Team is being strengthened with relevant expertise.

25. Regular reports will be made to the Corporate Strategy Board and quarterly update reports will be presented to Cabinet.

Procurement

26. The Council's Framework Partner Keepmoat has been commissioned in accordance with the Framework Agreement to deliver the school expansion programme.
27. Keepmoat with each school are progressing the detailed design and feasibility work on their proposals in the programme to create more mainstream and special educational needs places in Harrow. A programme is being developed for each school and progress will be reported to the Programme Board. Planning applications are being developed as part of this process and it is expected applications will be considered by the Planning Committee from April onwards.
28. At this stage, the procurement route for the Whitefriars/Teachers Centre development is under review. Keepmoat or an alternative contractor may be procured, for example from the Education Funding Agency's (EFA) framework agreement.

Traffic and travel

29. Measures are being put in place to address the traffic and congestion issues arising from the creation of additional school places. These measures have been reported in detail to Cabinet in previous reports and include:
- Transport Assessments at Phase 2 expansion schools and Transport Statements at additional special educational needs places provision. Mott MacDonald has been procured to complete this work by the end of February 2014.
 - Appointment of a Transport and Travel Planner Officer for the expansion projects to develop and implement effective travel strategies in conjunction with the schools.
 - There will be a communication strategy for the Phase 2 expansion projects to raise the profile of school travel planning. An additional Communications Officer has been engaged to give this work a high profile.

Statutory proposals

30. On Thursday 9 January 2014, statutory proposals will be published to expand 14 schools in Phase 2 of the primary school expansion programme:
- 11 community schools on 9 sites approved by Cabinet on 21 November 2013;
 - Cannon Lane Primary School approved by the Corporate Director for Children & Families under authority delegated by Cabinet;
 - St John Fisher Catholic Primary School approved by the Governing Body.

Statutory proposals in relation to these schools will be published for a four week representation period from Thursday 9 January 2014 to Thursday 6 February 2014.

31. At its meeting on 12 December 2013, Cabinet approved the publication of statutory notices to expand permanently and extend the age range of Whitefriars Community School to include provision for secondary aged pupils. Statutory proposals will be published for a six week representation period from Thursday 9 January 2014 to Thursday 20 February 2014.

Stakeholder engagement

32. The School Expansion Stakeholder Reference Group, a representative group of elected members and stakeholders, held its first meeting in November. A sub-group, for the proposal to establish an all-through school on the Whitefriars Community School and Harrow Teachers' Centre sites, will hold its first meeting in December. The purpose of these stakeholder reference groups is to provide advice and guidance on the implementation of the school expansion programme and Priority School Building Programme projects.
33. Pre-Planning community engagement will be undertaken on projects that will require planning consents for the build programme. This work will be undertaken early in the new year and will involve communications to school communities and local residents and the holding of open events about the proposals. A communications and engagement strategy is being developed with the Communications Team to support the expansion programme.

Financial implications

Revenue

34. Any school expansion programme will inevitably have significant financial implications. All schools proposed for expansion have raised concerns about available funding and clarity about funding is essential to maintain their commitment to the School Expansion Programme. School revenue budgets are funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As the Department for Education (DfE) allocates DSG based on pupil numbers, any increase in pupil numbers results in additional revenue funding for the expanding school. The revenue funding is allocated to schools based on the Harrow Schools' Funding Formula. School budgets are based on pupil numbers in the October prior to the start of the financial year, so there is always a funding lag when schools increase their pupil numbers. To ensure that schools who agree to an additional class are not financially penalised, the Harrow School Funding Formula provides 'Additional Class Funding' for the period from September to the end of March, following which the mainstream funding formula will take effect. This ensures that schools have adequate funding for at least the average costs of a teacher.

Capital

35. The school expansion programme indicative cost, including primary school expansions in Phase 1 and Phase 2 and assumptions about Phase 3 and secondary school expansions and provision for pupils with special educational needs is presented at Annexe A. The table

illustrates the initial indicative costings and the estimates following the completion of the detailed feasibility studies with the cost consultants.

36. It is currently estimated that the cost of permanently expanding the primary schools in Phase 2 is £26m. This does not include costs for two of the schools (Priestmead and Aylward) which will be delivered by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) as part of the Government's Priority School Building Programme (PSBP) to improve the schools in the worst condition across the country.
37. These costs were considered as part of setting the Capital Programme for this financial year (13/14). In October 2013, Cabinet agreed an increase to the Capital Programme for 13/14 due to additional funds being allocated by the EFA in this financial year. Bids have been submitted via the Capital Strategy capital bid process for the remainder of the programme which will come to Cabinet for approval in due course. Based on current estimates for the cost of the projects and the recent announcements about further yearly allocations from the EFA, it is expected that it is possible to deliver the programme with EFA capital grants, without the need for council capital funding.
38. The breakdown of the revised post-feasibility indicative costs for each school and the funding is detailed in the table below:

School	13/14 £,000	14/15 £,000	15/16 £,000	16/17 £,000	17/18 £,000	Totals £,000
Norbury	450	1,650	900	0	0	3,000
Belmont	370	1,345	735	0	0	2,450
Pinner Wood	190	690	370	0	0	1,250
Grange	230	850	470	0	0	1,550
Aylward		PSBP	PSBP	PSBP		0
Alternate (St Anselm's)	525	1,925	1,050	0	0	3,500
St John Fisher	430	1,570	850	0	0	2,850
Newton Farm	450	1,620	880	0	0	2,950
Cannon Lane	555	2,035	1,110	0	0	3,700
Priestmead		PSBP	PSBP	PSBP		0
Kenmore Park Infant and Junior Schools	470	1,700	930	0	0	3,100
Whitchurch First and Junior Schools	270	990	540	0	0	1,800
TOTALS	3,940	14,375	7,835	0	0	26,150

39. There is considerable range in the cost to achieve permanent expansion which reflects the individual nature of the schools and their sites.
40. The figures are indicative estimates informed by detailed feasibility stage cost plans. If there are major site anomalies or key planning issues then these costs could increase. There will be close monitoring of the affordability of the School Expansion Programme through the Programme Board.

41. If the EFA do not agree to the transfer of the TBNP funding for the St Anselm's and St George's projects there will be a loss of £2.01m and £500k funding for these projects. Although the places are still required, it is expected that the costs of providing these will be managed within the School Expansion Programme.
42. In December, the Government announced Basic Need Allocations for local authorities for 2015/16 and 2016/17. Harrow will receive £12.5m over the two years. This will be incorporated into the school expansion programme budget. In addition, £0.5m will be received in 2014/15 to support universal free school meals for children in reception, year 1 and year 2.
43. The Council has a small capital fund available for those schools that will have a bulge class in September 2014. Schools will be invited to bid for this funding for essential works to accommodate bulge classes.
44. Phase 1 of the proposed Secondary School Place Planning Strategy includes three strands to increase capacity. These three strands would be funded by the Government. The Bentley Wood High School and the Harrow Teachers' Centre/Whitefriars Community School proposals were the subject of successful bids to the Government's Targeted Basic Need Programme. The Harrow Teachers' Centre/Whitefriars Community School proposal is an extensive development and the feasibility study is being developed. The cost was reported to Cabinet at their meeting in December with the outcomes of the consultation on the proposals to expand and extend Whitefriars Community School.
45. A successful free school bid would be funded directly by the Government. Any bid is expected to identify a suitable building or site for the new school. The Education Funding Agency will support potential free school providers to locate appropriate sites, which will normally be existing buildings that can be refurbished or remodelled to provide a school.

Other funding opportunities

46. Harrow has benefitted from considerable success in the outcome of bids put forward by officers for both the Priority School Building Programme and the Targeted Basic Need Programme which will largely fund and deliver the schools programme.
47. Yearly allocations are expected to continue and officers have worked to ensure Harrow achieves its fair allocation each year with substantial increases announced in March 2013 compared with previous years.
48. Wherever possible officers will seek to maximise the benefits to Harrow from government policies and new housing development. For example, the contribution of Free Schools to school provision, and developer contributions to mitigate the impact of new housing developments within Harrow.

Legal implications

49. The Council has a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure the provision of sufficient schools for the provision of primary and secondary education in their area.
50. Under s.14 of the Education Act 1996, a local authority shall secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in their area. Sufficient means sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education.
51. In meeting this duty, a local authority must do so with a view to securing diversity in the provision of schools and increasing opportunities for parental choice.
52. State funded schools are split into schools maintained by the Local Authority and those directly funded by Central Government. The former are split into a number of categories and in Harrow, into community and voluntary aided schools. The latter encompass academies and free schools (which are academies which did not convert from a maintained school).
53. For maintained schools, there are prescribed requirements in order to make specific alterations. This includes expanding existing schools to add additional form groups. The requirements are set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and associated regulations.
54. Academies do not have to follow the same requirements in order to expand, but are expected to seek the approval of the Secretary of State.
55. Section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires that local authorities seek proposals for the establishment of an academy if they think that a new school is required in their area. There are only limited circumstances when a local authority will be able to publish proposals to establish a new maintained school.
56. In order to publish proposals to expand maintained schools, local authorities (and governing bodies in relation to voluntary aided schools) are required to consult stakeholders. Prior to deciding to publish proposals, the Council must consciously take account of the consultation results. If the results show that a number of stakeholders are against the proposal, the Council should consider these views, any mitigating steps which can be taken to address these views and other relevant information. In this case, relevant information will include financial information, views of other stakeholders, other viable alternatives and the requirement for school places to meet the Council's statutory duty.
57. The Council must ensure it meets its public law duties when making decisions, including meeting its public sector equality duty. It must

consider all relevant information, disregard irrelevant information, act in accordance with the statutory requirements and make its decision in a fair and transparent manner.

Equalities implications

58. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires that public bodies, in exercising their functions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other unlawful conduct under the Act, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
59. Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken on Phase 2 of the Primary School Expansion Programme. The conclusion of this assessment is that the implications are either positive or neutral. Full Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on the schools that are the subject of statutory proposals and will include consideration of secondary provision.
60. Harrow's schools are successful, inclusive and provide a diversity of provision. The school expansion programme will ensure sufficient school places for the increasing numbers of children in Harrow and will build on the successful provision that already exists in Harrow's schools.

Performance Issues

61. Schools in Harrow perform well in comparison to national and statistically similar local authorities. The vast majority of primary schools and secondary schools are judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by OfSTED. 92% of Harrow's primary and secondary schools are judged 'good' or 'outstanding', compared to 85% in London and 78% nationally.
62. The Schools White Paper and Education Act 2011 maintain a focus on driving up standards in schools, and place more of the responsibility with the schools directly for their improvement. The role of the Local Authority in measuring performance and driving improvement has changed significantly and is reduced from its previous level. However, the Local Authority maintains a strategic oversight and enabling role in local education, and is likely to retain some role in monitoring educational achievement and key measures such as exclusions and absence. The Local Authority is also statutorily responsible for supporting and improving underperforming schools.
63. The Local Authority continues to monitor key education indicators. The indicators are used locally to monitor, improve and support education at both school and local authority level. They are also used within information provided to the DfE.
64. The indicators fall within the following areas:

- Attendance and exclusions - remain a statutory duty for the Local Authority to monitor and improve.
- Underperforming schools – schools are assessed at Key Stage 2 & Key Stage 4 against defined floor standards.
- Narrowing the Gap - is a fundamental part of Ofsted’s school inspection process, and accordingly, the Local Authority monitors the attainment of identified groups of pupils in its schools. The table below includes the gap at key stage 2 and key stage 4 between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers and the gap between Harrow’s SEN children and their peers – children with a SEN provision includes School Action, School Action Plus or a Statement.

2012 Key Stage 2 - Narrowing the Gap	Harrow	National
Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers, based on pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and mathematics at Key Stage 2.	16%	17%
Achievement gap between pupils with special educational needs and their peers, based on pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and mathematics at Key Stage 2.	44%	49%

2012 Key Stage 4 - Narrowing the Gap	Harrow	National
Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers, based on pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grade GCSEs including English and mathematics GCSEs.	28.8%	26.4%
The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving 5 A*- C GCSE inc. English and Maths GCSEs.	46.3%	47.0%

65. There is a complex interrelationship between a number of other performance issues such as traffic congestion, road safety, traffic and parking enforcement and travel plan performance, as referred to earlier in the report, and all these considerations are taken into account in assessing school expansion proposals.

Environmental Impact

66. The Council’s over-arching climate change strategy sets a target to reduce carbon emissions by 4% a year. Schools account for 50% of the council’s total carbon emissions. Reducing emissions from schools is therefore a vital component in meeting the Council’s target. Phase 2 of the School Expansion Programme will have an impact on carbon emissions that will need to be carefully considered in this context.
67. The RE:FIT Schools Programme will be available to retrofit existing school buildings to improve their energy efficiency. For new-build schools, the design standards will need to ensure that they meet high energy use efficiency standards.

68. For many of the projects in the school expansion programme, planning applications will be required and part of the application will be a school travel plan. Through this process and the development of the solutions for the schools, the impact of the additional pupils and their travel modes will be addressed.

Risk Management Implications

69. The directorate and corporate risk management implications for the Council arising from school place planning are included on the directorate and corporate risk registers. A Programme Risk Register is also being formulated and this will be reviewed by the Programme Board.
70. The key high level risks for this programme are set out below:

High Level Risks	Consequences	Mitigating/Control Actions
Planning	Planning permission not granted creating delays to programme.	<p>Informal discussions with Planners during feasibility regarding planning polices.</p> <p>Planning Performance Agreement to be agreed.</p> <p>Community engagement through the Education Statutory Consultation and the pre-planning engagement activities. School community and local residents invited to meetings and provided with information about local proposals.</p> <p>Traffic Assessments and Traffic Statements being commissioned to inform School Travel Plans and highways mitigation measures.</p>
Finance	Unaffordable Programme / individual projects and additional costs to Council.	<p>Capital Strategy developed to bring together the Government's school funding streams: Basic Need, Capital Maintenance, Targeted Basic Need Programme; and building programmes e.g. Priority School Building Programme.</p> <p>School expansion feasibility designs aligned to the DfE guidance on spaces and areas for schools.</p> <p>Indicative costs calculated from feasibility studies to inform programme budget.</p> <p>Exploring how the Government's Free-School Programme for new schools (programme funded directly from</p>

		government) may be supported in Harrow. Robust financial and programme monitoring through the Programme Board, Capital Forum and Cabinet reports.
Programme delivery	Delays to programme – school places not available, additional costs.	Capital Team established with appropriate skills, experience and expertise in major construction projects to deliver programme. Programme Board established with Corporate Director and senior officer membership.
Pupil Projections	Over or under estimate of pupil growth leading to a mismatch of provision – shortage of places or over provision of places leading to high levels of vacancies.	GLA commissioned to provide school roll projections. Review of projections against admissions data on applications and in-year movement of pupils. Close working with schools. The permanent expansions are planned to achieve a sustainable level of school places to meet the growth as indicated by the pupil projections. The additional permanent places are created as the demand grows over the years. The peak and variations in demand for school places will be met by continued use of temporary additional places. This approach will minimise the risk of having to remove permanent capacity in the years following the peak in demand.
Communication	Lack of understanding of need and proposals leading to delays and complaints.	Communication strategy will be developed for overall programme and individual projects. Programme communications officer to develop and co-ordinate communications.

Corporate Priorities

71. This report incorporates the administration's priority to deliver a cleaner, safer and fairer Harrow by:
- Ensuring it fulfils its statutory duties to provide sufficient school places in its area.
 - Providing high quality local educational provision in schools for children close to where they live.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 20 December 2013		
Name: Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 9 December 2013		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director Strategic Commissioning
Date: 9 December 2013		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Corporate Director (Environment & Enterprise)
Date: 9 December 2013		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Johanna Morgan, Education Professional Lead, Education Strategy and School Organisation, 020 8736 6841.

Background Papers:

- Primary School Expansion Programme report to Cabinet 21 November 2013. Item 10 <http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=249&MId=61433&Ver=4>
- Primary School Expansion Programme report to Cabinet 12 December 2013. Item 9 <http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=249&MId=61434&Ver=4>
- Equality Impact Assessment on Phase 2 of the primary school expansion programme

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

*[Call-in does not apply as the
recommendation is for noting
only]*

Annexe A - School Expansion Programme indicative capital costs - Cabinet report 15 January 2014

Project\Financial Year	Original Pre-feasibility Estimated Project Cost	Spend to date	Current Post-feasibility Forecast	Variance to Original Estimated Project Cost	Scheme	Note
LAST UPDATED:	Aug 2013	Dec 2013	Dec 2013			
SEP Phase 1						
Marlborough (£10,500)	4,900	409	2,150	-2,750	PSBP	1
Vaughan (£8,500)	2,900	357	2,900	0	PSBP	1
Pinner Parks	2,850	254	3,100	250		2
Stanburn	2,150	1,039	2,150	0		
Glebe	1,750	1,236	1,750	0		
Camrose	297		297	0		
Cedars Manor	26		26	0	PSBP	
TOTAL SEP Phase 1	14,873	3,294	12,373	-2,500		
SEP Phase 2 Group 1 (Sep 14 Expansions)						
Norbury	2,300		3,000	700	TBNP	
Belmont	2,010	4	2,450	440	TBNP	
Pinner Wood	1,000	13	1,250	250		
Grange	1,250		1,550	300		
Aylward	PSBP	57		0	PSBP	
TOTAL SEP Phase 2 Group 1	6,560	74	8,250	1,690		
SEP2 Phase 2 Group 2 (Sep 14 Expansions)						
St Anselm's alternative	5,100		3,500	-1,600	TBNP	
St John Fisher	2,400		2,850	450	TBNP	
Newton Farm	2,150		2,950	800	TBNP	
Cannon Lane	3,130	82	3,700	570	TBNP	
Priestmead	PSBP			0	PSBP	
Kenmore Parks	3,500	50	3,100	-400		
Whitchurches	2,010		1,800	-210	TBNP	
TOTAL SEP Phase 2 Group 2	18,290	132	17,900	-390		
SEP Phase 3 (assume Sep 17 expansions)						
Expansion 1	2,500		2,500	0		
Expansion 2	2,500		2,500	0		
Expansion 3	2,500		2,500	0		
TOTAL SEP Phase 3	7,500	0	7,500	0		
SEN Expansions						
Woodlands	2,500	18	2,675	175	TBNP	
Kingsley	2,500		1,100	-1,400	TBNP	
Shaftesbury	2,500		2,600	100	TBNP	
West Lodge Mainstream Unit	1,500		950	-550	TBNP	
St George's alternative Mainstream Unit	1,500		950	-550	TBNP	
Bentley Wood Mainstream Unit	1,500	0	1,500	0	TBNP	
TOTAL SEN Expansions	12,000	18	9,775	-2,225		
Secondary Expansions						
Bentley Wood	2,150		2,350	200	TBNP	
Whitefriars Community	12,400		15,950	3,550	TBNP	
Additional New School (assume Sep 19 opening)						
Total Secondary Expansions	14,550	0	18,300	3,750		
School Expansion programme contingency at 5% (excl SEP 1)		0	3,086	3,086		
Other						
Capital Maintenance	8,100	2,017	8,100	0		
IT	950	23	950	0		
2YO grant	438		438	0		
Short Breaks	256	191	256	0		
Bulge classes	525	220	525	0		
Amalgamations	1,900	2,724	1,900	0		
TOTAL Other	12,169	5,175	12,169	0		
TOTAL ESTIMATED SPEND	85,942	8,694	89,353	3,411		

Spreadsheet notes and assumptions

- 1) For Marlborough and Vaughan schemes, PSBP will deliver the schemes up to approximate £6m costs, but the council may be required to contribute to the total cost of the scheme
- 2) £250k funded directly by school

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REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	January 2014
Subject:	Harrow's Local Account 2012-13
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Paul Najsarek, Corporate Director of Community, Health and Wellbeing
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No, as the Recommendation is for noting only
Enclosures:	Appendix One: Harrow's Local Account 2012 -13 Appendix Two: Adults Social Care Outcomes Framework

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the main elements of the Harrow Local Account Report 2012 – 2013

Recommendations: Cabinet is requested to note the information report.

Reason (for recommendation): To provide Cabinet with an overview of Harrow Adult Social Care performance during 2012 – 2013.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

The Local Account is an important aspect of our overall approach to improving quality. It highlights best practice and demonstrates the progress we are making towards positive outcomes for all those who depend on our services.

Local accounts are used by councils across the country to assess how well adult social care services are performing. In recent years, government policy has encouraged a trend away from reporting to central government. Instead, councils report directly to local residents via the Local Account.

We produced our second local account last year, and have gathered feedback to ensure that our Local Account continues to be citizen focused and aimed at the whole community.

Options considered

This report refers to activities already undertaken and is presented to Cabinet for information and not for decision.

Background

The Local Account matters because it is rooted in our desire to ensure that we are accountable to Harrow's vulnerable adults and carers. Throughout our Local account you will see evidence of the ways in which we have engaged with the local community and the ways in which we have responded to their collective voice. When the community has spoken, we have listened closely and taken positive action to improve Harrow's adult social care services.

The National Context

Understanding what we have achieved must be understood within the context of the changing care landscape. This year has seen:

- the Winterbourne View and Mid-Staffs reports
- the creation of the Integrated Transformation Fund
- the progress of The Care Bill
- the funding challenges continue, so we need to support ever-more people, with less.

We have chosen to meet the challenges with innovation and partnership working. We will continue to push for high quality services and continue to challenge poor quality care and support wherever it may be.

Quality Assurance

In this Local Account we explore our Quality Assurance framework, and introduce our recent innovations (e.g. The Safety Helix, Quality Charter, MyCommunity ePurse). In response to feedback following last year's report, we have tailored the style of the document to service users and carers, using more pictures and many more case studies to give context to our achievements.

Our Quality Assurance Quadrant (QAQ) system is now well established, and continues to result in major improvements to provider services and outcomes for vulnerable people and carers. The report shows the ways in which we review social care quality from different perspectives, and the innovative methods we use to respond to the various challenges. Importantly, the report shows the importance of partnership working, and the crucial part that is played by our local community.

It is important to recognise the contribution that has been made over the past year by Harrow's Local Account Group. The group is an important part of our engagement with the local community. As we move through 2014, the Local Account Group will conduct regular surveys and continue to contribute towards the quality assurance of Harrow's adult social care services.

The four domains

We use the four domains of the Adults Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) to set out what we achieved during 2012/13. We explain what we did in response to what the community said to us, and use case studies to provide context:

Domain 1 Enhancing quality of life for people with care and support needs

- We developed MyCommunity ePurse – a personal budget and support planning tool
- Co-produced a local quality charter with the local account group
- Successfully transitioned 450 users from block contracts to personalised home care
- Launched carers revival
- Increased employment opportunities for learning disability and mental health service users

Domain 2 Delaying and reducing the need for care and support

- Updated the entire care pathway protocol
- Launched the ICP pilot to reduce inappropriate admission to hospital
- Created Annie's Place
- Put in dedicated delayed transfer coordinator

Domain 3 Ensuring that people have a positive experience of care and support

- Published a market position statement
- Started a dance/musical-theatre research project ('Tizard')
- Conduct regular engagement and organise events for service users and carers

Domain 4 Safeguarding adults whose circumstances make the vulnerable and protecting them from avoidable harm

- Partnership working with NHS, emergency services, businesses and third-sector
- Safeguarding Adults Service continue to work closely with the Community Safety ASB Action Group
- Increased numbers who received formal safeguarding training
- Responded actively to Winterbourne View and Mid-Staffs scandals
- Developed the Safety Helix

Current situation

The Local Account is an important tool for the public to use in holding the local authority to account for how money is spent and on the quality of the services it provides.

Financial Implications

Any future actions are contained within existing plans and budgets as part of our continuing improvement cycle.

Legal Implications

There is currently no overarching statutory framework covering adult safeguarding. There is currently no legal obligation to produce an annual report covering safeguarding activity undertaken by the council.

Adult safeguarding is led by local authorities, based on the 'No Secrets' Guidance 2000 issued by the Department of Health under Section 7 of the Local Authorities Social Services Act 1970. Following a review by the Law Commission, the draft Care Bill 2012 aims to reform the law relating to care and support for adults and for carers, and to make provision about safeguarding adults in primary legislation.

The Bill is expected to become law in Spring 2014. On the basis the Bill receives royal assent in the form currently drafted, it will put Safeguarding Adults Boards on a statutory footing with the Council, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Police as core members. The Council, having consulted the aforementioned bodies, will be able to appoint other persons as it considers appropriate. Councils will remain the lead agency for safeguarding. The Boards will be required to publish an annual strategic plan detailing its strategy for achieving its objectives and what each member is to do to implement that strategy. In preparing such a strategy, there is a requirement to consult the local Healthwatch group and involve the local community. The Board will also be required to publish an annual report setting out what it has done in the previous year to implement its strategy and objectives.

Performance Issues

The body of this retrospective report is divided into the four domains of the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF):

- Enhancing quality of life for people with care and support needs
- Delaying and reducing the need for care and support

- Ensuring that people have a positive experience of care and support
- Safeguarding adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protecting them from avoidable harm

The report provides performance information gathered from performance indicators, survey data, inspections, consultations and user feedback.

Environmental Impact

None

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

Equalities implications

An EqlA has not been undertaken for the production of the report. This information report details activity across Adult Services. Many of the activities detailed in the Local Account report have undergone an EqlA and are available on line.

Corporate Priorities

The Local Account encompasses the 'Supporting and protecting people who are most in need' and a 'United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads' council priorities. It does this through ensuring robust QA measures are in place that safeguard service users and listen and learn from user feedback and complaints.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Donna Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 18 December 2013		
Name: Sharon Clarke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 10 December 2013		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington

on behalf of the
Divisional Director
Partnership,
Development and
Performance

Date: 16 December 2013

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker

on behalf of the
Divisional Director
(Environmental
Services)

Date: 10 December 2013

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Peter Eguae, Community Health and Wellbeing Directorate,
Safeguarding Assurance & Quality Services Manager

Ext: 2188

peter.eguae@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

The 2012/13 Adults Social Care Outcomes Framework (As set out at appendix 2)

Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care – “[Developing Local Accounts – What we Know](#)” (May 2013)

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

*[Call-in does not apply as the
recommendation is for noting
only]*

London Borough of Harrow
Local Account
2012/13

Draft

January 2014

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“We are national leaders in personalisation. 75 per cent of our service users received a personal budget in 2012/13”

Summary

Portfolio holder's foreword

Welcome to the second annual report about our adult social care services. This report is a central part of the Council's commitment to be open and transparent with Harrow residents about what we do and what we spend.

This report shows that despite the financial challenges and demographic pressures the adult social care system faces, we have continued to make exceptional progress. We have implemented new initiatives and partnership working that will make a big difference to the lives of Harrow's vulnerable adults.

In all of our work, we have listened closely to what service users and their carers want, and at all times made decisions in pursuit of high quality outcomes. Increasing people's opportunities to choose and control the care and support they receive underpins our philosophy of personalisation and safeguarding.

Do take time to read through this Local Account. Notice how improvement has been achieved through partnership and innovation. Learn about the various ways in which quality of life and wellbeing can and is being improved for Harrow's most vulnerable people.

This Local Account contains excellent examples of what can be achieved when we all pull in the same direction. If you have some new ideas and suggestions, I encourage you to contribute to our future progress by using the feedback form at the end of this report.

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane
Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing



Executive summary

Harrow's Adult Social Care team is a hard-working and committed group of innovative individuals. In the face of various challenges, we continue to improve services and achieve the best possible outcomes for our clients.

The past few years have seen changes that will reverberate throughout health and social care for the next decade and beyond. We have taken positive steps to ensure that any change will also mean progress towards our vision. In everything we do, we seek to improve the lives of vulnerable adults through innovation, partnership and prevention.

In recent years, the personalisation agenda has completely changed the face of adult social care. Harrow has fully embraced the new ways of working, and is now a national leader in the implementation of cash personal budgets. We care about the choice and flexibility available to our service users, and do whatever we can to deliver high quality outcomes.

Adult social care is about to undergo other big changes. The Care Bill will soon become law, and the integration between health and social care is well underway. Both of these policies are designed to maximise well-being and improve the experience of care and support for everybody who uses the adult social care system.

We have also developed initiatives of our own. You will read about some of them in this Local Account. Each of our initiatives contributes to improving the quality of care, support and wellbeing in Harrow.

This report is an important aspect of our overall approach to improving quality. It highlights best practice and demonstrates the progress we are making towards positive outcomes for all those who depend on our services. We produced our second local account last year, and have gathered feedback to ensure that this year's local account continues to be citizen focused and aimed at the whole community.

We give a special thanks to the Local Account Group, alongside whom we have co-produced some excellent work throughout the year. In the coming year we seek to widen participation in the Local Account Group, and to continue to support the team of enthusiastic and committed experts-by-experience, to improve and develop Harrow's adult social care system.

Bernie Flaherty
Director of Adult Social Services, Harrow Council



“We encourage independence, and help people surprise themselves – by showing them how much more they can do for themselves”



Introduction

This report highlights what adult social care has achieved between April 2012 and March 2013 in supporting our residents to lead active, healthy and independent lives. We will set out what we aimed to do and what we have delivered, as well as highlighting the services we are improving in future. We will be open about the challenges we face, share with you our achievements and be honest about the areas in which we need to improve.

What is a local account?

Local accounts are used by councils across the country to assess how well adult social care services are performing. In recent years, government policy has encouraged a trend away from reporting to central government. Instead, we report directly to local residents via the Local Account.

Our local account is an important aspect of our overall approach to improving quality. It highlights best practice and demonstrates the progress we are making towards positive outcomes for all those who depend on our services.

We produced our second local account last year, and have gathered feedback to ensure that our Local Account continues to be citizen focused and aimed at the whole community. In response to feedback this local account is easier to read, with more case studies and less jargon.

The Local Account matters because it is rooted in our desire to ensure that we are accountable to Harrow's residents. Throughout our Local account you will see evidence of the ways in

which we have engaged with the local community and the ways in which we have responded to their collective voice. When the community has spoken, we have listened closely and taken positive action to improve Harrow's adult social care services.

The Local Account User Group

A crucial component of our engagement with the community is Harrow's Local Account User Group. It is a group of Harrow residents made up of service users and carers. They are all experts by experience who are interested in ensuring the voice of local people is heard and that the support and services people receive in Harrow are high quality.

Adult social care is changing

In recent years, the personalisation agenda has completely changed the face of adult social care. Personalisation empowers services users and carers to achieve outcomes that are tailored to their needs. By receiving a cash personal budget, individuals are able to purchase a wide range of care and support in creative ways.

Harrow has fully embraced the personalisation agenda, and continues to be a national leader in the implementation of cash personal budgets. We care about the choice and flexibility available to our services user, and do whatever we can to deliver high quality outcomes.

Adult social care is about to undergo other big changes. The Care Bill will soon become law, and the integration between health and social care is well underway. Both of these policies are designed to maximise well-being and improve the experience of care and support for everybody who uses the adult social care system.

The National Context

The Care Bill

The Care Bill merges 40 laws into one modern legal framework, bringing significant changes to the council's responsibilities. Various aspects (e.g. national eligibility criteria, Dilnot cap) are still being developed by central government at the time of printing. It is clear however that the increased responsibilities will result in increased demand for adult social care services, in a time of reducing resources. There are many aspects to the Care Bill, including:

- Supported individuals will have a right to receive a cash personal budget
- Carers will have a right to receive support for their eligible needs
- Portability of care and support between local authorities
- All local authorities must adhere to national eligibility criteria
- The £72,000 care cap (aka 'Dilnot')
- There is an increased focus on people's wellbeing, including new duties to provide information and advice, and to prevent individuals from needing care and support.
- The person to be involved in their outcomes-focused assessment
- A new and more robust deferred payments system

- Local authorities have a responsibility to shape the market

Integration of health and social care

At this time, the NHS is undergoing huge changes too. Part of the NHS budget is being transferred to local authorities for the purpose of encouraging closer working between health and social care. This is a sensible but very complex goal.

We work closely with Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on a wide range of projects. We expect that the integration of our work will continue, and quicken in the coming years. As the process moves forward, our focus will be on working together to improve the outcomes for our service users in the most efficient and personalised way we can.

Funding challenges

In this exciting time we know that there will be many challenges. As you are aware, this is a very difficult time for public services in general. Across government – local and national – there is push to make savings and deliver services more efficiently. There have been various changes in the welfare system that directly affect service users and carers.

We are dedicated to making sure that the council is able to manage with reduced resources, and to ensure that we are able to continue to support a growing number of adults with social care needs as well as those who care for them. We have chosen to meet the challenges with innovation and partnership working. We will continue to push for high quality services, and continue to challenge poor quality care and support wherever it may be.

What is Harrow's approach

We are protecting the most vulnerable residents through challenging times using innovation, partnership and prevention. We are committed to providing a high quality service *as defined by the people who use our services*. We also challenge ourselves internally and the organisations we work with. Through this approach we quality assure our work from a variety of perspectives.

Quality assurance

The 'QAQ'

The Quality Assurance Quadrant, or QAQ, is a regular internal report which looks at four keys areas of our work – Reablement, Personalisation, Safeguarding and Providers – and focuses on four key perspectives.

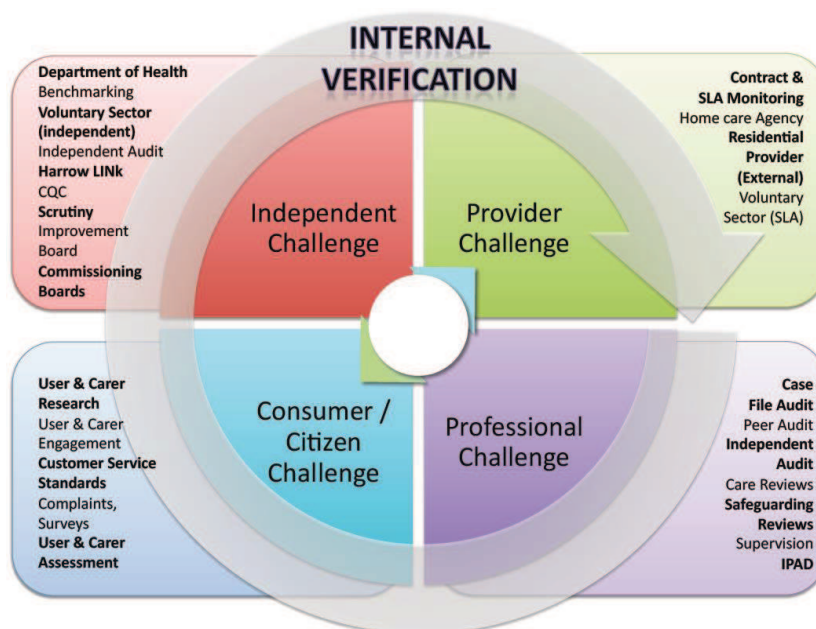


Figure 1: Harrow's Quality Assurance Quadrant (QAQ) framework

By looking closely at these four areas, from the four different perspectives, we challenge ourselves to maintain and improve the quality of Harrow's adult social care system.

The independent challenge ■

We look at the various independently assessed measures to give us a picture of adult social care within Harrow. For example, we know that in September 2013:

- 66% of new cash personal budgets were used to employ personal assistants – the majority of which were employed through an agency.
- 99% of safeguarding alerts – were completed within 24hrs. A safeguarding alert is the raising of a concern, suspicion or allegation of potential abuse or harm which may have arisen from:
 - A direct disclosure by a vulnerable adult

- A complaint or expression of concern by someone else
- An observation of abusive behaviour or an observation of the indicators of possible abuse.

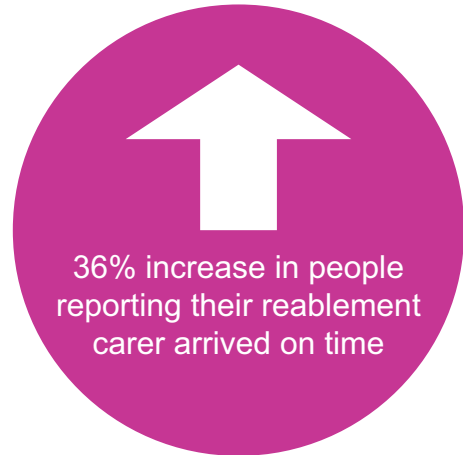
The provider challenge ■

By taking a close look at the quality of those providing services to Harrow's service users and carers, we are able to influence better outcomes for those residents who self-fund or choose not to approach the council for support.

- We ask AgeUK to conduct monthly surveys on the reablement service of two large providers in Harrow. We noticed in June 2013 that there was an increase in the proportion of people who were very dissatisfied with the way the providers dealt with complaints. In response, we were able to influence changes, which resulted in very positive improvements. By August and September 2013, more than 75% of people were very/fairly satisfied with the way their complaint was dealt with.
- We look closely at the standards of residential and nursing homes. We gather information from the CQC and conduct our own monitoring visits. We can and do embargo under-performing homes, and work with care home management teams to improve quality of care and working practices across the borough.

The consumer/citizen challenge ■

We regularly ask service users and carers what they think about the services they receive in Harrow.



This helps us to identify and promote good quality and best practice. We might learn about a brilliant care assistant, or a poorly performing provider, or the excellent food being provided at a residential home.

All of these little details are important to services users and carers, and are important to us. We pay attention to the positive and negative experiences, and focus on using what we learn to promote better outcomes.



- Over 80% of people felt more encouraged to do things themselves after reablement.
- The Local Account Group contributes to our monitoring of the views of our customers.

The professional challenge ■

Our social workers and support staff work hard and smart to achieve the best results for all of our clients. By monitoring their performance, we can see how decisions are being made across the adult social care pathway. Safeguarding is a crucial aspect of our professional challenge.

- In 2012/13 Harrow increased the number/rate of safeguarding *alerts* by 18% from the previous year (from 300 to 355 per 100k population). In doing so we are now above the London average, and are improving quicker than the London average.



- We increased the number/rate of safeguarding *referrals* by 31% from the previous year (from 190 to 250 per 100k population). The London average has remained flat during this time.
- The reason for these increases in alerts and referrals is the excellent work we are doing to raise awareness of adult safeguarding issues. For example, 620 staff across various agencies received formal safeguarding adults training in 2012/13 (a 7% increase from 2011/2012).

Safety Helix

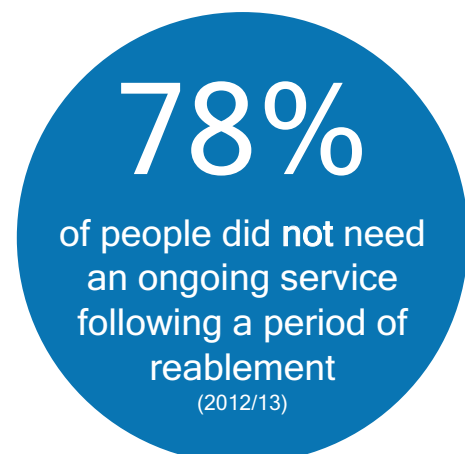
The Safety Helix applies our established Quality Assurance Quadrant (QAQ) and presents it in a client-centric way. It provides a framework to track and safeguard the service users throughout their contacts with us. The solution is both a safety 'yardstick' and a safety net to ensure that service users that could potentially be at risk do not get overlooked. We have already had some positive outcomes from this innovative tool. Using along it alongside our regular checks assists us to prevent service users and others from harm or abuse.

Useful tools

Reablement

Harrow's Reablement Service provides planned, short-term, intensive help over a period of up to six weeks. The services are offered to enable people to be supported at home to retain their independence, regain lost skills, or learn new ones, without being forced to depend on ongoing social work support.

Reablement is designed to help a person restore their independence and build their confidence; to help them to do as much as they can for themselves.



Reablement workers spend up to six weeks supporting each individual to re-learn lost skills following a period of illness, disability or a time when a person may have lost some confidence.

Reablement is generally the optimum way for an individual to begin receiving care and support. Everybody goes through the standard reablement process unless there is a good reason for them not to. Reablement is the 'front door' to Harrow's adult social care services.



Personalisation

We are committed to personalisation. Glen Mason – a Director in the Department of Health – visited us in November 2013, and said that “personalisation runs through Harrow’s work like letters in a stick of rock”. We are proud of this, and believe that encouraging users to exercise their choice, power and flexibility results in far better outcomes.

By reviewing how clients with a personal budget feel compared to those without a personal budget, we can see the effect personal budgets have on the people’s perceptions of control, safety and satisfaction. The following chart shows how effective personalisation is. It achieves better outcomes. People who are empowered feel safer and more in control. 25.2% more clients with a personal budget were satisfied (“extremely or very” satisfied) when compared to clients without a personal budget.

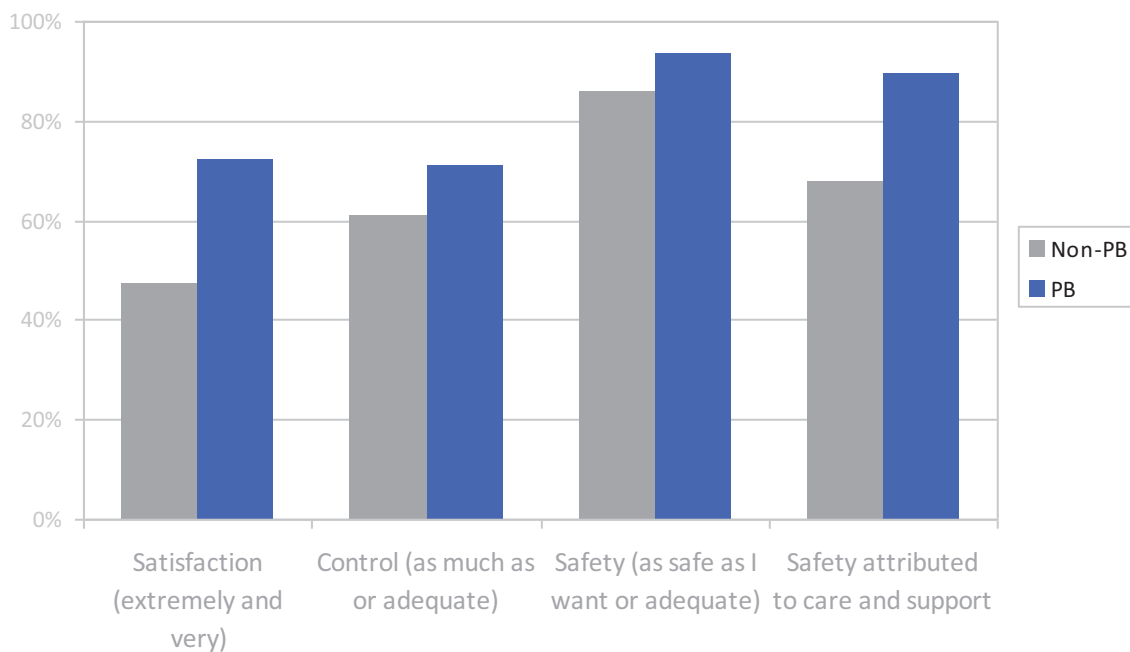


Figure 2: Does having a personal budget result in different outcomes? (Adult Community Care User (ACCU) Survey 2013)

Complaints

In Harrow we capture and resolve as many complaints as we can. We listen and learn. Our complaint numbers have remained healthy across all areas, which reflects a culture that is open to hearing and learning from feedback.

In the view of the Local Government Ombudsman and the CQC:

“Councils that capture high levels of complaints invariably achieve high Star ratings as it demonstrates a willingness to hear concerns, address them and improve services as a result of them. Whereas Council’s that capture lower levels of...complaints tend to get lower star ratings.”

The most notable trend related to the number of policy complaints following the introduction of the Fairer Charging policy (29 complaints in 2012-13 compared to only two in 2010-11). However, no complaints about the Fairer Charges policy were upheld by the Ombudsman. The policy brings Harrow Council into line with the majority of councils across the country.



In Harrow we set a target to respond to 75% of adult social care complaints within 10 days. We

did better than this in 2012/13 by responding to 79% of them within 10 days. Although this is a good result, we are working hard to ensure we exceed this result next year.

The introduction of mediation in 2005-06 significantly reduced and continues to significantly reduce the number of complaints that escalate. In 8 of the 9 cases where mediation was used in 2012/13, the mediation meeting successfully resolved the complaint (compared with 5 of 6 the previous year). This shows how effective it is as an option in resolving even the most contentious and distressing cases.



My support, My way

My support, My way is Harrow's Quality Assurance Charter. It defines what local people have told us is important to them. It is the basic standard of what local people should expect when they receive care and support in Harrow.

We see the charter as a way to empower local people, giving them confidence to challenge poor quality care and support.

In the coming year, we will encourage all services in Harrow to sign up to *My Support, My Way* as a tool for change. It will help services to

think about what quality means for local people and will raise standards of care.

Market position statement

A Market Position Statement is a tool that is designed for providers, and potential providers of care and support services. The aim is to support them to make decisions about if and how to invest and deliver services in Harrow. It will help them to react to opportunities that arise as a result of the introduction of personal budgets for people receiving social care support.

Who are our local people?

In the 2011 census, Harrow's population stood at roughly 239,000 residents. There is a predicted increase in growth over the next 10-15 years. A large part of this increase will be amongst the over 65s.

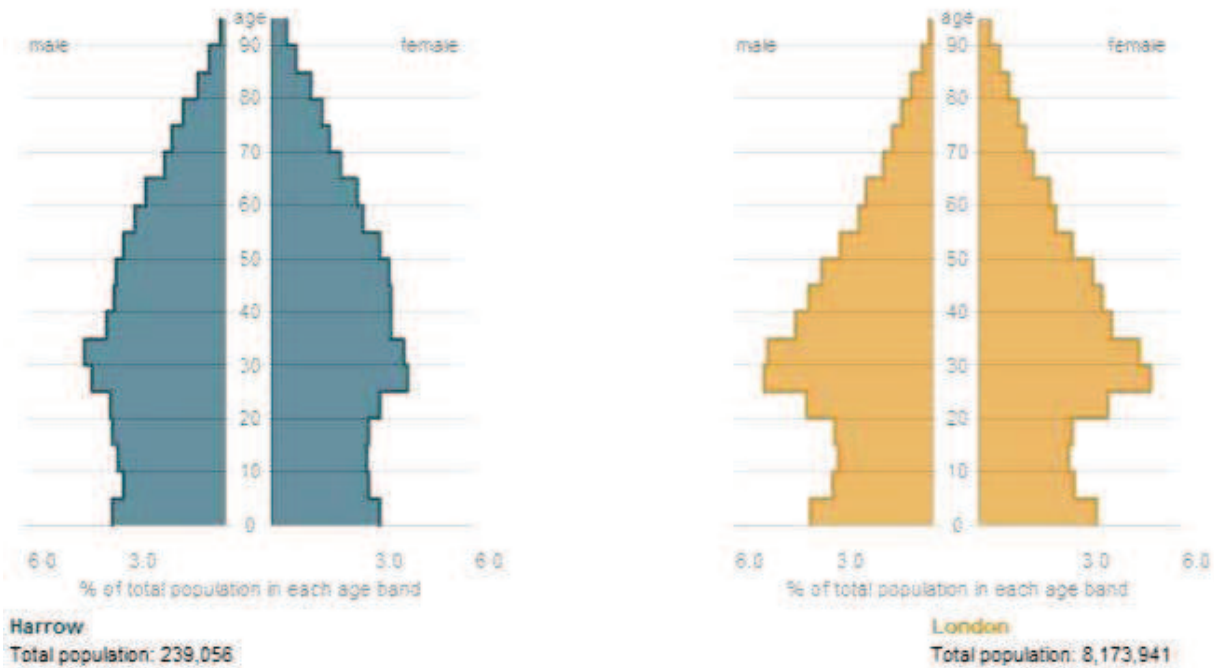


Figure 3: 2011 Census - population estimates for England and Wales

Ethnic diversity

Harrow is an ethnically diverse borough. More than half of Harrow's population is from Black and Ethnic Minority (BAME) groups. The biggest of these is the Indian ethnic group which is over a quarter of Harrow's population.

The population of all ethnic groups, except White British, is expected to increase in the coming 10 years. The White ethnic group is generally older than BAME groups.

Disability

Learning disability

In Harrow, 3 people per thousand have a learning disability, which is slightly lower than the national rate. Around 14% of people with learning disability have profound or complex needs.

The rate of people with learning disabilities is forecast to increase over the next 15 years, with

the biggest increase in the older population as life expectancy of people with a learning disability increases.

Physical disability

In 2012-13 there were 3,108 community based clients with a physical disability. Of these, 553 were under 65, and 2,555 were over 65.

The number of people aged 18-64 predicted to have a moderate or serious physical disability is projected to increase by 15%, from 14,143 in 2010 to 16,619 in 2030.

It is estimate that approximately 4% of the population in Harrow has a physical disability.

Older people

In Harrow, people aged 65 years and over make up 14.1% of the population (almost 34,000 people).

There are significantly high proportions of older people from BAME groups (24.9%) and the level of income deprivation amongst older Harrow residents (20.7%) is significantly worse than the national average.

Two thirds of social care clients are over 65 with the majority having a physical disability.

Deprivation affecting older people is higher in Harrow than the national average. Older people are significant users of both health and social care.

Carers

The 2011 census indicated that there are approximately 25,000 unpaid carers in Harrow with nearly 5,000 people providing over 50 hours of unpaid care a week.

Around 5,000 carers are on Harrow Council's registers, and over 3,000 were assessed or reviewed in 2012/13.

We make an ongoing effort to identify hidden carers and those carers who may not recognise themselves as carers, to ensure they can access support.





“We listen closely to what you say, and focus on providing the high-quality care and support you need.”

Enhancing quality of life for people with care and support needs

Quality of life is an important measure of how a service user or carer feels about the care and support they receive. It means different things to different people, so we must always focus on meeting individual needs and outcomes. We are doing this successfully in Harrow. Service users report that their quality of life has improved in 2012/13, and the quality of life reported by our carers is the third highest in London. These are two significant achievements that we welcome, but we refuse to be complacent.

Each achievement has been made through a variety of initiatives – small and large – rooted in our belief in the benefits of personalisation. By listening closely to what you tell us about the ways in which we can increase your control, improve your wellbeing and reduce your isolation, we have raised the bar. There is no upper ceiling to our concept of quality, so we will continue to promote and commission the highest possible quality care, support and advice to the direct benefit of every vulnerable adult in Harrow.

Our work

- **Developed MyCommunity ePurse, a support planning and personal budget management tool for service users and carers**
- **Co-produced a local quality charter – *My Support, My Way* – with the local account group**
- **Successfully transitioned 450 users from block contracts, to personalised home care**
- **Launched Carers Revival – a monthly group supporting carers who care for vulnerable people living in Harrow**

Examples

You said

Shop4Support was not easy to navigate

We did

We developed MyCommunity ePurse

My Community ePurse (MCeP) is a personal budget and support planning tool that gives our clients the facility to receive and manage their cash personal budget online. We have worked hard to bring this innovative new way of working to our service users and carers, and believe it is a very positive step towards the personalisation agenda.

The new website is much easier to navigate than its predecessor, and has additional functions that make it easier to create and change services. We believe in personalisation, and MCeP gives more power, choice and flexibility to our services users and carers.



What does this new way of working really mean for our service users?

- It means a wider market place to choose services and consider options that they may not have thought about or heard of before.
- No more managing separate bank accounts and paper records.

What does this new way of working really mean for service providers?

- Services are advertised free across the six boroughs that make up the West London Alliance.
- Ability to reach a wider client base as MyCommunity ePurse is adopted by other Local Authorities.
- One resource directory to maintain across all Local Authorities that use CarePlace.
- Improved cash flow with 4-weekly advance recurring payments being set up on clients' accounts.
- Reduced back office administration in chasing overdue invoices.

More information about our new tool MyCommunity ePurse is available via:

-  www.careplace.org.uk
-  **020 8424 1150**
-  jo.archer@harrow.gov.uk



You said

We want employment more opportunities

We did

Increased employment opportunities for learning disability and mental health service users

In 2012/13 Harrow had the highest proportion of adults with learning disabilities or using mental health services in paid employment across London. This is an excellent outcome.

- We ran a mental health employment project, focused on partnership working.
- Wiseworks – our employment-focused day centre – identifies skills and opportunities, and sets up work placements.

Case study

Darren's employment story

Darren has a learning disability and started working in Harrow Council's staff canteen in 2012. He has gone on to gain food hygiene qualifications. Darren says: "Harrow Council has provided me with opportunities to experience different jobs. I'm enjoying my roles."

Delaying and reducing the need for care and support

Outcomes

Reablement, prevention and early intervention form the cornerstone of more personalised services. In years gone by, the entire social care system inadvertently encouraged long-term dependence. This is not what people want and can be detrimental to their health, wellbeing and quality of life. We believe helping individuals to remain as independent as they want to be is highly effective and delivers better outcomes.

We are 6th nationally for providing reablement to older people discharged from hospital. We work in close partnership with NHS colleagues to support people in the most appropriate setting.

Our work

- Updated the entire care pathway protocol
- Launched the Integrated Care Partnership pilot to reduce inappropriate admissions by older people to hospital
- Created a drop-in service for people with dementia and their carers
- Put in place dedicated delayed transfer coordinator to improve our performance and service to users

Examples

You said

Help me stay out of hospital

We did

Started a pilot program to reduce frequent readmissions

The Integrated Care Partnership approved a Reablement pilot to work with 25 people who frequently call the ambulance, attend A&E or are admitted to hospital, where not always necessary.

The pilot program aims to reduce the ambulance call outs and hospital attendance by providing information, advice and support to participants and their carers.

The skills and support program began in July. Evaluation and tracking of outcomes will take place over a six month period and the program will be fully reviewed in February 2014.



Case study

Delayed transfers

In 2011/12 we were ranked 26th out of 33 London boroughs in relation to delayed transfers.

Delayed transfers of care, are where a patients is ready to return home or transfer to another form of care but still occupies a bed. A delayed transfer is a symptom of the health and social care system failing to provide the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

We put in place a dedicated delayed transfer coordinator, and improved the way we find out about transfers. We now find out about potential delayed transfers in advance, and have improved significantly. As a result, in 2012/13 we were ranked 23rd across London for social care attributed delays, but by Autumn 2013 we had improved to 5th across London which is excellent progress in this area of our work.

You said

I do not want to be passed around between people and teams

We did

Updated the entire care pathway to ensure that one worker deals with assessment

The vast majority of people who approach us for care and support are given a free six-week period reablement, which is highly successful at meeting achieving good outcomes. Feedback we received told us that there were occasions

where individuals were passed between social workers unnecessarily.

We want to avoid this where possible, and realised that by tweaking our processes, we could have a positive impact on people's experience of interacting with us.

As a result we reviewed and updated our entire care pathway to ensure that every case was handled by the most suitable team in the most suitable way.

You said

Offer more services and activities to support people with dementia *and* their carers

We did

We started Annie's Place

Annie's Place is a dementia drop-in service at Milmans Day Centre which began in September 2013. It is open every Thursday morning from 10am to 12pm for people with dementia, their carers and wider family.

Annie's Place provides information on available services, support and practical advice on reminiscence and other therapies (e.g. yoga, computer support, carer support, hairdressers, gentle exercise, etc).

The service user and carer engagement leads attend to offer support.

Annie's Place is a pilot scheme which will be reviewed in February 2014. More information is available via:



020 8424 1022



una.taylor@harrow.gov.uk

“Annie’s Place is absolutely first class. Everybody is so nice and Ron has been a new person since we have been coming here.” – Joan Howard (Ron’s wife since 1952)



Case study

Annie’s Place: Ron & Joan Howard

Ron Howard, 83, is a former football scout whose career highlights included stints at QPR and Millwall.

He has worked alongside famous faces, including Terry Venables, Mick McCarthy, John Docherty, Graham Souness, and David Pleat – and has witnessed some memorable moments from pitchside: from the joy of Luton beating Arsenal in a cup final and Cambridge going unbeaten all season, to the heartbreak of losing to Brian Clough’s Notts Forest.

His work took him around the country and overseas, particularly to Holland, where he would size up rising talent.

Ron has been visiting Annie’s Place, a new service run by Harrow Council and CNWL for those recently diagnosed with dementia and their carers, since it was set up. He and his wife Joan have been enthralled by the rest of the group with photos of the teams and footballing giants that Ron has met.

Reminiscence: a useful tool

Many people with dementia find themselves routinely having things done ‘for’ them or ‘to’ them. When a person shares something about their past and another person shows interest or enjoyment, it is a wonderful opportunity for that person to feel that they are the one who is giving something to another human being, rather than always being the one who is receiving or listening.

Ensuring that people have a positive experience of care and support

Outcomes

In 2012/13, 73% of Harrow's carers felt they have been included in discussions about the person the care for. To achieve a positive experience of care and support people need to know what choices are available to them. We run provider open-days, workshops to educate service users and carers, and empower them to make full use of their personal budget.

People also told us they want to have sense of what quality care and support looks like. We worked with Harrow's Local Account Group to co-produce a local quality charter to share what local people expected from social care providers.

Our work

- **Co-produced a local quality charter – *My Support, My Way***
- **Published a Market Position statement**
- **Started a dance and musical-theatre project to improve public health outcomes**
- **Conduct regular engagement, and organise events for service users and carers**

Examples

You said

We want to set the standards for local care

We did

Developed *My Support, My Way*

The Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) partnership included several "I" statements in the Making it Real document it produced in 2012.

Following conversations with the community and local account user group, there was a clear desire to create a similar document that was developed by local people, for local people.

So, alongside the Local Account User Group, we co-produced a local quality charter – *My Support, My Way*. It helps everybody to know and what good care and support looks like to a Harrow resident.

The charter is another important piece of the puzzle. We are making sure that all providers wishing to use MyCommunity ePurse to process payments sign up to and abide by its principles.

The charter is an exciting document which will empower service users and carers. We encourage Harrow's residents to use the principles contained in the charter to challenge providers who fall short.



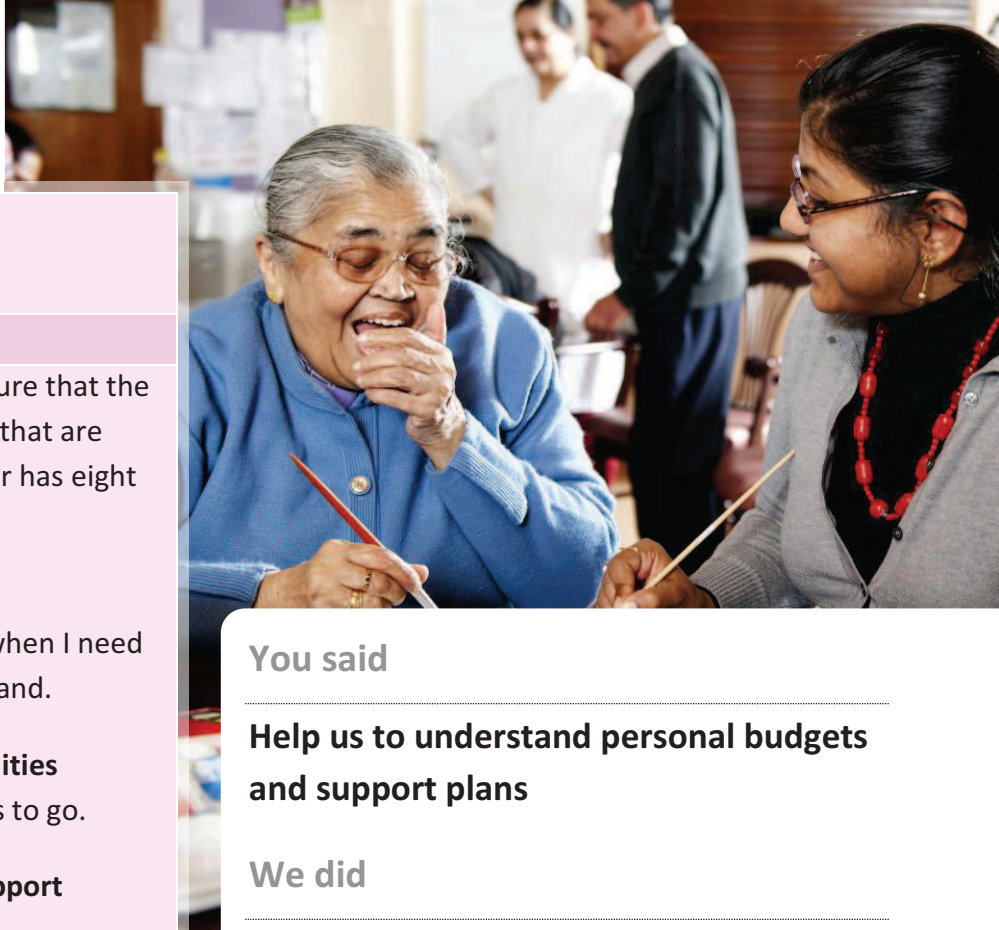
harrow.gov.uk



020 8424 1023



mario.casiero@harrow.gov.uk



Case study

My support, My way

The local quality charter aims to ensure that the people of Harrow receive the things that are really important to them. The charter has eight sections:

- 1. Information and Advice**
having the information I need, when I need it, in a format that I can understand.
- 2. Active and Supportive Communities**
having friends, family and places to go.
- 3. Flexible Integrated care and support**
my support, my way.
- 4. My Support Staff**
providing me with the help and support I need, when I need it.
- 5. Feeling in control and safe**
helping me to manage my own risks.
- 6. Personal Budgets and Self Funding**
my money, my choice, my way.
- 7. What about the carers?**
ensuring my family and friends are supported to support me.
- 8. Making it Real**
putting the charter into action.

Under each section are "I" statements that make very clear what local people value, and the standards we will encourage the local marketplace of providers to achieve and exceed.

You said

Help us to understand personal budgets and support plans

We did

Carers Revival: Personal Budget event

Our Carers engagement lead runs a monthly carer-focused event, called Carer's Revival. This support group is an active and enthusiastic part of the network of support for carers across Harrow and works closely Harrow Carer, Harrow Association for the Disabled and various partners across Harrow.

In response to requests to help people understand personal budgets and support plans, we held a innovate event that demonstrates the process using the metaphor of creating a dessert.

Following a simple assessment, each attendee learned how a budget is created to meet the needs (assessment stage).

Each person was then asked to think about what they wanted their dessert to look like. They were given a variety of sweets, cakes and ingredients to select from, and could choose anything they wanted, within the limits of their budget (support planning stage).



By the end of the event, individuals who were previously confused, not only understood the principles, but were enthusiastic about applying them in the real situations.

There have been several engagement events with service users and carers in the past year, and this is just one excellent and creative example of the many ways in which we have helped people to understand and use the power that is available to them.

More information for carers can be found by contacting

-  harrow.gov.uk
-  **020 8736 6093**
-  allison.brice@harrow.gov.uk

You said

Make sure that all the providers meet your standards

We did

Created our market position statement

The market is comprised of the various providers of care and support to Harrow's residents. We spoke with the community about the way we deliver personalisation, and the services they want to be available to them.

Our first Market Position Statement is a summary of what we learned from feedback and sets out how providers can make Harrow the best place to receive adult social care and support.

Case study

Dance, musical-theatre and singing master class

Building our successful Flash musical in Summer 2012, users of Harrow's Day Centres took to the dance floor in a ballet, musical-theatre and singing master class, hosted by a professional instructor.

The service users learned bar exercises and wowed onlookers with their enthusiasm and skills. After a short rehearsal, they donned wigs and colourful hats and took to the stage to perform a dance routine from the musical 'Hairspray'.

The event left everyone who took part feeling positive and energised. One service user said: "Isn't it great that they showed us what to do, and we got to have a go ourselves!"

Tizard Research Programme

Following the success of the master class we have developed regular sessions.

We are now working with the Tizard Centre (funded by the King's Fund) to develop a research programme around the benefits for people with learning disabilities and specifically the positive impacts on obesity and diabetes.

Safeguarding adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protecting them from avoidable harm

Outcomes

In Harrow we believe that safety is everyone's business. There is always more that can be done to protect vulnerable adults from avoidable harm. We chair Harrow's Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) to promote inter-agency cooperation at all levels of safeguarding adults work.

We have developed the Safety Helix, a new tool to track and safeguard people regularly. Currently, 85% of people say that our services make them feel safe and secure (ACCU Survey 2013). The various initiatives we have put in place over the past year have contributed to this sense of safety. By increasing in the number of staff we formally trained in 2012/13 we are creating a safer and more secure Harrow.

Our work

- **We increased home fire safety checks for vulnerable adults** following joint publicity between Housing, the Fire Service and the Safeguarding Teams.
- **Safeguarding worked to ensure that all District Nurses carry safeguarding adults information on the back of their name/identity badge**, so that the advice line number is easily available if they come across a patient that they are worried about
- **Safeguarding Adults Service continued to work closely with the Community Safety Antisocial Behaviour Action Group (ASBAG)**; firstly where vulnerable adults are victims and secondly where as perpetrators of anti social behaviour there have been concerns raised about it being in the context of deteriorating mental health.
- **We worked with the Police, Age UK Harrow and the Banks to improve the safety of vulnerable older people** who were being targeted when withdrawing money from ATMs – older people being the majority of the victims of this type of crime.
- **620 staff across various agencies received formal safeguarding adults training** (a 7% increase from 2011/2012)
- **Responded actively to the Winterbourne View and Mid-Staffordshire scandals**



Examples

You said

Protect us from poor care homes

We did

Updated the methods we use to suspend poorly performing homes

The Adult Social Care 'embargo' policy was updated to ensure that safeguarding concerns are the key element for deciding that placements should be suspended at a specific home.

Further work on this area will take place in 2013/14 using the learning from practice in previous years, feedback from providers and research into best practice.

You said

Do not forget about me

We did

Developed the Safety Helix to track and safeguard service users

We come into contact with service users in a wide variety of ways. The Safety Helix makes sure that we have regular contact with service users. We need to know that individuals are safe and free from neglect or abuse. The Safety Helix is another positive step that will increase the protection of vulnerable people across Harrow.

The solution will be both a safety 'yardstick' and a safety net that ensures that service users do not get overlooked. By making sure that no user goes more than 4 months without being contacted and asked about safeguarding issues, we will improve their safety and the safety of those across Harrow's adult social care system.

Case study

The Safety Helix

Through the new approach of the Safety Helix, the council will ensure that we ask every service user about their safety at least three times in each year.

We will make the most of every opportunity we have to check on our service users, whether through annual reviews, satisfaction surveys, comments/complaints or survey monitoring.

By tracking every individual, including the number of contacts we have, we will ensure that no-one falls through the gaps.



Winterbourne View

Following the inquiry into Winterbourne View scandal, several recommendations were made. We have worked closely with Harrow CCG to implement and embed every change.

You said

Provide extra support as my child becomes an adult

We did

Installed a dedicated transition team

Harrow has clear processes in place to ensure that plans are put in place for young people with complex health needs.

The transition team of two qualified social workers and a team manager is based within Adult Social Care. A young person with complex health needs will require support from a range of professionals and the transition worker coordinates the plan for the young person.

For the most complex young people we track their progress throughout their transition starting from Year 9 at school (13-14 years).

Case study

F's transition

F has a high level of complex health and social care needs, and requires the support of skilled carers over a 24-hour period. He was placed in an out-of-borough specialist school where he resided on a full-time basis.

F's transition from children to adult services took place a year earlier than planned as the residential school signalled their intention to close. The adult transition service coordinated the multi-disciplinary response and arranged to assess F's health and social care needs.

The multi-disciplinary team included education, children's social care, and Independent Reviewing Officer, transition social worker and Paediatric and Adult continuing care nurse assessor, the lead nurse at the residential school and F's family. The team worked together to assess F for eligibility for continuing health care funding.

Once eligibility for joint funding was established health and social care worked together to commission the most appropriate resource to meet F's highly complex needs. This included an assessment of F's capacity to be able indicate his preference of location/place to live.

Funding was agreed between children's services (for the initial period when F was 17) and then health and social care when he turned 18. F has settled well and reviews of the placement are being conducted jointly between health and social care.

This is an ideal example of the way that complex challenges are being solved through partnership working and dedication to the best interests of service users and carers.



If you or someone you know is being abused, harmed or exploited,
or if you are concerned about any adult at risk please call
Harrow Council's Safeguarding Adults Service:

During office hours
020 8420 9453

At all other times
020 8424 0999

Or email: safeguardingadults@harrow.gov.uk

Finance

How did we spend our money in 2012/13?

We provide services that support people in their own homes including home care, day care, reablement services and equipment.

Our services concentrated on enabling people to remain at home or return home after hospital treatment or time spent in a residential home.

Most people prefer to be cared for in the own home so these services are crucial for helping people live independent lives. We also provide services to unpaid carers who look after people with adult social care needs.

In 2012/13 we saved £2.8m compared to the previous financial year.

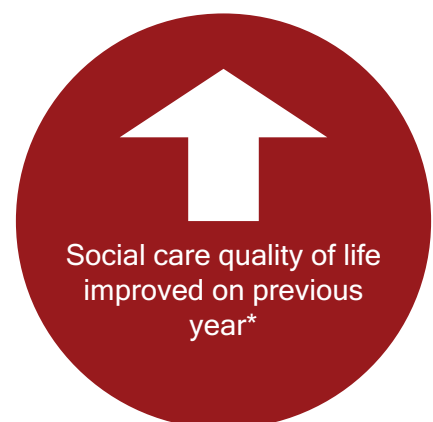
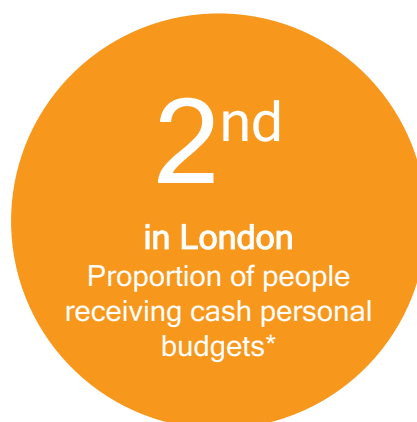
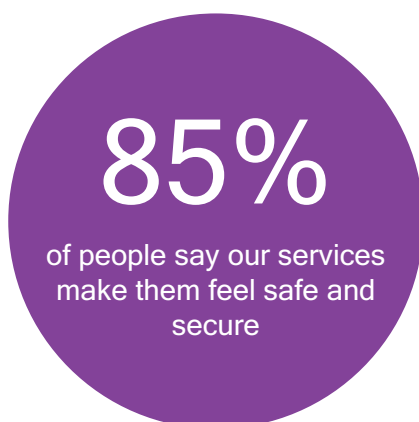
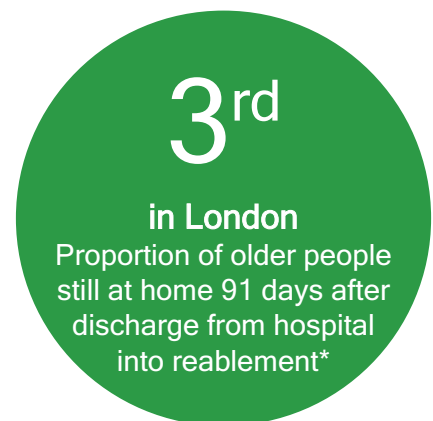
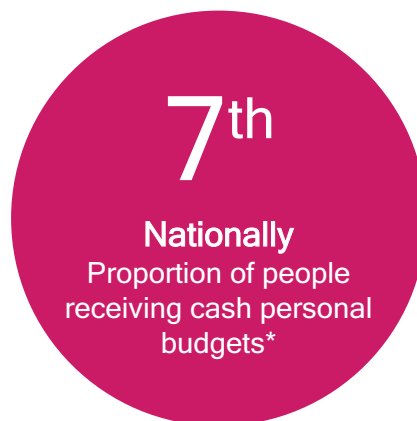
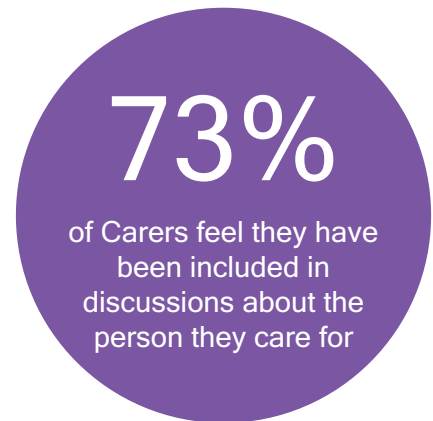
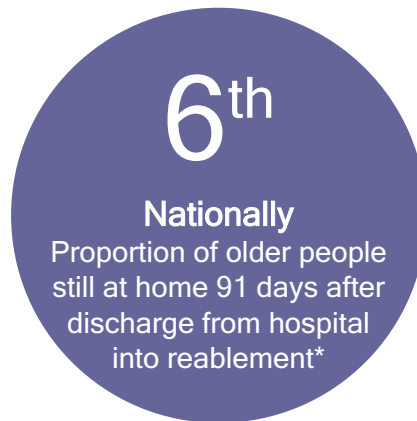
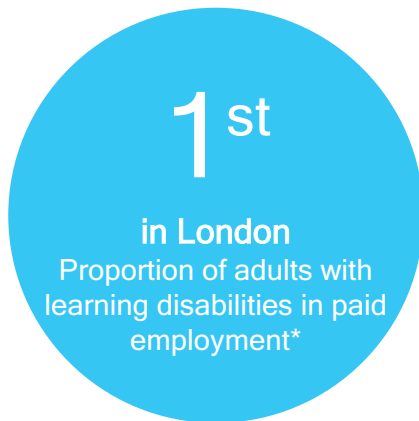


Figure 4: Breakdown of expenditure by service user group

Local authorities receive funding from the central government that is allocated according to a formula. The current funding formulae were based upon data collected in 2005. Since then, the delivery of care has changed significantly following a range of legislative, organisational and demographic changes. Harrow is one of the lowest grant-funded boroughs in London. As a result we have received, and are likely to receive, less funding for adult social care than neighbouring boroughs. We have highlighted the issue and its challenges on a number of occasions. The funding formula is currently under formal review, so we will continue to speak up for Harrow's residents and do whatever we can to get allocations that are more appropriate for the particular needs of our borough in the coming years.

Performance

We are measured independently, and regularly assess ourselves. These are a few of the independent indicators which show our strength in personalisation, reablement and support for carers during 2012/13. At the time of writing, the ASCOF (Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework) results are still provisional, and have been marked with an asterisk.



Glossary

Adult social care	Personal care and practical help for adults who have care or support needs due to age, illness or disability, to help them live their life as independently as possible.
Advocacy	Help for people to express their views about their needs and choices.
Care Quality Commission	An independent regulator of all health and social care services in England.
Carer	Someone who provides unpaid support to a family member or friend who cannot manage without this help.
Commissioning	Process the Council uses to plan and buy services for adults with care and support needs.
CNWL	Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
Deferred payment scheme	The deferred payment scheme which allows someone who goes into care to keep their property and still get help from the local authority with paying care home fees. The local authority recovers the fees from the proceeds when the property is sold. This scheme can also be used if there is a delay in selling a property.
Dementia	A syndrome (a group of related symptoms) associated with the ongoing decline of the brain and its abilities. Problems include memory loss, language and thinking speed.
Direct Payments	Cash payments given to people to pay for the community care services they have been assessed as needing. They are intended to give people greater choice in their care. The payment must be sufficient to enable the person to purchase services to meet their needs and must be spent on services that he or she needs.
Domiciliary care	See home care below.

Eligibility criteria	Guidance has been issued from the Department of Health about how each Council should set the criteria they use for a person to be eligible for social care services. Councils should ensure that each decision about a person's eligibility for support is taken following an appropriate community care assessment.
Equipment and adaptations	Specialist items provided to service users following an assessment by an occupational therapist or physiotherapist to help them remain safe in their home and perform daily activities.
FACS (Fairer Access to Care Services)	Government guidance for councils to help them set eligibility criteria for adult and social care services.
Health and Wellbeing Board	The Government has given local authorities a duty to set up these Boards. The aim is to bring together local Councillors, patient representatives and key decision-makers across health and social care so that local people benefit from coordinated and joined up local services. There is to be a focus on addressing health inequalities, combining resources across health and social care, and the empowerment and involvement of local people.
HealthWatch	An organisation planned to be established as a new independent consumer champion for health and social care. HealthWatch England will be a statutory distinctive part of the Care Quality Commission. Local HealthWatch is being created by developing the role of the existing LINKs (see below).
Home care	Home care or Domiciliary care is care provided in an individual's home, normally of a personal nature such as help with dressing, washing or toileting. It can be arranged by Social Services following an assessment of need, or can be arranged privately by the individual themselves, or someone acting for them.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	This is a process to identify current and future health and well-being needs of the local population; informing the priorities and targets set by local authorities and the local NHS PCTs. It enables agreed commissioning priorities that will improve outcomes and reduce health inequalities. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities and PCTs to undertake these assessments.

Local accounts	Local accounts are reports used by councils across the country to tell residents what adult social care is doing and to assess how well adult social care services are performing.
Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB)	Harrow's LSAB is a multi-agency partnership, made up of a wide range of statutory, independent and voluntary agencies and organisations, all working together to keep adults, particularly those who are more vulnerable, safe from the risk of abuse, harm or exploitation.
Local Involvement Network (LINK)	LINKs were set up to help people influence or change the way their health or social care services are delivered. They are made up of individuals and community groups who work together to improve local services. It is their job to find out what people like and dislike about local services and work with the people who plan and run them to help make them better.
Market Position Statement	This is a tool that is designed for providers, and potential providers, of care and support services.
MyCommunity ePurse	A support planning and personal budget tool for service users and carers, which gives service users the facility to receive and manage their cash personal budget online.
My Support, My Way	This is Harrow Council's Quality Assurance Charter. It defines what local people have said is important to them. It is the basic standard of what local people should expect when they receive care and support in Harrow.
NHS continuing care funding	This describes a package of continuing health care provided outside hospital, arranged and funded solely by the NHS, for people with ongoing health needs. To decide if a person is eligible for this funding an assessment of healthcare needs takes place. Eligibility for continuing care funding is reviewed on a regular basis.
Nursing care	Care carried out of supervised by a qualified nurse, including injections and dressings paid for by the NHS.
Outcome	End result, change or benefit for an individual who uses social care and support services.

Preventative Services	Services that involve early interventions to prevent long term dependency or ill health.
Personal Budgets	An allocation of funding given to users of community care services after a community care assessment. The amount should be enough to meet their assessed needs. People can take them either as direct payments (see above) or – while choosing how their care needs are met and by whom – leave local authorities with the responsibility to commission the services; or they can have a combination of the two.
Personalisation	Personalisation is a social care approach described by the Department of Health as meaning that “every person who receives support, whether provided by statutory services or funded by themselves, will have choice and control over the shape of that support in all care settings”. The purpose is to ensure that services are tailored to the needs of every individual, rather than being delivered in a “one-size-fits all” fashion.
Portability	The portability of social security benefits is the ability of workers to preserve, maintain, and transfer acquired social security rights (and social security rights in the process of transferring) from one private, occupational, or public social security scheme to another.
Providers	These are organisations or agencies who are commissioned to provide services on behalf of the Council.
Quality Assurance Quadrant (QAQ)	The QAQ is a regular internal report which focuses of four areas: consumer/citizen challenge, independent challenge, provider challenge, and professional challenge.
Reablement	Timely and focussed intensive therapy and care in a person’s home to improve their choice and quality of life and maximise long term independence. The aim is that, through short term intervention, people are helped to recover skills and confidence to enable them to live at home.
Residential care	Care in a care home providing personal care such as washing, dressing and taking medication.

Safeguarding

Protecting vulnerable people from neglect or physical, financial, psychological or verbal abuse.

Self Directed Support

A description of how a Council plans to arrange social care support by carrying out an assessment of need with an individual; agreeing what help is needed and then determining how much money will be provided to pay for it (this is called a Personal Budget). The Council then agrees a plan with an individual about how the money will be spent and who will manage the "personal budget". Some people chose to manage the money themselves.

Telecare

Equipment, devices and services to help vulnerable people stay safe and independent at home, including fall sensors and safety alarms.

Vulnerable adult

A person aged 18 or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to mental health problems, disability, sensory impairment, frailty or other condition.

Useful contacts

Harrow Council: Adult Services

Golden Number

020 8901 2680
www.harrow.gov.uk

Emergency out-of-hours Social Worker

020 8424 0999

Police non-emergency number

101
www.met.police.uk

NHS – fast but non-emergency medical help

111

Harrow Citizens' Advice Bureau

020 8427 9477
www.harowcab.org.uk

Harrow Mencap

020 8869 8484
www.harowmencap.org.uk

Harrow Association of Disabled People

020 8861 9920
www.had.org.uk

Mind in Harrow

020 8426 0929
www.mindinharrow.org.uk

Rethink Mental Illness

0300 5000 927
www.rethink.org

Stroke Association

0303 3033 100
www.stroke.org.uk

Parkinson's UK

0808 800 0303
www.parkinsons.org.uk

Age UK

020 8861 7980
www.ageuk.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society

020 7423 3500
www.alzheimers.org.uk

Carers UK

020 7378 4999
www.carersuk.org

Crossroad Care Harrow

020 8868 0903
www.carers.org

Harrow Carers

020 8868 5224
www.harowcarers.org

London Taxicard

0845 415 4156 or 020 7934 9791
www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/taxicards

Feedback

[Currently finalising questionnaire on Harrow's public consultation website.]



“Personalisation runs through Harrow’s work like letters in a stick of rock.”

Glen Mason
Director, Department of Health
November 2013

Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework 2013/14

Briefing

December 2013

Summary

On 31 March 2011, Transparency in outcomes: a framework for adult social care announced the first Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF), covering the year 2011-12. On 30 March 2012, the ASCOF for 2012-13 was published by the Department of Health. The purpose of the ASCOF is three-fold:

- Nationally, the ASCOF aims to give an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of social care in delivering better outcomes for people who use services.
- Locally, one of the key intended uses of the ASCOF is to support councils to improve the services they provide. The framework attempts to support meaningful comparisons between councils, based on the outcomes they deliver for local people, and to help stimulate the sharing of learning and discussions on best practice.
- It is intended that the ASCOF will foster greater transparency in the delivery of adult social care, supporting local people to hold their council to account for the quality of the services they provide.

The ASCOF encompasses four domains. These are:

- Enhancing quality of life for people with care and support needs.
- Delaying and reducing the need for care and support.
- Ensuring people have a positive experience of care and support.
- Safeguarding people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protecting from avoidable harm.

The ASCOF report contains the final figures for the 2012-13 ASCOF measures for England and supersedes the provisional ASCOF release in July 2013. Final data for these measures, along with further information on these and the other measures, will be included in the final report due to be published on 17 December 2013.

This is the first year for which measures based on the Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England (Carers' Survey) are included.

Council level data for 2012-13 are available in the above annex files and through the National Adult Social Care Intelligence Service, where council level data for 2011-12 are also provided. It is anticipated that, where available, council-level data for 2010-11 will be released alongside the final report for 2012-13.

Key facts

- In 2012-13, the social care-related quality of life score (where the most positive score is 24) was 18.8, whereas it was 18.7 in both 2010-11 and 2011-12 (measure 1A).
- The proportion of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment was 7.0 per cent in 2012-13, compared to 7.1 per cent in 2011-12. The proportion of adults with learning disabilities who live in their own home or with their family increased from being 70.0 per cent in 2011-12 to 73.5 per cent in 2012-13 (measures 1E and 1G).
- The carer-reported quality of life score has a most positive score of 12 and, in 2012-13, the average score was 8.1. 42.7 per cent of carers were reported to be extremely or very satisfied with social services in 2012-13, and 72.9 per cent of carers reported that they had been included or consulted in discussion about the person they cared for (measures 1D, 3B and 3C).
- 64.1 per cent of people said they were extremely or very satisfied with their care and support in 2012-13, compared to 62.8 per cent in 2011-12 and 62.1 per cent in 2010-11 (measure 3A).
- In 2012-13, the proportion of people who used services who felt as safe as they wanted was 65.1 per cent, whereas it was 63.8 per cent in 2011-12 and 62.4 per cent in 2010-11. 78.1 per cent of people who used services said that those services have made them feel safe and secure in 2012-13, compared to 75.5 per cent in 2011-12 (measures 4A and 4B).

The full ASCOF 2012/13 measures are available at:

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB11145>

The ASCOF 2013/14 report is available:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/141627/The-Adult-Social-Care-Outcomes-Framework-2013-14.pdf

REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	15 January 2014
Subject:	Safeguarding Adults Peer Review
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Bernie Flaherty, Director of Adult Social Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Barry MacLeod-Cullinane, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No, as the Recommendation is for noting only
Enclosures:	London Borough of Harrow, Adult Safeguarding Sector Led Challenge – feedback presentation

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report briefly sets out some background information about Peer Reviews and why Harrow Adult Services decided to commission one. It provides details about the process of the review, the findings of the Review Team and the next steps.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to note the findings of the Peer Review and the next steps that the Local Safeguarding Adults Board will be considering taking forward in the next year.

Reason: (for recommendation)

The safeguarding of vulnerable adults at risk of significant harm is a key duty for the Council and it is important for the Cabinet to be reassured that local arrangements are fit for purpose.

Section 2 – Report**Introductory paragraph**

Safeguarding adults work is a high priority for the Council evidenced by both the portfolio holder and shadow portfolio holder attending safeguarding board meetings and it is reflected in “cleaner, safer, fairer” agenda – the administration’s priorities for Harrow.

Options considered

There are no options in this report as it is a “for information” item, not a key decision.

Background

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) no longer inspects Councils, other than in-house residential services that councils provide. The expectation is for senior managers and Councillors to ensure that internal processes for continuous learning, quality assurance and improved outcomes for users are in place.

The London Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and Local Government Association work to improve and develop services in the adult social care sector through the London Social Care Partnership. Peer Review is one method that can be applied to support self evaluation and service development.

Safeguarding work within the Adults Division of Community, Health and Wellbeing has a well established quality assurance framework that is committed to continuous improvement and the decision to commission a formal Peer Review in this important area reflects this. The Peer Review Challenge was commissioned by the Council with the full support of the Local Safeguarding Adults Board.

What was the Harrow process?

In order to test and prepare for the formal peer review an external expert panel was set up chaired by Professor Gill Manthorpe, a well known expert

nationally in the field of safeguarding adults. The expert panel took place on 4th and 5th March 2013.

The panel found a strong sense of Adults Safeguarding being given high priority in Harrow. This was evident in the knowledge of senior managers and front line staff. They declared commitment to the subject. They also noted that elected members were reported to take a genuine interest in the safeguarding adults agenda.

The expert panel concluded in their summary that the observations and recommendations made in their report were to be set in the context of an impressive Safeguarding Adults Service.

The overall findings of the expert panel were very positive but there were some recommendations and these were implemented before the formal Peer Review.

The Peer Review Challenge team were in Harrow for 3 days, (18-20 November 2013) and the formal process followed the Local Government Association methodology. The Team that carried it out was:

- Cathy Kerr (Director of Adult and Community Services, LB Richmond)
- Stephen Day (Director of Adult Services, LB Ealing)
- Gill Ford (Head of Performance and Quality Assurance, LB Richmond)
- Mary Stein (Head of Service Transformation, LB Brent)
- Cathie Williams (for London Councils and also the lead for Adult Safeguarding, Local Government Association)

It should be noted that all members of the Team were social care professionals i.e. there were none from the other statutory sectors including the NHS and the Police.

The methodology was:

- completion of a self assessment; reading by the Peer Review Team of the self assessment/evidence portfolio (prior to the 3 days on-site work); and
- interviews/focus groups/observation on site.

The evidence portfolio was extensive and the interviews/focus groups included a wide range of LSAB members and partner organisations across the statutory sectors (NHS, Fire Service, Police) and third sector (Mencap/Age UK Harrow/Mind in Harrow etc). Elected members (the Portfolio holder and shadow portfolio holder); front line staff and relevant managers were also interviewed.

The Safeguarding Adults Peer Review standards

The 8 themes used in the Peer Review have been developed by ADASS; SCIE; NHS Confederation and the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) and from them Harrow identified 3 main areas for examination:

- (i) Supporting Practice;
- (ii) Quality Assurance; and
- (iii) Governance.

Under these main themes there were six specific outcome areas as outlined below and where as part of the self assessment, strengths/achievements and areas for improvement/consideration were identified.

- the council demonstrates improved safeguarding outcomes alongside wider community safety improvements
- the council has fully engaged people who use services in the design of its services
- there is recognised and active leadership by the council on Adult Safeguarding
- the council has robust and effective service delivery that makes safeguarding everybody's business
- services are held accountable through performance measures, including quality measures, towards the outcomes for people in the strategy
- there is multi-agency commitment to safeguarding

The Peer Review Team's findings

The agreement with the LGA and ADASS is that the Peer Review Team will produce a presentation before they finish on-site. This was presented to Harrow on 20th November 2013 and is being presented at the Cabinet meeting by the Peer Review Team. The presentation is relatively brief and therefore the Peer Review Team has agreed that some members will attend the next meeting of the LSAB to explain their findings in more detail and discuss possible next steps that the Board might wish to consider.

Overall the findings were very positive.

Highlights

Practice

They found that there is impressive safeguarding adults practice which is overseen by strong leadership and commitment by senior officers and elected members.

There is also a real strength in the practice at all levels with a range of forums/activities in place to develop the skills of staff and clear evidence of a learning cycle.

They also found that staff are giving high priority to placing users at the centre of the safeguarding process and to working with them to achieve the outcomes they want.

They also noted that the LSAB has produced good literature and that other materials and awareness raising activities have also had a positive impact.

Governance

The LSAB is well established with a high level of commitment from most partners. There is also strong leadership from the Council with evidence of inter department working practices, including strong links with Children's Safeguarding and wider community safety work.

There is also evidence of innovative activities that reach some citizens who would not otherwise get any support.

Quality Assurance

There is evidence of the Council proactively seeking feedback from service users and acting on the feedback. There is evidence that there is an effective learning loop from the practice through audit response and review. There is also a broad and innovative system of risk management in place.

Recommendations

Practice

The Peer Review Team said that gaining access to justice for victims in Harrow (in common with the national picture) is a challenging experience, and we must continue to do what we can to make it easy for people to report issues.

They found that getting through the "front door" of Access Harrow can be difficult.

They advised the board to consider how it exerts a preventative function to ensure people are not harmed by poor health, care or police responses.

Governance

They asked the Council to consider how it brings strategic leadership and commitment from key partners into owning safeguarding (rather than seeing it as Council business they are helping with).

They received reports that the Council's IT system is slow – staff mentioned the lack of secure e-mail to share confidential information with partners and difficulty with scanning and printing facilities.

Quality Assurance

They identified scope to address care quality issues more systematically. This would involve partnership work between NHS Commissioners, CQC, the Quality Surveillance Group, along with the council. This will encourage Providers to engage more proactively with their own learning and development

They identified a need for more focus on outcomes in reporting to the LSAB assisted by systematically capturing the outcomes that people wanted and whether they have been achieved.

Conclusion

In conclusion the Peer Review Team stated that they found an openness to try new approaches and that the Council is in a strong position for the challenges that are coming and to continue the journey. The general view was that the service was “good, moving to great” and the partnership was well positioned to deal with the changes coming along in safeguarding adults work in the future.

Next Steps

It is important to note that some of the recommendations had already been identified by the LSAB and work is underway e.g. a new template for capturing partner data for presentation at Board meetings; a quarterly meeting with Access Harrow to discuss the pathway for safeguarding adults alerts; a legal update Best Practice Forum held on 10th December 2013 as part of ongoing sessions to further develop staff’s understanding of relevant legislation and a new Prevention Strategy will be considered by the LSAB at its March 2014 meeting. Some of the recommendations relate to the function of the LSAB and the Board had already agreed to some independent challenge at its next annual review day in June 2014. This will provide an opportunity for further debate about membership, ownership and effectiveness.

Legal Implications

There is currently no statutory obligation placed upon local authorities to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board, but the Care Bill 2013, when it receives Royal Assent and becomes a statute, will introduce a duty to do so. The Care Bill will also consolidate community care legislation and introduce a duty to promote well being as well as a duty to make enquiries inter alia, where there is reasonable cause to suspect that an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect.

Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications associated with the areas for consideration, however resource implications will be kept under review in progressing the next steps and if any increased costs are identified as a result, these will need to be contained within the overall budget envelope where possible.

Performance Issues

This report relates to performance in that one of the areas chosen by Harrow for external review was “services are held accountable through performance measures, including quality measures, towards the outcomes for people in the strategy”.

Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications

Safeguarding adults work is included in both the Council and NHS Clinical Commissioning Group’s risk registers with actions agreed to mitigate the highlighted issues. The completion of the Peer Review has been identified as one key way of ensuring that risks are reduced and local arrangements are as effective as possible.

Equalities implications

There is no decision for an EqIA to address, however the LSAB carefully tracks relevant statistics to ensure that alerts are arising from all sections of the local community and where there are low numbers has agreed to target its awareness raising campaigns etc.

Corporate Priorities

Protection of some of the most vulnerable adults in the borough is a priority for the administration. Much of the work of the LSAB is in partnership with wider community safety initiatives e.g. door step crime, distraction burglary and domestic violence.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Donna Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 10 December 2013		
Name: Sharon Clarke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 10 December 2013		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington



on behalf of the
Divisional Director
Strategic
Commissioning

Date: 10 December 2013

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker



on behalf of the
Corporate Director
(Environment &
Enterprise)

Date: 10 December 2013

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Visva Sathasivam (Assistant Director Adult Social Care)
Tel: 0208 736 6012

Background Papers: None.

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

*(Call-in does not apply as the
recommendation is for noting only)*

London Borough of Harrow Adult Safeguarding Sector Led Challenge Feedback presentation

20th November 2013

www.local.gov.uk

Feedback format

- The Peer Challenge team
- The Peer Challenge process
- Feedback in adult safeguarding
 - strengths
 - areas for further consideration
- Requests to share specific good practice
- Your reflections and questions

The Peer Challenge Team

- **Cathy Kerr**, Director of Adult and Community Services, LB Richmond
- **Stephen Day**, Director of Adult Services, LB Ealing
- **Gill Ford**, Head of Performance and Quality Assurance, LB Richmond
- **Mary Stein**, Head of Service Transformation, LB Brent
- **Cathie Williams**, for London Councils
(also Lead for Adult Safeguarding, Local Government Association)

Peer Challenge explanation

- Peer Challenge is based on the established Adult Safeguarding Standards – tailored to a London ASC pilot with London councils
- Not an inspection – invited in as ‘critical friends’
- Sector led improvement – the peer team learn a lot too

The Peer Challenge Process

- Harrow invited this Peer Review Team to focus particularly on three themes:
 - supporting Practice
 - governance
 - quality assurance
- These link to the safeguarding standards
- Pre-reading documents and data analysis
- On site – observations, interviews, meetings and focus groups
- Feedback presentation

Context

- Although we focus on three themes, it's impossible for people not to tell us about all of the safeguarding standards
- Participants reassured that information provided is non-attributable
- People have been open, enthusiastic and honest
- Our feedback is based on triangulation of what we've read, heard and seen

Generally...

- Thank you! We have been privileged to work with you
- You put together a great on site programme
- We have met some brilliant staff and people using services and everyone we have met has been interested and committed to safeguarding adults
-a short presentation cannot do justice to the depth and breadth of what we have seen and heard and the contributions people make

Findings from the Harrow Sector Led Challenge:

**1. Effective Practice – we have
broken this down into a number of
themes**

Outcomes for and experiences of individuals

Strengths

- We heard of practice that puts the outcomes people want as the priority
- Social workers describe success as achieving the outcomes people want

Outcomes for and experiences of individuals

Areas for Consideration:

- Systematically capture the fact that people have been asked the outcomes they want and the extent that they are realised.

This will focus practice even more and give the Board information about how effective they are

- Re-focus on outcomes (rather than outputs or conclusions)
- Getting through the ‘front door’ of Access Harrow can be difficult
- Access to justice is challenging here as elsewhere but that shouldn’t stop partners trying to address this

Awareness raising and prevention - observations

- Awareness raising activities, including those led by people using services, has had a positive impact and the safeguarding service has a wide reach in the community
- Good literature, posters and other materials and they are all available on the website

Safeguarding Responses: observations

- There is real strength in practice at all levels
 - Specialist safeguarding managers and staff are confident and knowledgeable
 - The investment in social work development and skills is evident and this protects both Harrow citizens and the council
 - There is a range of forums and materials to support staff in working with people, including supervision, training and development, risk panels and good practice forums
 - A learning cycle is evident
-

Partnership in practice - observations

- Good evidence of partnership working across the council
- Front line partnership working is rather hit and miss – including examples given to us in relation with the Police and NHS staff

Legal issues

- Teams describe strong and accessible legal advice
- Safeguarding specialists are confident and knowledgeable but there is more to do to ensure that all social workers know all the legal frameworks they work in
- Further work on Mental Capacity Act, Human Rights Act and Domestic Violence legislation, case law and approaches would be beneficial

2. Governance: Safeguarding Adults Board

Strengths

- Strong leadership from the council
- SAB is well established with a high level of commitment from most partners
- Awareness raising has had an impact and safeguarding is seen as everybody's business
- Strong links with wider Community Safety work and some innovative activities that reach some citizens who would not otherwise get support
- Strong links with safeguarding children

Safeguarding Adults Board

Areas for Consideration

- Strategic leadership and commitment from key statutory partners (on the board and in their respective organisations) will be critical to safeguarding Harrow citizens
- In their leadership role the council should consider how it brings partners into owning safeguarding (rather than seeing it as council business they are helping with)
- The Board should consider how it exerts a preventative function to ensure that people are not harmed by poor health, care or police responses
- The Board should consider how it brings together the data and intelligence its partners have in order to identify and manage risks in Harrow

3. Quality Assurance

Strengths

- There is evidence that there is an effective learning loop from practice through audit, response and review
- There is evidence of the council proactively seeking feedback from people using services to ensure that safeguarding is effective, and then acting on that feedback
- There is a broad and innovative mesh of risk management for and with people

Quality Assurance

Areas for consideration

- There is a lot of council data. It could be enhanced by a focus on outcomes from practice and greater interrogation and analysis
- There is scope to address more systematically, across the council and NHS commissioners, CQC and the Quality Surveillance Group, care quality issues and provider intelligence
- The council could encourage providers to engage more proactively with their own learning and development and share their own QA processes
- IT is slow

In conclusion...

- Impressive safeguarding policies
 - We have seen a very large number of motivated and committed staff
 - There is strong council leadership from members and officers, and in practice from social workers
 - There is an openness to try new approaches
 - The council is in a strong position for the challenges that are coming and to continue on the journey
 - the service is moving from “good to great” and actions from the Peer Review will further assist
-

Your reflections and questions

**....and any feedback from all of us to the Sector Led
Improvement Team**

Contact details

Cathy Kerr

Cathy.kerr@richmond.gov.uk

Cathie Williams

Email: cathiewilliams@btinternet.com

The Adult Safeguarding Community of Practice on the Knowledge Hub has hundreds of documents, forums, discussions and videos about safeguarding – everything from legislation, policy and guidance to practice examples. Do register, join and contribute!

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REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	15 January 2014
Subject:	Brent and Harrow- Joint Trading Standards Service
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Caroline Bruce, Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

The purpose of this report is to request that members consider its contents and note the continuation of the current partnership arrangement between the London Boroughs of Brent and Harrow and agree delegations to enable the finalisation of the Service Level Agreement.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Note and agree the continued joint arrangements for the Trading Standards service with Brent Council and agree delegations for additional aspects of the service namely the Illegal Money Lending project and the charging for the Primary Authority Partnership;

2. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Environment and Enterprise in conjunction with Brent Council's Strategic Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment to conclude the year on year changes to the SLA to reflect the operational needs of the Council and to execute such documents as necessary to give effect to recommendation 1 above.

Reason (for recommendation): To ensure delegation of an executive function.

Section 2 – Report

This report requests Cabinet to note and agree the continued joint arrangements between Brent and Harrow and to consider some initiatives that are being developed as part of the SLA discussions. This is required to maintain the status quo of continuing to combine Brent and Harrow Trading Standards service. This partnership has resulted in a larger single trading standards service of significant size to be “fit for purpose” and meet the needs of both boroughs.

Background

Trading Standards as a local authority service has a long history of partnership working. Brent has provided the service for Harrow on a consortium basis since the 1970s. Originally the service encompassed the Boroughs of Harrow, Brent and Ealing until Ealing left the consortium in the early 1990s. In 1996 a formal consortium agreement was drawn up between Brent and Harrow based upon the prior agreement between the three parties.

In accordance with the administrative arrangements which came into force under the Local Government Act 2000, the parties are required to review the arrangements contained within the 1996 agreement and seek regular Executive approval. A report to Cabinet on 3 July 2001 sought clarity from Members as to how to deal with the three joint committees that existed at the time. This resulted in the creation of the Joint Advisory Panel to oversee the service and a Service Level Agreement (SLA) setting out the costs and commercial arrangements.

The SLA is now being finalised and some new delegations are required to facilitate the inclusion of new initiatives into the agreement.

Options considered

There are no other options being considered at this stage as the SLA needs to be finalised by February 2014 to be effective for 1st April 2014. A future review will look at options for service delivery and this will be reported to Cabinet in due course.

Current situation

The joint service has been delivered successfully by the Brent –Harrow consortium with demonstrable benefits arising from the economies of the scale of the operation. Since 2008/2009 there has been a £300k reduction in the cost of the service. In 2013/14 additional income and further efficiencies have resulted in a further reduction to Harrow residents of £190k without diminution in the service.

The SLA for the 2014/15 financial year is currently being reviewed and there are two proposals already agreed by Brent's Cabinet that now require consideration by Harrow before they can be incorporated into the SLA. These are:

1. Illegal Money Lending Investigation

An Illegal Money Lending Team ("IMLT") was established within Birmingham Trading Standards as a pilot project in England, one of only two in Great Britain; the other pilot area being Glasgow – covering Scotland. The remit of the team is to investigate illegal money lending activity, establish if a problem exists and, if so, bring to justice those persons carrying on this activity. The team is made up of highly experienced investigators with a broad range of backgrounds and investigative skills.

Research funded by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and using information gathered by the Birmingham pilot project has been published which identifies the extent of this type of activity as well as the reasons that people use illegal money lenders. Funding for the project is provided from the Financial Inclusion Fund administered by the Treasury and managed by BIS. The Treasury and BIS announced that due to the success of the Birmingham pilot, funding will be continued and can be used to roll out to other Authorities.

On 29th December 2010, Business Minister, Edward Davey announced that £5.2 million in funds was to be made available to continue the national illegal money lending project for 2012/13 through the trading standards service.

In addition, the Minister also announced that BIS intended to restructure the project by moving it to a three national team model. The Minister indicated that BIS were looking to maintain front line services whilst providing a value for money project. The England team is now hosted by Birmingham City Council and will continue to provide resources to investigate and prosecute illegal money lending across England.

Brent is currently in discussion with Birmingham to finalise the Illegal Money Lending Protocol. To take part in this scheme requires a delegation to Brent so that Harrow can be included in the protocol. There are no other viable alternative to this option as Birmingham City Council provides this service across England and as the scheme is funded by BIS there are no costs to Councils taking part in the scheme.

2. Introduction of a Charge base Regulatory Advice service for businesses.

Local Authority regulators, such as Trading Standards, Food Safety and Health & Safety, have been advising businesses of all sizes for many years in a number of ways. Regulators have justified this on the basis that this is a part of their statutory duties and that helping businesses comply with the law was a more effective way of ensuring compliance than by just inspection and enforcement action (including prosecution). This approach also satisfied the requirements of the Enforcement Concordat and the Regulators' Compliance Code. The key compliance tool used was the Home Authority (HA) principle whereby a Local Authority acts as the single point of contact for businesses that are based in their area but operate across the country. Local Authority regulatory services have been supporting HA relationships with larger companies for many years.

The Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 (RESA) introduced the concept of Primary Authority Partnerships (PAPs) which are seen as the logical development of the HA schemes. PAPs are legally recognised schemes, unlike the voluntary HA schemes they are intended to replace. PAPs are open to any business, charity or other organisation that is regulated by two or more local authorities in respect of a relevant function. PAPs are offered across a range of regulatory functions.

The June 2013 report to the Brent Executive sought approval for the introduction of a PAP scheme in Brent and for the introduction of a charging system to increase the availability of advice and support to businesses, especially to Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), with the provision of up to seven hours free advice and guidance on regulatory matters.

The Brent proposals aim to reduce and simplify the regulatory burden on businesses entering into PAPs by ensuring that they can have confidence in applying nationwide the advice they have been given. This is because admission to a PAP scheme symbolises consistency of approach between different local enforcement agencies. For businesses requiring more advice than it would presently be possible to give from existing resources, these proposals extend the availability of advice, with up to seven hours advice and support provided free and the option to access more advice if required at an extremely economic rate.

In finalising the SLA Harrow will have the flexibility to not only determine the number of hours free service to be provided to Harrow businesses but to also determine the charges that would apply thereafter.

As this is an additional aspect to the service there need to be a delegation to Brent by Harrow Cabinet before it can be incorporated into the SLA.

Implications of the Recommendation

Resources, costs

The financial implications are outlined below. There are no additional resource implications for the delegation re Illegal Money Lending. There are also no additional resource implications for the charging for regulatory advice. The SLA will include the commercial arrangements for the allocation of income gained from this initiative.

Staffing/workforce

None

Equalities impact

None

Community safety

The proposed revisions to the SLA for 2014/15 would introduce further improvements to the service in respect of illegal money lending and the businesses regulatory advice service and contribute to improving community safety.

Legal Implications

The purpose of the service level agreement is to allow Harrow Council to continue with the administrative arrangements in providing a joint trading standard service with Brent Council. This is covered by the general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011. The power to delegate a function to another local authority is contained in s101 Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.

Financial Implications

The current cost of the service is £625k. The MTFs reductions mean that the net budget available is £485k in 2013/14. The 2014/15 available budget and service level is to be discussed as part of the SLA.

Performance Issues

The Trading Standards service contributes to the Council priorities of making Harrow a Safer and Fairer Borough through its work in regulating business activity and monitoring product and business safety. The service contributes actively to the Safer Harrow Partnership through input to the joint tasking process and contributions to partnership activities such as weeks of action and joint enforcement projects. Its priorities and performance standards are set annually by a service plan which is scrutinised by a member level Advisory Board. In relation to the two proposals in this report, the IMLT deals with protecting vulnerable people who may be the victims of extortionate credit as well as harassment and intimidation from loan sharks, while the chargeable business advice ensures that we maintain a level of assistance for all of our businesses.

The table below shows the current performance metrics for the service:

Performance Metric (Descriptor)	Specific Activity undertaken	Planned	Actual
Number of consumer protection enquiries dealt with from members of the public	Requests for action completed (criminal)	850	1057
High risk premises due for inspection	Announced Primary High Risk Insp.	70	50
Targeting businesses which sell age restricted goods	Under Age Test Purchase Visits	150	150
Referrals from other Local Authorities regarding businesses where we provide advice and assistance on a national level	Home Authority Referrals	145	67
Number of reports/investigations submitted by the team	Criminal Reports of Infringement	50	46
Number referrals the Trading Standards Financial Investigations team.	Financial Investigations under POCA	6	7
The number of defendants prosecuted	Prosecutions completed (Magistrates)	11	20
The number of formal cautions issued	Simple Cautions	12	9
The number of letters of warning issued	Letters of Warning	20	20
Audits completed of members of the approved trader scheme	Approved Trader Scheme audits	30	114
The number of Doorstep crime operations	Doorstep Crime Multi-Agency	6	1
Number of emergency callouts attended by staff in relation to rogue trader activity	Doorstep Crime Rapid response actions	6	3

Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? No

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No.

Priorities

The report contributes to the fairer aspect of the current corporate priorities as it ensures the regulation of trading standards.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jessie Man



on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 3 December 2013

Name: Linda Cohen



on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 10 December 2013

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Martin Randall



on behalf of the
Divisional Director
Strategic Commissioning

Date: 2 January 2014

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker



on behalf of the
Corporate Director
(Environment &
Enterprise)

Date: 12 December 2013

*

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Venetia Reid-Baptiste, Divisional Director- Commissioning Services
Environment & Enterprise
Tel: 020 8424 1492

Background Papers: Minutes – Cabinet, 3 July 2001 –
Recommendation III - Local Government Act 2000 - Joint
Arrangements

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/CeListDocuments.aspx?Committeed=249&MeetingId=1049&DF=17%2f07%2f2001&Ver=2>

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]

REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	15 January 2014
Subject:	Harrow Help Scheme Review
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Tony Ferrari, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Draft Help Scheme Policy Appendix B – Telephone questionnaire Appendix C – Feedback from the Help Scheme Review Appendix D – London Council letter to the Secretary of State Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the outcome of the review of the pilot Harrow Help Scheme, providing members with the proposed policy changes for the financial year 2014/15.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to make the following decisions:

1. Agree to utilise the 'Local Welfare Provision' funding by operating the Emergency Relief Scheme for a second year 2014/15.

2. Agree and adopt the changes to the Help Scheme policy.

Reason: (For recommendation)

The DWP allocated funding to all Local Authorities to provide a 'Local Welfare Provision' as a result of the changes to the Social Fund included within the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Further to close partnership working with a multi-agency group and public consultation Harrow Council developed the Emergency Relief Scheme which was piloted for the first year of operation to give the Council the opportunity to understand need within the borough.

The pilot Emergency Relief Scheme has now been reviewed through consultation with Emergency Relief Scheme staff, referral partners and a sample of users of the scheme. The feedback received throughout this process has helped to shape the changes to the proposed scheme for the second year of operation - 2014/15.

DWP have not confirmed the funding allocation post 2014/15 and therefore the Emergency Relief Scheme has been redesigned to continue for one year in its current form and to be sufficiently flexible to cope with changes in programme funding in future years.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 As a result of changes to the Social Fund within the Welfare Reforms the Government gave all Local Authorities a pot of funding to provide a Local Welfare Provision'. The funding is not ring fenced and Local Authorities were given the autonomy to develop a provision that meets the needs of their local area.
- 2.2 In line with Harrow Council's vision these changes were taken forward by working together with a multi-agency group to design and develop the Council's Emergency Relief Scheme. The scheme was also shaped through feedback from a twelve week public consultation.
- 2.3 Whilst the DWP provided Local Authorities with data on the operation of the previous schemes run through the Social Fund, the information was not detailed. Therefore it was agreed that the Emergency Relief Scheme would be piloted over the first year of operation to help the Council to understand the need within Harrow for this provision of support. The scheme has been monitored throughout this pilot period and the outcomes of the review have influenced the proposed shape of the scheme for the year 2014/15.

- 2.4 The Emergency Relief Scheme sits within the overall Harrow Help Scheme. The Harrow Help Scheme provides a holistic approach to the provision of advice and support to people in Harrow making best use of resources available across the borough. The Harrow Help Scheme brings together discretionary pots of funding, including the pot of funding to deliver the 'Local Welfare Provision, ensuring funds are prioritised to maximise effectiveness and minimise spend.

Options considered

- 2.5 The government has provided the funding for the local welfare provision for a second year 2014/15. This funding is not ring fenced and therefore a decision could be made to use this funding in another way to deliver a 'Local Welfare Provision'. There is an expectation from the Government that support is provided for people in an emergency and as the scheme delivers this expectation, Officers are recommending that the Emergency Relief Scheme continues to operate over the next financial year 2014/15.
- 2.6 The scheme could continue 'as is' however feedback from both referral agencies and users has suggested that some changes are required to improve delivery of the scheme. Officers are recommending that elected members approve the changes to the policy.

Current situation

- 2.7 The principles of both the Harrow Help Scheme and the Emergency Relief scheme that have helped to shape delivery over the first year of operation and are listed below:

Harrow Help Scheme Principles

- The scheme will be financially sustainable
- The scheme will help to increase financial independence and decrease formal support
- The fund will be monitored to continuously shape the scheme going forward
- The scheme will put in place the single view of the customer
- The scheme doesn't duplicate provision that is delivered elsewhere in the borough.

Emergency Relief Scheme Principles

- The Emergency Relief Scheme is a discretionary service provided within the available funds
- The funding will be allocated on a monthly basis to minimise the risk of the funds not being available throughout the year

- It will be a service that meets urgent needs that cannot be met elsewhere
- An accessible service that provides short term support where there is a risk to the safety and/or health of the household to:
 - o Assist people to remain or return to the community; and/or
 - o Help people who are suffering severe hardship

Access to the Help Scheme

2.8 The Help pages are accessible through the web and provide details of advice and support available in the borough.

2.9 Initially when the scheme was first developed there was an intention to develop a directory of advice and support available in the borough. As this activity started, a voluntary sector consortium within Harrow were successful in getting lottery funding to develop a similar advice portal. Further to concerns regarding duplication it was agreed that the Council should work with the consortium and feed into the development of the portal. The procurement of specialised IT has recently taken place and therefore all organisations are currently collecting the required information to inform the portal.

Access to the Emergency Relief Scheme

2.10 People have been able to access the Emergency Relief Scheme through the telephone and completion of hard copy application forms. The original intention that applications could be carried out on-line has yet to be implemented as there have been issues regarding the implementation of the IT system. The system is due to go live in January 2014 and the on-line application process should be available in February 2014.

Eligibility Criteria

2.11 A person applying to the Emergency Relief Scheme must meet both primary and secondary eligibility criteria to be able to access support through the scheme. The primary and secondary eligibility criteria are included on page 4 and 5 of the attached Help Scheme policy.

2.12 If a person is found to have an emergency need that is a risk to their health or safety, they are provided with 'in kind' support such as food vouchers, furniture, white goods, travel assistance and fuel top-ups. The table starting on page 6 of the attached policy shows the needs that will be considered for the 'in kind' support and the criteria that is being proposed to be applied in year 2014/15 and subsequent years.

Emergency Relief Scheme Data

2.13 The Emergency Relief Scheme went live on 2nd April, 2013. The following data shows the support that has been provided through the scheme to the end of October:

Types of award	Total number of applications to the scheme	Total number of refusals	Numbers of awards given (applicants could receive more than one type of award)	Total value of awards given
Food	676	372	207	£8,475.00
Fuel			76	£1,288.00
Furniture			80	£19,978.42
White goods			55	£17,519.65
Delivery				£127.95
Clothes			14	£865.00
Travel (Xcite funding + ERS)			5	£193.60
TOTAL				

* The number is higher as multiple awards are given in certain cases.

Procurement of Furniture

2.14 Due to the projected level of spend within the scheme on furniture, a procurement exercise took place to appoint a supplier where Harrow will purchase all its used and new furniture as well as white goods. The procurement exercise is complete and there are now separate contracts set up for the provision of the following items:

Lot 1 - Re-used furniture

Lot 2 - Furniture (beds, chairs, tables etc.)

Lot 3 – White goods (washing machine, fridge, cooker etc.)

Lot 4 – Flooring (carpets, lino etc.)

2.15 To date there has not been any awards of re-used furniture. However now the contract is in place, and as part of the review, consideration has been given to the provision of re-used furniture to support people experiencing an emergency.

Emergency Relief Scheme Review

2.16 The review has involved the following activity:

- § Data review
- § Meetings held with the following:
 - Emergency Relief staff
 - Key referrers – CAB, Housing
 - Jobcentre Plus staff

- Community Reference Group which includes membership from HAD, Harrow Mencap, Mind in Harrow, Age UK, The Harrow Law Centre, National Landlords Association, CAB, Jobcentre Plus, Harrow Association of Somalie Organisations (HASVO), and representation from internal Council services.
- § Telephone questionnaire with a sample of applicants who were both successful/unsuccessful in getting support from the scheme. The questionnaire is attached at Appendix B to this report.

Feedback

Questionnaire

- 2.17 The telephone questionnaire was carried out with a random sample of 53 applicants to the scheme. The detailed feedback to both the telephone questionnaire and face to face activity is included in the attached paper at Appendix C to this report.
- 2.18 A summary of the responses to the telephone questionnaire with users of the scheme is shown below in Table 2:

Table 2	
Review Questions	Feedback
Was the Emergency Relief Scheme application process simple to follow?	<p>The majority of people agreed the application process was simple to follow. For the 19% that didn't agree their comments included the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lots of documents required and the applicant may not have all of these available - Lots of questions particularly if English isn't the applicants first language - Difficult if you are not very good at filling out forms
<p>Council's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § <i>Applicants will have to continue to provide documents as verification is required.</i> § <i>The applicant is able to apply by telephone if they find it difficult to complete forms.</i> 	
Did you accept the support that was offered to you?	<p>Everybody who responded accepted the support that was offered to them.</p>
Did the support you received meet your emergency need?	<p>Everybody who responded and received support advised that the support met their emergency need. Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All grateful for the help received - Feel that should be able to receive more than 1 award - Worried that when money goes in Bank will be swallowed up with bank charges and will be in the same position again - Had been refused help from JCP (Job Centre Plus) and without food and fuel
<p>Council's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § <i>Applicants are able to receive more than 1 award and this was advised in the</i> 	

Table 2	
Review Questions	Feedback
	<i>telephone conversation</i> § <i>Officers are working very closely with JCP to ensure, where appropriate, DWP are providing support through the Short Term Benefit Advice</i>
Were you signposted to any other services?	Everybody who responded advised that they were not signposted to other services.
Did you go to the signposted services for help?	N/A
Did you find the services useful?	N/A
Council's response: § <i>Whilst the applicants who responded advised that they had not been signposted to any other services the officers with the team have logged that over half of the people interviewed had been signposted to the following organisations as appropriate to the individual: DWP, CAB, HAD, Housing Services, Children's Services and the Xcite programme. As a result of this feedback the team will review the way in which people are signposted to ensure the resident understands the services they are being signposted to and how that service can support them to improve their current financial situation.</i>	
Was there anything that could have been done differently/better?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Again most people stated how grateful they were to receive help at a time they were really in need - Many positive comments regarding the helpfulness of the ERS Team - Limiting awards to 2 a year is too low - People on low income who are working also require help as know somebody that is going to the Foodbank - Mix-up between JSA and Job Club resulted in money being stopped. Food/Fuel covered whilst didn't have any money - Problems with the Allpay card in relation to top up of fuel – Post Offices will not take Allpay cards and some paypoint locations - Some people who responded advised that the scheme should not give out cash
Council's response: § <i>Managers will feed back to the team the positive comments that have been received regarding their delivery of the scheme</i> § <i>The scheme will continue to be limited to 2 awards per year</i> § <i>The primary criteria to access the scheme will continue to only support people on means tested benefit as the Council do not have the resources to be able to means test people on low incomes.</i> § <i>Working closely with JCP to ensure, where appropriate, DWP are providing support through the Short Term Benefit Advice.</i> § <i>London Councils have recently written a letter to the Secretary of State to request responses to the issues that are arising because a significant demand for all Local Welfare Provision across London has directly resulted because of issues with DWP administered benefits. The letter is attached at Appendix D.</i>	

Face to Face

- 2.19 All people contacted via face meetings were advised that feedback was requested on the process/criteria and application of the criteria/support provided from the scheme.
- 2.20 A summary of the response to the questions asked with organisations and staff through the face to face activity is shown below in Table 3

Table 3	
Review Questions	Feedback
What has worked well?	The external organisations felt that the scheme was better and easier to access than the previous DWP scheme. All mentioned again that the staff were very helpful. The staff themselves welcomed the good relationship they have within the team and with Access Harrow staff and reflected how this ensured that face to face activity with applicants went smoothly.
Councils response:	
<p>§ <i>As stated above feedback will be provided to the team regarding the positive comments.</i></p> <p>§ <i>Feedback will also be given to the Access Harrow team to thank them for their input to ensuring the successful delivery of the scheme</i></p>	
What hasn't worked so well?	<p>The following key concerns were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When the scheme started it was difficult for applicants to get an award and therefore the staff from one of the external organisations were still reticent to use the scheme. - Need to have a more holistic approach to how the scheme can help people rather than gatekeeping a benefits system - Have been some issues with Allpay cards however it was acknowledged that they are quick at resolving problems - Generally the systems and paperwork take up too much time for the award given – administration v resources - Some issues regarding applicants not being able to apply after 4.00 p.m. and for staff issues regarding the processing of late afternoon applications within appropriate timescales
Councils response:	
<p>§ <i>A Manager has attended a team meeting to encourage signposting to the scheme from the organisation that raised concerns.</i></p> <p>§ <i>As the scheme has moved forward and officers are beginning to understand the need for the support within Harrow the team are applying the scheme more holistically</i></p> <p>§ <i>The administration of the scheme will be streamlined considerably when the IT system is in place in the New Year.</i></p> <p>§ <i>Confirmation was provided that applicants are able to apply after 4.00 p.m. however they will not necessarily receive their award the same evening however circumstances are taken into account.</i></p> <p>§ <i>All publicity for the scheme encourages applications to be made earlier in the day.</i></p>	
Issues/suggestions	- Scheme should allow people to keep some capital to

Table 3	
Review Questions	Feedback
raised regarding the criteria to the scheme	<p>support them in emergencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boroughs should have agreement on what happens when a person moves from one borough to the other - Scheme should provide support for people who have no recourse to public funds but are working and on a low income - Only giving 2 awards per year can be a problem – need clear procedures to show when we have given support over a period of time and it only counts for 1 provision - Means tested benefit is fair but maybe should consider people on low income who are working and have had a disaster i.e. fire/flood and would not be able to get goods in any other way - Should help non dependants having issues with benefits but not getting support from parents.
<p>Councils response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § <i>The Scheme is based on a risk to health and safety and is a last resort therefore the applicant must not have savings that can meet the need in whole or in part.</i> § <i>Clarity regarding people moving from one borough to another will be sought from the London wide Local Welfare Provision group. The responsible borough should provide the support to the claimant however if exceptional circumstances and other borough unable to help Harrow will provide emergency food if the person meets the criteria.</i> § <i>The criteria will not be changed to provide support for people with no access to public funds</i> § <i>The procedures will be updated to provide clarity on numbers of provision of support</i> § <i>Unable to means test people on low income and therefore unable to support through Emergency Relief Scheme</i> § <i>Non dependants will be living in the household and therefore are likely to be able to access food etc. Exceptional circumstances are always considered</i> 	
Are there any issues/ suggestions in provision of support?	<p>There were various suggestions made in relation to the provision of further support such as coats, school uniforms, phone credit for people who are homeless to get housing, sofas, wardrobes, flooring and topping up fuel bills.</p> <p>There were also suggestions put forward in relation to secondary criteria used when providing goods i.e. fridges should be provided to all not only those that meet the current criteria Staff felt that the procedures should be more detailed in relation to the replacement of existing goods and helping people who have been without furniture for some time but did not know that they could apply for help.</p>
<p>Councils response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § <i>Officers will propose to Councillors that the provision of support to the scheme is updated to include the following changes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Flooring will be provided for all applicants.</i> 	

Table 3	
Review Questions	Feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Phone credit to a level of £10 will be given for single homeless people who have used all their credit and cannot make the calls they need to Landlords to secure accommodation</i> ○ <i>Appropriate clothing is provided through the scheme and this includes coats and footwear</i> ○ <i>The secondary criteria will be updated to provide fridges to all groups</i> ○ <i>The secondary criteria will be updated to provide washing machines to all applicants with children as well as people with a disability/medical need that creates the need for frequent washing or high temperature washing</i> ○ <i>Help will be given to support people if they have pest issues i.e. bed bugs, rats etc.</i> ○ <i>The scheme will look to provide wardrobes or chest of drawers as appropriate</i> ○ <i>The scheme will not provide sofas however will signpost to shops/charities where used sofas can be bought.</i>
General Issues and suggestions raised	<p>The following comments were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff wanted contact details for internal services and Local Welfare provision schemes across the country - The Council should explore Credit Unions for the provision of loans - The Council should not be referring people to budgeting loans for emergency situations as gets them in more debt only in the case of where the person wants non-essential items - Clarity required on the length of time a person will be supported, particularly in the case of where benefits have been sanctioned - Application form will need updating if changes are put forward - Procedures need more detail
Councils response:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § <i>The team now have contact details for all services and Local Welfare Provision Schemes across the country</i> § <i>The Council did explore the provision of loans through Credit Unions however the administrative costs were too high</i> § <i>The team will signpost people to budgeting loans where they want non-essential items</i> § <i>People will be supported for a maximum of 4 weeks if their circumstances meet the criteria (1 award)</i> § <i>Procedures have been updated to provide more detail.</i> 	

Emergency Relief Scheme Proposals for Change

Emergency Relief Scheme Principles

2.21 The revised Help Scheme Policy is attached at Appendix A.

The principles for the Emergency Relief Scheme were designed in partnership with a multi-agency group and will remain as stated in pages 3 and 4 of the Harrow Help Scheme policy.

Primary Eligibility Criteria

2.22 There are no changes to the Primary Eligibility Criteria as detailed on page 4 and 5 of the policy.

Emergency Relief Scheme – Needs and Secondary Eligibility Criteria

2.23 If a person has met the primary criteria they will be referred through to the Emergency Relief Scheme where their circumstances will be considered against criteria to establish whether there is a risk to the household if the need is not met. The vulnerability criteria will not change and is explained at page 5 of the policy.

2.24 The table on page 6 of the policy details the provision of ‘in kind’ support and criteria that will be applied at this stage of the process. The proposed changes are listed below:

- Support will be provided for a maximum of 4 weeks if their circumstances meet the criteria (e.g. food)
- White goods – currently fridges are given to people who have a requirement for cold storage for medication and milk for children under 11 years. The proposed change will provide fridges to all qualifying applicants.
- White goods – washing machines are currently given where there are people with a disability/illness that creates a need for frequent washing or high temperature washing and families with 3 or more children. The proposed change will include the provision of washing machines to all qualifying families with children in addition to the previous criteria.
- The scheme will provide additional support as follows:
 - The scheme will provide flooring for all groups
 - Phone credit to a level of £10 will be given for single homeless people who have used all their credit and cannot make the calls they need to Landlords to secure accommodation
 - Help will be given to support all groups if they have pest issues i.e. bed bugs, rats etc.
 - The scheme will look to provide wardrobes or a chest of drawers for all groups

Help Scheme

2.25 All other elements of the Help Scheme Policy will remain the same as currently delivered.

Legal Implications

2.26 The council has local discretion in setting criteria for the fund, however it should take account of its public law duties when making this

decision. This includes taking account of the equality implications, results of consultation and other relevant material

- 2.27 Although the DWP funding transferred for this purpose is not ring fenced, there is an expectation that funds will be used for local welfare provision.

Financial Implications

This is a report of the Corporate Director of Resources and deals with financial matters throughout.

Performance Issues

There are two elements to this service. Support relies on both “goods in lieu” awards which are dealt with within 24 hours, and the signposting of applicants to appropriate organisations who can provide further help. Regarding the former, the team is well resourced and 100% of awards to date have been dealt with within 24 hours; this performance is expected to continue. Regarding the latter, whilst the Team give advice on the telephone, Harrow is working with the Harrow Advising Together Consortium (HAT) to build an on-line advice Portal which will improve signposting and advice. As this aspect develops, consideration will be given to the best way of measuring performance. Applicants’ perceptions of the service, which are generally favourable, have also been captured in the survey described earlier in the report and the Council has responded to the views expressed.

Environmental Impact

None

Risk Management Implications

With DWP funding allocated only for two years (2013/14 & 2014/15), there clearly is a risk that the Harrow Help Scheme, including the Harrow Emergency Scheme, will not be able to continue beyond the coming year.

Currently the scheme is under spending, mainly due to our “no cash awards policy”. There is a risk that administration costs will exceed programme funding spent and this again is a risk for the long term viability of the scheme.

Although the scheme is open to all experiencing financial hardship or requiring emergency needs, there is risk that it continues to be used only by a minority of residents who previously made use of the Social Fund scheme under the DWP administration. Take up by all those who need it relies on a good communication strategy that advertises the scheme and ensures residents know how and where to apply. Whilst we have held the “Harrow Helping You Event”, advertised the Emergency Relief Scheme in My Harrow magazine and distributed posters and leaflets widely, ongoing advertising is not viable both due to cost and uncertainty regarding future funding.

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? Yes

Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”), the council, in the exercise of its functions, has to have ‘due regard’ to (i) eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (ii) advancing equality of opportunity between those with a relevant protected characteristic and those without; and (iii) fostering good relations between those with a relevant protected characteristic and those without. The relevant protected characteristics are age, race, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but to a limited extent.

An Equalities Impact Assessment screening was conducted in relation to the review of the Help Scheme and can be found at Appendix E to the Cabinet Report. The Help Scheme is a mitigation put in place to support people in financial hardship.

The review of the Help Scheme has been carried out by talking to key referral organisations, staff and users. The Equality Impact Assessment screening has concluded that the proposed changes within the Help Scheme will not have an adverse impact on residents from any of the protected groups however the following actions have been put in place to avoid potential impact:

1. Advertise the changes to the voluntary sector and Jobcentre Plus to ensure referral agencies are aware of the changes and able to provide support to their users.
2. Detailed data is not known on why these groups are accessing the scheme more than others. It may be that some do not have emergency needs or these needs are met within their communities. To ensure all groups have equal access Officers will continue to work with representatives from the Community Reference Group, as stated above, to raise awareness of the scheme.
3. Continue to monitor the applicants for the Emergency Relief Scheme against the protected characteristics to ensure that, if appropriate, actions are put in place to ensure all are aware of the emergency provision of support.

Corporate Priorities

The Harrow Help Scheme reflects the aims of our corporate priorities to ensure a fairer Harrow.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dawn Calvert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 10 December 2013		
Name: Paresh Mehta	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 5 December 2013		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Martin Randall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director Strategic Commissioning
Date: 5 December 2013		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise
Date: 5 December 2013		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Fern Silverio (Head of Service – Collections & Housing Benefits),
Tel: 020-8736-6818 / email: fern.silverio@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Appendices, as attached to the main report

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]

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The Harrow Help Scheme Policy 2014 - 15

Helping people to help themselves



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the Help Scheme policy which will take effect from April 1st 2014.
- 1.2 DWP have not confirmed the funding allocation post 2014/15 and therefore the Emergency Relief Scheme has been redesigned to continue for one year in its current form and to be sufficiently flexible to cope with changes in programme funding in future years.
- 1.3 The Harrow Help Scheme has been developed to support people experiencing financial hardship. The intention of this scheme is to provide a holistic approach to the provision of advice and support to people by making best use of all available resources.
- 1.4 The Council are working with a Voluntary Sector Consortium, Harrow Advising Together (HAT) who have been successful in getting lottery funding to develop an Advice Portal. A link to the portal will sit within the Help Pages of the Council's website.
- 1.5 Access to the Advice Portal will be through the web or telephone where the person will be signposted to the advice and support that they require. More complicated queries will be directed through to the appropriate organisation that can provide help. If the situation is urgent the person could be referred through to the Emergency Relief and Hardship Team within the Council for assessment to access financial assistance.
- 1.6 The Emergency Relief and Hardship Team will initially assess the applicant to identify if they are able to access the support to meet their needs by other means, such as maximising benefit entitlement. If no other support is available, the team will assess them for entitlement to discretionary assistance from within the council. Where appropriate a referral will be made to other services. All other successful applicants will be considered for either an Emergency Relief Payment, Economic Development Payment or Discretionary Housing Payment¹.
- 1.7 The Emergency Relief Scheme sits within the Harrow Help Scheme and has been developed as a result of the changes to the Social Fund that were taken forward through the welfare reforms. As a result of these changes all Local Authorities were given responsibility to develop a Local Welfare Provision that provides flexible help to meet unavoidable need.

¹ Discretionary Housing Payments will be addressed under a separate policy.

- 1.8 Once the applicant has been reviewed against primary criteria the Emergency Relief and Hardship Team will assess against secondary criteria to understand risk to health and safety if the need is not met. If the person meets the criteria they will be provided with 'in kind' support to meet their need. To improve the person's long term outlook they may also be required to access advice and support.
- 1.9 The Emergency Relief Scheme criteria is aligned with other discretionary financial assistance available across the council to ensure funds are prioritised to maximise effectiveness and minimise spend.
- 1.10 A Hardship Fund of £100,000 has been made available for year 2014/15. This fund will be used to assist people in financial hardship through grants to fund community projects.
- 1.11 The second year of operation of this scheme has been shaped through close monitoring and evaluation of the pilot scheme in 2013/14 and through a review. The review has been carried out by working in partnership with a multi-agency group and through getting feedback from users of the scheme, key referrers and staff operating the scheme.

2. The Principles of the Harrow Help Scheme and the Emergency Relief Scheme

- 2.1 The principles of the Harrow Help Scheme have been informed through partnership working and feedback from consultation.
- 2.2 The principles are to help ensure that people accessing the scheme are provided with holistic support that improves their long term position.
- 2.3 The data analysis and feedback gathered through the pilot months of the scheme has been used to shape the delivery of the Harrow Help Scheme in 2014/15.
- 2.4 **The principles of the Harrow Help Scheme are:**
 - § The scheme will be financially sustainable
 - § The scheme will help to increase financial independence and decrease formal support
 - § The fund will be monitored to continuously shape the scheme going forward
 - § The scheme will put in place a single view of the customer

- § The Scheme doesn't duplicate provision that is delivered elsewhere in the borough

2.5 The Principles of the Emergency Relief Scheme

The principles of the Emergency Relief Scheme are:

- § The Emergency Relief Scheme is a discretionary service provided within the available funds
- § The funding will be allocated on a monthly basis to minimise the risk of the funds not being available throughout the year
- § It will be a service that meets urgent needs that cannot be met elsewhere
- § An accessible service that provides short term support where there is a risk to the safety and/or health of the household to:
 - Assist people to remain or return to the community; and/or
 - Help people who are suffering severe hardship

3. Access to the Emergency Relief Scheme

3.1 A person will access the Emergency Relief Scheme through the web, the telephone or face to face support from Council, Voluntary/Community Sector or other partners providing front line services. This can be carried out either through referral from an agency or self-referral.

3.2 At this stage an initial eligibility check will be carried out. Dependant on the outcome of the check the person could either be directed to

- Advice and Support services that will support them in their time of need which could include referrals through to Council Services such as Housing or Adults Services or external services such as the Citizens Advice Bureau; and/or
- where the person is experiencing a crisis, they will be asked to complete the application process for the Emergency Relief Scheme. Any applications to the Emergency Relief Scheme can be made through hard copy, telephone or through the web by the applicant or

the supporting agency, including the Emergency Relief and Hardship team.

4. Primary eligibility criteria

4.1 The initial eligibility check is formally called the Primary Eligibility Check. The person must meet all of this criteria to be referred through to the Emergency Relief Scheme. The primary eligibility criteria is:

- § Period of residency for 3 months is needed (exceptions may be accepted i.e. people fleeing violence, leaving residential/institutional care/prison and about to move to Harrow)
- § Qualifying age – over 16 years old
- § Applicant is in receipt of a means tested benefit, or have an underlying entitlement to that benefit
- § The applicant must not have savings that can meet the need in whole or in part.
- § No other friends/family who could support the need
- § If there have been two successful claims from the household for emergency support in the last year a further claim cannot be made
- § There must be eligibility to access public funds

4.1.1 Means tested benefits are as stated below:

- § Child and working tax credits
- § Income support
- § Job seekers allowance income based
- § Employment Support Allowance Income Related
- § Pension Credit
- § Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support

4.2 Should a person meet all the primary criteria and be experiencing an emergency, where 'in kind' support can be provided to meet the need, they will then be required to meet secondary criteria.

5. Emergency Relief Scheme – Needs and Secondary eligibility criteria

5.1 If a person has been referred through to the Emergency Relief Scheme the circumstances of their household will be considered against criteria which establish the risk to the household if the need is not met.

5.2 The vulnerability criteria that falls within the secondary criteria is as follows:

- A child under 16 years old in the household
- Care leavers
- Pensioner
- Member of the household has an illness that would be severely impacted if need not met; and
- A household where a person, a partner or a dependant child is physically or mentally disabled and receives one of the following:
 - Disability Living Allowance (any component)
 - Employment Support Allowance (Support group)
 - Incapacity Benefit
 - Mobility Supplement
 - Severe Disablement Allowance
- People who are registered blind
- People who live in a property which has been granted a disabled band deduction;
- People who have been granted a Severely Mentally Impaired exemption for Council Tax; or
- Anyone who receives War Disablement Pension or War Widows Pension

5.3 The following table shows the needs that will be considered for the provision of 'in kind' support and the criteria that will be applied:

Need	Secondary Criteria	Provision of 'in kind' support
Food – no food available to provide at least one meal to household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For all (not restricted to vulnerable group) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Referral to food bank - Allpay card - Food for the period required dependant on access to funds, e.g. next benefit payment, for a maximum of four weeks
Energy fuel (heating, hot water, cooking fuel, electricity) – 1. Key card on emergency provision 2. Threat of disconnection or been disconnected	<p>Heating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for vulnerable groups as defined in Section 5.2 of this policy as follows: Heating fuel only provided from October to April 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fuel to be provided for period required dependant on access to funds e.g. Next Benefit payment, for a maximum of four weeks - Key meter top up - Cooking fuel - Minimal provision of microwave to non-vulnerable
	<p>Hot Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for vulnerable groups as defined in Section 5.2 of this policy - No restriction to the time of year this will be provided 	
	<p>Cooking fuel (gas)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for vulnerable groups as defined in Section 5.2 of this policy - No restriction to the time of year this will be provided 	
	<p>Electricity (specifically lighting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For all (no restriction to vulnerable group) - No restriction to the time of year this will be provided 	
White goods (Fridge, freezer, cooker, washing machine)	<p>Fridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For all (not restricted to vulnerable group) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White goods provided through organisations contracted through the Emergency Relief Scheme
	<p>Freezer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current Meals on Wheels users to freeze food and any other health requirements e.g. anorexic 	
	<p>Cooker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For vulnerable groups as defined in Section 5.2 of this policy 	
	<p>Washing machine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For households where there are people with a 	

Need	Secondary Criteria	Provision of 'in kind' support
	disability/illness that creates a need for frequent washing or high temperature washing e.g. incontinence and - Families with children	
Furnishings (Beds and mattresses, bedding, table and chairs, wardrobes or chest of drawers)	Beds and mattresses - For all (not restricted to vulnerable group)	- New bed and mattress provided through organisations contracted through the Emergency Relief Scheme
	Bedding - For all (not restricted to vulnerable group)	- Allpay card for new bedding
	Wardrobes/Chest of drawers - For all (not restricted to vulnerable group)	- Reuse wardrobe or chest of drawers provided through organisation contracted with the Council to provide re-use furniture
	Table and chairs - For all (not restricted to vulnerable group)	- New table and chairs provided through organisations contracted through the Emergency Relief Scheme
Flooring (carpets/lino)	- For all (not restricted to vulnerable group)	- Flooring provided through organisations contracted through the Emergency Relief Scheme
Clothing - Warm clothing including coat, socks, jumper, shoes. One full change of clothing for person leaving institutional care - School uniform	- For all (not restricted to vulnerable group)	- Second hand clothing through arrangement with local Charity Shop - Where not available then Allpay card for new clothing - School uniform through schools second hand uniform shops/donations or where not available an Allpay card will be provided
Travel Expenses	- Fleeing domestic	- Allpay card or travel

Need	Secondary Criteria	Provision of 'in kind' support
	violence/attendance at close relative's funeral (immediate family) travel to homeless hostel/to collect Emergency Relief Scheme goods/vouchers	warrant at cheapest method of travel
Telephone Credit	- For single homeless people who have used all their credit and cannot make the calls they need to Landlords to secure accommodation	- Through Allpay card
Eradication of pest issues	- For all (Not restricted to vulnerable groups)	- If Council through direct payment or Allpay Card
Other (which may include nappies/baby food)	- Cases will be looked at individually	- By provision of Allpay card

5.4 In relation to the provision of support there will be exceptional circumstances where reasonable judgement will be taken and as a result 'other' support may be provided as appropriate and dependant on need.

5.5 Where it is noted that there may be safeguarding concerns referrals will be made by the Emergency Relief Scheme Team through to the appropriate service.

5.6 Where emergency support is required the target will be to assess the application within one working day, up to a maximum of two working days. Notification of the decision will be issued as soon as is reasonably practicable, or in a maximum of 14 days.

5.7 Successful applicants may be required to access advice and support services as a requirement of their award of support.

5.8 People who access the Emergency Relief Scheme are required to consent to their data being shared. Information will be shared across the Council and, where appropriate, with external partners and other Councils, to enable prompt and informed decision making, preventing duplicate provision. Subsequent support will acknowledge this financial support. Any data sharing will be carried out within the remit of the Data Protection Act 1998.

6. Review of Emergency Relief Decision

- 6.1 If people disagree with the Council's decision then they will be able to ask the Council to review their decision. The request to review the decision will have to be submitted within 1 week of the decision. The review will be carried out by the team's Senior Manager and will be final.

7. Alignment of Local Authority Discretionary Funding

- 7.1 The Council has brought together all appropriate discretionary pots of funding that are used to support people in emergency need to provide additional support to the Emergency Relief Scheme.
- 7.2 By aligning these pots of funding with the Emergency Relief Scheme the specialist team can assess an applicant against the criteria and ensure the right support is provided for people in time of need and also ensuring public funds are distributed appropriately.
- 7.3 Discretionary Housing Payments and a small Economic Development grant have been brought under the Emergency Relief and Hardship assessment team however activity will be taken forward to bring together further discretionary funds.

8. Discretionary Housing Payment

- 8.1 The Emergency Relief and Hardship Team deliver the Discretionary Housing Payment alongside the Emergency Relief Scheme.
- 8.2 The Discretionary Housing Payment is a scheme provided by central government and administered by the Council to provide additional assistance with housing costs to people experiencing hardship including those impacted by the programme of Welfare Reform. These payments are regulated by the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 and associated best practice guidance. There is a new draft guidance to be introduced from April 2013 to take account of the changes to the benefit system. Discretionary housing payments can only be used for further financial assistance where a local authority considers that help with housing cost is needed. This can include help with rent, deposits and lump sums associated with housing need e.g. removal costs. The proposed new guide confirms that a claimant will only be entitled to discretionary housing payments if he/she is entitled to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and has rental liability and requires further financial assistance with housing costs.

Provision of Discretionary Housing Payments is addressed under a separate policy.

9. Economic Development Grant

- 9.1 The Economic Development Grant is available to support people to return to work.
- 9.2 The fund will support people on means tested Benefits, who are known to the Economic Development Service by providing travel expenses for interviews and training if set up by the Economic Development Department. Further funding is also available to support people moving back into work in the construction industry.

10. Financial Hardship Fund

- 10.1 The Financial Hardship Fund has been made available to support community projects that would help low income individuals and households who are negatively impacted by the Welfare Reforms or the current economic situation. The grants allocation process has been developed in partnership with the multi-agency Community Reference Group. A report is being taken to the Council's Cabinet meeting on the 13th February, 2014. The funding will be allocated for the year 2014/15.

11. Monitoring of Harrow Help Scheme

- 11.1 Applications to the Emergency Relief Scheme will be monitored through quantitative data that will be captured through the software commissioned to deliver this provision of support. The software will not be able to capture any groups of people not applying to the Emergency Relief Scheme due to not meeting the initial eligibility criteria and therefore qualitative data will be collected through close working relationships with referral services and agencies.
- 11.2 Due to the nature of the Help Scheme it will be difficult to capture quantitative data to support the monitoring process. However qualitative data will be collected through close working relationships with the wide range of agencies and services providing advice and support within Harrow. The success of the Help Scheme will be measured through a broad range of data that will be monitored by the Welfare Reform Project Group.
- 11.3 DWP have not confirmed the funding allocation post 2014/15 and therefore the Emergency Relief Scheme has been redesigned to continue for one year in its current form and to be sufficiently flexible to cope with changes in programme funding in future years.

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TEMPLATE 2 - Full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

In order to carry out this assessment, it is important that you have completed the EqIA E-learning Module and read the Corporate Guidelines on EqIAs. Please refer to these to assist you in completing this form and assessment.

<p>What are the proposals being assessed? (Note: 'proposal' includes a new policy, policy review, service, function, strategy, project, procedure, restructure)</p>	<p>The development of the Harrow Help Scheme being put in place to help mitigate the effects of the welfare reforms.</p> <p>The Emergency Relief Scheme sits within the Harrow Help Scheme and is a new service developed as a direct result of the changes within the Welfare Reforms to the Social Fund.</p>
<p>Which Directorate / Service has the responsibility for this?</p>	<p>Collections and Housing Benefits</p>
<p>Name and job title of lead officer</p>	<p>Fern Silverio, Divisional Director, Collections and Housing Benefits</p>
<p>Name & contact details of the other persons involved in the EqIA:</p>	<p>Sheila Seymour-Howell, Project Member Sheila.seymour-howell@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8424 1806 Ext 2806 Bernie Beckett, Consultation Project Manager BBeckett@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8424 7640 Ext 7640</p> <p>A multi-agency group has been developed to oversee the development of the Harrow Help Scheme and the Equality Impact Assessment. This group has membership from the Voluntary Sector including CAB, Mind in Harrow, Harrow Mencap, Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD), Age UK, Landlords Association, Tenants and Residents Association, Councillors, and Representatives from Harrow Council Services.</p>
<p>Date of assessment:</p>	<p>The EqIA has been opened on the 2nd January, 2013. The document will be monitored and updated on a regular basis by a multi-agency group.</p>

The current document is Version 1.

Version 2 - Updated to include analysis of data from DWP – 3rd January, 2013

Version 3 – Updated to reflect feedback from the consultation – 11th February, 2013

Version 4 – Updated to reflect comments – 13th February, 2013

Version 5 – Updated to reflect further comments – 18th February, 2013

Version 6 – Updated to reflect further comments – 26th February, 2013

Stage 1: Overview

The proposed Harrow Help Scheme has been developed to help support people who have been affected by the changes to benefits through the welfare reforms. The scheme will bring together advice and support delivered across the borough and align this with the pot of funding the Council is receiving, from the Government, to provide emergency assistance to those most in need. We will be calling this part of the Harrow Help Scheme the Emergency Relief Scheme. This pot of funding is being given to Councils as a direct result of the changes to the Social Fund where Crisis Loans for general purposes and Community Care Grants are being abolished as part of the welfare reforms. The funding is not ring fenced however Councils have been advised they should provide flexible help to meet unavoidable need.

218 What are the aims, objectives, and desired outcomes of your proposals?
(Explain proposals e.g. reduction / removal of service, deletion of posts, changing criteria etc)

The Harrow Help Scheme has been developed in partnership with a multi agency sub group which includes membership from Jobcentre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Harrow Mencap, Mind in Harrow, Age Concern, Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD), the Landlords Association, Harrow Councillors and representatives from Harrow Council Services.

The principles of the Harrow Help Scheme are

- The scheme will be financially sustainable
- The scheme will help to increase financial independence and decrease formal support
- The fund will be monitored to continuously shape the scheme going forward
- The scheme will put in place a single view of the customer
- The scheme doesn't duplicate provision that is delivered elsewhere in the borough

	<p>Whilst the government is not expecting Councils to replace the current scheme administered by the Department of Work and Pensions the Council is concerned that there could, as a result of these changes, be impacts for some groups of people. The council will have less money to be able to deliver the Emergency Relief element of the Harrow Help Scheme and therefore the criteria must be stringent whilst at the same time ensuring people are able to access emergency support where there is a risk to their health and safety if they do not receive the help.</p> <p>The Harrow Emergency Relief Scheme has been set up to provide short term support to those most in need. The principles of the Emergency Relief Scheme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Emergency Relief Scheme is a discretionary service provided within the available funds - The funding will be allocated on a monthly basis to minimise the risk of funds not being available throughout the year - It will be a service that meets urgent needs that cannot be met elsewhere - An accessible service that provides short term support where there is a risk to the safety and/or health of the household to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Assist people to remain or return to the community; and/or o Help people who are suffering severe hardship <p>Currently the social fund is provided through cash grants or cash loans. The Emergency Relief Scheme will be providing 'in kind' support that meets the need of the applicant.</p> <p>The scheme is being piloted for the first year to help understand how the scheme is working, who and why people are accessing the scheme and this information will then be used to shape the future scheme.</p>
<p>2. What factors / forces could prevent you from achieving these aims, objectives and outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The changes to the Social Fund are being implemented on the 1st April, 2013 and therefore to avoid a gap in delivery of emergency provision the scheme needs to be up and running by the beginning of April. - Emergency Relief Scheme team not in place by 1st April, 2013. - IT/payment mechanisms not in place by 1st April, 2013 - Lack of funding and resources to support implementation.

	<p>- Risk that further resources are not provided to develop the Harrow Help Scheme.</p> <p>- Lack of data to ensure scheme is targeted most effectively</p>
<p>3. Who are the customers? Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc.</p>	<p>Any Harrow resident can access the Help Scheme although it has been designed to support low income households affected by welfare reform.</p> <p>The customers of the Emergency Relief Scheme are the users of the current Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants</p> <p>The DWP developed an EqIA on the proposed changes in October 2011 and this document is attached at Appendix A. The following data has been supplied by DWP and analysed locally. A breakdown of the data and how it relates to access to the Social Fund in Harrow is attached at Appendix B. Predominantly within Harrow the users of the Crisis Loan are single males with no children between the ages of 18 to 44 and users of Community Care grants are single females between the ages of 18 and 54.</p>
<p>4. Is the responsibility shared with another department, authority or organisation? If so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are the partners? Who has the overall responsibility? 	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is being developed corporately within the Resources Directorate. The Council's Benefits Team have responsibility for the development of the Emergency Relief Scheme.</p> <p>The Local Authority is working in partnership with a multi agency group to develop the Harrow Help Scheme.</p>
<p>4a. How are/will they be involved in this assessment?</p>	<p>The Welfare Reform Project Board and Member and Officer Steering Group both meet on a monthly basis and updated reports are provided to these groups.</p> <p>The multi-agency sub group is meeting on a monthly basis and are responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing the proposed scheme - Developing the principles for the proposed scheme - Developing the principles and criteria for access to the Emergency Relief Scheme - Developing the consultation materials and activity - Understanding the impacts of delivering the new scheme - Monitoring the delivery of the pilot over the first 12 month period
<p>Stage 2: Monitoring / Collecting Evidence / Data</p>	
<p>5. What information is available to assess the impact of your proposals? Include the actual data, statistics and evidence (including full references)</p>	

was reviewed to determine the potential impact on each equality group (protected characteristic). This can include results from consultations and the involvement tracker, customer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, research interviews, staff surveys, workforce profiles, service users profiles, local and national research, evaluations etc

(Where possible include data on the nine protected characteristics. Where you have gaps, you may need to include this as an action to address in the action plan)

Age (including carers of young/older people)	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p> <p>Data showing usage in Harrow of the current Social Fund Scheme is attached at Appendix B.</p> <p>Predominantly within Harrow 61% the users of the Crisis Loan are single males between the ages of 18 to 44.</p> <p>50% of users of Community Care grants are single females between the ages of 18 and 54.</p> <p>Approximately 90% of users of both the Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants are of working age.</p>
22 21 ability (including carers of disabled people)	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p>
Marriage / Civil Partnership	<p>As outlined in age the majority of the users of both Community Care Grants and Crisis loans are single people.</p> <p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p>

Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p>
Race	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p>
Religion and Belief	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p>
Sex / Gender	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p>
222 Sexual Orientation	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p>
<p>6. If you have insufficient data on any of the protected characteristics, is there any other (local, regional, national research, reports, media) data sources that can inform this assessment?</p> <p>Include this data (facts, figures, evidence, key findings) in this section.</p>	<p>National information is available within the DWP Equality Impact Assessment which is attached at Appendix A.</p> <p>Local analysis of the data provided by the DWP is attached at Appendix B.</p> <p>Analysis has been carried out on the forecast of impacts as a result of the welfare reforms and is attached at Appendix C.</p> <p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p>

In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.		Yes	To be carried out	No
<p>NOTE: If you have not undertaken any consultation as yet, you should consider whether you need to. For example, if you have insufficient data/information for any of the protected characteristics and you are unable to assess the potential impact, you may want to consult with them on your proposals as how they will affect them. Any proposed consultation needs to be completed before progressing with the rest of the EqIA. Guidance on consultation/community involvement toolkit can be accessed via the link below http://harrowhub/info/200195/consultation/169/community_involvement_toolkit</p>				
Who was consulted?	What consultation methods were used?	What do the results show about the impact on different equality groups (protected characteristics)?	What action are you going to take as a result of the consultation? This may include revising your proposals, steps to mitigate any adverse impact. <i>(Also Include these in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)</i>	
<p>The following were given the opportunity to have their say as part of the consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All residents - Local Charities/ voluntary organisations - Current Social Fund users 	<p>All consultation materials designed in partnership with multi agency sub group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation booklet and survey - Web survey - Face to Face activity including events and discussion groups 	<p>The Emergency Relief Scheme, which sits within the Harrow Help Scheme, is a new welfare provision provided through funding from the DWP. The Scheme will be a one year pilot to ensure data and qualitative information can be gathered. This information will be used to help shape the Harrow Help Scheme after the pilot period.</p> <p>An overview of the key impacts identified through the consultation activity and the responses are included within the Cabinet Report at Section 6.5</p> <p>Feedback from the consultation has been discussed with both the multi-agency sub group and the Community Reference Group and has helped to shape both the principles for the Harrow Help Scheme and the eligibility</p>		

		criteria for the emergency relief element of the pilot scheme.	
<p>8. What does your information tell you about the impact on different groups? Consider whether the evidence shows potential for differential impact, if so state whether this is an adverse or positive impact? How likely is this to happen? How you will mitigate/remove any adverse impact?</p>			
Protected Characteristic	Positive	Adverse	What measures can you take to eliminate or reduce the adverse impact(s)? E.g. consultation, research, implement equality monitoring etc. (Also Include these in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)
<p>224 Age (including carers of young/older people)</p>		<p>x</p>	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p> <p>The Emergency Relief Scheme primary eligibility criteria has been shaped through consultation.</p> <p>The secondary criteria has been defined through consultation with the multi- agency sub group and the Community Reference Group. However the feedback from some older people that completed the forms through Age UK was received retrospectively to this meeting and therefore not considered. However this issue had previously been raised at a Sub Group meeting regarding this issue and it was agreed there should be a consistent level of capital across all age groups as the detrimental level of impact of the welfare reforms across working age would exceed the</p>
	<p>Explain what this impact is, how likely it is to happen and the extent of impact if it was to occur.</p> <p>The DWP data shows that approximately 90% of users are of working age. Therefore if there are any impacts through the implementation of the new scheme it could affect this group more than others.</p> <p>There is a possibility that running the scheme through the Local Authority could increase demand from older people. Older people that have responded to the consultation have raised concern that the criteria relating to savings should increase for that group as they are unable to work to increase their savings and this issue is recognised by the DWP in benefits criteria.</p> <p>Under the protected characteristic 'age' 61% of users of the Crisis Loan items and living expenses are single males and the majority are between the ages of 18 and 54. 50% users of Community Care Grants are single female and the majority again are between the ages of 18 and 54. Therefore should these people between the ages of 18 and 54 not meet the eligibility criteria for the new scheme this group are more</p>		

		<p>likely to be affected by the changes.</p> <p>With the knowledge that large families and working age are more likely to be affected by the welfare reforms the Help Scheme has been developed as a mitigation. A holistic approach has been taken to the development of this scheme by ensuring that mitigations are aligned with support that is provided by Families First, Housing, Economic Development and Collections as well as external agencies.</p> <p>Within the secondary criteria some elements of emergency support will only be provided if applicants meet a criteria re vulnerability. People with children under 16 are included within this group.</p>	<p>impact on pensioners of the capital limit.</p> <p>Discussion has been held with partners to develop a mechanism to monitor unmet need through the pilot period to help inform positive/adverse impacts of the pilot.</p>
<p>225</p> <p>Disability (including carers of disabled people)</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>With the knowledge that people with disabilities are more likely to be affected by the welfare reforms the Help Scheme has been developed as a mitigation. A holistic approach has been taken to the development of this scheme by ensuring that mitigations are aligned with support that is provided by Families First, Housing, Economic Development and Collections as well as external agencies including Harrow Association of Disabled People.</p> <p>Within the secondary criteria some elements of emergency support will only be provided if applicants meet a criteria re vulnerability. People who have disabilities and receive Disability premium are included within this group.</p> <p>No positive or adverse impact has been identified</p>	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p> <p>The Emergency Relief Scheme primary eligibility criteria has been shaped through consultation.</p> <p>The secondary criteria has been defined through consultation with the multi-agency sub group and the Community Reference Group.</p> <p>Discussion has been held with partners to develop a</p>
<p>Gender</p>			

<p>Reassignment</p> <p>Marriage and Civil Partnership</p> <p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p> <p>Race</p> <p>Religion or Belief</p> <p>Sex</p>			<p>to date.</p> <p>As in the protected characteristic 'age' the majority of the users of both the Community Care Grants and Crisis loans are single people and therefore this group are likely to be impacted if they do not meet the primary eligibility criteria for access to the Emergency Relief scheme.</p> <p>No positive or adverse impact has been identified to date.</p> <p>No positive or adverse impact has been identified to date.</p> <p>A specific criteria for access to the Emergency Relief Scheme is that the applicant must have recourse to public funds. This is in keeping with the existing Social Fund scheme and access to Benefits overall. The impact of this specific criteria is more likely to affect people who are not British citizens.</p> <p>No positive or adverse impact has been identified to date.</p> <p>With the knowledge that lone parents (more likely to be female) are more likely to be affected by the welfare reforms the Help Scheme has been developed as a mitigation. A holistic approach has been taken to the development of this scheme by ensuring that mitigations are aligned with support that is provided by Families First, Housing, Economic Development and Collections as well as external agencies.</p> <p>Anybody on means tested benefit over the age of 16 may apply to the scheme for assistance if they meet the initial eligibility criteria. Secondary eligibility criteria has been developed in relation to</p>	<p>mechanism to monitor unmet need through the pilot period to help inform positive/adverse impacts of the pilot</p> <p>In relation to 'Race' other support services currently in place will continue to provide support to this group.</p>
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			<p>risk to health and safety which will then be applied before successful award is provided</p> <p>There may be an impact to all age groups if they are in emergency need however do not meet the initial eligibility criteria or the secondary criteria and therefore will not be able to access the fund.</p> <p>No positive or adverse impact has been identified to date.</p>	
Sexual Orientation				
<p>9. Cumulative impact – Are you aware of any cumulative impact? <i>For example, when conducting a major review of services. This would mean ensuring that you have sufficient relevant information to understand the cumulative effect of all of the decisions.</i></p> <p>Example: <i>A local authority is making changes to four different policies. These are funding and delivering social care, day care, and respite for carers and community transport. Small changes in each of these policies may disadvantage disabled people, but the cumulative effect of changes to these areas could have a significant effect on disabled people's participation in public life. The actual and potential effect on equality of all these proposals, and appropriate mitigating measures, will need to be considered to ensure that inequalities between different equality groups, particularly in this instance for disabled people, have been identified and do not continue or widen. This may include making a decision to spread the effects of the policy elsewhere to lessen the concentration in any one area.</i></p>				<p>The changes to the Social fund fall within the overall welfare reforms and therefore there is a cumulative impact on residents who are impacted by all or some of the changes. The Help Scheme has been developed to help mitigate the impacts of these changes and provide longer term solutions. Within this scheme advice and support from all providers across Harrow is being brought together to ensure a holistic approach is developed. Through this work gaps in support are being identified and a Hardship Fund has been made available to be used to help commission activity within the community that should help bridge the gaps.</p> <p>There is a risk of increased demand, due to the impact of all the changes within the welfare reforms however in particular in relation to the introduction of Universal Credit, on the Harrow Help Scheme, and in particular the Emergency Relief Scheme and as a result the resources available may not meet the needs of the community.</p> <p>The Social Fund is being localised and therefore there will be different schemes across the country. The eligibility criteria for each of these schemes are unlikely to be the same and therefore there could be instances where applicants fall within 'gaps' i.e. many local authorities have residential criteria for access to their scheme. The Council is working closely with boroughs within West London and has been part of a pan London group brought together to share information on the development of schemes. Through working with other Local</p>

	<p>Authorities and through working closely with the voluntary sector throughout the pilot every effort will be made to understand what the gaps are and what mitigations can be put in place to reduce impacts.</p>								
<p>10. How do your proposals contribute towards the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires the Council to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.</p> <p>(Include all the positive actions of your proposals, for example literature will be available in large print, Braille and community languages, flexible working hours for parents/carers, IT equipment will be DDA compliant etc)</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups</p>	<p>Foster good relations between people from different groups</p>							
<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>		<p>Are there any actions can you take to meet the PSED requirements? (List these here and include them in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)</p>							
<p>228 . Is there any evidence or concern that your proposals may result in a protected group being disadvantaged (please refer to the Corporate Guidelines for guidance on the definitions of discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act)?</p>									
<p>Yes</p>	<p>Age (including carers) x</p>	<p>Disability (including carers) x</p>	<p>Gender Reassignment x</p>	<p>Marriage and Civil Partnership x</p>	<p>Pregnancy and Maternity x</p>	<p>Race x</p>	<p>Religion and Belief</p>	<p>Sex</p>	<p>Sexual Orientation</p>
<p>No</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p></p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>
<p>If you have answered "yes" to any of the above, set out what justification there may be for this in Q12a below - link this to the aims of the proposal and whether the disadvantage is proportionate to the need to meet these aims. (You are encouraged to seek legal advice, if you are concerned that the proposal may breach the equality legislation or you are unsure whether there is objective justification for the proposal)</p> <p>If the analysis shows the potential for serious adverse impact or disadvantage (or potential discrimination) but you have identified a potential justification for this, this information must be presented to the decision maker for a final decision to be made on whether the disadvantage is proportionate to achieve the aims of the proposal.</p>									

<p>If there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should not proceed with the proposal. (select outcome 4) If the analysis shows unlawful conduct under the equalities legislation, you should not proceed with the proposal. (select outcome 4)</p>	
<p>Stage 4: Decision</p>	
<p>12. Please indicate which of the following statements best describes the outcome of your EqIA (tick one box only)</p>	
<p>Outcome 1 – No change required: when the EqIA has not identified any potential for unlawful conduct or adverse impact and all opportunities to enhance equality are being addressed.</p>	x
<p>Outcome 2 – Minor adjustments to remove / mitigate adverse impact or enhance equality have been identified by the EqIA. <i>List the actions you propose to take to address this in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5</i></p>	
<p>Outcome 3 – Continue with proposals despite having identified potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to enhance equality. In this case, the justification needs to be included in the EqIA and should be in line with the PSED to have ‘due regard’. In some cases, compelling reasons will be needed. You should also consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the adverse impact and/or plans to monitor the impact. (explain this in 12a below)</p>	
<p>Outcome 4 – Stop and rethink: when there is potential for serious adverse impact or disadvantage to one or more protected groups. (You are encouraged to seek Legal Advice about the potential for unlawful conduct under equalities legislation)</p>	
<p>12a. If your EqIA is assessed as outcome 3, explain your justification with full reasoning to continue with your proposals.</p>	

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<p>Stage 5: Making Adjustments (Improvement Action Plan)</p>			
<p>13. List below any actions you plan to take as a result of this impact assessment. This should include any actions identified throughout the EqIA.</p>			
Area of potential adverse impact e.g. Race, Disability	Action proposed	Desired Outcome	Target Date
	Lead Officer	Progress	
<p>This is a pilot and therefore the scheme will be monitored to understand impacts.</p>	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p>	<p>Harrow Help Scheme in place in April 2014</p>	<p>April 2014</p>
	Fern Silverio		

	<p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p> <p>Ongoing discussion will be held with partners to develop a mechanism to monitor unmet need through the pilot period to help inform positive/adverse impacts of the pilot.</p>				
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Stage 6 - Monitoring

The full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented, it is therefore important to ensure effective monitoring measures are in place to assess the impact.

<p>14. How will you monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? How often will you do this? (<i>Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5</i>)</p>	<p>The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.</p> <p>In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.</p> <p>Regular feedback will be sought from all support/advice organisations included within the Harrow Help Scheme as well as from customers.</p>
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	<p>On-going discussion will be held with partners to develop a mechanism to monitor unmet need through the pilot period to help inform positive/adverse impacts of the pilot.</p> <p>Regular feedback reports will be provided to the Community Reference Group for discussion.</p>				
<p>15. Do you currently monitor this function / service? Do you know who your service users the service?</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td>x</td> </tr> </table>	Yes		No	x
Yes		No	x		
<p>16. What monitoring measures need to be introduced to ensure effective monitoring of your proposals? (Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)</p>	<p>As above in number 14.</p>				
<p>17. How will the results of any monitoring be analysed, reported and publicised? (Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)</p>	<p>The results of monitoring will be analysed by the Community Reference Group and will feed into a report that will be put to Cabinet on the outcomes of the pilot early next year 2014.</p>				
<p>18. Have you received any complaints or compliments about the policy, service, function, project or proposals being assessed? If so, provide details.</p>	<p>No.</p>				
<p>Stage 7 – Reporting outcomes The completed EqIA must be attached to all committee reports and a summary of the key findings included in the relevant section within them. EqIA's will also be published on the Council's website and made available to members of the public on request.</p>					

Protected Characteristic	Impacted group
Age	<p>The DWP data shows that approximately 90% of users are of working age. Therefore if there are any impacts through the implementation of the new scheme it could affect this group more than others.</p> <p>Under the protected characteristic 'age' 61% users of the Crisis Loan items and living expenses are single males and the majority are between the ages of 18 and 54. 50% users of Community Care Grants are single female and the majority again are between the ages of 18 and 54. Therefore should these people between the ages of 18 and 54 not meet the eligibility criteria for the new scheme this group are more likely to be affected by the changes.</p> <p>There is a possibility that running the scheme through the Local Authority could increase demand from older people and through the consultation older people raised concern regarding the limits with regards savings in the primary eligibility criteria.</p>
Sex	No impacts have been identified however monitoring will be carried out over the pilot period
Disability	No adverse impacts have been identified however monitoring will be carried out over the pilot period
Marriage/Civil Partnership	As in 'Age' the majority of the users of both crisis loans and community care grants are single and of working age and therefore if this group do not meet the primary eligibility criteria for access to the Emergency Relief Scheme they may be impacted
Race	A specific criteria for access to the Emergency Relief Scheme is that the applicant must have recourse to public funds. This is in keeping with the existing Social Fund scheme and access to Benefits overall. The impact of this specific criteria is more likely to affect people who are not British citizens.
Religion and Belief	No impacts have been identified however monitoring will be carried out over the pilot period
Gender	No impacts have been identified however monitoring will be carried out over the pilot period
Reassignment	No impacts have been identified however monitoring will be carried out over the pilot period
Pregnancy and maternity	No impacts have been identified however monitoring will be carried out over the pilot period
Sexual Orientation	No impacts have been identified however monitoring will be carried out over the pilot period

The Harrow Help Scheme is a new provision and currently we are only able to capture qualitative feedback.

In relation to the Emergency Relief Scheme this will be piloted to ensure data is captured on the nine protected characteristics.

Regular feedback will be sought from all support/advice organisations included within the Harrow Help Scheme as well as from customers.

Discussion has been held with partners to develop a mechanism to monitor unmet need through the pilot period to help inform positive/adverse impacts of the pilot.

19. Summary of the assessment

NOTE: This section can also be used in your reports, however you must ensure the full EqIA is available as a background paper for the decision makers (Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny, CSB etc)

What are the key impacts – both adverse and positive?
 Are there any particular groups affected more than others?
 Do you suggest proceeding with your proposals although an adverse impact has been identified? If yes, what are your justifications for this?
 What course of action are you advising as a result of this EqIA?

<p>20. How will the impact assessment be publicised? E.g. Council website, intranet, forums, groups etc</p>	<p>The EqIA will be publicised on the Council's website.</p>		
<p>Stage 8 - Organisational sign Off (to be completed by Chair of Departmental Equalities Task Group) The completed EqIA needs to be sent to the chair of your Departmental Equalities Task Group (DETG) to be signed off.</p>			
<p>21. Which group or committee considered, reviewed and agreed the EqIA and the Improvement Action Plan?</p>	<p>The Community Reference Group will have helped to shape the EqIA.</p>		
<p>Signed: (Lead officer completing EqIA)</p>	<p>Fern Silverio</p>	<p>Signed: (Chair of DETG)</p>	<p>Alex Dewsnap</p>
<p>Date:</p>		<p>Date:</p>	

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Review of the Emergency Relief Scheme

Telephone questionnaire

Introduction

Could I speak to (insert name of interviewee)

I am calling you from Harrow Council and my name is (insert name of interviewer). We are reviewing the Emergency Relief Scheme and therefore ringing a sample of people who have been unsuccessful and successful in getting support from the scheme. We want to find out your views on the way the scheme has worked for you. If you wish your name can be kept anonymous when you give the feedback.

Would you be happy to answer a few questions?

Yes

No

If the person doesn't want to complete the questionnaire please thank them for their time and note on the spread sheet.

If the person does want to respond then please ask the following questions:

Questionnaire

Question 1

Do you want your name to be kept anonymous?

Yes

No

If the person responds yes please do not register name or address on the spread sheet

Question 2

Was the Emergency Relief Scheme application process simple to follow?

Yes

No

If the person has answered no please ask them what could be improved.

Question 3

Were you offered help from the Emergency Relief Scheme?

Yes No

If the person answered no please go straight to question 6

Question 4

Did you accept the support that was offered to you?

Yes No

If the person answered yes please go straight to question 5

If the person answered no to this question please state below the reasons why they didn't accept the support.

Question 5

Did the support you received meet your emergency need?

Yes No

If the person has answered no please ask for their reasons

Question 6

Were you signposted to any other services?

Yes No

If the person has answered no please go straight to question 9

If you have answered yes please advise the services you were signposted to.

Question 7

Did you go to the signposted services for help?

Yes

No

Question 8

Did you find the services useful?

Yes

No

If you have answered no please give your reasons

Question 9

Was there anything that we could have done differently/better?

Monitoring Information

Please note that we have to ask some personal questions to help us to ensure that everybody in the community is able to access our services. You do not have to answer these questions and if you do your replies will not be used in a way that identifies you.

Age - What is your age group?

Under 16	<input type="text"/>	16 – 24 years	<input type="text"/>
25 – 44 years	<input type="text"/>	45 – 64 years	<input type="text"/>
65 & over	<input type="text"/>		

Disability – Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months?

No	<input type="text"/>	Yes, affecting mobility	<input type="text"/>
Yes, affecting hearing	<input type="text"/>	Yes, affecting vision	<input type="text"/>
Yes, a learning disability	<input type="text"/>	Yes, mental ill-health	<input type="text"/>
Yes, another form of disability, please specify	<input type="text"/>		

Ethnic origin - What is your ethnic origin?

Asian or Asian British

Afghani	<input type="text"/>	Bangladeshi	<input type="text"/>
Chinese	<input type="text"/>	Indian	<input type="text"/>
Pakistani	<input type="text"/>	Sri Lankan	<input type="text"/>
Any other Asian background – please specify	<input type="text"/>		

Black or Black British

African	<input type="text"/>	Caribbean	<input type="text"/>
Somali	<input type="text"/>		
Any other Black background – please specify	<input type="text"/>		

Mixed background

White and Black African	<input type="text"/>	White and Black Caribbean	<input type="text"/>
White and Asian	<input type="text"/>		
Any other mixed background - please specify	<input type="text"/>		

Other ethnic background

Arab	<input type="text"/>	Iranian	<input type="text"/>
Any other Ethnic group – please specify	<input type="text"/>		

White or White British

Albanian	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gypsy / Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Romanian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other White background - please specify	<input type="text"/>		

Marriage or Civil Partnership

Are you married?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you in a Civil Partnership?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pregnancy or Maternity

Have you been pregnant and / or on maternity leave during the past 2 years?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Religion and belief - What is your religion?

Buddhism	<input type="checkbox"/>	Judaism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christianity (all denominations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hinduism	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zoroastrian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Islam	<input type="checkbox"/>	No religion / Atheist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jainism	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other -please specify	<input type="text"/>

Sex - Are you?

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Sexual orientation - What is your sexual orientation?

Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay Man	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gay Woman / Lesbian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other – Please specify	<input type="text"/>		

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EMERGENCY RELIEF SCHEME DATA REVIEW COMPARISONS

Total Applications received up to 15/10/2013 is **500**

These were broken down as follows;

Total awarded and collected (including those that were originally refused but then subsequently awarded and those that have been awarded more than once) – **273**

Total awarded and not collected – **20**

Total referred onto other agencies – **49**

Total refused – **138**

Total withdrawn – **20**

We looked at all of the protected characteristics that have to be included in the EQIA;

- § Disability
- § Sex or Gender
- § Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality
- § Age
- § Gender reassignment
- § Pregnancy and maternity
- § Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality
- § Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- § Sexual orientation

Where it was possible, we compared the information given by the applicants of the ERS scheme (both awarded and refused) with the information that is known from the 2011 Census. This enabled us to see how the people applying to the ERS scheme reflected the wider Community and what extra measures would need to be implemented if the Scheme was not currently inclusive to all.

DISABILITIES

Harrow’s resident population, according to the findings of the 2011 Census, is 240,500. 26,600 of Harrow’s working age people (aged 16-64) classified themselves as disabled within the 2011-12 period (July to June), this equates to 16.8%.

Comparing this to the ERS scheme, out of the 272 working age people, (aged 16-64) who were awarded help, 79 classified themselves as disabled, this equates to 29% of the people who applied. Out of the 137 working age people, (aged 16-64) who were refused help, 30 people classified themselves as disabled, this equates to 21.9% of the people who were refused.

	Total number of Working Age people (aged 16-64) living in Harrow	Total number of Working Age people (aged 16-64), classified as Disabled	Total % of People with Disabilities	Total % Difference between number of Working Age people in Harrow with Disabilities and those who have applied to the ERS scheme who classified themselves as Disabled
Working Age Population in Harrow	158,400	26,600	16.8%	
ERS Awarded	272	79	29%	12.2% higher
ERS Refused	137	30	21.9%	5.1% higher

*Population estimates taken from the 2011 Census and 2011 mid year estimates
Number of people with Disabilities taken from Nomis; Annual Population Survey.*

The number of ERS claims (both awarded and refused), where the applicant had classified themselves as Disabled was higher than the percentage of working age people (aged 16-64) who were classified as Disabled, according to the 2011 Census.

We therefore took a random sample (35 awarded claims and 15 refused claims) to see whether any disability benefits were in payment.

Awarded claims – sample of 35

Disability benefit in payment	Yes	No	Unknown
	18	15	2

Refused claims – sample of 15

Disability benefit in payment	Yes	No	Unknown
	3	8	4

For those people who did not have Disability benefit in payment, I have listed a sample of the comments which were made on their Application forms;

- I suffer from depression
- I have issues with Addiction, depression and Cardiovascular illness
- I have Lymphoma and am receiving Chemo Therapy
- I suffer from Dyslexia
- My Disability premium has been suspended due to a change of circumstances
- I have a Physical Disability ...DLA ended Dec 2012
- I suffer with Back pain, Depression, Suicidal tendencies and am on medication

SEX

Of Harrow's total population, (240,500) based on the 2011 Census, 118,900 (49.4%) are male and 121,600 are female (50.6%).

The Tables below shows all the ERS Applications (Awarded and Refused) and whether the applicant was either male or female.

Awarded Applications - 273

Sex	Breakdown of population in Harrow	Number of People Awarded help from the ERS scheme (based on 273 Awarded Applications)	% of People Awarded help from the ERS scheme, (based on 273 Awarded Applications)	Total % of Harrow's population broken down (based on total population of 240,500)	Total % Difference between Harrow's population and those who have been Awarded
Male	118,900	128	47%	49.4%	2.4% lower
Female	121,600	143	52.3%	50.6%	1.7 % higher

2 people did not disclose their sex.

Refused Applications – 138

Sex	Breakdown of population in Harrow	Number of People Refused help from the ERS scheme (based on 138 Refused Applications)	% of People Refused help from the ERS scheme (based on 138 Refused Applications)	Total % of Harrow's population broken down (based on total population of 240,500)	Total % Difference between Harrow's population and those who have been Refused
Male	118,900	53	38.4%	49.4%	11% lower
Female	121,600	79	57.2%	50.6%	6.6% higher

6 people did not disclose their sex.

ETHNIC GROUPS

The total population in Harrow is 240,500. This estimate is based on the findings of the 2011 census. Harrow is one of the most diverse places in the country. 2011 figures reveal that the White British category includes only 30.9% of Harrow's population. This means that 69.1% of residents are therefore classed as belonging to a minority ethnic group. The most significant minority group, at 26.4% is Asian/Asian British; Indian, ranking Harrow as second in England and Wales for its Indian population. Another significant group is classified as Asian/Asian British; Other Asian, making up 11.3% of residents and ranking Harrow 1st within this classification, this group is largely comprised of Sri Lankan Community.

White; Other is another group which has grown and as of 2011 figures represented 8.2% of the population in Harrow. Within this group there are 3,868 residents who were born in Poland and 4,784 residents born in Romania, Making it the largest Romanian community within England and Wales. Harrow still has a high Irish born population, ranked 7th in 2011. Whilst Black/African/Caribbean/Black British is not particularly dominant, (it represents 8.2% of the total), we have the highest number of Kenyan born residents, (this can be attributed to a number of migrants from Kenya who are of Asian descent).

The Table below shows all the ERS Awarded Applications and to which Ethnic group the recipient indicated they belonged to;

Awarded Applications - 273

Ethnic Group	% of People in Harrow who classified themselves as belonging to a particular Ethnic Group	Number of People Awarded help from the ERS scheme (based on 273 Awarded Applications)	% of People Awarded help from the ERS scheme (based on 273 Awarded Applications)	% Difference between Harrow's population and those who have been Awarded
White British	30.9%	70	25.7%	5.2% lower
Asian/Asian British: Indian	26.4%	21	7.7%	18.7% lower
Asian/Asian British: Other	11.3%	16	5.9%	5.4% lower
White Other	8.2%	31	11.3%	3.1% higher
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	8.2%	60	22%	13.8% higher
Other Ethnic Groups	Data Not Known	15	5.4%	Data Not Known
Mixed Race	3.9%	11	4%	0.1% higher

White British is only those recipients who ticked that specific box.

Asian/Asian British: Indian are those recipients who described themselves as Asian/Asian British, British Indian or Indian.

Asian/Asian British: Other are those recipients who described themselves as Afghan, Sri Lankan Tamil, Sri Lankan and Pakistani.

White Other are those recipients who described themselves as White African, White English, White Scottish, Irish, Polish, Bulgarian, Croatian, Dutch and White European.

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British are those recipients who described themselves as Black or Black British, Black African, British Moroccan, Somali, Black Caribbean and West Indian

Other Ethnic Groups are those recipients who describe themselves as Arab, Filipino, Egyptian, Turkish, Iranian and Japanese.

Mixed Race are those recipients who describe themselves as White & Black African, White & Black Caribbean, White & Asian and any other Mixed background.

The 20 people who described themselves as British but did not clarify any further, have not been included in any of the above groups.

There were 29 people all together who did not disclose their Ethnic group.

The Table below shows all the ERS Refused Applications and which Ethnic group the recipient belonged to;

Refused Applications - 138

Ethnic Group	% of People in Harrow who classified themselves as belonging to a particular Ethnic Group	Number of People Refused help from the ERS scheme (based on 138 Refused Applications)	% of People Refused help from the ERS scheme (based on 138 Refused Applications)	% Difference between Harrow's population and those who have been Refused
White British	30.9%	24	17.4%	13.5% lower
Asian/Asian British; Indian	26.4%	7	5%	21.4% lower
Asian/Asian British; Other	11.3%	24	17.4%	6.1% higher
White Other	8.2%	11	8%	0.2% lower
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	8.2%	33	24%	15.8% higher
Other Ethnic Groups	Data Not Known	13	9.4%	Data Not Known
Mixed Race	3.9%	10	7.2%	3.3% higher

White British is only those recipients who ticked that specific box.

Asian/Asian British: Indian are those recipients who described themselves as Asian/Asian British, British Indian or Indian.

Asian/Asian British: Other are those recipients who described themselves as Afghan, Sri Lankan Tamil, Sri Lankan and Pakistani.

White Other are those recipients who described themselves as White African, White English, White Scottish, Irish, Polish, Bulgarian, Croatian, Dutch and White European.

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British are those recipients who described themselves as Black or Black British, Black African, British Moroccan, Somali, Black Caribbean and West Indian

Other Ethnic Groups are those recipients who describe themselves as Arab, Filipino, Egyptian, Turkish, Iranian, Japanese, Persian, Brazilian, Chinese and Albanian.

Mixed Race are those recipients who describe themselves as White & Black African, White & Black Caribbean, White & Asian and any other Mixed background.

There were 16 people all together who did not disclose their Ethnic group.

As per the information in the table above, a high proportion of awarded/refused applicants came from the Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Ethnic Group. However, this is consistent with the larger than average Applications received from this particular group.

AGE

20 per cent of Harrow's residents are aged under 16, this equates to 48,200. 65.9%, which is (158,400) of Harrow's population fall within the working age bracket (aged 16 to 64) and 14.1% (33,900) of Harrow's residents are 65 years of age and older.

The average age in Harrow is approximately 36 years, which ranks Harrow 284th out of 348 local or unitary authorities, depicting a younger average than the majority of local authorities.

The table below shows all the ERS Applications (Awarded and Refused) and the decade that the recipient was born in. Under 16's cannot apply to the scheme.

Awarded Applications – 273

Born in 1930's	1	0.4%
Born in 1940's	4	1.47%
Born in 1950's	36	13.2%
Born in 1960's	66	24%
Born in 1970's	67	24.5%
Born in 1980's	78	29%
Born in 1990's	14	5.1%

7 people did not disclose their age.

Refused Applications – 138

Born in 1930's	1	0.7%
Born in 1940's	3	2.2%
Born in 1950's	19	13.8%
Born in 1960's	37	26.8%
Born in 1970's	28	20.3%
Born in 1980's	34	24.6%
Born in 1990's	11	8%

5 people did not disclose their age.

All figures rounded up/down to the nearest hundred. Totals may not agree due to rounding.

*Sources used;
2011 Census briefing
2011 Mid Year Estimates
Nomis; Annual Population Survey
2011 Census; Ethnic Group*

Religion and Belief

The 2001 Census showed that Harrow had the highest level of religious diversity of any local authority in England and Wales. The 2011 Census ranked Harrow 1st for persons of Hindu religion, Jain and Unification Church. Out of 348 areas in England and Wales Harrow has the 2nd lowest ranking of residents with no religion and 5th lowest for Christians (37.3%). Harrow is ranked 24th for Muslim faith residents who account for 12.5% of the population.

Information from the 2011 Census

Religion	Harrow %	National %
Christianity	37.3	59.4
Hinduism	25.3	1.5
Islam	12.5	5.0
Judaism	4.4	0.5
No Religion	9.6	24.7
Religion not stated	15.4	7.2

Awarded Applications – 273

Religious Belief	% of People in Harrow who classified themselves as having a particular religious belief	Number of People Awarded help from the ERS scheme (based on 273 Awarded Applications)	% of People Awarded help from the ERS scheme (based on 273 Awarded Applications)	% Difference between Harrow's population and those who have been Awarded
Buddhist	Data not Known	3	2%	Comparison cannot be made
Christianity (including Catholic)	37.3%	103	37.7%	0.4% higher
Farsi	Data not Known	1	0.3%	Comparison cannot be made
Hindu	25.3%	11	4%	21.3% lower
Humanist	Data not Known	1	0.3%	Comparison cannot be made
Muslim	12.5%	47	17.2%	4.7% higher
Jedi	Data not Known	1	0.3%	Comparison cannot be made
Jehovah Witness	Data not Known	1	0.3%	Comparison cannot be made
Judaism	4.4%	1	0.3%	4.1% lower
Pentecostal	Data not Known	1	0.3%	Comparison cannot be made
Rastafarian	Data not Known	1	0.3%	Comparison cannot be made
Sikh	Data not Known	2	0.7%	Comparison cannot be made
No Religion	9.6%	45	16.5%	6.9% higher

Other	Data not Known	2	0.7%	Comparison cannot be made
Prefer not to say	15.4%	21	7.7%	7.7% lower

26 people did not disclose their Ethnic Group

Refused Applications - 138

Religious Belief	% of People in Harrow who classified themselves as having a particular religious belief	Number of People Refused help from the ERS scheme (based on 138 Refused Applications)	% of People Awarded help from the ERS scheme (based on 138 Refused Applications)	% Difference between Harrow's population and those who have been Refused
Agnostic	Data not Known	1	0.7%	Comparison cannot be made
Christianity (including Catholic)	37.3%	46	33.3%	4% lower
Hindu	25.3%	5	3.6%	21.7% lower
Muslim	12.5%	41	29.7%	17.2% lower
Jainism	Data not Known	1	0.7%	Comparison cannot be made
Jehovah Witness	Data not Known	1	0.7%	Comparison cannot be made
Rastafarian	Data not Known	2	1.4%	Comparison cannot be made
No Religion	9.6%	12	8.7%	0.9% lower
Other	Data not Known	1	0.7%	Comparison cannot be made
Prefer not to say	15.4%	10	7.2%	8.2% lower

18 people did not disclose their Ethnic Group

We do not have any data to compare with on the following 5 questions (Gender Identity, Marital Status, Child benefit in payment, Pregnancy/Maternity, Sexual orientation) but still felt it was an important part of our review to include the answers given as we do ask the questions when people are applying to the ERS scheme.

Gender Identity

The question asked was; is your Gender Identity the same Gender that you were assigned at birth?

Awarded Applications - 273

Yes	273	100%
No	0	0%

Refused Applications – 138

Yes	138	100%
No	0	0%

Marital Status

Awarded Applications – 273

Married	21	7.7%
Divorced	11	4%
Single	212	77.6%
Civil Partnership	2	0.7%
Separated	13	5%
Widowed	3	1%
Fleeing Domestic Violence	1	0.4%
Not Disclosed	7	2.6%
Prefer not to say	3	1%

Refused Applications - 138

Married	18	13%
Divorced	6	4.3%
Single	89	64.5%
Civil Partnership	1	0.7%
Separated	6	4.4%
Widowed	2	1.4%
Living with Partner	1	0.7%
Not Disclosed	8	5.8%
Prefer not to say	7	5.2%

Child Benefit in Payment

Awarded Applications – 273

Yes	109	39.9%
No	160	58.6%
Not Disclosed	4	1.5%

Refused Applications – 138

Yes	63	45.6%
No	68	49.2%
Not Disclosed	7	5.2%

Pregnancy and Maternity

The question asked was; have you been Pregnant or on Maternity leave in the past 2 years?

Awarded Applications – 273

Yes	20	7.3%
No	147	53.9%
N/A	99	36.3%
Prefer not to say	5	1.8%
No Answer	2	0.7%

Refused Applications - 138

Yes	8	5.8%
No	70	50.8%
N/A	54	39.1%
Prefer not to say	1	0.7%
No Answer	5	3.6%

Sexual Orientation

The 2011 census did not have a question on sexual orientation; however 306 persons declared living in a same sex couple. It is estimated that 6% of the UK population are lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB), which would equate to approximately 14,430 of our residents belonging to the LGB community.

Civil Partnership ceremonies in Harrow from 05/12/2005-31/12/2012

Year	Male Partners	Female Partners	Total Number of Ceremonies
2005	3	0	3
2006	31	17	48
2007	10	2	12
2008	8	9	17
2009	5	2	7
2010	6	3	9
2011	6	2	8
2012	11	6	17
Total			121

The tables below show all the ERS Applications (Awarded and Refused) and what sexual orientation they classified themselves as;

Awarded Applications - 273

Heterosexual	216	79.1%
Bisexual	3	1%
Gay	2	0.7%
N/A	0	0%
Not Known	4	1.5%
Prefer not to say	19	7%
Not Answered	29	10.7%

Refused Applications - 138

Heterosexual	99	71.7%
Bisexual	2	1.5%
Gay	1	0.7%
N/A	3	2.2%
Not Known	3	2.2%
Prefer not to say	12	8.7%
Not Answered	18	13%

All figures rounded up/down to the nearest hundred. Totals may not agree due to rounding.

*Sources used;
2011 Census briefing
2011 Mid Year Estimates
Nomis; Annual Population Survey
2011 Census; Ethnic Group*

Deprivation in Harrow compared to other Borough's

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England (called Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)). The IMD can be broken down into seven separate indices which relate to income; employment; health and disability; education; skills and training; barriers to housing and services; living environment and crime. The indices facilitate the ranking of areas, relative to one another, according to their level of deprivation.

Harrow is now ranked 203rd out of 354 boroughs in England (where 1 is the most deprived borough). Harrow retains its position as 7th least deprived borough (out of 33). Inequality within Harrow is highlighted by the three LSOAs in the top 20% most deprived areas in the country, an increase of one since 2007 Indices and the 23 LSOAs in the top 20% least deprived areas in the country, the same number since 2007.

Help Scheme Review

Feedback

- q Emergency Relief Scheme sits under the umbrella of the Help Scheme and was implemented as a pilot in April 2013
- q Review focussed on the pilot Emergency Relief Scheme and has involved the following activity:
 - Data review
 - Face to face meetings with:
 - Emergency Relief Staff
 - Key referrers – CAB
 - Jobcentre Plus staff
 - A sub group of the Community Reference Group which includes membership from Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD), Harrow Mencap, Mind in Harrow, Age UK, the Harrow Law Centre, National Landlords Association, CAB, Jobcentre Plus, Harrow Association of Somalie Organisations (HASVO), and representation from internal Council Services
- q Telephone questionnaire with a sample of applicants who were both successful/unsuccessful in getting support from the scheme.

Feedback from telephone survey with users



- q **Tried to contact 53 applicants to the scheme over the telephone**
- q **17 responded**
- q **14 had received awards and 3 had not received awards**

Question	Yes	No
Was the Emergency Relief Scheme application process simple to follow? What could be improved?	81%	19%
Feedback:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> q Not really as a lot of information and documents required at the time which you may not have q Lots of questions to answer and it is a bit difficult when English is not your first language q Difficult if you are not very good at filling out forms and you do not like doing it. q Yes but not sure if made a mistake on the form as wasn't awarded help 	

Feedback from telephone survey with users



Questions and Responses		Yes	No
Did you accept the support that was offered to you?		100%	
Feedback: ☑ No responses received as 100% of those that responded and had been offered support accepted the award			

Questions and Responses		Yes	No
Did the support you received meet your emergency need? If no please give your reasons		100%	
Feedback: ☑ Would have been grateful for any help given as needed food/fuel and the crisis loan has stopped. But do feel that should be able to receive more than one award (the person was advised that applicants can receive more than one award) ☑ Very grateful at the time but very worried that when money goes into the bank on Thursday it will be swallowed up with bank charges and will be in the same position again. Can I have some information regarding the Foodbank? ☑ Had been refused help from JCP and without food and fuel, very grateful			

Questions and Responses		Yes	No
Were you signposted to other services? If so advise the services you were signposted to			100%
Feedback: ☑ No responses received			
Did you go to the signposted services for help?		N/A	N/A
Did you find the services useful? If you have answered no please give your reasons		N/A	N/A

Feedback from telephone survey with users



Questions and Responses

Was there anything that could have been done differently/better?

Feedback:

- Most people stated how grateful they were for the support they received from the scheme at a time when they really needed the help
- The person I spoke to was really helpful. It is far better that the scheme doesn't give cash as that could mean the money could be used on anything not just the emergency....
- Having a limit of 2 awards a year is too low as you never know what your circumstances are going to be from one week to the next. You only have to have a JSA payment stopped and you are back to square one with no help. It does not just apply to people on benefits but also to people who work as someone I know is on a low income and still has to go to the Foodbank in order to feed their children.
- The lady who gave me my voucher was very helpful and I think that having experienced staff who have some experience of life is a good thing
- The staff were very helpful and helped me out when things were very difficult. I do not know what I would have done without the help at that time.
- I do not know what I would have done without the support for 2 days I was given
- ...there was mix-up between the JCP and the Job Club they were aware I attended college one day a week to do an electrical course but they still stopped my JSA. The food/fuel covered me for a few days when I didn't have any money.
- I had trouble finding anywhere that would take my Allpay card to top up the gas/electricity. As I have a pre-pay meter they would charge 50p but would not add it on and take the money off the card and only wanted me to pay with cash. I tried all the Post Offices in Harrow and the paypoint locations. I do not think the scheme should hand out cash. I also asked for a fridge and cooker on my application but didn't hear back
- Scheme excellent couldn't think of any ways could be improved
- Very impressed with the team as helped greatly when didn't know where else to turn. Do not know what I would have done if had been refused

Feedback from telephone survey with users



Questions and Responses

Was there anything that could have been done differently/better? Cont'd

Feedback:

q Grateful for the help. Also received £40 from Childrens Services and Foodbank. Very grateful for overall help that Council has provided. Would have been useful to see somebody face to face as it was an emergency situation sometimes need an answer there and then and cannot wait for a response.

q I was refused as not classed an emergency situation, I asked for a toddler bed but could only provide single beds

q I was refused as it was deemed I had enough disposable income to use myself. I cannot entirely remember as some time ago. At times felt very low and would be happy if did not wake up in the morning. Think maybe I have the wrong coloured skin to be awarded anything

q I was surprised not to be awarded as have 3 children to support. Receiving CB and CTC two weeks after applied.

Was refused as had a student loan but had been without money so long had to use money to repay friends and catch up on bills.

Feedback from Organisations/ERS Team



Questions and Responses

What has worked well?

Feedback:

- α Scheme is better than the previous system
- α Scheme is easier to access than the previous social fund run by the DWP
- α In the beginning kept getting an answerphone however now telephones are answered all the time
- α Advisers go above and beyond with some clients
- α Staff very nice and helpful
- α Team go out of the way to help people
- α Small team works really well as aware of each others cases and able to take forward
- α Quite a subjective process – seeing people can help to balance and understand the need
- α Really good relationship with Access Harrow staff, very helpful and go out of their way to help
- α Great that Allpay blocks alcohol and cigarettes.
- α Easiest part of the scheme to administer is furniture and travel as able to work with other services/ organisations to confirm status of applicant

Feedback from Organisations/ERS Team



Questions and Responses

What hasn't worked so well?

Feedback:

- q When the scheme started it was very difficult to get an award therefore staff have issues accessing the scheme and would rather try and find other funding
- q Some issues regarding applicants not being able to apply after 4 pm
- q A resident who couldn't speak English was sent from CAB to get help on the telephone and when they arrived at Access Harrow were given a form and told to go back to CAB to get completed
- q Need to have a more holistic approach to how the scheme can help people rather than gatekeeping a benefits system
- q Allpay cards – telephone line not always free. Put in number but doesn't tell you to put # key. System isn't always quick but Allpay do fix problems quickly
- q System and paperwork take too much time – particularly when have a small award v resources required to administer
- q If several applications received in the afternoon, even early afternoon, then there are problems with being able to administer all the applications. Sometimes have to do the paperwork the next day and that then impacts next days work
- q Too many different log in sheets/spreadsheets doesn't follow the pattern of the application form
- q Assist not always up to date – sometimes client would have more up to date information

Feedback from Organisations/ERS Team



Questions and Responses

Issues and suggestions raised regarding the criteria to access the scheme

Feedback:

- Scheme should allow people to keep some capital for emergencies/funerals and suggestion put forward Single person £150, Couple £200, Family £400
- All boroughs should have agreement on what happens when a person moves from one borough to another.
- Suggestion that if a person has been moved into Harrow by another who is responsible for paying the HB Harrow could provide the food/any other emergency support and responsible borough provide furniture etc.
- Scheme should provide support for people who have no recourse to public funds but are working – they are doing everything they should be but may be on very low income and experience an emergency – could be just in cases of fire, flood or burglaries.
- Only giving 2 awards per year can be a problem – need to have clear procedures to show when we have given support over a period of time and it only counts as 1 provision
- Means tested benefit is fair but maybe should consider people on low income who are working who have had a disaster (fire) as would not be able to get the goods in any other way
- Non dependants having issues with benefits but not getting support from parents

Feedback from Organisations/ERS Team



Questions and Responses

Issues/suggestions raised regarding the provision of support

Feedback:

- ☐ Coats should be provided in the winter
 - ☐ School Uniforms should be provided
 - ☐ Travel requests for funerals need more clarity – who can be given support to attend – do you ask for death certificate – do we pay for overnight accommodation?
 - ☐ White goods should include fridges as priority item to everybody
 - ☐ Flooring should be given – within Community Care Grants flooring was given dependant on medical information and if family had children. The CC Grant would only provide flooring for the relevant bedrooms and living room.
 - ☐ Phone credit for single homeless people who have often used up all their phone credit and cannot make the calls they need to
- Landlords to secure accommodation
- ☐ Washing machines should be given to everybody with children
 - ☐ Help should be given to people who have pest issues i.e. bed bugs, rats etc.
 - ☐ People should be able to have a sofa – even if re-use. Difficult if child has come home from school and expected to sit on hard chair all evening.
 - ☐ What happens with people who have lived in the property for years and have no furniture – do we help them?
 - ☐ Require clear policy for replacing existing items
 - ☐ Wardrobes should be given as clothes on damp floor is a risk to health and safety
 - ☐ Why are we topping up metres and not helping people with their fuel bills
 - ☐ Loss of money hard as very subjective – easy to go to Police Station and get police number

Feedback from Organisations/ERS Team



Questions and Responses

General issues/suggestions raised

Feedback:

- Team require contact details for all services
- Require contact details for all ERS schemes to enable effective signposting
- Require a contact with DWP to be able to resolve complex benefit issues
- Should explore Credit Union loans
- Should not be referring people to budgeting loans for emergency situations as gets them in more debt. Whilst they are interest free a large % is taken from benefits to pay off the loan. CAB would advise to refer for budgeting loans when person wants non essential items i.e. television
- Need to agree how long the scheme will support a person particularly if benefits have been sanctioned for a long period of time – 6 weeks/2 months? More detail in policy on allocation of awards
- JCP have seen an increase in applications for budgeting loans since the scheme started.
- Prisoners are having more input from DWP in prison before they leave in helping them into work – this might be the reason why the scheme is not getting many prisoners.
- Application form needs renewing
- Procedures need to have more detail to provide clarity

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Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9DA

18th November 2013

Dear Secretary of State

Local Welfare Provision

As you will be aware in April 2013 elements of the discretionary social fund, crisis loans and community care grants, were abolished and some funding devolved to local authorities in order to set up local welfare provision schemes.

You will also be aware that no legal duty was attached to this funding stream and it did not represent 'ring-fenced' grant to local authorities. In November 2012 Steve Webb MP wrote to my colleague Cllr Teresa O'Neill confirming that government did not expect local authorities to replicate the existing scheme of crisis loans and community care grants either in whole or in part.

A number of concerning trends have come to our attention regarding the ways in which DWP provision and new appeal and sanction systems are placing unexpected pressure on local welfare provision schemes. The Leaders of London local authorities have agreed to contact you regarding these emerging issues.

The experience in London so far is that a significant amount of the demand for local welfare provision is arising directly from issues with DWP administered benefits including;

- JSA & ESA sanctions
- Clients referred despite potentially being eligible for hardship payment or Short Term Benefit Advances from Job Centre Plus
- Delays in administering Short Term Benefit Advances

From this month, a new system of mandatory reconsideration before appeal will be implemented meaning that individuals wishing to challenge a decision made by DWP will be required to undergo a compulsory reconsideration of that decision by the Department before formally lodging an appeal.

This is concerning in cases where individuals have been refused Employment Support Allowance (ESA) following a Work Capability Assessment. Where an appeal is lodged the client is entitled to receive the basic rate of ESA whilst the appeal is considered. However, the new rules mean that they must now wait whilst the mandatory reconsideration is carried out during which time they are not entitled to receive ESA.

The only benefit available to them during this period would be Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) for which they must effectively declare themselves fit for work and be available for work. As you will be aware, 45% of appeals against adverse ESA decisions in London are successful indicating there are significant numbers of people for whom a JSA application is neither appropriate nor advisable.

This is of concern to London boroughs as they are already experiencing significant demand from residents presenting with issues with ESA and the mandatory reconsideration changes are likely to increase the number of households in financial hardship.

I would be grateful therefore if you were able to provide specific responses to the questions below:

- 1) Do you acknowledge that given the high success rate of appeals against adverse ESA decisions, there will be some individuals for whom claiming JSA during a period of compulsory reconsideration before appeal will be inappropriate or impossible? If so, could you indicate what financial support is available to counter financial hardship in the meantime?
- 2) How long does the department expect a mandatory reconsideration to take? What measures can be put in place to fast-track ESA cases?
- 3) Do you feel that there are sufficient numbers of trained Disability Employment Advisors available in Job Centres to adequately advise significant numbers of clients with health/disability problems that may need to sign onto JSA whilst there is mandatory reconsideration of their ESA decision?
- 4) Could you indicate the steps that the department is taking to monitor the impact of the introduction of Short Term Benefit Advances and when any findings are expected to be made public?
- 5) Will you instruct officials to work with London Councils to carry out an exercise to analyse a segment of demand data from a London local authority in order to better understand the kinds of issues arising?

The Department has said repeatedly that it is for local authorities to decide to whom they should make payments. The new local authority administered local welfare provision was not intended to replace the abolished national schemes but I fear that we are in the position that local authorities will have to plug the gaps in DWP provision on a more concerted basis in order to prevent even higher costs arising in terms of dealing with homelessness and child protection issues.

Local authorities will find it increasingly difficult to develop the more innovative approaches to local welfare provision that were envisaged at the time funding was devolved and instead will be required by DWP administration processes to replicate the failed system of crisis payments - precisely what was not intended.

I would be grateful if you would give these matters your urgent attention. Although local welfare provision is only a small part of the wider welfare reform programme, the issues I have raised represent wider concerns that the most complex and in-need cases become the responsibility of local authorities devolving only risk and cost.

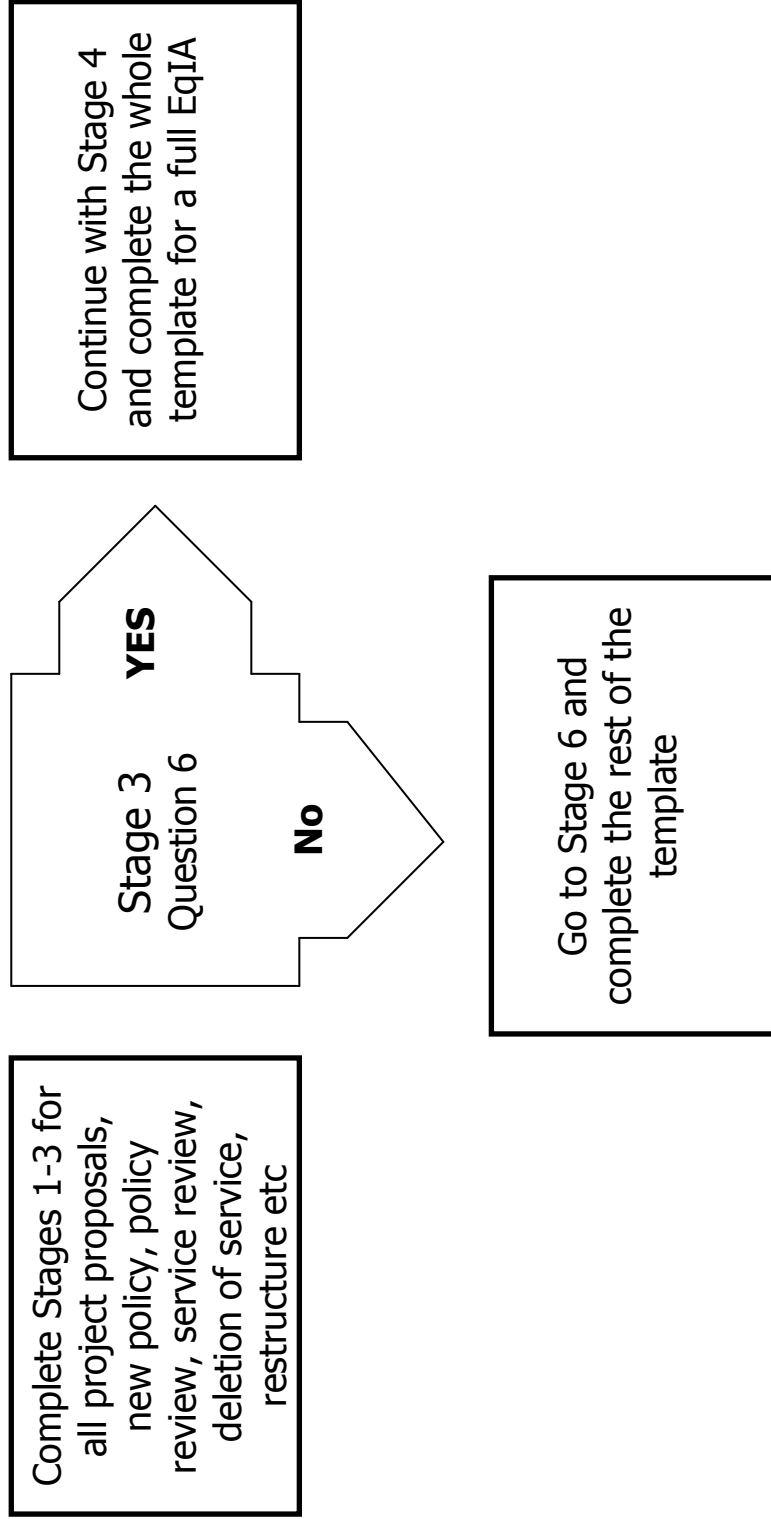
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jules Pipe". A horizontal line is drawn underneath the signature.

Mayor Jules Pipe
Chair

Equality Impact Assessment Template

The Council has revised and simplified its Equality Impact Assessment process. There is now just one Template. Project Managers will need to complete **Stages 1-3** to determine whether a full EqIA is required and the need to complete the whole template.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

In order to carry out this assessment, it is important that you have completed the EqIA E-learning Module and read the Corporate Guidelines on EqIAs. Please refer to these to assist you in completing this assessment.

It will also help you to look at the EqIA Template with Guidance Notes to assist you in completing the EqIA.

Type of Project / Proposal:	Tick	Type of Decision:	Tick
Transformation		Cabinet	
Capital		Portfolio Holder	
Service Plan		Corporate Strategic Board	
Other		Other	
Title of Project:	Review of the Help Scheme		
Directorate / Service responsible:	Collections and Housing Benefits, Resources Directorate		
Name and job title of lead officer:	Fern Silverio, Head of Service, Collections and Housing Benefits		
Name & contact details of the other persons involved in the assessment:	Bernie Beckett, Consultation Project Manager Bernie.beckett@harrow.gov.uk Jenny Townsley, Service Manager, Housing Benefits Jennifer.townsley@harrow.gov.uk		
Date of assessment:	31 st October, 2013 – Version 1		
Stage 1: Overview			
1. What are you trying to do? (Explain proposals e.g. introduction of a new service or policy, policy review, changing criteria, reduction / removal of service, restructure, deletion of posts etc)	<p>The Help Scheme was implemented as a pilot in April, 2013 with funding provided to all upper tier Local Authorities by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to develop a Local Welfare Provision that provides emergency support to people in need. The EqIA developed in March 2013 to support this activity is attached at Appendix A to this document.</p> <p>The pilot has now been in operation for 6 months and therefore a review of the scheme has been taken forward. This EqIA provides detail on the impacts of the proposed policy changes to the scheme for the year 2014/15.</p> <p>The Pilot Help Scheme was agreed at Cabinet on the 14th March, 2013 and</p>		

implemented on the 1st April, 2013.

The intentions of the pilot scheme are to:

- Provide a holistic approach to the provision of advice and support to people affected by welfare reforms;
- Make best use of all available resources across Harrow, including advice and support agencies
- Develop a Directory of Support to enable effective signposting
- Bring together discretionary pots of funding within the Council, as appropriate to ensure resources are used to their maximum effect.

The Help Scheme includes the following features:

- The Directory of Support is now being taken forward in partnership with a voluntary sector consortium, Harrow Advising Together (HAT), who has received lottery funding, to develop an Advice Portal. This portal will support the effective signposting for residents in Harrow and will link into the Harrow Help pages on the Council's website.
- The discretionary pots of funding that sit within the Harrow Help Scheme include:

The Financial Hardship fund – The draft policy and Equality Impact Assessment will be put to the February 2014 Cabinet for decision.

The Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) – this is Government funding to support people receiving Housing Benefit, who are impacted by the welfare reforms, with their housing costs. The policy was agreed at Cabinet in July 2013 and is not under review.

Xcite funding for support with transport and construction which is not under review.

Emergency Relief Scheme – the review of the Help Scheme will focus on reviewing

the operation of the Emergency Relief Scheme.

The review of the Help Scheme has been carried out by consulting with referral partners which has included the Citizens Advice Bureau and Jobcentre Plus, staff delivering the scheme and users of the scheme, both successful and unsuccessful. An overview of the feedback is attached at Appendix C to the Cabinet Report.

Emergency Relief Scheme

The Emergency Relief Scheme was agreed at Cabinet in March 2013 and implemented, as a pilot scheme, in April 2013. The scheme sits within the overall umbrella of the Help Scheme.

The Government have provided funding for two years to deliver Local Welfare Provision and therefore Officers have recommended to Cabinet that the Emergency Relief Scheme continue for the second year of operation from April 2014 to March 2015.

The review of the Emergency Relief Scheme has covered the following:

- The process
- Criteria and application of the criteria
- Support provided

The feedback from the review has shaped the changes to the scheme which are in relation to the primary criteria to access the scheme and the secondary criteria and provision of support. All of the changes to these criteria result in additional support provided to the customer for the operation of the second year of the scheme 2014/15. The changes to the policy are explained in detail within the Cabinet Report at page 11.

Help Scheme Policy

The Help Scheme policy has been updated to reflect the proposed changes and is at Appendix A to the Cabinet report.

<p>2. Who are the main people / Protected Characteristics that may be affected by your proposals? (all that apply)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Residents / Service Users</th> <th>Partners</th> <th>Stakeholders</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Staff</td> <td>Age</td> <td>Disability</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender Reassignment</td> <td>Marriage and Civil Partnership</td> <td>Pregnancy and Maternity</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Race</td> <td>Religion or Belief</td> <td>Sex</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sexual Orientation</td> <td>Other</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Residents / Service Users	Partners	Stakeholders	Staff	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Other	
Residents / Service Users	Partners	Stakeholders														
Staff	Age	Disability														
Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity														
Race	Religion or Belief	Sex														
Sexual Orientation	Other															
<p>3. Is the responsibility shared with another directorate, authority or organisation? If so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are the partners? Who has the overall responsibility? How have they been involved in the assessment? 	<p>The overall responsibility for taking forward this assessment lies with the Collections and Benefits, Resources Directorate.</p> <p>The policy has been developed by working in partnership with a multi-agency Community Reference Group and representatives from all service areas.</p>															
<p>Stage 2: Evidence / Data Collation</p>																
<p>4. What evidence / data have you reviewed to assess the potential impact of your proposals? Include the actual data, statistics reviewed in the section below. This can include census data, borough profile, profile of service users, workforce profiles, results from consultations and the involvement tracker, customer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, research interviews, staff surveys; complaints etc. Where possible include data on the nine Protected Characteristics.</p> <p>(Where you have gaps (data is not available/being collated), you may need to include this as an action to address in your Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)</p>	<p>Harrow profile: 20 per cent of Harrow's residents are aged under 16 (48,200)¹ whilst this signifies a small percentage change from 2010 estimates (0.7% change), in actual numbers it is an increase of 3,600 young people.</p> <p>65.9 per cent (158,400) of Harrow's population fall within the working age bracket (16 to 64) and 14.1 per cent (33,900) of Harrow's residents are 65 years of age and older.</p> <p>The average (median) age in Harrow is approximately 36 years, which ranks Harrow 284th out</p>															
<p>Age (including carers of young/older people)</p>																

¹ Source: mid-year population estimates 2011

	<p>of 348 local or unitary authorities for age, depicting a younger average than the majority of local authorities².</p> <p>A paper showing a detailed breakdown of access to the scheme of groups from the protected characteristics is attached to this EqIA at Appendix B.</p> <p>The breakdown shows that the majority of people accessing the scheme are of working age with the minority of pensionable age.</p> <p>The Scheme has been developed to support people who are in financial hardship. The changes to the scheme, as a result of the review, provide additional help to people in emergency need for the second year of operation of the scheme 2014/15.</p>
<p>272</p> <p>ability (including carers of disabled people)</p>	<p>Harrow profile: 17.3% of Harrow's working age population (16-64) classified themselves as disabled within the 2011-12 period (July to June), a total of 26,600 individuals. This signifies a decrease of 4.6% for the same period in 2010-11. 13,800 (17.3%) are men and 12,900 (17.7%) are women³</p> <p>A paper showing a detailed breakdown of access to the scheme of groups from the protected characteristics is attached to this EqIA at Appendix B.</p> <p>The breakdown shows there is a slightly higher percentage of people with disabilities accessing the scheme than the number of people with disabilities of working age across Harrow within the Harrow profile however some of these applicants who have stated they have a disability to not receive a disability payment.</p> <p>The Scheme has been developed to support people who are in financial hardship. The changes to the scheme, as a result of the review, provide additional help to people in emergency need for the second year of operation of the scheme 2014/15.</p>
<p>Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>Harrow profile: This data is currently not available</p> <p>A paper showing a detailed breakdown of access to the scheme of groups from the protected characteristics is attached to this EqIA at Appendix B.</p> <p>All applicants to the scheme that completed the equality monitoring have advised their gender is the same</p>

² Source: 2011 Census briefing note 3: September 2012; Sue Kaminska

³ Source: Nomis: Annual Population Survey

	<p>as at birth.</p> <p>The Scheme has been developed to support people who are in financial hardship. The changes to the scheme, as a result of the review, provide additional help to people in emergency need for the second year of operation of the scheme 2014/15.</p>
<p>Marriage / Civil Partnership</p>	<p>Harrow Profile: Since their inception there have been a total of 121 civil ceremonies in Harrow. There is no further data available on marriages.</p> <p>A paper showing a detailed breakdown of access to the scheme of groups from the protected characteristics is attached to this EqIA at Appendix B.</p> <p>The majority of applicants to the scheme are single and small minority of people that responded to the monitoring information are married/civil partnership.</p> <p>The Scheme has been developed to support people who are in financial hardship. The changes to the scheme, as a result of the review, provide additional help to people in emergency need for the second year of operation of the scheme 2014/15.</p>
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>Harrow Profile: This data is currently not available</p> <p>A paper showing a detailed breakdown of access to the scheme of groups from the protected characteristics is attached to this EqIA at Appendix B.</p> <p>A small number of people who have accessed the scheme (7.3% for awarded applications and 5.8% for refused applications) have been pregnant or on maternity leave in the past 2 years.</p> <p>The Scheme has been developed to support people who are in financial hardship. The changes to the scheme, as a result of the review, provide additional help to people in emergency need for the second year of operation of the scheme 2014/15.</p>
<p>Race</p>	<p>Harrow profile: Harrow is one of the most diverse places in the country. At the time of 2001 Census 49.9% of Harrow residents were classified as White British. 2011 figures reveal that the White British category now</p>

	<p>includes only 30.9% of Harrow's population, 69.1% of residents are therefore classified as belonging to a minority ethnic group⁴. The most significant minority ethnic group, at 26.4% is Asian/Asian British: Indian, ranking Harrow as second in England and Wales for its Indian population. Another significant group is classified as Asian/Asian British: Other Asian, making up 11.3% of residents and ranking Harrow 1st within this classification; this group is largely comprised of Sri Lankan community. All Asian/Asian British groups have increased since 2001.</p> <p>White Other is another group which has grown, from 4.49% in 2001 to 8.2% in 2011. Within this group there are 3,868 residents who were born in Poland and 4,784 residents born in Romania, making it the largest Romanian community within England and Wales⁵. Harrow still has a high Irish born population, ranked 7th in 2011. Whilst Black/African/Caribbean/Black British is not particularly dominant we have the highest number of Kenyan born residents (this can be attributed to a number of migrants from Kenya who are of Asian descent).</p> <p>A paper showing a detailed breakdown of access to the scheme of groups from the protected characteristics is attached to this EqIA at Appendix B.</p> <p>The breakdown shows that there are a high percentage of black/African/Caribbean/Black British people accessing the scheme than other ethnic groups.</p> <p>The Scheme has been developed to support people who are in financial hardship. The changes to the scheme, as a result of the review, provide additional help to people in emergency need for the second year of operation of the scheme 2014/15.</p>												
<p>Religion and Belief</p>	<p>Harrow profile: The 2001 Census showed that Harrow had the highest level of religious diversity of any local authority in England and Wales. The 2011 Census ranked harrow 1st for persons of Hindu religion, Jain and Unification Church. Out of 348 areas in England and Wales harrow has the 2nd lowest ranking of residents with no religion and 5th lowest for Christians (37.3%). Harrow is ranked 24th for Muslim faith residents who account for 12.5% of the population. Information from the 2011 census shows the following:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>- Christianity</td> <td>Harrow – 37.3%</td> <td>National – 59.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- Hinduism</td> <td>Harrow – 25.3%</td> <td>National – 1.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- Islam</td> <td>Harrow – 12.5%</td> <td>National – 5.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- Judaism</td> <td>Harrow – 4.4%</td> <td>National – 0.5%</td> </tr> </table>	- Christianity	Harrow – 37.3%	National – 59.4%	- Hinduism	Harrow – 25.3%	National – 1.5%	- Islam	Harrow – 12.5%	National – 5.0%	- Judaism	Harrow – 4.4%	National – 0.5%
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- Islam	Harrow – 12.5%	National – 5.0%											
- Judaism	Harrow – 4.4%	National – 0.5%											

⁴ 2011 Census: Ethnic Group. KS201EW

⁵ 2011 Census: Country of Birth (detailed). Table QS203EW

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No religion - Religion not stated <p style="text-align: right;">Harrow – 9.6% Harrow – 15.4%</p> <p style="text-align: right;">National - 24.7% National – 7.2%</p> <p>A paper showing a detailed breakdown of access to the scheme of groups from the protected characteristics is attached to this EqlA at Appendix B. This comparison with the overall population statistics shows that a lower percentage of people from the Hindu religion are accessing the scheme.</p> <p>The Scheme has been developed to support people who are in financial hardship. The changes to the scheme, as a result of the review, provide additional help to people in emergency need for the second year of operation of the scheme 2014/15.</p>
<p>Sex / Gender</p> <p style="text-align: right;">275</p>	<p>Of Harrow's total population (240,500), 118,900 (49.4%) are male and 121,600 (50.6%) are female⁶</p> <p>A paper showing a detailed breakdown of access to the scheme of groups from the protected characteristics is attached to this EqlA at Appendix B.</p> <p>The breakdown of access to the scheme shows that more women are accessing the scheme than men.</p> <p>The Scheme has been developed to support people who are in financial hardship. The changes to the scheme, as a result of the review, provide additional help to people in emergency need for the second year of operation of the scheme 2014/15.</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Harrow profile: The 2011 census did not have a question on sexual orientation; however 306 persons declared living in a same sex couple, an increase of 84 couples. It is estimated that 6% of the UK population are lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB), which would equate to approximately 14,430 of our residents belonging to the LGB community</p> <p>Since their inception, a total 121 Civil Partnership ceremonies have taken place in Harrow.</p> <p>A paper showing a detailed breakdown of access to the scheme of groups from the protected characteristics is attached to this EqlA at Appendix B. The breakdown of access to the scheme shows the majority of people accessing the scheme are heterosexual. There is no comparison available with Harrow's overall population statistics.</p> <p>The Scheme has been developed to support people who are in financial hardship. The changes to the scheme, as a result of the review, provide additional help to people in emergency need for the second</p>

⁶ Source: 2011 Mid Year Estimates

year of operation of the scheme 2014/15.

Harrow profile: In comparison to other areas Harrow was relatively less deprived in 2010 than it was in 2007. It is now ranked 203rd out of 354 boroughs in England (where 1 is the most deprived) compared with x in 2007. In London, Harrow retains its position as 7th least deprived borough (out of 33). The indicator showing the most deprivation in Harrow is Barriers to Housing where it is ranked 54th most deprived nationally.

The Scheme has been developed to support people who are in financial hardship. The changes to the scheme, as a result of the review, provide additional help to people in emergency need for the second year of operation of the scheme 2014/15.

The following information has helped to inform this EqIA:

- Publishing Equalities Information Meeting the Public Sector Duty January 2013 Harrow Council Our Harrow Our Story – 2013 - http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/863/public_sector_equality_duty
- LGA, 'The Local Impacts of Welfare Reforms' August 2013
- Exemption criteria <http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits-e/benefits/the/benefit/cap/e/benefits/the/benefit/cap/and/housing/benefit/e/the/benefit/cap/and/housing/benefit/who/is/exempt.htm>

5. What other (local, regional, national research, reports, media) data sources that you have used to inform this assessment?

at the Title of reports / documents and websites here.

Stage 3: Assessing Potential Disproportionate Impact

6. Based on the evidence you have considered so far, is there a risk that your proposals could potentially have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the Protected Characteristics?

	Age (including carers)	Disability (including carers)	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion and Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Yes									
No	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

YES - If there is a risk of disproportionate adverse Impact on any **ONE** of the Protected Characteristics, continue with the rest of the template.

- § **Best Practice:** You may want to consider setting up a Working Group (including colleagues, partners, stakeholders, voluntary community sector organisations, service users and Unions) to develop the rest of the EqIA
- § It will be useful to also collate further evidence (additional data, consultation with the relevant communities, stakeholder groups and service users directly affected by your proposals) to further assess the potential disproportionate impact identified and how this can be mitigated.

NO - If you have ticked 'No' to all of the above, then go to **Stage 6**

- § Although the assessment may not have identified potential disproportionate impact, you may have identified actions which can be taken to advance equality of opportunity to make your proposals more inclusive. These actions should form your Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7

Stage 4: Collating Additional data / Evidence

7. What additional data / evidence have you considered to further assess the potential disproportionate impact of your proposals? (include this evidence, including any data, statistics, titles of documents and website links here)

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8. What consultation have you undertaken on your proposals?

Who was consulted?	What consultation methods were used?	What do the results show about the impact on different groups / Protected Characteristics?	What actions have you taken to address the findings of the consultation? (This may include further consultation with the affected groups, revising your proposals).

Stage 5: Assessing Impact and Analysis

<p>9. What does your evidence tell you about the impact on different groups? Consider whether the evidence shows potential for differential impact, if so state whether this is an adverse or positive impact? How likely is this to happen? How you will mitigate/remove any adverse impact?</p>				
Protected Characteristic	Adverse	Positive	Explain what this impact is, how likely it is to happen and the extent of impact if it was to occur. Note – Positive impact can also be used to demonstrate how your proposals meet the aims of the PSED Stage 9	What measures can you take to mitigate the impact or advance equality of opportunity? E.g. further consultation, research, implement equality monitoring etc (Also Include these in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)
Age (including carers of young/older people)				
278 Disability (including carers of disabled people)				
Gender Reassignment				
Marriage and Civil Partnership				

Pregnancy and Maternity										
Race										
Religion or Belief										
Sex										
Sexual orientation										
279										
<p>10. Cumulative Impact – Considering what else is happening within the Council and Harrow as a whole, could your proposals have a cumulative impact on a particular Protected Characteristic?</p> <p>If yes, which Protected Characteristics could be affected and what is the potential impact?</p>										
					Yes			No		
<p>10a. Any Other Impact – Considering what else is happening within the Council and Harrow as a whole (for example national/local policy, austerity, welfare reform, unemployment levels, community tensions, levels of crime) could your proposals have an impact on individuals/service users socio economic, health or an impact on community cohesion?</p> <p>If yes, what is the potential impact and how likely is to happen?</p>										
					Yes			No		

11. Is there any evidence or concern that the potential adverse impact identified may result in a Protected Characteristic being disadvantaged? (Please refer to the Corporate Guidelines for guidance on the definitions of discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act) available on Harrow HUB/Equalities and Diversity/Policies and Legislation

	Age (including carers)	Disability (including carers)	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion and Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Yes									
No									

If you have answered "yes" to any of the above, set out what justification there may be for this in Q12a below - link this to the aims of the proposal and whether the disadvantage is proportionate to the need to meet these aims. (You are encouraged to seek legal advice, if you are concerned that the proposal may breach the equality legislation or you are unsure whether there is objective justification for the proposal)

If the analysis shows the potential for serious adverse impact or disadvantage (or potential discrimination) but you have identified a potential justification for this, this information must be presented to the decision maker for a final decision to be made on whether the disadvantage is proportionate to achieve the aims of the proposal.

§ If there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should not proceed with the proposal. **(select outcome 4)**

∞ If the analysis shows unlawful conduct under the equalities legislation, you should not proceed with the proposal. **(select outcome 4)**

∞ Page 6: Decision

12. Please indicate which of the following statements best describes the outcome of your EqIA (tick one box only)

Outcome 1 – No change required: the EqIA has not identified any potential for unlawful conduct or disproportionate impact and all opportunities to advance equality are being addressed.

Outcome 2 – Minor adjustments to remove / mitigate adverse impact or advance equality have been identified by the EqIA. *List the actions you propose to take to address this in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7*

Outcome 3 – Continue with proposals despite having identified potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to advance equality. In this case, the justification needs to be included in the EqIA and should be in line with the PSED to have 'due regard'. In some cases, compelling reasons will be needed. You should also consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the adverse impact and/or plans to monitor the impact. **(Explain this in 12a below)**

Outcome 4 – Stop and rethink: when there is potential for serious adverse impact or disadvantage to one or more protected groups. (You are encouraged to seek Legal Advice about the potential for unlawful conduct under equalities legislation)

12a. If your EqIA is assessed as **outcome 3 or you have ticked 'yes' in Q11**, explain your justification with full reasoning to continue with your proposals.

Stage 7: Improvement Action Plan

13. List below any actions you plan to take as a result of this Impact Assessment. This should include any actions identified throughout the EqIA.					
Area of potential adverse impact e.g. Race, Disability	Action required to mitigate	How will you know this is achieved? E.g. Performance Measure / Target	Target Date	Lead Officer	Date Action included in Service / Team Plan
Ensure all groups that fall within the protected characteristics understand the changes to the policy.	Advertise the changes to the voluntary sector and Jobcentre Plus to ensure referral agencies are aware of the changes and able to provide support to their users.	Discussions will be held with the multi-agency Community Reference group and Jobcentre Plus to ensure effective signposting is taking place.	31 st March, 2014	Fern Silverio/Jenny Townsley	
Through equality monitoring on the operation of the scheme there are some groups accessing the scheme more than others.	Detailed data is not known on why these groups are accessing the scheme more than others. It may be that some do not have emergency needs or these needs are met within their communities. To ensure all groups have equal access Officers will continue to work with representatives from the Community Reference Group to raise awareness of the scheme. Continue to monitor the applicants for the Emergency Relief Scheme against the protected characteristics to ensure that, if appropriate, actions are put in place to ensure all are aware of the emergency provision of support.	Discussions will be held with the multi-agency Community Reference Group to ensure awareness of the scheme.	31 st March 2014	Fern Silverio/Jenny Townsley	

Stage 8 - Monitoring

The full impact of the proposals may only be known after they have been implemented. It is therefore important to ensure effective monitoring measures are in place to assess the impact.

<p>14. How will you monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? What monitoring measures need to be introduced to ensure effective monitoring of your proposals? How often will you do this? <i>(Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)</i></p>	<p>Access to the scheme and the support provided is monitored on a monthly basis by the Emergency Relief Team. The data is provided to the Welfare Reform Governance Structure which includes a multi-agency Community Reference Group.</p> <p>This EqIA reflects feedback from an overall review of the scheme which has resulted in proposed changes to the Emergency Relief Scheme policy over the second year of operation of the scheme.</p> <p>The Scheme will be monitored through the Welfare Reform Governance structure which includes a multi-agency Community Reference Group.</p> <p>None however have received compliments regarding the operation of the scheme.</p>
<p>15. How will the results of any monitoring be analysed, reported and publicised? <i>(Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)</i></p>	<p>The Scheme will be monitored through the Welfare Reform Governance structure which includes a multi-agency Community Reference Group.</p>
<p>16. Have you received any complaints or compliments about the proposals being assessed? If so, provide details.</p>	<p>None however have received compliments regarding the operation of the scheme.</p>
<p>Stage 9: Public Sector Equality Duty</p>	
<p>17. How do your proposals contribute towards the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires the Council to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.</p> <p>(Include all the positive actions of your proposals, for example literature will be available in large print, Braille and community languages, flexible working hours for parents/carers, IT equipment will be DDA compliant etc)</p>	<p>discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.</p>
<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups</p>
<p>Access to the fund is open to all people who meet both the primary and secondary criteria.</p>	<p>Foster good relations between people from different groups</p>
<p>Access to the fund is open to all people who meet both the primary and secondary criteria.</p>	<p>All protected groups could potentially access the Emergency Relief Scheme.</p> <p>By ensuring the development of the assessment criteria and the review of the scheme was carried out in an open and</p>

	To ensure all groups have equal access Officers will continue to work with representatives from the Community Reference Group to raise awareness of the scheme.	transparent manner with input from the Voluntary Sector should foster good relations between people from different groups.
Stage 10 - Organisational sign Off (to be completed by Chair of Departmental Equalities Task Group) The completed EqIA needs to be sent to the chair of your Departmental Equalities Task Group (DETG) to be signed off.		
18. Which group or committee considered, reviewed and agreed the EqIA and the Improvement Action Plan?	EqIA Quality Assurance Group	
Signed: (Lead officer completing EqIA)	Fern Silverio	Signed: (Chair of DETG)
Date:	29.11.13	Date:
Date EqIA presented at the EqIA Quality Assurance Group	Signature of ETG Chair	
		Alex Dewsnap

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REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	15 January 2014
Subject:	Review of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Tony Ferrari, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Corporate Debt Recovery Policy 2009 Appendix B – draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy Appendix C – Consultation document Appendix D – Consultation feedback Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the proposed changes to the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy which has been shaped through partnership working with a multi-agency Debt Recovery Sub Group and feedback from a public consultation.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to make the following decisions:

1. Agree and adopt the changes to the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy.
2. Agree that Council Debt Recovery Services update their individual debt policies to reflect the principles of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy by 1st April, 2014.

Reason: (for recommendation)

The Corporate Debt Policy was implemented in 2009. Issues were raised by Councillors at Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the need for debt recovery services to recognise vulnerability within the collection processes. These concerns prompted an extensive review of the Corporate Debt Policy.

The review has been carried out by working with both an internal officer group representing all Council Services and an external multi-agency sub group that has included representation from the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD), Age UK Harrow, Harrow Mencap and Newlyn's and Chandlers Bailiffs and Council Debt Recovery services.

The policy has also been shaped through feedback from a public consultation carried out from 30th September, 2013 to 24th November, 2013.

When the policy is finalised all Council Debt Recovery services will update their policies to reflect the principles of the corporate policy.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 The Corporate Debt Policy was originally agreed by the Council in 2009 and is attached at Appendix A to this report. There has recently been an extensive review of this policy prompted by issues raised at Scrutiny Committee in 2012 regarding the identification of vulnerable debtors within the Council's Council Tax debt collection process.
- 2.2 The review has focused on the following recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Challenge Panel:
 - I. Debt recovery services should develop processes for the identification of vulnerable residents and review their cases at appropriate stages in the debt recovery process.

- II. The Council should improve communication processes within the organisations and with external agencies in order to facilitate a greater understanding of the level and impact of debt within the community. Then Council should then share lessons learnt, processes and procedures.
- III. The Council should show how it will improve how it signposts residents who are experiencing financial/debt difficulties to sources of advice in the borough.
- IV. *The integration of all debt recovery services within a central recovery service should be implemented but not until:*
 - § *The central service has been able to introduce a process for identification of vulnerable residents as above*
 - § *The housing service has been able to clarify its own strategic approach to debt recovery for implementation by the central service*

Reports have previously been provided to the Scrutiny Committee updating them of progress and changes to both the policies and operational processes.

- 2.3 The review of the Debt Recovery Policy has been carried out in partnership with an internal officer group and a multi-agency Debt Collection Sub Group. Both groups have met regularly throughout the review. All proposals for change have been discussed through the welfare reform governance structure which includes the multi-agency Community Reference Group.
- 2.4 A consultation on the changes was held from 30th September, 2013 to 24th November, 2013.

Options considered

- 2.5 The review of the integration of all debt recovery services has not looked at the development of a central recovery service as this is out of scope at this point in time. The review however has aligned the debt recovery processes to ensure that, where it is highlighted, customers with multiple debts will be dealt with in a consistent and transparent manner. The alignment of debt collection processes has considered the statutory requirements for each process and a flow chart showing enforcement for each debt collection process is included as an appendix to the proposed Corporate Debt Recovery Policy, attached at Appendix B to this report.

Approach to the Review of the Policy

- 2.6 As stated earlier in the report the review of the policy was taken forward in partnership both internally and externally with the voluntary sector and other key stakeholders. This ensured that the policy reflects the Council's duty to ensure prompt and effective collection of charges whilst, at the same time, ensuring the Council adopts a fair and considered approach to the recovery of debt.
- 2.7 The groups have worked together to take forward the following activity within the review:
- Update the principles of the policy and defining what customers can expect from the Council and what the Council expects from customers
 - Development of vulnerability criteria to ensure people who are vulnerable and require additional support to be able to manage their financial circumstances are identified as part of the debt collection process so that appropriate collection procedures are applied to them.
 - Development of criteria to define when a person sits within the vulnerability criteria and cannot manage their financial affairs
 - Development of secondary financial assessment criteria.
- 2.8 Both the external voluntary community groups and internal service areas have been involved in understanding the feedback collected throughout the consultation and shaping the changes within the policy that are being put to Councillors for recommendation within this report.
- 2.9 Officers have reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure that Councillors are kept informed and given the opportunity to give their view throughout the review of the policy.

Consultation

- 2.10 The consultation was carried out with staff, public and voluntary sector between 30th September and 24th November 2013. Consultation booklets and the draft policy were sent to 200 randomly selected Council Tax payers with an invitation to respond to the questionnaire via the web, post, telephone, email and/or attend a workshop. Opportunities to provide feedback on the process were also given to all members of the multi-agency Debt Collection Sub Group. This group includes membership from CAB, Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD), Harrow Mencap, Harrow Law Centre, Age UK, Harrow Mencap, the Council's contracted Bailiffs - Newlyn's and Chandlers, Jobcentre Plus, representation from Council Debt recovery Services.

2.11 Consultation documents were made available online signposting to a variety of channels including:

- Telephone
- Face to face through a workshop
- Email
- Hard copy
- Online survey

The consultation booklet can be found at Appendix C.

In total 5 responses were received and these were both through the web, internal services and an external organisation.

All respondents were generally in support of the policy with minimal suggestions for change.

2.12 The feedback to the consultation is detailed within the attached presentation at Appendix D and is summarised below:

Table 1		
Question		Summary of Feedback
1.	Do you agree with the principles of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy? If you have answered no please let us know what you think these should be	All agreed with the principles of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy.
The Council's response: § <i>The principles of the policy will remain the same</i>		
2.	Are there any further actions that the Council needs to do to deliver the principles?	The responses included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suspending recovery action if a debt is queried - Writing off a debt - A recognition of the cumulative impacts of welfare reforms and a realisation that people can't pay rather than won't pay
The Council's response: § <i>Unfortunately the Council is unable to suspend recovery action when debt is queried due to both legal reasons and in some cases the resources this action would require</i> § <i>Whilst 'writing off a debt' is included as a paragraph within the policy there is also a statement included within the Council's delivery of the principles</i> § <i>The policy recognises that there are people who can't pay rather than won't pay however this could be for many reasons rather than specifically the changes within the welfare reforms.</i>		
3.	Are there any further actions that should be included for customers?	A response was received which requested that customers with multiple debts are asked to list them in order of priority to help the council to understand how likely they are to receive arrears owed to them rather than repayment back to a loan shark or

Table 1	
Question	Summary of Feedback
	money lender
	<p>The Council's response:</p> <p>§ <i>The policy has been changed to reflect this comment and now requests that the customer provides the totality of their debt to support realistic repayment agreements and prioritisation of repayments.</i></p>
4.	<p>Do you think any groups of people have been missed from the vulnerability criteria?</p> <p>A response requested that people who have been subject to benefit cap and property size criteria are included as a category within the vulnerability criteria</p>
	<p>The Council's response:</p> <p>§ <i>As this group of people could fall within any of the groups within the vulnerability criteria and therefore will not be included as a specific group</i></p>
5.	<p>Do you agree with the criteria we are proposing to use to identify somebody who falls within the vulnerability criteria and cannot manage their financial circumstances? If you have answered no please let us know why you do not agree and whether we should include any other criteria</p> <p>The majority agreed with the criteria proposed to identify somebody who falls within the vulnerability criteria and cannot manage their financial circumstances however there was concern raised that the proposed criteria wasn't enough and therefore a request that an additional criteria was included which asked that a person's inability to manage their own affairs has been evidenced by a reliable third party such as a social worker, doctor, nurse or other professional.</p>
	<p>The Council's response:</p> <p>§ <i>The policy has been updated to show that "evidence provided by professionals" will be considered as part of the criteria on the Council's Debt Recovery Services when determining whether a person can manage their financial affairs effectively</i></p>
6.	<p>Are there any circumstances that haven't been taken into account within the secondary financial assessment explained in Table 2, page 9 of the draft policy?</p> <p>Concern was raised that the Council's hierarchy for prioritising debt (Table 1 page 8) did not reflect the common understanding of priority debts amongst all money advisors and an example was given that the Council could be at risk of liable action if advising somebody to pay their Adult Social Care debt over mortgage arrears and the person then losing their home or their liberty as a result of the Council's advice.</p>
	<p>The Council's response:</p> <p>§ <i>The Council has an overarching duty to all residents within Harrow to collect any monies due to fund the provision of local services. The hierarchy of debts showed in table 1 (page 8 of the policy) was agreed at Cabinet in 2009 to ensure that the Council can help customers who have multiple debts to the Council to repay with a view of avoiding the most serious consequences if the debt is not paid. If the Council Officer identifies that the person has a multitude of debt which includes debt to organisations other than the Council, the Officer would signpost the customer to a free to access advice and support organisation where an independent holistic approach can be taken.</i></p>
7.	<p>Do you have any further comments on the policy?</p> <p>No further comments provided</p>

- 2.13 The policy attached at Appendix B has been updated to reflect the feedback from the consultation.

Draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy – Proposals for change

Principles

- 2.14 The principles of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy can be found at pages 2/3 of the draft policy document at Appendix B to this report. The principles of the policy are as follows:

- To maximise income for the provision of services in Harrow whilst collecting debt responsibly, sensitively and effectively across all of our debt collection services
- Aim to pay particular emphasis on the early identification of debt with early contact with the debtor to prevent debt occurring. We will work with debtors to ensure they maintain a minimum payment to ensure arrears do not increase and debt is ultimately recovered over a realistic period.

Within the policy it is explained what customers can expect the Council to do to deliver the principles and also what the Council expects of customers who have a Debt to the Council (pages 2/3).

Vulnerability Criteria

- 2.15 The vulnerability criteria was initially developed as a direct result of concerns raised by Councillors at Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the debt collection process was not picking up vulnerability effectively. The vulnerability criteria proposed at pages 3-7 of the policy details who the Council feels is vulnerable, either on a temporary or permanent basis, in relation to debt collection and the options that will be taken forward dependant on their individual circumstances.
- 2.16 Councillors will note that some of the vulnerability criteria is based on whether the individual can manage their financial affairs effectively without support. The criteria for identifying these cases has been developed through partnership working and feedback from the consultation and is detailed on page 7 of the policy.
- 2.17 The intention is that should a person be considered vulnerable under the criteria in the policy, and where their case is known by the Council, their case will be highlighted on IT systems to prompt Debt Recovery Services within the Council to look into the individual's circumstances before taking forward any further action. Checkpoints will be put in place at various stages of the debt collection process in both Housing and Council Tax to ensure the cases known to the Council are picked up at the formal stages of debt collection. There will be cases that fall within the criteria that are not known to the Council and therefore partnership working with the Voluntary Sector will be important to help identify these individual cases. The Sundry Debtors IT system will require reconfiguration to be able to put vulnerability 'flags' on the

system and therefore this will be taken forward in the second phase of implementation of the policy.

- 2.18 Unfortunately there is not one integrated IT system across all debt collection services and therefore the successful operation of this policy is dependant on effective data sharing and continual updating of vulnerability on the various IT systems. A pilot is currently taking place between Adult Services and Council Tax to identify how the process will operate operationally. The information collated and skills developed from this pilot will support the second phase of the roll out across all debt recovery services within the Council

Assessment of ability to pay

- 2.19 In making an assessment on an individual's ability to pay, officers will work with customers to ensure their income is maximised by ensuring they are claiming their full entitlement of benefits. Both Housing and Adults are able to assess their customers at the point of entry to their service and therefore have prior knowledge of a customer's financial circumstances. However this method is not possible for both Council Tax and Sundry Debt because the first contact these services will have with the customer will be when they are in debt to the service.
- 2.20 Where multiple debts are known, the Council will work with the customer to help them to prioritise the repayment of their debt in line with the hierarchy of debt shown in Table 1 in the policy on page 8 and relevant business rules prevailing at the time. Where warranted, staff will also look at cases on individual merit and assess ability to pay taking into account any exceptional circumstances the debtor may have. This hierarchy of debt was agreed within the initial Corporate Debt Policy in 2009 and will not change as a result of the review.
- 2.21 When considering the hierarchy in relation to debts owed to external organisations advice will be provided on the repercussions of failing to make repayments and the customers will be signposted to advice and support organisations where an independent holistic approach can be taken.
- 2.22 Within the review a secondary financial assessment has been developed for consideration after the hierarchy of debt has been pursued. This secondary assessment is included within the policy at Table 2, page 9, and in relation to debts outside of the Council aligns with the CAB's Financial Assessment.

Legal Implications

The policy takes into account the need to recover all monies efficiently but ensures that Harrow complies with its duty to ensure that these monies are collected in a fair and balanced way. The policy ensures that a balance is struck between the interests of the majority of tax payers who pay on time, whilst being both robust and effective against those who deliberately fail to make payments and also being sufficiently flexible to deal with those who cannot pay as a result of their financial circumstances.

The policy provides an additional bulwark against the risk of procedural challenge under equalities.

Financial Implications

This is a report of the Corporate Director of Resources and deals with financial matters throughout.

Performance Issues

Council Tax

Collection over the last three financial years is shown in the table below. In the current year at quarter 2, collection stands at 56.76%.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Council Tax collected %	97%	97.8%	97.7%

Due to the introduction of localised council tax support from 1/4/2013, the overall collection rate has changed from 98.5% to 97.5% with effect from 1/4/2013 which has been factored in to the overall tax base calculation. This is due to the fact that only 70% is expected to be collected from the £5.1m proportion of the council tax which relates to the additional amount due to be paid by working age claimants, many of whom are in receipt of income support or job seekers allowances. For the rest, and the large majority of council tax income, a collection rate of 98.5% is still expected and the revised recovery policy will support both these objectives.

Housing Rents

Housing is currently facing a number of challenges to ensure that rental income collection rates are maintained. Welfare Reform, in relation to the size criteria, along with changes to non dependant charges and the implementation of council tax support, has impacted negatively on household budgets. Despite these changes Housing has not only managed to maintain its collection rate but it has improved up to quarter two from 96.87% last year to 97.72% in 2013. The table below shows the year end collection rates for the last three years.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Housing Rents collected %	98.36%	99.03%	98.39%

Sundry Debtors/Adult Social Care

Collection over the last three financial years has been as below and in the current year at quarter 2 stands at 71%. Sundry debts include many different types of debt ranging from Commercial Rents to Adult Social Care. In the majority of the cases recovery occurs without recourse to the County Court or Charges on Property as debts can be small. As such collection rates are not as high as in other areas although the new policy will support higher collection rates in future.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Sundry Debt collected %	75%	78%	75%

Environmental Impact

None

Risk Management Implications

Risk Included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate Risk Register in Place? No

In the current economic climate there is a risk that the Council's income collection performance could decline. This would have an adverse impact on the amount of monies available to pay for services and on the overall Council's financial position. However the risk is managed by ensuring a robust but sensitive collection policy is in place that endeavours to collect the maximum amounts possible over a period of time.

Equalities implications

An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out and is attached at Appendix E.

Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act"), the council, in the exercise of its functions, has to have 'due regard' to (i) eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (ii) advancing equality of opportunity between those with a relevant protected characteristic and those without; and (iii) fostering good relations between those with a relevant protected characteristic and those without. The relevant protected characteristics are age, race, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but to a limited extent.

An Equalities Impact Assessment screening was conducted in relation to the review of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy and can be found at Appendix C to this report. The policy has been updated to ensure that debt collection is fair and equitable across all the protected characteristics. The policy now includes vulnerability criteria that has been developed to ensure that consideration is given to an individual's circumstances if they fall within the vulnerability criteria and the appropriate actions are taken forward in relation to the collection of the debt owed.

The review of the policy, including the development of the vulnerability criteria, has been designed in partnership (with the Welfare Reform's multi agency Community Reference Group, a multi-agency sub group and the Officer Project Board) to help residents from all the protected characteristics receive a consistent and fair service. The Equality Impact Assessment screening has concluded that the changes to the policy will not have an adverse impact on residents from any of the protected groups however the following actions have been put in place to avoid potential impact:

1. The effectiveness of the policy is dependant on debt recovery services sharing information regularly in relation to both vulnerability and debts. Therefore the pilot project that is currently being taken forward between Council Tax Recovery and Adult Services is looking to understand the resources required and processes that need to be put in place to identify vulnerability within the debt collection process. Once this pilot is complete the learning will be shared with all debt recovery services.
2. The Council will not be aware of all debtors that sit within the vulnerability criteria and therefore close partnership working with external agencies will be key to help ensure the Council is informed when before taking forward debt collection.

It is likely however that the policy supports Financial Exclusion positively. Specifically it supports the lowering of financial exclusion costs, which are not always just economic. Financial Inclusion is also about fairness and social justice. It is not acceptable that anyone, least of all the most vulnerable members of society, should face avoidable costs such as:

- experiencing the stress – financial and otherwise, of over-indebtedness which could have been avoided with timely advice and support.
- paying additional costs, charges or fees because of lack of information or warnings as to the repercussions of further recovery actions
- risking intimidation and violence, to say nothing of the extortionate cost, at the hands of illegal loansharks, because no advice regarding payment plans or sign posting to affordable borrowing options are available.

Improved Financial inclusion will not only improve customer satisfaction, but it will also benefit Council staff. In particular, frontline staff, who can be demoralised by conflict with debtors and other customers, and by constantly dealing with them in crisis due to financial problems. Adopting the revised policy which supports the delivery of financial inclusion interventions, may increase the skills and motivation of staff, improving recruitment and retention.

Priorities

The revised Debt Recovery Policy reflects the aims of our corporate priorities to ensure a fairer Harrow. It takes into consideration the difficulties of those who can't pay on time due to short term financial hardship, by adopting a sensitive and pragmatic approach to collection, but also ensures a balance is in place by taking into account the financial interests of all taxpayers who rely on local authority income being collected to ensure the sustainability of service delivery.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dawn Calvert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 10 December 2013		
Name: Paresh Mehta	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 4 December 2013		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Martin Randall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director Strategic Commissioning
Date: 5 December 2013		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise
Date: 29 November 2013		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Fern Silverio (Head of Service – Collections & Housing Benefits),
Tel: 020-8736-6818 / email: fern.silverio@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

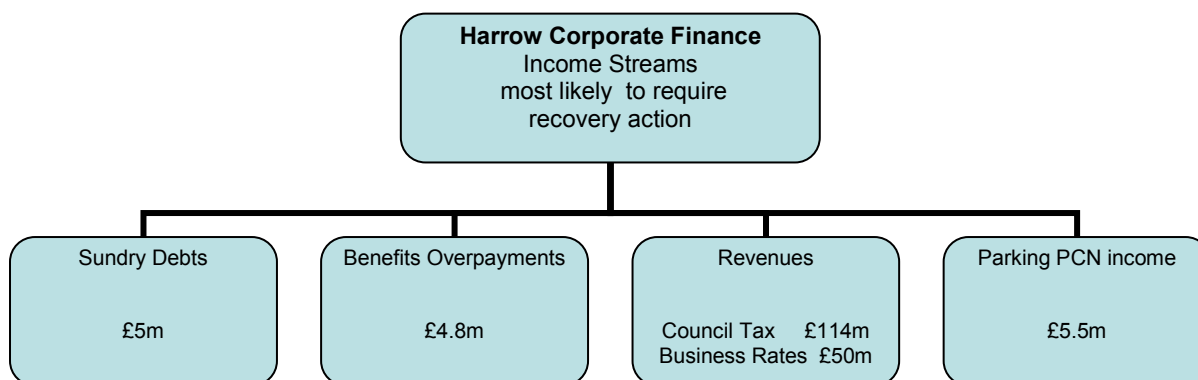
Appendices, as attached to the main report

Call-In Waived by the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	NOT APPLICABLE <i>[Call-in applies]</i>
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Harrow

Debt Management Policy

“Collecting money responsibly, sensitively and effectively”



The above figures are intended to demonstrate annual income “traffic” as opposed to residual, or current arrears.

It should be noted that collection performance is good and the vast majority of our customers pay on time. However, this policy sets out what Harrow will do where recovery action is required. The more detailed actions are set out in the associated service specific policies, namely

- **The Council Tax Recovery Policy**
- **The Business Rates Recovery Policy**
- **The Housing Benefit Overpayments Recovery Policy**
- **The Sundry Debtor Recovery Policy**
- **The Parking PCN Recovery Policy**

This document therefore acts as the overarching policy setting out what will be done as well as what the council intends doing in future to ensure a single view of the customer to ensure improved collection rates for the benefit of all tax payers.

This Policy’s objective is to maximise collection through joint working and sharing of information. Logic demands that as budgetary settlements tighten, the amount of income from our collection processes is key and must be maximised further. The Borough has developed high performing collection teams in Revenues and Sundry debtors, that achieve high performance in terms of percentage of cash collected. The business competence for high income collection is already available in-house, and it is right that more joint working should occur to ensure that the high rates of collection already achieved in some areas are applied to all “credit income” streams available to the Council.

The Revenue generated from Council Tax collection forms a significant proportion of the Authority's overall Revenue budget and as such we recognise our responsibility to maximise collection to protect the overall financial health of the Authority. We also aim to recover overpayments of Housing and Council Tax benefit to ensure that the impact of Subsidy loss to the Council is minimised.

In addition to the above, we recognise the importance of maximising collection from the other significant income streams such as housing rents, commercial rents, parking enforcement and sundry debts. We recognise the diverse nature of Harrow as a Borough, with pockets of affluence and areas of deprivation. In carrying out our duty to collect outstanding monies, we aim to take account of differing customer needs and circumstances and to reflect these in our policies for recovering each of the said debts. The minimum objective of this policy is that an individual's indebtedness to the council does not worsen. In overall terms, we aim to deal robustly with those who are wilful non payers using all recovery options available to the council, including where relevant, using bankruptcy as a method of debt recovery provided the debt exceeds the "bankruptcy level", and to deal sensitively with those who are willing to pay but are experiencing difficulties in doing so and to ensure that payment arrangements are fair.

This overall debt management policy, links the specific recovery policies for the different income types ensuring that a hierarchy for recovery of multiple debts is followed, ensuring priority or unsecured debts are collected first, minimising income loss and ensuring consistency in approach. All Departments involved will develop processes to cross-refer in order to provide a holistic service to those in debt. The intention is that this will have a much more effective outcome both for individuals and for the council, and will ultimately improve collection rates.

This document provides guidance for staff to help them to identify the most urgent debts and which debts should be recovered first. It also encourages staff to consider allocation of monies based on appropriation rules or percentage allocation should one single weekly or monthly payment arrangement be agreed to take account of the debtor's total cumulative debts to the authority.

Harrow will adopt a fair and caring approach to recovery of debts from council tax, business rates, housing benefit overpayments, rents, commercial rents, service charges and sundry debts ensuring that both preventative and early recovery action is taken. Staff will treat people with respect at all times and provide a range of methods for debtors to pay their charges which are the most efficient and cost effective including Direct Debit, debit and credit card payment facilities as a minimum.

Harrow will place emphasis on instilling a responsible payment culture amongst its customers, the early identification of vulnerable residents

and the offer of holistic collection as well as debt advice and support. The policy is based on a high level of contact with the debtor, with reminders and final notices issued as soon as possible following default and with telephone contact, face to face interviews or personal contact via debt recovery agents or bailiffs at key stages of any recovery.

We aim to pay particular emphasis on early identification of debt and early contact with the debtor to prevent debt occurring. We will work with debtors to ensure they maintain a minimum payment to ensure arrears do not increase, and in areas such as council tax we will endeavour to obtain a payment that ensures council tax debts are paid in year.

It is our aim to:

- Come to a payment arrangement with the debtor that contains arrears and stops the position worsening
- If practical, agree an overall payment to the Council that encompasses all debts owed to Harrow
- Sustain tenancies for tenants and home ownership for owners

This will help Harrow in:

- Collecting higher levels of outstanding debts
- Avoid costs associated with recovery and other charges including officer time, court costs, bailiff charges or insolvency costs
- Reduction in the number of evictions and associated costs of void loss and repairs costs on empty homes / commercial property from abandoned properties and a higher turnover
- Reduction in the number of empty commercial properties
- Improving Key Performance Indicators and customer satisfaction levels

Harrow will:

- Have regard to relevant legislation and good practice
- Provide training to all staff involved in income maximisation to include aspects of welfare advice including housing Benefit, debt advice and cost effective recovery procedures
- Where practical, have mechanisms to identify vulnerable debtors and to offer advice
- Regard every contact with the debtor as an opportunity to seek repayment as well as to assess and advise on potential income from benefits

- Work with Access Harrow Customer Advisors to ensure recovery staff and AH are working together on the focus of this policy, especially as AH has the most contact with our customers
- Work with CAB to ensure debtors are given independent advice
- Use data collected including that by AH CRM, our partner agencies – debt collectors, bailiffs, insolvency practitioners etc,- to review and report on the impact of this policy and associated service specific policies and procedures.

Debt Hierarchy - *Personal debt only*

Priority	Debt type	Commentary
1.	Council Tax	Statutory annual debt where non payment can lead to committal to prison
2.	Rent / Commercial Rent	Eviction is an option and this is down to service specific policy
3.	Service Charges	Can be secured against property
4.	Housing Benefits / Sundry debts	Mostly unsecured debts which due to their nature need early recovery or quickly become uncollectible. Due to their small amounts, depend on debt collection techniques with a view to the debtor volunteering to make regular payments – the authority having no court orders to enforce. Exception are large debts where County Court action or Insolvency used.

Harrow notes that ultimately it is up to the customer to decide which debt they wish to pay off first. However in cases where debtors approach Harrow with a view to amalgamating their debts, then in those cases the above hierarchy will apply.

Write offs

Whilst we will always pursue the collection of outstanding debts, there will be occasions where the debt is unrecoverable. Should a w/off be required, then this will follow the guidance set out within the Council's Financial Regulations and any w/off procedure set out within the individual service specific policies, as amended from time to time. Our aim, in this respect, is to keep up to date with w/off's and have transparency regarding bad debt provisions rather than accumulate old debt.

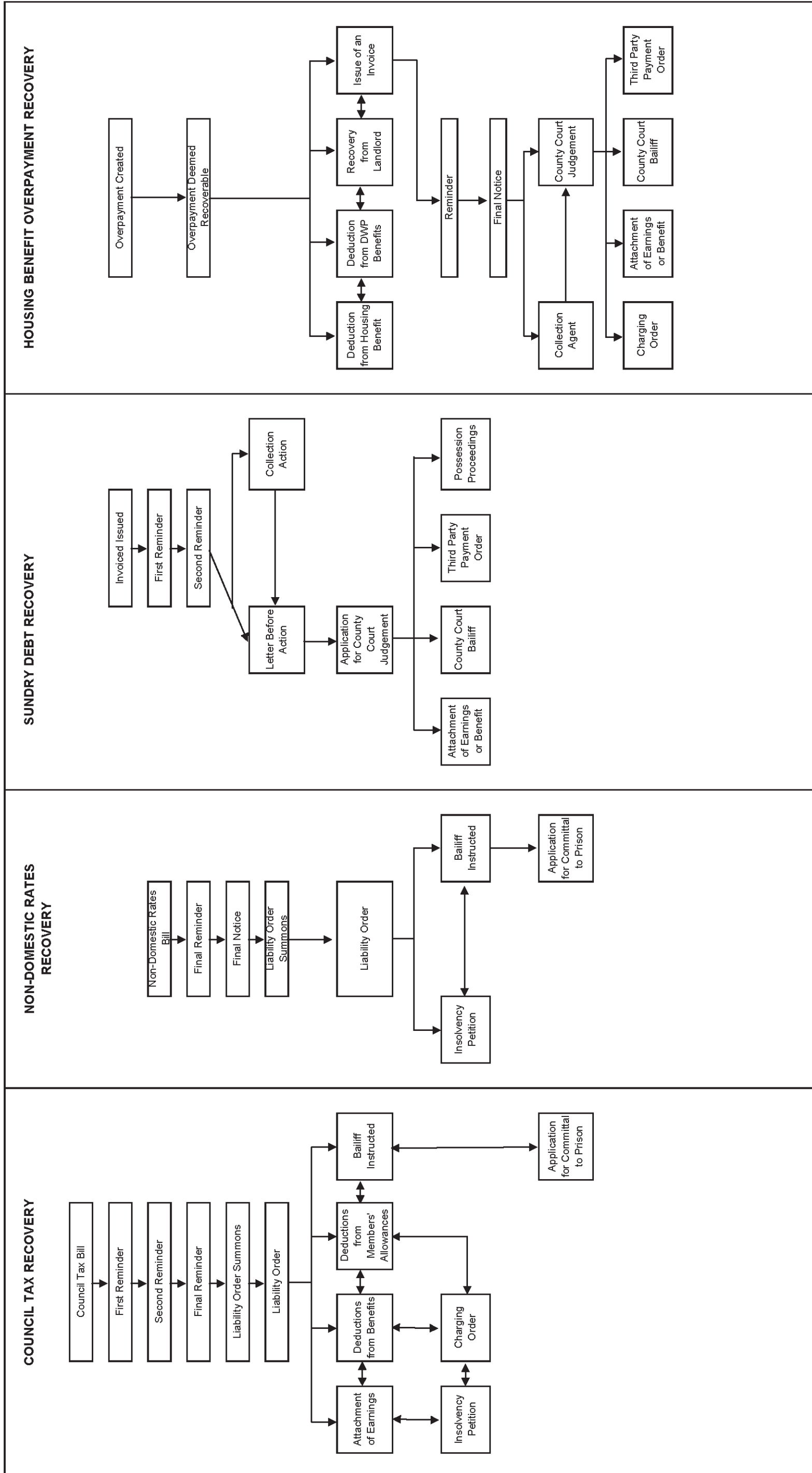
Vulnerable Debtors

Harrow has many debtors who are elderly, vulnerable through mental or physical disabilities, have young dependent children and who have literacy or language problems. These debtors, if identified as such through the course of recovery, will be treated fairly and in accordance to their needs within this policy. Harrow staff will always try to carry out a range of Customer Welfare Checks to ensure that we are providing the best advice and following the best practice to meet customers' needs when maximising income for Harrow. These checks will have the objective of increasing the take-up of financial entitlements including housing and council tax benefits and discounts to reduce the levels of debt and increase the debtor's income. Harrow will provide advice and support, work with other organisations and will access information on behalf of debtors where appropriate.

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ENFORCEMENT OPTIONS



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Draft Harrow Council Corporate Debt Recovery Policy

“Collecting money responsibly, sensitively and effectively”

Introduction

Harrow Council levies rent and charges for a variety of services and is responsible for the collection of local taxes. We have a duty to our residents to ensure prompt and cost effective billing, collection and recovery of all sums due to us. Whilst the majority of our customers do pay on time we recognise that arrears of payment can arise for a variety of reasons.

Delays in the collection of the debt owed to us results in less funding available to provide services to the local community.

This document is an overarching draft policy, for both our customers and staff. The policy sets out our proposed approach to debt collection and provides a framework for debt collection services across the Council. This policy links the specific recovery policies for the different income types to ensure that a hierarchy for recovery of multiple debts is followed, ensuring priority debts are collected first, minimising income loss and ensuring consistency in approach. All Departments within the Council involved will develop processes to cross-refer in order to provide a holistic service to those in debt. The intention is that this will have a much more effective outcome both for you, our customer, and for us, the Council, ultimately improving on and maintaining upper quartile collection rates.

We will adopt a fair and caring approach to recovery of debts from Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit Overpayments, Housing Rents, Commercial Rents Services charges and Sundry debts which includes Adults Services e.g. Home Help and Meals on Wheels, distinguishing between those customers who are unable to pay and those who deliberately won't pay. We will do this by ensuring that both preventative and early recovery action is taken and signposting our customers to get help when they are experiencing difficulties.

This policy has been updated to reflect feedback from a consultation. When this policy is finalised our Debt Collection Services will update their individual debt recovery policies to reflect the principles of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy. All debt recovery policies will be updated by 1st April, 2013.

Scope of the Policy

The policy relates to the following Debt Recovery Services:

- Council Tax

- Housing
- Business Rates
- Sundry Debts (Includes Adults and Children's Services)
- Parking PCN

Principles of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy

The driving principle behind the policy is to maximise income for the provision of services in Harrow whilst collecting debt responsibly, sensitively and effectively across all the Council's debt collection services.

We aim to pay particular emphasis on early identification of debt with early contact with our customers who get into debt to prevent debt occurring. We will work with customers to ensure they maintain a minimum payment to ensure arrears do not increase.

To deliver this effectively our customers can expect us to:

- Comply with relevant legislation and have regard to identified good practice
- Put in place effective arrangements for the provision of advice and support which include:
 - o We will work with independent organisations e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to ensure our customers who get into debt are given independent advice
 - o Our staff are trained in the maximisation of benefits uptake, debt collection and negotiation skills.
- Our staff will treat customers with respect at all times and respond courteously
- To offer a wide choice of payment options to help our customers to pay their bills to us whilst ensuring we offer the most efficient and economical methods to reduce costs to the Council

- Advise our customers promptly about the existence of their debt

- Put checkpoints in place at key points of the recovery process to identify where a customer may be vulnerable and to offer advice

- Where our customers owe more than one debt to us consideration will be given to a hierarchy of debt in order to identify priority debts.

- We will support and signpost customers to take responsibility in their journey to become financially independent

- In exceptional circumstances, where all appropriate recovery methods have been exhausted and we are unable to recovery the debt then a recommendation will be put forward that the debt is written off.

- Use data collected by us and our partner agencies – debt collectors, bailiffs, insolvency practitioners etc. to review and report on the impact of this policy and associated service specific policies and procedures.

We would expect that customers who have a debt, or who have a liability to pay a charge to us would follow the following principles:

- Pay amounts due promptly to ensure receipt by us on or before the date that the payment is due

- Inform us promptly of any changes to their circumstances that may affect the amount to be paid or the ability to pay

- Notify us promptly if their address changes

- Contact us promptly if it is believed the amount charged is not correct, both where the amount may be too much or too little

- Contact us promptly if unable to pay an amount that is due

- Advise the Council of the totality of their debt to support realistic repayment agreements and prioritisation of repayments.

- Respect the Council’s employees and its agents and respond to them courteously

- Be frank and honest when providing information in connection with the billing, collection or recovery of sums due to us.

Vulnerability Criteria

We recognise that some people require additional support to be able to manage their financial affairs and their circumstances may make them vulnerable. This criteria defines who we will consider as vulnerable and how this will be reflected in our approach to debt collection.

When managing the collection of debt the fact that someone is vulnerable does not mean that they will not be required to pay their debt. Each case will be looked at individually and, dependant on their circumstances the following will be options considered:

- Ensuring our customer has access to all relevant benefits, discounts or other entitlements
- Referral to other sources of advice
- Payment arrangements for the debt
- Allowing longer to pay
- A temporary arrangement with lower repayment than would normally be agreed
- Postponing enforcement action

We do not have one integrated IT system where all debt with us is collated. Therefore the effective operation of this policy is reliant on processes being put in place to enable our staff to be able to share information regarding vulnerability

appropriately and ensure the correct flags are highlighted on systems. It is however recognised that there will be limitations to the effective sharing of information. A pilot is currently taking place between Council Tax Recovery and Adult Services to get a clear understanding of how the following process works operationally. Further to the completion of the pilot the process for identifying vulnerability will be expanded across other debt collection services, with data sharing agreements put in place if appropriate.

We will not be aware of all customers within the community who are considered vulnerable under the criteria. We will work closely with advice and support organisations to help ensure, where possible, vulnerability is identified in relation to Debt Recovery.

The intention is that if a customer is considered to be vulnerable, under the criteria listed below, their case will be highlighted on the appropriate IT system/s. This will notify services that they need to look into the customers circumstances, and/or contact the relevant professional support worker before any further action is taken. To ensure that every opportunity is taken up to identify whether the service is dealing with a vulnerable customer the following checkpoints will be put in place at the following key points of the recovery process where the IT system allows this to take place:

Council Tax

- Summons
- Cases sent to the Bailiffs
- Bankruptcy/Committal/Charging Order
- Sale of House

Housing

- Notice Seeking Possession.
- Court Action.
- Application for an Eviction Warrant
- Eviction

Currently the Sundry Debtor system would require a reconfiguration of the system to allow flags to be inserted to identify vulnerability. This service will fall within the second phase of implementation along with Housing when the pilot is complete.

Vulnerable Groups

A customer may be considered vulnerable on a temporary or permanent basis, All Council Services will ensure records are kept updated to ensure appropriate advice

and support is given. The following list identifies the groups of people that may be considered vulnerable:

People with a Physical and/or Sensory Disability

A customer who has a physical disability is not necessarily vulnerable for the purposes of debt collection, however they will be considered vulnerable if their disability prevents them from managing their financial affairs effectively and need support.

Mental Illness

A customer has a mental health need and it prevents them from managing their financial affairs effectively and need support.

Learning Disability

A customer who has a learning disability will be considered vulnerable in respect of debt collection if they are unable to manage their financial affairs effectively and need support.

Autism

A customer who has autism will be considered vulnerable in respect of debt collection if they are unable to manage their financial affairs effectively and need support.

Serious Illness

A customer who has a long term serious illness or who is terminally ill, or a member of their close family, may be considered vulnerable if this affects their ability to manage their financial affairs effectively and they require support.

Language Difficulties

A customer who does not understand either written or spoken English, especially where they do not have the support from family who can speak or read English

People with Literacy Issues

A customer with literacy issues who does not understand written communications, especially where they do not have the support from family could be considered as vulnerable.

Elderly Persons

An elderly customer, may be considered vulnerable for the purposes of debt collection. This will be in cases where they are frail, ill and living on a limited income or where they have recently suffered the death of a partner who has previously managed their family finance.

Families with children

A family with children may be vulnerable if they have complex needs and are unable to manage their financial affairs effectively without support. Where the family's needs are so complex that they are allocated a Social Worker or lead professional, the family would be considered as vulnerable.

Young people leaving care

Young customers leaving care and may be unable to manage their financial affairs without support and would be considered as vulnerable.

Homelessness

A customer who is homeless or about to be made homeless and is unable to manage their financial circumstances would be considered as vulnerable.

Carers

A customer who is a carer and is unable to manage their financial circumstances without support would be considered as vulnerable.

Bereavement

A customer who has suffered a recent bereavement of a close relative could be considered vulnerable if they are unable to manage their financial affairs effectively without support.

Fleeing violence

A customer who has recently been the victim of violence or hate crime could be considered vulnerable if they are unable to manage their financial affairs effectively without support.

Prisoners and Detainees

Prisoners and detainees who have a debt to us and are detained will be considered as vulnerable.

Non-European Economic Area (EEA) and Refugees

A customer who is a non EEA national or refugee may be considered as vulnerable if they are unable to manage their financial affairs effectively without support.

The above list identifying vulnerability is not exhaustive. If somebody is highlighted to us as vulnerable, either from internal or external communications their individual circumstances will be considered.

Management of financial affairs criteria

The criteria our Debt Collection Services will consider when determining whether a person can manage their financial affairs effectively include the following:

- If the person has multiple debts
- The person has been granted support from the Emergency Relief Scheme
- Evidence provided by professionals will be considered as part of the process

As stated earlier in the policy it is acknowledged that there may be instances where vulnerability may not be identified however we are working in partnership with external agencies to ensure these instances are minimised.

We are taking forward a pilot between Council Tax Recovery and Adult Services to identify how the checkpoints for the identification of vulnerability operate and therefore the feedback from this trial will feed into the effective operation of this policy. This trial will only cover a small number of customers who may be classified as vulnerable for the purpose of this policy.

We understand that a customer's circumstances can change and therefore we will monitor the vulnerability flags on a regular basis, and at a minimum yearly, to ensure our records are up- to-date.

Methods of Payment

We offer a range of payment methods for customers to pay their bills to us. These include Direct Debit, Online and Telephone Payments, Cash and Cheque. Direct Debit is the Councils preferred method of payment. Credit card payments will always be subjected to a surcharge except where legislation specifically prohibits it.

Assessment of Ability to Pay

When assessing the ability to pay we will work with the customer to ensure their income is maximised by providing advice on available benefits. The Council works closely with Advice and Support Agencies in Harrow and will support the customer to access individual advice and support if this is required.

Both Housing and Adult Services assess potential customers for the ability to pay prior to them receiving our services and therefore there will be prior knowledge on the customer's ability to pay. The information gained from this process will inform these services collection processes if debt is accrued.

Both Sundry Debts and Council Tax Recovery will not have this prior knowledge and therefore are only able to make a financial assessment of the customer's income, expenditure and whether all benefits have been claimed when the debt has been incurred.

Where customers are unable to pay the debt in one lump sum an arrangement can be made for the customer to pay by instalments. Provided the arrangement is kept to, no further recovery action will take place. We will work with the customer to make a realistic instalment arrangement and where possible will consider payments the customer may need to make to clear other priority debts.

Where multiple debts to us are known the Council will work with the customer to help them prioritise the repayment of their debt with a view of avoiding the most serious consequences if debt is not repaid. In these cases the hierarchy outlined in Table 1 will apply.

Table 1

Priority	Debt Type	Commentary
1.	Council Tax	Can result in bailiff action, attachment of earnings/benefits bankruptcy or imprisonment
2.	Rent/Commercial Rent	Can result in eviction
3.	Leasehold Service Charges	Can result in repossession
4.	Housing Benefits/Sundry Debts including Adult Social Care	Mostly unsecured debts which due to their nature need early recovery or quickly become unrecoverable. Due to their small amounts depend on debt collection techniques with a view to the debtor volunteering to make regular payments – the Authority having no court orders to enforce. Exceptions are large debts where County Court action or insolvency used.

Once the priority debts have been considered the financial assessment will consider debts where non-payment could lead to loss of the customer's home or imprisonment as shown in Table 2 below. .

When considering the hierarchy in relation to debts owed to external organisations advice will be provided on the repercussions of not making repayments and the customers will be signposted to advice and support organisations where an independent holistic approach can be taken.

Table 2

Debt Type	Commentary
Private Sector Rent/Leasehold Service Charges/Mortgage Arrears	Can result in repossession
Fuel debts (current suppliers)	Can result in disconnection
Maintenance/child support arrears (for children in care) enforced through the magistrates' court	Can result in imprisonment
Income Tax arrears when enforced through the magistrates' court	Can result in bankruptcy or imprisonment (only for evading payment)
VAT arrears	Imprisonment (only for evading payments)
National insurance contribution arrears	Fine – followed by imprisonment if unpaid
Telephone/mobile phone/telecom packages arrears (essential services)	Disconnection
Payday Loans/hire purchase/conditional sale (essential goods)	Repossession of essential goods/imprisonment
Fines arrears/default – these include parking fines issued by the magistrates' court but not parking penalties issued by local authorities.	Fine
County Court Judgements	Can result in Bailiff action, Attachment of Earnings or bankruptcy
TV licence arrears	Fine and imprisonment

Multiple Debts

Some customers may owe more than one debt to us. If the customer is also on a low income or experiencing financial hardship we need to be clear on the debts we consider a priority to pay and these are shown in Table 1.

As stated earlier in the policy the Council does not have one IT system for debt collection and therefore it will be difficult for services to automatically understand whether multiple debts are owed to Council Services. However this information will be sought from debtors within the financial assessment process. For vulnerable customers, where vulnerability is known, checks will be made with the relevant service. If multiple debts are owed repayment will be discussed taking into consideration prioritisation of debt.

Enforcement

Reasonable efforts will be made by us to recover debts without having to resort to enforcement action. However where debts are not paid enforcement, including court action, will be necessary. We will use all legal means to recover debts and these include:

- Attachment of earnings orders
- Deduction from Benefits
- Deduction from Member's Allowances
- Bailiffs and debt collection agencies
- Possession proceedings
- Bankruptcy
- County court money judgements
- Committal to prison proceedings
- Charging Orders
- Sale of properties
- Eviction

Attached to this policy at Appendix A is a flow chart showing the enforcement process for each debt collection process along with a description of the enforcement options at Appendix B.

The Debt Recovery Agents contracted with us have signed up to our corporate vulnerability criteria and Code of Conduct.

Writing Debts off

If all appropriate recovery methods have been exhausted and we are unable to recover the debt then a recommendation will be put forward that the debt is written off. All debts to us will be actioned in accordance with Financial Regulations.

Monitoring the Policy

We use data collected both internally within the Council and externally with our partner agencies, debt collectors, bailiffs, insolvency practitioners etc. to review and report on the impact of this policy and associated service specific policies and procedures.

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APPENDIX B – Enforcement Options

(1) Attachment of Earnings

The Council can order the debtor's employer to make deductions from the debtor's wages or salary. The deductions are sent directly to the Council until the debt is cleared. The employer has no choice but to comply, as it is an offence to ignore the attachment order. They must tell the debtor each time a deduction is made but may also charge the debtor £1.00 each time a deduction is made to cover their own costs. The money is taken weekly, fortnightly or monthly (in accordance with the debtor's pay) and is deducted at a percentage rate in line with the amount the debtor earns.

(2) Deductions from benefits

The Council can ask the Department for Work and Pensions to make deductions directly from a person's Universal Credit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance. The money deducted is sent to the Council each month and continues until the Council Tax is paid in full, or the benefit entitlement stops. A person must inform the Council within two weeks of any changes in their benefit entitlement.

(3) Bailiff action

The Council can instruct bailiffs to collect the outstanding debt from a person.

The Council's bailiffs are certificated through the County Court and abide to a Code of Practice. The bailiff company will write to the debtor first. If the debtor makes payment to them in full or makes and keeps to an arrangement with them, then no further costs will be added other than a small charge for card payments.

When the bailiff visits the debtor, they ask for full payment and will add visit costs. If the debtor cannot pay the amount due in full immediately, the bailiff may agree a payment arrangement. This is covered by a 'walking possession' agreement. This is where the bailiff records an inventory of goods that can be sold to repay the debt if the debtor does not keep to his/her arrangement. The debtor will be asked to sign the walking possession agreement. Additional fees will be added to the debtor's bill for this action. Providing the debtor pays as arranged, there are no further costs. If the debtor's goods are subject to a walking possession agreement, the debtor cannot move or dispose of them without the bailiff's permission. If the debtor fails to pay as arranged and has signed a walking possession agreement, the bailiff may re-enter the debtor's property, using force if necessary, to take the goods listed on the inventory. The debtor is charged for their removal and sale.

If the bailiff believes that the debtor may intentionally dispose of his/her goods, they may take 'close possession' of them. This means that the bailiff remains in the debtor's property until the debt is paid or the goods removed by the bailiff. Additional costs are added to the debtor's bill. The bailiff may visit the debtor's property to enforce the liability order by removing goods. If a van is used, additional costs are added to the debtor's bill.

(4) Possession proceedings

This is available for the non-payment of rent or service charge. The first step will be to serve the tenant with a 'Notice of Intent to Seek Possession', (Notice of Seeking Possession if the debtor is a secure tenant, a Notice of Proceedings for Possession if the debtor is an introductory tenant or a Notice to Quit if the debtor holds a temporary tenancy).

This notice tells the debtor how much rent the debtor owes and that the Council may apply to the County Court for a Possession Order after 28 days. If there has been no payment from the debtor, the Council will apply for a Hearing date. At the hearing, the Court may agree to give the Council an outright possession order. This usually means 28 days after the court hearing, the debtor will have to leave their home. If the debtor does not leave, the Council will request the court's bailiff to evict the debtor.

(5) Bankruptcy action

The Council may decide to take insolvency action against the debtor if the total debt owed to the Council is more than £750. If the court declares a debtor bankrupt he/she could lose their home and possessions to pay the debts and have to pay significant additional costs on top of the debt that is owed to the Council. The Council will send the debtor a letter warning of bankruptcy proceedings and give him/her a last chance to pay before bankruptcy action starts.

If the Council does not make an agreed payment, a 'Statutory Demand' is served on the debtor. This is the first formal stage in a process that may lead to bankruptcy. If the debtor does not agree a payment arrangement after the service of a Statutory Demand, or if the court does not set the case aside, the Council will then serve the debtor with a bankruptcy petition.

(6) Charging Orders

If the debtor owns a property, the Council may decide to apply for a Charging Order to be placed on it. This is similar to a mortgage and means the Council can recover outstanding debt from the proceeds of sale if the property is sold at a later date. Once the Charging Order has been granted against a property, the Council can ask the court for an order to evict the debtor and enforce the property's sale to recover the money the debtor owes the Council from the proceeds.

(7) Committal proceedings

The Council may take committal proceedings against a debtor if they do not try to clear their debt. This means the debtor could go to prison for the non-payment of debt owed to the Council. If the bailiffs have been unable to remove goods to pay for the debt, or if the Council thinks other recovery options are inappropriate, the Council can ask the Magistrates' Court to send the debtor a summons to attend a committal hearing. This means that the Council can ask the Magistrates' Court to decide whether to send the debtor to prison for not paying monies owed to the Council.

At the hearing, the Council's representative will confirm to the Magistrates' Court that a Liability Order has been granted and that the bailiffs have either been unsuccessful in removing the debtor's goods or the debtor does not have goods of sufficient value to clear the debt. The Magistrates' Court then asks the debtor the reason they have not paid the debt owed to the Council and decides whether the debtor has failed to pay due to 'wilful refusal' or 'culpable neglect'. The Magistrates' Court asks the debtor questions about their income and expenditure. This is called a 'means enquiry'. It helps the court decide whether the debtor have been guilty of wilful refusal or culpable neglect.

There are several decisions the Magistrates' Court can make:

(a) Court order with suspended sentence

The debtor can be sentenced to a term of imprisonment but this sentence will be suspended provided the debtor keeps to the conditions of the suspension. This is usually an order to pay a set amount to clear the debts. If the debtor fails to do what is ordered by the Magistrates' Court the Council will apply for the debtor to be brought back to court for the prison sentence to be enforced.

(b) Court Order without a suspended sentence

The debtor could be ordered to pay a set amount. If the debtor does not keep up the payments, he/she is ordered to come to court again to explain why they have not paid. The Magistrates Court will then decide what to do next. The Council will apply for the order to be backed by a suspended sentence.

(c) Committal to prison

The Magistrates' Court can decide to send the debtor to prison immediately for up to 90 days.

If the debtor does not appear in court, the Council asks the Magistrates' Court to issue a warrant for arrest with bail. This means that a Warrant Officer can arrest the debtor and bail them to appear in court at a later date. If the debtor does not appear at court after being bailed, the Council asks the Magistrates Court to issue a warrant for the debtor's arrest without bail. In this case, a Warrant Officer can arrest the debtor and take the debtor to police custody or straight to the Magistrates' Court to appear in front of the District Judge.

Deduction from Member's allowances

This option only applies to elected Members. If a Councillor has not paid their Council Tax, up to 40% of their allowances can be claimed to clear the debt.

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Consultation Document

Draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy

30th September 2013 to 24th November 2013

Why are we consulting?

Effective debt management is crucial as this money provides needy resources which we use to deliver services.

The Corporate Debt Recovery policy was originally agreed by the Council in 2009. There has recently been an extensive review of corporate debt recovery and as a result the proposed changes are included within the attached draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy.

This is an overarching policy setting out our approach to debt collection. A corporate framework for debt collection services ensures a consistent and fair approach is taken to debt collection across the Council. When this policy is agreed Debt Recovery Services within the Council will update their policies to reflect the principles of the Corporate Policy.

We have been working with a multi-agency group to develop the policy which included Citizens Advice Bureau, Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD), Age Concern, Jobcentre Plus, Harrow Mencap, Newlyns and Chandlers Bailiffs and representatives from our Debt Recovery services.

We want to make sure this draft policy is inclusive and reflects the views of people living in Harrow. We are, therefore, asking for your views in a consultation that will be held over an eight week period from 30th September, 2013 to 24th November, 2013. To be able to respond to this consultation effectively you will need to read the draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy which is attached to this consultation document. Further copies can be downloaded from our web www.harrow.gov.uk/cdrpconsultation or by telephoning 020 8420 9332.

The main features of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy

Principles of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy

The principles of the policy have been updated and are:

- To maximise income for the provision of services in Harrow whilst collecting debt responsibly, sensitively and effectively across all of our debt collection services.
- We aim to pay particular emphasis on the early identification of debt with early contact with the debtor to prevent debt occurring. We will work with debtors to ensure they maintain a minimum payment to ensure arrears do not increase.

Within the policy (page 3) we have outlined what customers can expect from the Council to deliver these principles effectively and the principles that the Council

would expect customers to follow who have a responsibility to pay a charge to the Council or have a debt to the Council.

Vulnerability Criteria

There are some people who will require additional support to be able to manage their financial affairs and their circumstances may make them vulnerable. We have developed criteria that identifies who we will consider vulnerable and how this will be reflected in our approach to debt collection. This criteria is a new feature within the Corporate Debt Collection Policy.

When a person is identified as vulnerable their case will be looked at individually by the relevant debt collection service. This does not mean that they will not be required to pay their debt. Dependant on their circumstances the following options will be considered:

- Ensuring the person has access to all relevant benefits, discounts or other entitlements
- Referral to other sources of advice
- Payment arrangements for the debt
- Allowing longer to pay
- A temporary arrangement with lower repayment than would normally be agreed
- Postponing enforcement action.

The vulnerability criteria is explained in detail on pages 4-7 of the draft policy.

Management of financial affairs criteria

As you will note from reading the vulnerability criteria some of the people will only be considered vulnerable if they cannot manage their financial affairs effectively. Criteria has been developed to help debt collection services understand when a person cannot manage their financial affairs effectively which includes the following:

- If the person has multiple debts
- The person has been granted support from the Council's Emergency Relief Scheme (further information on the Emergency Relief Scheme can be found at www.harrow.gov.uk/emergencyreliefscheme)

We are currently taking forward a pilot between our Council Tax Recovery and Adult Services to identify how the checkpoints for the identification of vulnerability operate and therefore the feedback from this trial, as well as your views given through this consultation will influence the criteria and its future operation.

Assessment of Ability to Pay

We will continue to ensure that we work with customers to ensure their income is maximised by providing advice on available benefits. Where customers are unable to pay their debt in one lump sum an arrangement can be made for the customer to pay by instalments. Where customers have multiple debts that are owed to the Council we will work with the customer to help them prioritise the repayment of their debt with a view to avoiding the most serious consequences if the debt is not repaid. The hierarchy of debts was included within the previous policy and is not changing. (Included within the draft policy -Table 1 on page 8).

Once the priority debts have been considered the financial assessment will consider debts where non-payment could lead to loss of the customer's home or imprisonment as shown in Table 2, pages 8 and 9 of the draft policy. This secondary assessment has been introduced as a new feature to the draft policy.

Enforcement

Reasonable efforts are made by the Council to recovery debts without having to resort to enforcement action. However where debts are not paid enforcement, including court action, is necessary. The enforcement actions that the Council will take forward are explained on page 9 of the draft policy and are not changing as a result of the review of the policy.

We want your views

Harrow Council is committed to making sure its residents get the opportunity to influence the development of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy. We are consulting with you over an eight week period from 23rd September, 2013 to 17th November, 2013.

You can give your views by:

Questionnaires - You can complete the questionnaire that came with this booklet and return to the following freepost address:

London Borough of Harrow
Freepost
PO Box 730
Civic Centre
Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2DU

Workshop – We are holding a workshop for all interested parties to attend and give their views on Thursday 31st October, 2013, 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon in the Members Lounge at the Civic Centre, Station Road HA1 2XY. If you wish to attend please telephone 020 8420 9332.

Online – Visit www.harrow.gov.uk/cdrpconsultation to find information about this consultation and to view the draft policy. You can also complete the questionnaire on line.

Telephone - 020 8420 9332 (Please note that after working hours there is an answer phone on this telephone. Please leave your contact number and we will call you back.)

Email – you can email your comments or queries to benefits@harrow.gov.uk

How the decisions will be made

Once the consultation is complete the feedback will be collated, anonymised and will be used to shape the Corporate Debt Recovery policy. A report will be written and presented at the Council's Cabinet meeting on the 15 January, 2014 where the final decision on the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy will be taken.

Questionnaire

We want you to give your views and help us to shape the new Corporate Debt Recovery policy. Please complete the following questionnaire and return it to us by Freepost to London Borough of Harrow, Freepost, P.O. Box 730, Civic Centre, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2DU.

Questionnaires must be returned no later than Friday 22 November, 2013.

-
1. The principles of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy are explained on page 2/3 of the draft policy. Do you agree with these principles?

Yes No

If you have answered no please let us know what you think they should be

-
2. We have explained what customers can expect from Harrow Council when delivering the principles on page 3 of the draft policy. Are there any further actions that we need to include?

3. We have explained what the Council expects from customers who have a charge they must pay to the Council on pages 3/4 of the draft policy. Are there any further actions that we need to include?

-
4. The Vulnerability Criteria is explained at pages 3 to 7 of the draft policy. Do you think any groups of people have been missed from the vulnerability criteria?

Yes No

If you have answered yes, please let us know the groups that you feel have been missed and why.

5. Do you agree with the criteria we are proposing to use to identify somebody who falls within the vulnerability criteria and cannot manage their financial circumstances? This criteria is explained at pages 6 and 7 of the draft policy under the heading 'Management of financial affairs criteria.

Yes No

If you have answered no please let us know why you do not agree and whether we should be including any other criteria

-
6. Are there any circumstances that haven't been taken into account within the secondary financial assessment explained in Table 2, page 9 of the draft policy?

-
7. Do you have any further comments on the policy?

Why do we monitor?

Harrow Council has a legal responsibility to promote and advance equality. To help us to do this, it is important that we have a good understanding of our communities, how our services are being accessed and who is using or would like to use our services. With up-to-date and accurate information we are able to:

- Better understand our service users / residents and shape services to meet their specific needs
- Identify and address any barriers / issues individuals may experience when accessing our services (including information about our services)
- Ensure our policies and services are accessible to everyone who uses them

The information will also enable us to monitor our progress with regards to addressing inequality and allow our employees and service users see how we are performing on equality.

Data Protection – it is your choice whether you provide this information. Your replies will not be used in a way that identifies you. However they will help us to understand how community needs may vary and help us to make informed decisions on how we develop our services and target resources.

Age - What is your age group?

Under 16	<input type="text"/>	16 – 24 years	<input type="text"/>
25 – 44 years	<input type="text"/>	45 – 64 years	<input type="text"/>
65 & over	<input type="text"/>		

Disability – Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months?

No	<input type="text"/>	Yes, affecting mobility	<input type="text"/>
Yes, affecting hearing	<input type="text"/>	Yes, affecting vision	<input type="text"/>
Yes, a learning disability	<input type="text"/>	Yes, mental ill-health	<input type="text"/>
Yes, another form of disability, please specify	<input type="text"/>		

Ethnic origin - What is your ethnic origin?

Asian or Asian British			
Afghani	<input type="text"/>	Bangladeshi	<input type="text"/>
Chinese	<input type="text"/>	Indian	<input type="text"/>
Pakistani	<input type="text"/>	Sri Lankan	<input type="text"/>
Any other Asian background – please specify	<input type="text"/>		

Black or Black British

African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somali	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Black background – please specify			

Mixed background

White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other mixed background - please specify			

Other ethnic background

Arab	<input type="checkbox"/>	Iranian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Ethnic group – please specify			

White or White British

Albanian	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gypsy / Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Romanian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other White background - please specify			

Marriage or Civil Partnership

Are you married?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you in a Civil Partnership?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pregnancy or Maternity

Have you been pregnant and / or on maternity leave during the past 2 years?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Religion and belief - What is your religion?

Buddhism	<input type="checkbox"/>	Judaism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christianity (all denominations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hinduism	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zoroastrian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Islam	<input type="checkbox"/>	No religion / Atheist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jainism	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other -please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sex - Are you?

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

Yes

No

Sexual orientation - What is your sexual orientation?

Bisexual

Gay Woman / Lesbian

Other – Please specify

Gay Man

Heterosexual

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Draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy

Consultation Feedback

Consultation held from 30th September, 2013 to 24th November, 2013

q Consultation booklet and questionnaire sent to:

- A random sample of 200 Council Tax payers both in receipt/not in receipt of Council Tax Support
- The multi-agency Community Reference Group which includes membership from Harrow CAB, Mind in Harrow, Harrow Mencap, HAD, Age UK Harrow, HASVO, CNWL, Harrow Law Centre, Jobcentre Plus, Landlords Association, Unions and representatives from Council Services
- Staff within the Council's Debt Recovery Services

q Consultation web pages and survey online

q Consultation Workshop

- q Vulnerability has been identified but it is not detailed what we actually monitor in the Council – need to mention that all vulnerable groups are not monitored by the Council
- q Adult Services recorded service users relate to individuals who have been assessed (substantial or critical), this will not cover all people who are vulnerable
- q You mention there would be a flag – we would need to ensure the flag can be turned off as well which would require a regular update and matching exercise
- q Adults fees should be mentioned within the policy

Council's response:

- q The draft policy will be updated to state that the Council will not be aware of all people within the Community that could be considered vulnerable.
- q The Council will work closely with Advice and Support Agencies to help ensure, where possible, vulnerability is identified in relation to Debt Recovery Services
- q Vulnerability flags will be monitored by the individual Debt Recovery Services on a regular basis and at a minimum yearly.
- q Policy will be updated to include Adults Fees

q There is a problem regarding list of priority debts and whilst completely understand that recovery of monies owed to the Council are a priority to the Council, there is a common understanding of what are priority debts amongst all money advisors and these are listed below (slide 5). It would be a bit disingenuous for a Council Officer to say to someone that paying their adult social care charge was more of a priority than paying their mortgage, or paying VAT that had been evaded and such advice may be viewed as downright unethical as it is simply not true. It might also leave the Council liable to action if the person lost their home or their liberty as a result of following the Council's advice

Council's response:

q The Council has an overarching duty to all residents within Harrow to collect any monies due to fund the provision of local services. The hierarchy of debts showed in Table 1 (page 8 of the policy) was agreed at Cabinet in 2009 to ensure that the Council can help customers who have multiple debts to the Council to repay with a view of avoiding the most serious consequences if the debt is not paid. If the Council Officer identifies that the customer has a multitude of debt which includes debt to organisations other than the Council, the Officer would signpost the customer to a free to access advice and support organisation where an independent holistic approach can be taken.

General Feedback

CAB Financial Assessment:

Type of Debt	Ultimate sanction
Mortgage/secure loan arrears	Repossession followed by eviction
Rent arrears	Repossession followed by eviction
Council Tax	Imprisonment
Gas/electricity arrears (current suppliers)	Disconnection
Maintenance arrears, child support arrears, contribution order arrears (for children in care) enforced through the magistrates' court	Imprisonment
Income tax arrears when enforced through the magistrates' court	Imprisonment (only for evading payment)
VAT arrears	Imprisonment (only for evading payment)
National insurance contribution arrears	Fine – followed by imprisonment if unpaid
Telephone/mobile phone/telecom packages arrears (essential services)	Disconnection
Hire purchase/conditional sale (essential goods)	Repossession of essential goods/ imprisonment
Fines arrears/default – these include parking fines issued by the magistrates' court but not parking penalties issued by local authorities, which are non-priority debts	Fine
TV Licence – if the client does not have one or is in arrears	Fine

CAB Table of Non priority debts

Type of Debt	Ultimate sanction
Consumer credit debts and unsecured personal debts including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Credit cards/store cards □ Overdrafts □ Catalogues/mail order □ Unsecured loans □ Personal debts 	Court action for debts
Benefit overpayments	Deduction at source if client still in receipt of benefit
Tax credit overpayments	Deduction from on-going entitlement if client still in receipt of tax credits. Court action for debt if not
Hire purchase/conditional sale (non-essential goods)	
Parking penalties – civil enforcement	Bailiffs may seize vehicle
Water rates	Court action for debts

Council's response:

The secondary financial assessment shown in Table 2 (page 8 of the policy) has been updated to reflect the CAB Financial Assessment (excluding Council Debts) shown on slide 5.

- q First you have to be in a vulnerable category and then you have to consider whether 'it effects their ability to manage their financial affairs effectively and require support' but the only two categories to be considered are:
- If the person has multiple debts; and
 - If the person was granted an award from the Emergency Relief Scheme
- q The two criteria are not enough to pick up people who might be vulnerable i.e. if somebody was terminally ill and in hospital, their sick pay had stopped, were awaiting benefits and their direct debt for Council Tax had bounced. Should there be an additional criteria that includes 'or their inability to manage their own affairs has been evidenced by a reliable third party such as a social worker, doctor, nurse or other professional whole statement has been accepted as valid by a senior member of revenues staff'

Council's response:

- q The policy will be updated to show that the criteria the Council's Debt Recovery Services will consider when determining whether a person can manage their financial affairs effectively will include:
- Evidence provided by professionals would be considered as part of the process

Questionnaire Feedback



Question	Yes	No
1. Do you agree with the principles of the policy?	2	0
Council's response: ☑ Further to all responses received from the consultation the principles of the policy will remain the same		

Question	Yes	No
2. We have explained what customers can expect from Harrow Council when delivering the principles. Are there any further actions we need to include?	1	0
Feedback from the consultation: ☑ Suspending recovery action if a debt is queried ☑ Writing off debt ☑ A recognition of the cumulative impacts of welfare reforms and a realisation that people can't pay rather than won't pay		

Council's response: ☑ Unfortunately, the Council is not able to suspend recovery action when debt is queried due to the resources this action would require ☑ Whilst 'writing off a debt' is included within the policy it will also be mentioned within the delivery of the principles ☑ The policy recognises that there are people who can't pay rather than won't pay however this could be for many reasons rather than specifically the changes within the welfare reforms.		
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Questionnaire Feedback



Question	Yes	No
3 We have explained what the Council expects from customers who have a charge they must pay to the Council. Are there any further actions we need to include	1	1
Feedback from consultation		
q Ask the customer with multiple debts to list them in order of priority to enable the Council to determine how likely they are in receiving for example, Council Tax arrears before repayment back to loan shark or money lender		
Council's response		
q The policy will be changed to include a request to the customer to advise the Council of the totality of their debt and to have a discussion regarding their priorities		
Question		
4 Do you think that any groups of people have been missed from the vulnerability criteria?	1	1
Feedback from consultation		
q Those subject to bedroom tax and/or benefit cap		
Council's response		
q People who have had their benefits changed through either the Social Sector Size Criteria and/or the Benefit Cap could fall within any of the groups within the vulnerability criteria and therefore will not be included as a specific group		

Questionnaire Feedback



Question	Yes	No
5. Do you agree with the criteria we are proposing to identify somebody who falls within the vulnerability criteria and cannot manage their financial circumstances? If you have answered no please let us know why you do not agree and whether we should be including any other data.	2	0

Consultation Response - None

Council Response:

q Whilst no comments were received to this question in the questionnaires a general comment was received and therefore as stated in slide 7 the policy will be updated to include the following in relation to management of financial circumstances:

- Evidence provided by professionals would be considered as part of the process

Question	Yes	No
6. Are there any circumstances that haven't been taken into account within the secondary financial assessment explained in Table 2, page 8 of the policy?	0	1

Consultation Response - None

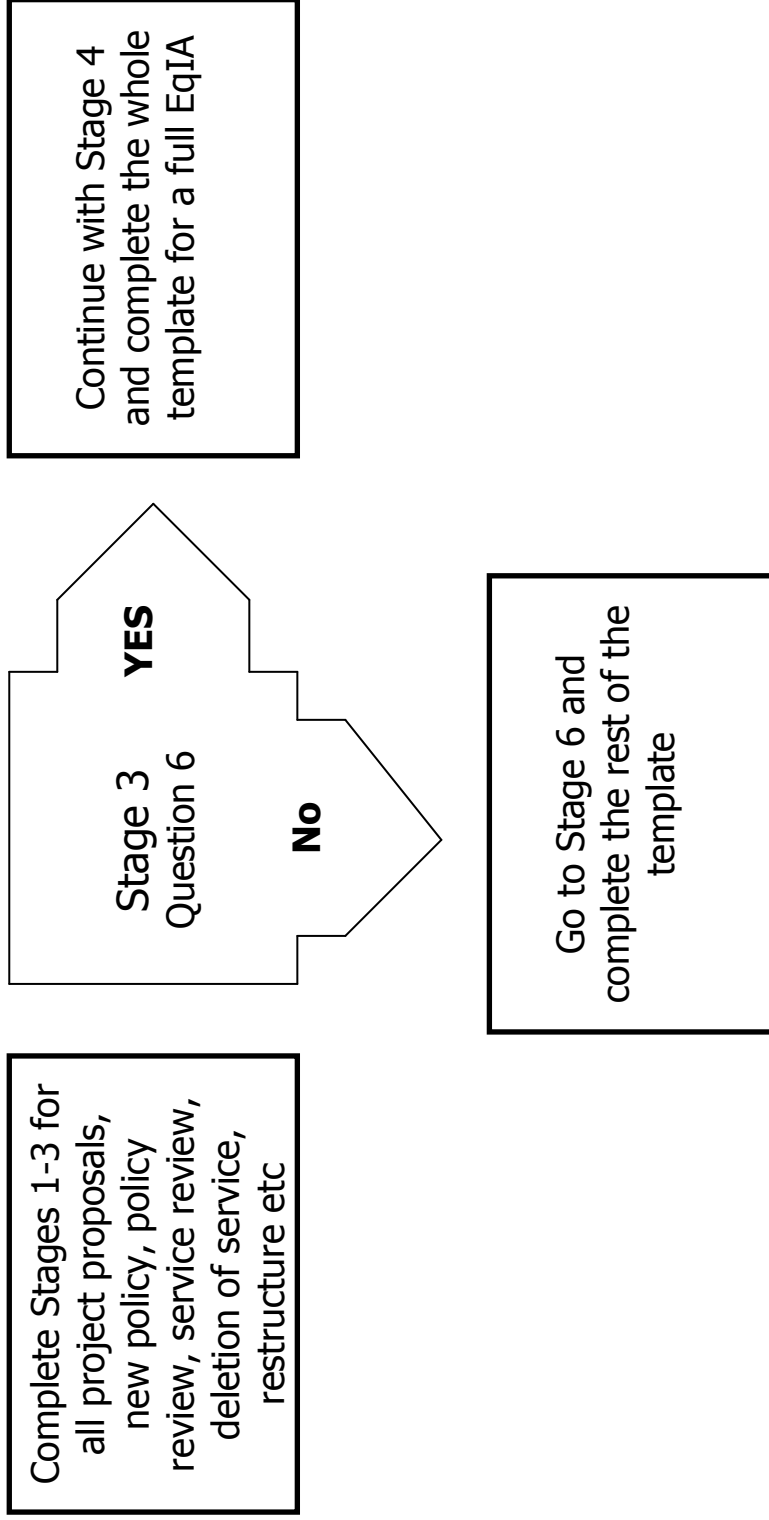
Council Response:

q Whilst no comments were received to this question in the questionnaires a general comment was received and therefore as stated in slide 5 the secondary financial assessment has been updated to reflect the order of external debts to the council included in the response to the consultation on slide 5.

Question	Yes	No
7. Do you have any further comments on the policy?		
Consultation response - none		

Equality Impact Assessment Template

The Council has revised and simplified its Equality Impact Assessment process. There is now just one Template. Project Managers will need to complete **Stages 1-3** to determine whether a full EqIA is required and the need to complete the whole template.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

In order to carry out this assessment, it is important that you have completed the EqIA E-learning Module and read the Corporate Guidelines on EqIAs. Please refer to these to assist you in completing this assessment.

It will also help you to look at the EqIA Template with Guidance Notes to assist you in completing the EqIA.

Type of Project / Proposal:	Tick	Type of Decision:	Tick
Transformation		Cabinet	
Capital		Portfolio Holder	
Service Plan		Corporate Strategic Board	
Other		Other	
Title of Project:			
Review of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy			
Directorate / Service responsible:			
Resources Directorate Collections and Housing Benefits			
Name and job title of lead officer:			
Fern Silverio, Head of Service, Collections and Housing Benefits			
Name & contact details of the other persons involved in the assessment:			
Bernie Beckett, Consultation Project Manager BBeckett@harrow.gov.uk Tel: 020 8736 6726			
Date of assessment:			
This EqIA has been updated throughout the review of the Corporate Debt Policy. The most recent update has been carried out on the 25 th October, 2013			
Stage 1: Overview			
<p>1. What are you trying to do? (Explain proposals e.g. introduction of a new service or policy, policy review, changing criteria, reduction / removal of service, restructure, deletion of posts etc)</p>			
<p>The Corporate Debt Recovery Policy was agreed by the Council in 2009. An extensive review of the policy has been carried out to specifically ensure the policy reflects concerns raised by elected members at the Councils Scrutiny Committee and their following recommendations:</p> <p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>The central debt recovery service should develop a process for the identification of vulnerable residents and reviewing their cases at appropriate stages in the central debt recovery process.</p> <p><i>A draft vulnerability criteria has been developed through a public consultation and</i></p>			

engagement with a multi-agency Community Reference Group, multi-agency Debt Collection Sub Group and through internal discussions within an Officer Debt Collection Sub Group and the Welfare Reform Governance Structure. The vulnerability criteria is included within the draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy, pages 5-7, attached at Appendix B to the Cabinet Report.

Services have agreed that proposed checkpoints will be put in place at key stages of the Debt Collection processes to capture vulnerability. A pilot will be taken forward with Council Tax Recovery and data from Adult Services to trial the process for identifying vulnerability at the initial checkpoint stages for Council Tax Collection, to identify how the process will work operationally and the resources required to deliver. The learning from this pilot will influence the plan for implementation across all debt collection services. When these processes are in place a data sharing agreement will be drawn up that shows the detail of the information to be shared, and, if it is necessary to transfer data between services, how it will be transferred, stored and how long it will be retained by the receiver service.

The Sundry Debtor system would require configuration of the system to allow flags to be inserted to identify vulnerability. The costs and processes required to update this system is not yet known.

Recommendation 2

The integration of all debt recovery services with the central recovery service should be implemented but not until:

The central service has been able to introduce a process for identification of vulnerable residents as above

The Housing service has been able to clarify its own strategic approach to debt recovery for implementation by the central service

This review has not considered the centralisation of all debt recovery services. However the review has aligned the debt recovery processes for all Debt Collection services. A flowchart showing the Enforcement for all Debt Collection Services is attached to the draft Debt Recovery Policy at Appendix A.

There are some specific legislative requirements in relation to seeking possession through the courts for Council tenants or seeking an order in relation to leasehold service charge that require officers to have detailed knowledge of housing law as well as best practice and the regulators requirements to operate. It should also be noted that with co-regulation our tenants have a right to determine income recovery.

Where multiple debts are highlighted the Council will work with the debtor to prioritise the debts that will have the most serious consequence if they are not paid. Table 1 (page 8) within the draft policy shows the hierarchy of debts that was agreed by Cabinet within the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy in 2009. There are no plans to change the hierarchy of debts however a secondary financial assessment (Table 2 page 9 of the draft policy) has been updated to reflect the feedback from the public consultation.

Recommendation 3

The Council should improve communication processes within the organisation and with external agencies in order to facilitate a greater understanding of the level and impact of debt within the community. Lessons learnt, processes and procedures should be shared.

The Welfare Reform Governance structure, which includes the multi-agency Reference Group will be monitoring the level of debts within the community as part of the overall monitoring of the changes within the welfare reforms. Welfare Reform Awareness sessions have been carried out, both internally within the Council, and externally with the Voluntary Sector, Community Groups, GPs and Heads from local schools. The Council is working closely with the voluntary sector to support an understanding of the level of debts within the community.

The Housing Service is also represented on the West London Welfare Reform Group which is a forum specifically established to share lessons learnt, processes and procedures and good practice.

Recommendation 4

The council should show how it will improve how it signposts residents who are experiencing financial/debt difficulties to sources of advice and advocacy in the

borough

The Harrow Help Scheme brings together discretionary pots of funding that provide support to people in difficult financial circumstances.

The Council is also working with a Voluntary Sector Consortium to develop an advice portal, Harrow Advising Together (HAT), which will be available to all residents through the web, email, Facebook and telephone. The advice portal is intended to increase the reach and cost effectiveness of advice and support services across Harrow. A link to the portal will sit within the Help Scheme.

The Housing Service has extended a project that funds the CAB to target households identified by the service as in need of priority advice and support.

Key features of change – Corporate Debt Recovery Policy

The activity explained above in response to the recommendations made by Councillors has shaped the review of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy. This document has been developed in partnership with multi-agency reference group, representation from internal debt recovery services and through a public consultation. The policy includes the following key features:

The principles of the policy - have been updated and are:

- To maximise income for the provision of services in Harrow whilst collecting debt responsibly, sensitively and effectively across all of our debt collection services
- We aim to pay particular emphasis on the early identification of debt with early contact with the debtor to prevent debt occurring. We will work with debtors to ensure they maintain a minimum payment to ensure arrears do not increase.

Within the draft policy (pages 2 and 3) at Appendix B to the Cabinet Report the Council also outlines what customers can expect from the Council to deliver these principles effectively and the principles that the Council would expect customers to follow who have a responsibility to pay a charge to the Council or have a debt to the Council.

Vulnerability criteria – is a new feature within the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy and is detailed starting page 3 of the draft Policy.

Management of financial affairs criteria – Within the vulnerability criteria some people are only considered vulnerable if they are not able to manage their financial affairs effectively. The criteria has been developed to help Debt Recovery Services understand when a person may not be able to manage their financial affairs effectively and is detailed on page 7 of the draft policy.

Assessment of Ability to pay – We will continue to work with people to ensure their income is maximised by providing advice on available benefits. Where customers are unable to pay their debts in one lump sum the Council will work with the customer to prioritise their repayments. The hierarchy of debts was included within the previous policy and will not be changed. Once the priority debts have been considered a secondary financial assessment will be carried out which is new to the policy. Detail on the secondary assessment is included in Table 2, page 9 of the draft policy.

Enforcement – Whilst the Council will make reasonable efforts to recover debts without enforcement action, if the debt remains unpaid enforcement action will be taken forward. The action taken is explained on page 9 of the draft policy and will not change as a result of the review.

Once the draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy has been agreed all Debt Recovery Services within the Council will update their policies to reflect the changes agreed.

The Council does not have one IT system for debt collection and therefore it will be difficult for services to automatically understand vulnerability and whether multiple debts are owed to Council Services. The effectiveness of this policy will depend upon services sharing information on a regular basis. A pilot is taking place between

Council Tax Collection and Adult Services to understand the resources and processes required to ensure the policy works effectively. Further to the completion of the pilot the process for identifying vulnerability will be expanded across other debt collection services, with data sharing agreements put in place as appropriate.

It is likely however that the policy supports Financial Exclusion positively. Specifically it supports the lowering of financial exclusion costs, which are not always just economic. Financial Inclusion is also about fairness and social justice. It is not acceptable that the most vulnerable members of society, should face avoidable costs such as:

- Experiencing the stress – financial and otherwise of over indebtedness which could have been avoided with timely advice and support
- Paying additional costs, charges or fees because of lack of information or warnings as to the repercussions of further recovery actions
- Risking intimidation and violence to say nothing of the extortionate cost, at the hands of illegal loan sharks, because no advice regarding payment plans or sign posting to affordable borrowing options are available.

Improved financial inclusion will not only improve customer satisfaction, but it will also benefit Council staff. In particular, frontline staff, who can be demoralised by conflict with debtors and other customers, and by constantly dealing with them in crisis due to financial problems. Adopting the revised policy which supports the delivery of financial inclusion interventions, may increase the skills and motivation of staff, improving recruitment and retention.

2. Who are the main people / Protected Characteristics that may be affected by your proposals? (all that apply)

Residents / Service Users	Partners	Stakeholders
Staff	Age	Disability
Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity

	Race	Sexual Orientation	Religion or Belief	Sex
<p>3. Is the responsibility shared with another directorate, authority or organisation? If so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the partners? • Who has the overall responsibility? • How have they been involved in the assessment? 	<p>This policy has not been developed in isolation. There has been close working with internal debt recovery services and with external agencies such as Harrow Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Harrow Mencap, Harrow Association of Disabled Persons (HAD), Mind in Harrow, Harrow Age UK, The Law Centre, Jobcentre Plus through the Community Reference Group. The policy has also been updated to reflect feedback from consultation.</p> <p>The overall responsibility for the delivery of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy lies with the Head of Service, Collections and Benefits, Resources Directorate.</p> <p>The responsibility for development, implementation and delivery of the changes is shared with the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accounts Payable - Revenues - Housing - Community Health and Wellbeing. <p>All services are represented on the Corporate Debt Collection Group and have been involved in shaping the draft policy.</p>			
Stage 2: Evidence / Data Collation				
4. What evidence / data have you reviewed to assess the potential impact of your proposals? Include the actual data, statistics reviewed in the section below. This can include census data, borough profile, profile of service users, workforce profiles, results from consultations and the involvement tracker, customer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, research interviews, staff surveys; complaints etc. Where possible include data on the nine Protected Characteristics. (Where you have gaps (data is not available/being collated), you may need to include this as an action to address in your Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)	<p>What evidence / data have you reviewed to assess the potential impact of your proposals? Include the actual data, statistics reviewed in the section below. This can include census data, borough profile, profile of service users, workforce profiles, results from consultations and the involvement tracker, customer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, research interviews, staff surveys; complaints etc. Where possible include data on the nine Protected Characteristics. (Where you have gaps (data is not available/being collated), you may need to include this as an action to address in your Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)</p>			
Age (including carers of young/older people)	<p>Harrow profile: 20 per cent of Harrow's residents are aged under 16 (48,200)¹ whilst this signifies a small percentage change from 2010 estimates (0.7% change), in actual numbers it is an increase of 3,600 young people. 65.9 per cent (158,400) of Harrow's population fall within the working age bracket (16 to 64) and 14.1 per cent</p>			

¹ Source: mid-year population estimates 2011

(33,900) of Harrow's residents are 65 years of age and older.

The average (median) age in Harrow is approximately 36 years, which ranks Harrow 284th out of 348 local or unitary authorities for age, depicting a younger average than the majority of local authorities².

Council Tax currently have approximately 7,000 to 8,000 debtors and the total level of debt outstanding is £4.1m to the 31.3.13. The total arrears equates to 3.4% of the total Council Tax yield raised annually. As a comparison Council Tax Support arrears to the 31st March, 2013 equate to £863,000 or 10% of the total Council Tax yield raised for this category of tax payer. Even without Council Tax Support coming in this particular sector, which previously received Council Tax Benefit (before the scheme changed to CTS) was already having payment difficulties as highlighted by the higher arrears outstanding, and will no doubt have further challenges trying to pay the higher amounts of Council Tax now demanded of them. We recognise these challenges and have factored in a 70% collection rate against this particular sector as opposed to a 98.5% collection rate for everybody else.

There is currently minimal information in terms of the 9 characteristics held on the Housing service database but this is an ongoing piece of work which is being monitored with targets having been set for the end of the year. Currently 100% information is held for gender, 86% ethnicity and 87% for age (date of birth). Applying this information directly to those cases with rent arrears the data does exist and is explained below:

Tenants with arrears over £300						
Age Groups	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
0-15						
4	31	81	134	180	73	28
0.67%						
					No DoB	DoB held
					66	527
					11.06%	88.27%

Do we have any figures for Accounts payable and Adult Services

The majority of the welfare reforms impact working age households, particularly those families with over 3 children.

The vulnerability criteria is a new addition to the policy and puts in place additional support for those groups of people who meet the criteria. In relation to the protected characteristic 'age' the criteria captures the following:

² Source: 2011 Census briefing note 3: September 2012; Sue Kaminska

- Elderly persons may be considered vulnerable for the purposes of debt collection. This will be in cases where they are frail, ill and living on a limited income or where they have recently suffered the death of a partner who has previously managed their family finance
- Families with children may be vulnerable if they have complex needs and are unable to manage their financial affairs effectively without support. Where the family's needs are so complex that they are allocated a Social Worker or lead professional the family would be considered as vulnerable.

Where a person is highlighted as vulnerable within the debt collection process their case will be looked at individually and the action taken forward will depend on their circumstances.

Harrow profile: 17.3% of Harrow's working age population (16-64) classified themselves as disabled within the 2011-12 period (July to June), a total of 26,600 individuals. This signifies a decrease of 4.6% for the same period in 2010-11. 13,800 (17.3%) are men and 12,900 (17.7%) are women³

This data is currently not available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current Council Tax IT system.

Housing Tenants – Arrears over £300

Disability				
Yes	No	Prefer not to say	Rel % held	% Blank
32	94	0	126	471
			21.11%	78.89%

People with disability are impacted by the Welfare Reforms and therefore are likely to receive less income as a result of the changes. Whilst the Council Tax Support Scheme gives some additional support to people with disabilities they still have to pay at least 10% of their Council Tax

The vulnerability criteria is a new addition to the policy and puts in place additional support for those groups of people who meet the criteria. In relation to the protected characteristic 'Disability' the criteria captures the following groups of people:

- People with physical and/or sensory disability, mental illness, learning disability, autism and serious illness will be considered vulnerable if their disability prevents them from managing their financial affairs effectively and need support.
- Carers who are unable to manage their financial affairs effectively and need support

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Disability (including carers of disabled people)

³ Source: Nomis: Annual Population Survey

	<p>Where a person is highlighted as vulnerable within the debt collection process their case will be looked at individually and the action taken forward will depend on their circumstances.</p> <p>This data is currently not available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services</p> <p>This data is currently not available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services</p> <p>This data is currently not available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services</p>															
<p>Gender Reassignment</p> <p>Marriage / Civil Partnership</p> <p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>Harrow profile: Harrow is one of the most diverse places in the country. At the time of 2001 Census 49.9% of Harrow residents were classified as White British. 2011 figures reveal that the White British category now includes only 30.9% of Harrow's population, 69.1% of residents are therefore classified as belonging to a minority ethnic group⁴ The most significant minority ethnic group, at 26.4% is Asian/Asian British: Indian, ranking Harrow as second in England and Wales for its Indian population. Another significant group is classified as Asian/Asian British: Other Asian, making up 11.3% of residents and ranking Harrow 1st within this classification; this group is largely comprised of Sri Lankan community. All Asian/Asian British groups have increased since 2001.</p> <p>White Other is another group which has grown, from 4.49% in 2001 to 8.2% in 2011. Within this group there are 3,868 residents who were born in Poland and 4,784 residents born in Romania, making it the largest Romanian community within England and Wales⁵. Harrow still has a high Irish born population, ranked 7th in 2011. Whilst Black/African/Caribbean/Black British is not particularly dominant we have the highest number of Kenyan born residents (this can be attributed to a number of migrants from Kenya who are of Asian descent). In relation to the debt collection services this data is not available and unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services.</p> <p>This data is currently not available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current Council Tax IT system.</p> <p>Housing Tenants – Arrears over £300</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Blank</td> <td>81</td> <td>13.57%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not disclosed</td> <td>83</td> <td>13.90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Held</td> <td>433</td> <td>72.53%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total tenants</td> <td>597</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total tenanted properties</td> <td>511</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Blank	81	13.57%	Not disclosed	83	13.90%	Held	433	72.53%	Total tenants	597		Total tenanted properties	511	
Blank	81	13.57%														
Not disclosed	83	13.90%														
Held	433	72.53%														
Total tenants	597															
Total tenanted properties	511															
<p>Race</p>	<p>353</p>															

The vulnerability criteria within the policy does capture people with language difficulties where the person does not understand either written or spoken English, especially where they do not have the support from family who can speak or read English. The vulnerability criteria also captures non-European Economic Area (EEA) and refugees who may be considered as vulnerable if they are unable to manage their financial affairs effectively without support.

Where a person is highlighted as vulnerable within the debt collection process their case will be looked at individually and the action taken forward will depend on their circumstances.

Harrow profile: The 2001 Census showed that Harrow had the highest level of religious diversity of any local authority in England and Wales. This means that there is a 63 per cent chance that two people at random would be from different religious groups. We do not yet have comparative data for 2011, but the 2011 Census ranked Harrow 1st for persons of Hindu religion, Jain and Unification Church, 2nd for Zoroastrian and 6th for Jewish. Out of 348 areas in England and Wales Harrow has the 2nd lowest ranking of residents with no religion and 5th lowest for Christians (37.3%). Harrow is ranked 24th for Muslim faith residents, who account for 12.5% of the population⁶

Housing Tenants – Arrears over £300

Religion and Belief	Baha'i	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Humanist	Jain	Judaism	Islam
14	0	0	7	9	0	0	1	32
Rastafarian	Sikh	Zoro	Other	Prefer not to say	Total Rel/Beliefs	Blank		
0	0	0	0	6	63	528		
				1.01%	10.55%	88.44%		

Where a person is highlighted as vulnerable within the debt collection process their case will be looked at individually and the action taken forward will depend on their circumstances.

Of Harrow's total population (240,500), 118,900 (49.4%) are male and 121,600 (50.6%) are female⁷

This information is not currently available and unlikely to be able to be captured within the current Council Tax IT system

Housing Tenants – Arrears over £300.

Sex / Gender	Person date		Equalities data	
	Male	Female	None	Gender Reassignment
192	404	1	0	597
	99.83%	0.17%	0	

Religion and Belief

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Sex / Gender

	<p>Where a person is highlighted as vulnerable within the debt collection process their case will be looked at individually and the action taken forward will depend on their circumstances.</p> <p>Harrow profile: The 2011 census did not have a question on sexual orientation; however 306 persons declared living in a same sex couple, an increase of 84 couples. It is estimated that 6% of the UK population are lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB), which would equate to approximately 14,430 of our residents belonging to the LGB community</p> <p>Since their inception, a total 121 Civil Partnership ceremonies have taken place in Harrow.</p> <p>This information is not currently available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across the majority of debt collection services.</p>																
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Housing Tenants – Arrears over £300</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Bisexual</th> <th>Man</th> <th>Woman</th> <th>Heterosexual</th> <th>Other</th> <th>Prefer not to say/not disclosed</th> <th>% Held</th> <th>% Blank</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>119</td> <td>0</td> <td>4</td> <td>120 20.10%</td> <td>473 79.23%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Harrow profile: In comparison to other areas Harrow was relatively less deprived in 2010 than it was in 2007. It is now ranked 203rd out of 354 boroughs in England (where 1 is the most deprived) compared with x in 2007. In London, Harrow retains its position as 7th least deprived borough (out of 33). The indicator showing the most deprivation in Harrow is Barriers to Housing where it is ranked 54th most deprived nationally.</p>	Bisexual	Man	Woman	Heterosexual	Other	Prefer not to say/not disclosed	% Held	% Blank	0	1	0	119	0	4	120 20.10%	473 79.23%
Bisexual	Man	Woman	Heterosexual	Other	Prefer not to say/not disclosed	% Held	% Blank										
0	1	0	119	0	4	120 20.10%	473 79.23%										

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<p>Socio Economic</p>	<p>The following information has helped to inform this EqIA: The Corporate Debt Collection Policy 2009 Council Tax Recovery Policy Identify titles of both the Sundry Debts and Housing policies Publishing Equalities Information Meeting the Public Sector Duty January 2013 Harrow Council Our Harrow Our Story – 2013 - http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/863/public_sector_equality_duty</p>
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<p>5. What other (local, regional, national research, reports, media) data sources that you have used to inform this assessment? List the Title of reports / documents and websites here.</p>	<p>The following information has helped to inform this EqIA: The Corporate Debt Collection Policy 2009 Council Tax Recovery Policy Identify titles of both the Sundry Debts and Housing policies Publishing Equalities Information Meeting the Public Sector Duty January 2013 Harrow Council Our Harrow Our Story – 2013 - http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/863/public_sector_equality_duty</p>
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Stage 3: Assessing Potential Disproportionate Impact

6. Based on the evidence you have considered so far, is there a risk that your proposals could potentially have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the Protected Characteristics?

	Age (including carers)	Disability (including carers)	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion and Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Yes									
No	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

YES - If there is a risk of disproportionate adverse Impact on any **ONE** of the Protected Characteristics, continue with the rest of the template.

§ **Best Practice:** You may want to consider setting up a Working Group (including colleagues, partners, stakeholders, voluntary community sector organisations, service users and Unions) to develop the rest of the EqIA
 § It will be useful to also collate further evidence (additional data, consultation with the relevant communities, stakeholder groups and service users directly affected by your proposals) to further assess the potential disproportionate impact identified and how this can be mitigated.

NO - If you have ticked 'No' to all of the above, then go to **Stage 6**

§ Although the assessment may not have identified potential disproportionate impact, you may have identified actions which can be taken to advance equality of opportunity to make your proposals more inclusive. These actions should form your Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7

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Stage 4: Collating Additional data / Evidence

7. What additional data / evidence have you considered to further assess the potential disproportionate impact of your proposals? (include this evidence, including any data, statistics, titles of documents and website links here)

8. What consultation have you undertaken on your proposals?

Who was consulted?	What consultation methods were used?	What do the results show about the impact on different groups / Protected Characteristics?	What actions have you taken to address the findings of the consultation? (This may include further consultation with the affected groups, revising your proposals).
The consultation was held with	Consultation booklet and survey	The feedback from the	The consultation feedback has been

<p>the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council Tax payers and Council Tax Support claimants - Council Tenants - Voluntary Sector - Staff from Council Debt Collection Services 	<p>that could be completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard copy and free post - Web - Telephone - Email <p>Face to face through workshop</p>	<p>consultation influenced the development of the policy. The policy provides some additional support, not previously provided, to ensure that people who are seen as vulnerable in relation to the criteria within the policy will ensure that there circumstances are looked at before progressing with action.</p> <p>In relation to the collection of debt there was some feedback from the consultation that the Council's internal prioritisation of debt could put people at risk of action against debts owed to external organisations and is not specific to any protected characteristic.</p>	<p>used to update the draft policy which is being put to Members for decision at January 2014 Cabinet.</p> <p>The Council has a responsibility to all residents to collect monies owed to fund Council Services. However where an officer identifies that a person has a multitude of debts they will signpost to an advice and support organisation who will be able to give independent support.</p>
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Stage 5: Assessing Impact and Analysis

<p>9. What does your evidence tell you about the impact on different groups? Consider whether the evidence shows potential for differential impact, if so state whether this is an adverse or positive impact? How likely is this to happen? How you will mitigate/remove any adverse impact?</p>			
Protected Characteristic	Adverse	Positive	<p>Explain what this impact is, how likely it is to happen and the extent of impact if it was to occur.</p> <p>Note – Positive impact can also be used to demonstrate how your proposals meet the aims of the PSED Stage 9</p> <p>What measures can you take to mitigate the impact or advance equality of opportunity? E.g. further consultation, research, implement equality monitoring etc (Also Include these in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)</p>
Age (including carers of young/older			

people)								
Disability (including carers of disabled people)								
Gender Reassignment								
Marriage and Civil Partnership								
Pregnancy and Maternity								
358 Race								
Religion or Belief								
Sex								
Sexual orientation								
10. Cumulative Impact – Considering what else is happening within the Council and Harrow as a whole, could your proposals have a cumulative impact on a particular Protected Characteristic?						Yes	No	
If yes, which Protected Characteristics could be affected and what is the potential impact?								
10a. Any Other Impact – Considering what else is happening within the						Yes	No	

Council and Harrow as a whole (for example national/local policy, austerity, welfare reform, unemployment levels, community tensions, levels of crime) could your proposals have an impact on individuals/service users socio economic, health or an impact on community cohesion?

If yes, what is the potential impact and how likely is to happen?

11. Is there any evidence or concern that the potential adverse impact identified may result in a Protected Characteristic being disadvantaged? (Please refer to the Corporate Guidelines for guidance on the definitions of discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act) available on Harrow HUB/Equalities and Diversity/Policies and Legislation

	Age (including carers)	Disability (including carers)	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion and Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Yes									
No									

If you have answered "yes" to any of the above, set out what justification there may be for this in Q12a below - link this to the aims of the proposal and whether the disadvantage is proportionate to the need to meet these aims. (You are encouraged to seek legal advice, if you are concerned that the proposal may breach the equality legislation or you are unsure whether there is objective justification for the proposal)

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35
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the analysis shows the potential for serious adverse impact or disadvantage (or potential discrimination) but you have identified a potential justification for this, this information must be presented to the decision maker for a final decision to be made on whether the disadvantage is proportionate to achieve the aims of the proposal.

- § If there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should not proceed with the proposal. **(select outcome 4)**
- § If the analysis shows unlawful conduct under the equalities legislation, you should not proceed with the proposal. **(select outcome 4)**

Stage 6: Decision

12. Please indicate which of the following statements best describes the outcome of your EqIA (tick one box only)

Outcome 1 – No change required: the EqIA has not identified any potential for unlawful conduct or disproportionate impact and all opportunities to advance equality are being addressed.

Outcome 2 – Minor adjustments to remove / mitigate adverse impact or advance equality have been identified by the EqIA. *List the actions you propose to take to address this in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7*

Outcome 3 – Continue with proposals despite having identified potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to advance equality. In this case, the justification needs to be included in the EqIA and should be in line with the PSED to have 'due regard'. In some cases, compelling reasons will be needed. You should also consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the adverse impact and/or plans to monitor the impact. **(Explain this in 12a below)**

<p>Outcome 4 – Stop and rethink: when there is potential for serious adverse impact or disadvantage to one or more protected groups. (You are encouraged to seek Legal Advice about the potential for unlawful conduct under equalities legislation)</p>	
<p>12a. If your EqIA is assessed as outcome 3 or you have ticked 'yes' in Q11, explain your justification with full reasoning to continue with your proposals.</p>	

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Stage 7: Improvement Action Plan				
13. List below any actions you plan to take as a result of this Impact Assessment. This should include any actions identified throughout the EqIA.	Area of potential adverse impact e.g. Race, Disability	Action required to mitigate	How will you know this is achieved? E.g. Performance Measure / Target	Target Date Lead Officer Date Action included in Service / Team Plan

<p>Whilst the vulnerability criteria is an addition to the policy its effectiveness is dependent on services sharing information regularly in relation to both vulnerability and debts. If this information isn't shared the vulnerable groups could be at risk.</p>	<p>A pilot project is currently taking place between Council Tax Recovery and Adult Services to understand the resources required and processes that need to be put in place to identify vulnerability within the debt collection process. Once this pilot is complete the learning will be shared with all debt collection services.</p>		<p>Fern Silverio Paul Young</p>	
<p>There may be instances where vulnerability is not highlighted as it is not known by any Council Services.</p>	<p>The Council is working closely with external agencies to help ensure these instances are minimised.</p>		<p>Fern Silverio Linda D'Souza Toni Burke Donna Edwards</p>	

Stage 8 - Monitoring

The full impact of the proposals may only be known after they have been implemented. It is therefore important to ensure effective monitoring measures are in place to assess the impact.

14. How will you monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? What monitoring measures need to be introduced to ensure effective monitoring of your proposals? How often will you do this? *(Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)*

The Corporate Debt Recovery Policy will be monitored through the Welfare Reform Governance structure which includes both internal groups and the multi-agency Community Reference Group

15. How will the results of any monitoring be analysed, reported and publicised? *(Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)*

The results of the monitoring will be reported through the Welfare Reform Governance structure

<p>16. Have you received any complaints or compliments about the proposals being assessed? If so, provide details.</p>	None	
<p>Stage 9: Public Sector Equality Duty</p>		
<p>17. How do your proposals contribute towards the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires the Council to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups. (Include all the positive actions of your proposals, for example literature will be available in large print, Braille and community languages, flexible working hours for parents/carers, IT equipment will be DDA compliant etc)</p>	<p>Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups</p>	<p>Foster good relations between people from different groups</p>
<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</p>	<p>The Corporate Debt Recovery has been developed to ensure a fair and consistent approach to debt across the Local Authority. Vulnerability criteria has been put in place to help identify the most financially vulnerable and ensure their individual circumstances are taken into account when considering further debt recovery action</p>	<p>The policy covers are groups of people who may find themselves in debt and provides a fair and consistent approach. The vulnerability criteria captures the most financially vulnerable groups and this criteria has been developed through consultation</p>
<p>Would ensure their individual circumstances are taken into account when considering further debt recovery action</p>	<p>All protected groups could potentially find themselves in debt at some time to the Council. The development of the policy ensures a fair and consistent approach to debt collection for all groups of people. The vulnerability criteria has been developed through partnership working and consultation and acknowledges that the criteria is not exhaustive and if a persons individual circumstances are highlighted consideration will be given.</p>	
<p>Stage 10 - Organisational sign Off (to be completed by Chair of Departmental Equalities Task Group) The completed EqIA needs to be sent to the chair of your Departmental Equalities Task Group (DETG) to be signed off.</p>		
<p>18. Which group or committee considered, reviewed and agreed the EqIA and the Improvement Action Plan?</p>	<p>EqIA Quality Assurance Group</p>	

Signed: (Lead officer completing EqIA)	Fern Silverio	Signed: (Chair of DETG)	
Date:	29 th November, 2013	Date:	
Date EqIA presented at the EqIA Quality Assurance Group		Signature of ETG Chair	

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REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	15 January 2014
Subject:	Calculation of Business Rates Income for 2014 – 2015
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Toni Ferrari, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

The Local Government Finance Act 1988 places a duty on the authority to calculate the business rates for the area annually as part of its budget setting process.

Regulations require billing authorities to formally calculate the estimated level of non domestic rates (NDR) it anticipates to collect for 2014-2015 and pass this information to the Secretary of State and precepting authorities by 31 January in the preceding year.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet considers the information given in this report and agrees that :

1. The non domestic rates estimates and calculations are calculated in

accordance with the regulations as follows:

		£m
	Projected NDR Income 2014/15	48.364
Less	Payable to DCLG (50% Central Share)	(24.182)
Less	Payable to the Greater London Authority (20%)	<u>(9.673)</u>
Equals	Amount to be retained by Harrow (30%)	14.509

2. The above information is provided to the Secretary of State and GLA by 31 January 2014.
3. The Council's Chief Finance Officer (section 151 officer) be authorised, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to submit revised figures (from those above) to the Secretary of State and GLA by 31 January 2014, if further clarification is received from DCLG on the financial impact of the proposed changes to the authority and how this is to be calculated.

Reason:

To fulfil the Council's statutory obligation to provide estimates and calculations in relation to NDR for 2014-2015.

It should also be noted that if the DCLG proposals (as noted in this report) are not implemented by Government, the council's estimated NDR income figures will need revision so that they can be submitted by the 31 January 2014 deadline.

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 introduced the Business Rate Retention (BRR) scheme from 01 April 2013.
- 1.2 The scheme provides for non-domestic rates collected by a billing authority to be shared between it, its major precepting authorities and central government. It also provides that certain sums are to be treated as being outside the scheme. These sums are retained in their entirety by the billing authority (or by the billing authority and some, or all, of its major preceptors).
- 1.3 Subsequent amendments to the statutory framework require a billing authority, before the beginning of a financial year, to forecast the amount of business rates that it will collect during the course of the year and, from this, to make a number of allowable deductions in order to arrive at a figure for its non-domestic rating income. The calculation that Harrow makes before the start of the financial year determines

how much Harrow must pay to central government and its major precepting authorities during the course of the year.

- 1.4 There is no change to the way business rates are calculated; these continue to be set nationally. There is also no change to the existing mandatory and discretionary reliefs available to eligible ratepayers.

2. Background

- 2.1 Under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended by the LGFA 2012, regulations set out detailed formulae for the calculation of an annual estimated Business Rates. The starting point is the amount payable by businesses to the authority under s.43 and 45 of the 1988 Act in the preceding year. An estimate is then calculated taking into account adjustments for RPI, transitional protection payments, collection costs and disregarded amounts. At the end of each year the authority must arrange for calculations and amounts to be certified in accordance with arrangements set out by the Secretary of State.
- 2.2 The above net resultant figure will then be divided by two. This will identify 50% to be paid to the Central Pool (Government). The other 50% will then be split 60/40 with the GLA, the 60% retained by Harrow equating to 30% of the overall total net yield.
- 2.3 Throughout the year, the authority retains a fixed amount and pays a fixed amount to preceptors. Any difference between forecast amounts and final outturns will result in a surplus, or deficit on the billing authority's Collection Fund. Any such surplus or deficit is shared between the parties to the Pool and has to be taken into account as part of the future year's budget process.

2.4 Harrow's NDR 2014/15 Tax Base

- 2.5 The forecast in this report takes into account the latest data available including a list of all proposals outstanding (as provided by the Valuation Officer), an analysis of properties likely to be removed from the valuation list as well as an analysis of new potential properties coming into the list, an estimate of likely reliefs, reductions due to appeals and an estimate of likely losses due to some debts being uncollectable.
- 2.6 The forecast is required to be formally notified to DCLG and preceptors. This is done by billing authorities having to complete a business rates return estimating the likely business rates. The return takes the form of a formal National Non-Domestic rates return 1 (NDR 1) and uses the data used for the Council's Business Rates Tax Base estimate.
- 2.7 The calculation of Harrow's NDR income figure for 2014/15 and for the formal outturn is therefore as follows;

Gross Rates Yield: Total Rateable value x NDR rate multiplier
Less Mandatory Reliefs
Less Discretionary Reliefs
Less estimated losses on Collection
Less Allowance for costs of collection (as set by DCLG formula)
Plus or Minus Rate Retention Adjustments for: Change in Rateable Value due to growth or reduction in property numbers Adjustment due to Appeals
Net Business Rates Yield and base of the calculation of central and local shares

However, on the 6 December, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published guidance on Business Rates following announcements in the Autumn Budget Statement which introduce the following;

Capping the 2014-15 multiplier at 2% rather than increasing it by 3.2% as per Sept 2013 RPI,

The extending of the doubling of the Small Business Rates Relief (SBR) for a further 12 months until 31/3/2015,

A discount of £1,000 for shops, pubs and restaurants with a rateable value below £50,000 for two years up to the state aid limits, from 1 April 2014.

The granting of 50% business rates relief for 18 months – between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2016 – for businesses that move into retail premises that have been empty for a year or more.

The DCLG announcement also confirmed an indicative compensation figure of £375k to be paid to Harrow under section 31 grant as a result of the above measures. The Business Rates retention calculation has therefore used this figure (grossed up from 30% to 100% to reflect the expected reduction in gross Business Rates loss of £1,250,000).

The Business Rates Retention calculation additionally takes the above factors into account.

2.8 Table 1

Projected NDR income calculation for 2014/15 –(using November 2013 data)

Local Authority	Harrow	
	£m	
Gross Rateable value November 2013	129.067	a
Small Business Rate Multiplier (13/14)	0.462	b
Inflation Assumption / RPI/DCLG cap	2.0%	c
Business Rate Multiplier 2014/15	0.471	d
		b x c(+b)
Notional gross yield figure	60.821	e
		a x d
Losses due Small business rate relief	2.820	r
Change in notional gross yield 2013/14 to 2014/15	102.0%	g
Projected small business rate relief 2014/15	2.876	h
		f x g
Losses due to Empty property exemptions	1.900	i
Change in notional gross yield 2013/14 to 2014/15	102.0%	j
Projected Empty property exemptions 2014/15	1.938	k
		i x j
Mandatory relief	4.750	l
Change in notional gross yield 2013/14 to 2014/15	102.0%	m
Projected Mandatory Relief 2014/15	4.845	n
		l x m
Discretionary relief	0.60	o
Change in notional gross yield 2013/14 to 2014/15	102.0%	p
Projected Discretionary Relief 2014/15	0.61	q
		o x p
Additional Yield generated from SBR suppl	0.700	r1
Cost of collection	0.254	r 2
Projected contribution to the pool	51.547	s
		e-h-k-n-q-r1+r2
Losses in collection 2%	1.031	t
Losses on appeal 2.4%	0.902	u
Losses due to Enterprise Zones	0.000	v
Losses on Transitional Relief (net) (Ignore)	0.098	w
Gains due to Renewable Energy schemes	0.000	x
Gains due to New Developments	0.000	y
Net contribution to the pool	49.614	z
		s- t-u
Less Reduction due to DCLG Autumn Budget announcement	1.250	
Contribution to pool	48,364	
Less Central Share (50% to Government)	-24,182	
Less Fire Authority share	-0.483	
Less GLA Transport	-9.190	
NDR Income retained	14.509	

2.9 Legal Implications

- 2.10 Schedule 7B of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended, reserves the right for the Secretary of State to direct billing authorities to make calculations and supply information and in the absence of such a direction, to make regulations imposing similar requirement. Regulations require that on or before 31 January in the preceding year, billing authorities must estimate the amount of NDR income, calculate the amount of the central share, calculate the amount for each precepting authority's share, estimate the amount of qualifying relief and notify the Secretary of State and relevant precepting authority of these estimates or calculations.
- 2.11 The regulations contain detailed formulae for calculations. The Business Rates Tax Base has therefore been calculated according to the relevant formulae and guidance issued to date and is made up of the following;
- Estimated Gross Business Rate Yield less
 - Adjustments for empty rate relief
 - Adjustments for small business rate relief
 - Adjustments for Mandatory Charity Relief
 - Adjustments for Discretionary Rate Relief
 - Adjustments for Transitional Relief
 - Adjustments for enterprise zones, new builds, renewable energy schemes, other deductions
 - Cost of collection
 - Losses on collection
 - Expected losses on appeals
- 2.12 At present the regulations and legislation do not appear to require decisions to be taken at a particular level within the council. In the absence of any specific statutory requirement as to decision making, it is necessary to take account of the Functions and Responsibilities Regulations 2000 which set out decisions which can and cannot be taken by the Executive.
- 2.13 Under the Council's constitution, approving the budget (including setting the Council Tax) is reserved to full Council. Budget is defined as allocation of financial resources to different services and projects, proposed contingency funds, setting the council tax including decisions relating to the control of the Council's borrowing requirement, the determination and control of its capital expenditure and the setting of virement limits. Calculating the business rates estimates is not part of this overall budget approval, although the estimate used will be taken into account when considering the Council's financial position. It is appropriate for this decision to be taken by Cabinet in the same way as the council tax base is a Cabinet decision. However, due to the fact that regulations have not been made to reflect the Government's intended changes, there is a risk that the estimates will have to be revised to reflect the existing regulatory requirements. It is proposed that if this happens, this decision is delegated to the Director of

Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to ensure the Council meets its statutory requirements

2.14 Financial Implications

This is a report of the Corporate Director of Resources and deals with financial matters throughout. The retained amount for Business Rates has been determined to be **£14.509m** and the amount will be reflected in the Council's Final Revenue Budget for 2014-15.

2.15 Performance Issues

Although the likely NDR income figures above are being used to estimate actual NDR income for 2014/15 and, therefore, included as such in setting the 2014/15 budget, ultimately, it will be actual NDR income received that will be available to the authority. This may be less or more than the actual estimate and brings a certain amount of risk.

In percentage terms the collection rates achieved over the last three financial years are as below and in the current year at quarter 2 is 58.3%.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Non-domestic rates collected %	96.4%	96.2%	95.4

Officers ability to both forecast NDR income for budgeting purposes and monitor actual NDR income during the year will be critical in the process and in managing potential income pressures during the year.

2.16 Environmental Impact

None

2.17 Risk Management Implications

The authority needs certainty regarding the volatility in the rating list, however this cannot be guaranteed

- As specific levels of Appeals cannot be anticipated,
- Property demolitions may occur which were not anticipated,
- There may be Valuation Officer review of assessments which give rise to reductions in rateable value,
- Substantial backdated RV reductions may occur which were not anticipated,
- Rating is "reactive"; appeals served now may not be considered and resolved for a number of years,
- Large hereditaments could have a disproportionate effect on Harrow, for example, heavy industrial plants etc, whose assessments may be challenged on multiple occasions through the life of the Rating List.

Apart from the above, other matters that may affect the bottom line business rates income are;

- Losses on collection
- Discretionary Rate Relief “top ups”
- Discretionary Section 44a relief
- Charitable Trusts
- Rate audit and appeals by Harrow against property in its own portfolio
- The issuing, or lack of issuing, completion notices.

It should also be noted that a high in year collection percentage of business rates now becomes much more important than in previous years as the local authority will now have a direct vested interest in collecting as much business rates as it can to ensure it meets its own forecast on which the budget is based.

There is a danger that the actual gross Business Rates reduction, based on recent Central Government announcements, will be higher than that estimated by Officers. We must therefore accept there may well be a risk to the collection fund in the form of a deficit for the year 2015/16 if the Business Rates reduction is indeed higher than the £1.25m assumed.

2.18 Equalities implications

None

2.19 Corporate Priorities

The Business Rates Baseline allows the Council to raise local funding which is fundamental in supporting all corporate priorities as Business Rates Retention is a key element of the Council’s overall budget.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dawn Calvert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 24 December 2013		

Name: Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 30 December 2013		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Martin Randal



on behalf of the
Divisional Director
Strategic
Commissioning

Date: 12 November 2013

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker



on behalf of the
Corporate Director of
Environment and
Enterprise

Date: 12 November 2013

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Fern Silverio – (Divisional Director, Collections & Housing Benefits)
Tel: 020-8736-6818 / email: fern.silverio@Harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

- Government Guidance on Business Rates Retention
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-retention-and-the-local-government-finance-settlement-a-practitioners-guide>
- The Local Finance Act 1988 as amended by the LGFA 2012
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/17/enacted>
- Localism Act 2011
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]

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REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	15 January 2014
Subject:	Project Minerva
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources Directorate
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources Councillor Tony Ferrari, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Exempt:	No, except for appendices 2, 3, and 4 which are exempt on the grounds that they contain “exempt information” under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that they contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Equalities Impact Assessment Appendix 2 – Exempt (Part II) - SAP Replacement System Financial Appraisal Appendix 3 – Exempt (Part II) - Internal Options and External Suppliers Comparison Appendix 4 – Exempt (Part II) - Details of Shared Services and External Suppliers contacted Appendix 5 – Ref from O&S Committee

1. Summary and Recommendations

This report analyses and evaluates options for achieving cost reductions within the Resources Directorate revenue budgets for 2015/16 onwards and makes recommendations accordingly. It also includes within the analysis undertaken, the rationale for proposing a re-tender of the IT Service.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Note the analysis, evaluation and findings of the options considered within Section 2 of this report.
2. Approve exercise of the early break clause within the Incremental Partnership Agreement variation for the provision of IT Services to permit cessation from 24th November 2015.
3. Agree that the Council does not extend the initial period of the Incremental Partnership Agreement currently scheduled to expire on 3rd October 2015.
4. Approve the re-tender of the IT Service contract under EU Procurement rules and in accordance with contract standing orders and delegate authority to proceed with the procurement to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and to bring a contract award recommendation to Cabinet for commencement of the IT Service contract. Delivery of the IT Service will require the delivery of major projects from time to time and this will need to be accommodated within the service scope of the re-tender.
5. Subject to approval of recommendation 4 above, give approval to run the process to appoint a Legal and Commercial provider for the re-tender of the IT Service.
6. Authorise the Corporate Director of Resources to continue exploring the potential for a shared service arrangement with suitable partners.
7. Approve the launch of a two-year cost reduction programme aimed at achieving a savings target of 17% (i.e. £2.0m per annum) identified from the options analysis in Sub-Section 2.2.1 of this report.

Reason: (For recommendation)

The Council has a balanced budget for 2013/14 and 2014/15 which includes the delivery of a total level of savings of £22.8m over the two years. However, the current national 'austerity' measures are anticipated to continue potentially up to 2020 and possibly beyond. The Council therefore needs to plan for further potential cost reduction challenges that are anticipated in addition to the £75.0m of savings it will have achieved between 2010 and 2015 (out of a controllable spend of approximately £188.0m).

Current projections are that the Council will need to achieve savings representing 30% of its budget between 2015 and 2020.

Concurrently with the above, the Council's existing outsourced IT Service contract with Capita contains a break clause permitting an early cessation of the contract from October 2015, if exercised.

In recognition of the above, Project Minerva was launched during 2013 to undertake an evaluation of options available to contribute towards anticipated cost reductions including the following activities:

- Determine a baseline revenue budget position;
- Perform an informal "soft" market test;
- London Authority research;
- Shared Services research;
- Discussions with relevant software providers;
- Engagement with clients (of the Resources Directorate);
- Engagement with Schools; and
- Engagement with Staff and Trade Unions.

Additionally, consideration has been given to the potential for service disruption, financial implications, risks, benefits and outcomes for the options set out within Section 2 of this report.

Following analysis and evaluation of the available options incorporating the above factors, the recommendations above are proposed.

2. Report

2.1. Introductory paragraph

The Council currently has a balanced budget for 2013/14 and 2014/15 which includes the delivery of savings of £22.8m over those two years. However, it is anticipated that the national 'austerity' measures already in place to address the national budget deficit are likely to continue up to 2020 and possibly beyond. The Council therefore needs to plan for further potential cost reduction challenges in addition to the £75m of savings it has already identified for achievement between 2010 and 2015.

Within the current economic and financial climate, the future service delivery model will need to change if further significant cost reductions are to be achieved. The protection of "front line" services is considered to be a pre-requisite to ensuring that the Council can continue to deliver services that meet customer

requirements and support and protect people that are most in need. Consequently, planning for the future delivery of services needs to be undertaken now in order for cost reductions to be delivered by 2015/16.

To facilitate the evaluation of cost reduction options, primary research has been undertaken into the potential for a shared service arrangement with another Local Authority, outsourcing services to a private contractor, implementing internal changes delivered through the services concerned, replacing the SAP system and relocating “back-office” services to cheaper alternative locations.

Additionally, the initial period of the existing Incremental Partnership Agreement with Capita expires on 3rd November 2015 but may be extended by up to five years by giving at least 12 months written notice. The variation to the above agreement for the provision of IT Services expires on 24th November 2020 and contains a break clause provision that can be exercised subject to giving at least 12 months prior written notice. As such, it has been considered prudent to also review and consider the current outsourced IT Service arrangements within the context of the above.

If approved, the recommendations contained within Section 1 of this report will enable the Council to embark on a two-year cost reduction programme aimed at achieving an annual savings target of £2.0m from 2015/16. They also facilitate the re-tender of the existing IT Service contract to better support and facilitate achievement of the Council’s corporate priorities and secure greater value.

A number of the services in the Project Minerva scope are also provided to Schools and engagement with them from the outset has therefore been necessary.

2.2. Options considered

Project Minerva was launched during 2013 in response to three key challenges outlined below which need to be planned for accordingly:

1. Future pressures for cost reductions anticipated from 2015/16 and beyond.
2. The break clauses within the Council’s existing contract with Capita that may be exercised subject to one year’s prior written notice.
3. The future requirement and use of the existing SAP IT system.

The project scope included the following specific service areas:

- Finance and Assurance;
- Human Resources and Organisation Development;
- Payroll and Shared Services;
- Health & Safety;
- Collections and Benefits;
- Procurement; and
- Information Technology (IT).

A range of options have been considered and evaluated comprising of the following:

- Internal Transformation (including re-specification of services, SAP system replacement and relocation of services);
- Sharing Services (with another local authority); and
- Outsourcing (to a private sector company).

2.2.1. Internal Options

Services in scope within the Resources Directorate have developed cost reduction options including but not limited to internal change projects, service transformation and increased self service through channel migration. Internal options have been developed with an input from managers and employees across the Resources Directorate. Options have also been received from Trade Unions (i.e. Unison) in relation to some service areas.

Additionally, within the internal options investigated, the case to replace the existing SAP system with a lower tier solution and the establishment of an office and operation in the North of England was also considered.

Procurement has been excluded from the internal options exercise as any potential reduction in direct procurement service costs would be unlikely to have a sustainable and beneficial effect for the Council. Instead, an agreed financial target for savings to be achieved from Procurement processes conducted is being developed.

Unison has also prepared two alternative options, for HRD and Health and Safety and these proposals were considered and incorporated into the proposals for HRD and Health & Safety.

Table 1 below shows the overall cost reductions anticipated for the services in scope if they were to undertake their proposed cost reduction options. It shows that approximately 17% (i.e. £2.0m) could potentially be saved annually.

Detailed proposals for delivering savings internally will be brought to Cabinet as appropriate and employee consultation will be conducted in due course.

Table 1

Function	Estimated Cost – 2013/14			
	2013/14 Estimated Cost Provided to External Suppliers	Number of Staff	Saving Proposed	Investment
	(£m)	No	(£m)	(£m)
Revenues & Benefits	4.5	99	0.6	0.1
Finance & Assurance	3.6	56	0.9	0.3
Human Resources & Shared Services	3.5	71	0.5	0.9
Total	£11.6	226	2.0	1.3

2.2.2 SAP Replacement

The Council has been actively involved in Programme Athena which has been running across London Authorities. The objective of Programme Athena was to promote sharing and commonality for back office systems being run by the London Boroughs. This involved grouping Councils by the system they were running and assessing whether they could move to single instances of that system and potentially moving on to shared back office arrangements.

Harrow has been involved in the OneSAP stream of work and has therefore had discussions with the other Boroughs using SAP to seek convergence opportunities. The Corporate Director of Resources has been the OneSAP lead for London.

An outcome of Programme Athena has been increased exposure to trends in back office systems in use across the Boroughs. A number of Boroughs are migrating from some of the larger Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems and onto mid-tier systems.

The potential for replacing the Council's existing SAP system (a top range solution in use across a range of commercial and public sector organisations worldwide) with a mid-range solution has therefore been considered with the input from two current market leaders for mid-range solutions in use by Local Authorities.

Research conducted indicates that there is a potential for reduced annual revenue costs achievable from a system migration due to the lower maintenance fees and less

complex upgrades involved. However, the cost of procuring and implementing a new system together with the upheaval and disruption that this would undoubtedly cause during a period of already significant change within the Council, has led officers to conclude that this option would not be viable for Harrow Council to pursue at this point in time.

Appendix 2 of this report contains relevant information relating to the financial appraisal of this option.

2.2.3 Relocation of Services

Research has been undertaken to investigate the potential benefits of “wage arbitrage” through the relocation of “back-office” services to cheaper alternative locations without having to procure the services of an outsourcing organisation. In this model, Harrow Council would continue to run the services in question but from a different location.

Research has indicated that salary savings could be achieved in most areas outside of London. However, the greatest savings can be found in the North East region of the UK with average salaries being 30% lower than Harrow Council. These findings have been further validated using comparative figures obtained from another Local Authority in the North East of England.

Research included investigating and obtaining the costs of operating a remote office and the provision of IT and telephony connectivity costs to Harrow Council.

In evaluating the financial feasibility for relocating operations to another part of the country, an assumption was made that the initial operations to be considered for transfer would include transactional “back-office” activity for Revenues and Benefits and Accounts Payable/Receivable services.

The annual saving in salary costs under the above assumptions amounted to approximately £1.0m per annum. However, ongoing rental and operating costs would effectively reduce this potential benefit to approximately £200K per annum. With the significant one-off costs involved in establishment of the offices, related infrastructure costs, and potential redundancy costs totalling approximately £3.0m, the outline business case indicates that the payback period would be in excess of ten years.

The relocation of “back-office” services outside of Harrow would increase the potential risk of service disruption arising particularly if resourcing requirements could not be met as anticipated.

On this basis, it is considered that the relocation of services into a Harrow owned and operated facility elsewhere in the UK would not represent the most cost efficient or effective way of achieving service cost reductions at this juncture.

2.2.4 Shared Services options

Primary research was undertaken by approaching 22 London Local Authorities to discuss their current back-office service arrangements and to enquire as to whether they would consider sharing services with Harrow Council. This included Local Authorities already operating an SAP system to determine whether there was any potential for sharing resources through the combination of either systems or services.

Existing shared service arrangements, such as the Tri-Borough arrangement (i.e. Westminster City Council, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham), Elevate East (i.e. a joint venture arrangement comprising Barking and Dagenham and Agilysys) and One Oracle, were also approached to determine if there was the potential for a shared service with Harrow Council.

Research indicates that there is no current appetite amongst the Local Authorities contacted within London to share services with Harrow Council. The Local Authorities operating SAP systems were already following their own strategic paths and the existing shared service arrangements were either not seeking to increase their current client base or there were legal barriers preventing Harrow Council from joining the existing shared service arrangement.

Local Authority shared service providers outside of London were also approached but there was no current desire from the providers contacted to provide services to London boroughs.

The final element of primary research conducted concerned the appetite for a shared service with County Councils local to Harrow Council. Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Surrey and Hampshire county Councils were approached and of these, both Surrey and Hampshire County Councils met with officers to discuss the potential for sharing services.

Surrey County Council were unable to progress with a shared service option at the time of meeting and although Hampshire County Council has had further discussions with officers, they are currently engaged in a major transition programme including the Fire and Rescue and Police Authorities that is scheduled to continue until November 2014. They are therefore unable at present to consolidate further services within their shared service provision but are willing to

continue exploring the potential opportunity for sharing services with Harrow Council in the future.

2.2.5 External options

Consideration has also been given to the potential for savings by outsourcing services to an external service provider.

Suppliers were invited to take part in a “soft” market test that involved attendance at two working sessions following the receipt of a prospectus comprising baseline information including costs, staffing and transactional volumes.

Six suppliers were initially approached of which five took part in the entire process and three gave responses that were sufficiently complete to enable a comparison to be made with the other options under consideration.

Whilst each supplier proposed slightly differing solutions, they were consistent in the following main points:

- All would prefer to migrate from Harrow Council’s existing SAP system onto another system as they are using alternative systems in their existing service centres,
- All proposed solutions that would potentially involve the transfer of activities on a large scale to lower cost areas of the UK (e.g. the North East and South Wales); and
- All would incur significant transformation costs, mainly through the implementation of new systems and processes and redundancy.

Appendix 3 of this report contains relevant information relating to the financial appraisal of this option.

2.2.6 IT Re-tender

The IT Service is currently outsourced to Capita. The initial period of the existing agreement with Capita expires on 3rd November 2015 but may be extended by up to five years by giving at least 12 months written notice. The variation to the above agreement for the provision of IT Services expires on 24th November 2020 and contains a break clause provision that can be exercised subject to giving at least 12 months prior written notice.

The contracted services currently provided by Capita include Business Transformation under a partnership agreement. This was one of the first major incremental partnership agreements entered into with an initial focus on SAP implementation for Finance, Payroll, CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and the delivery of Procurement savings.

The objective was to have a transformation partner within the Council that could contribute towards ideas and innovation and provide a faster route to implementation through commercial mechanisms designed to share and transfer risk.

Major projects delivered under the partnership agreement include HARP, Waste GPS / Route Optimisation, SNT 1 & 2, Libraries RFID, Customer Contact, Business Support, Towards Excellence and Business Support. Commercial mechanisms include Business Cases, Paid Work and Benefits Cards.

In 2010, the IT Service was incorporated within the existing partnership agreement as a contract variation with one of the key contractual requirements being a major IT upgrade programme. The ability to transfer risk to the supplier was a key factor in this decision.

In general terms under existing arrangements, key performance targets and risk transfer have been achieved. Additionally, the transformation partnership has been effective particularly where:

- the investment has been paid “up-front”;
- an opportunity for a demonstrable return exists; and
- risks and rewards have been shared.

The IT market is generally moving towards a “Tower Model” whereby contracts are awarded to Managing Agents to help deliver and manage critical services. These are characterised in general terms by Managing Agents who;

1. Take the risks for “end to end” delivery and operations,
2. Don’t necessarily hold direct contracts with service providers,
3. Provide full 24/7 service desks to support customer requirements; and
4. Work closely with the Council.

It is recognised that the Council would not be able to achieve such an operating model immediately and that to this extent a hybrid version (i.e. Master Vendor Model) would be an effective incremental step. Under this approach, an option would exist for suppliers to either bid for all “lots” as a single contract as well as permit small and medium sized entities (SME’s) and best of breed suppliers to join together under a Master Vendor arrangement.

Consideration has been given as to whether the future IT Service could be delivered internally rather than through an external supplier. However, the rationale applied in outsourcing the service in 2010 retains its validity today and in particular the following key issues are considered to be

fundamental reasons for continuing this particular strategic approach:

- An in-house service would not support the underwriting of any solution design,
- There would be an absence of expertise and capability to deliver and meet both current and future requirements,
- The Council would still have a significant reliance on external organisations to deliver change and achieve expectations,
- It is difficult to recruit and retain staff in the IT Market,
- Flexibility to respond to changes in size of the organisation (increasing or contracting) and keeping abreast of developments in changes in the IT market and Environment generally,
- The Council may be limited to recruiting short-term available resources from the agency market for delivering ad-hoc projects whereas an external provider can draw upon wider available resources from within their organisation and more promptly,
- The Council has a lesser ability to achieve economies of scale or exploit supplier benefits with suppliers and the market place,
- The Council has lower levels of access to innovation to improve services.

An external IT Supplier would be able to provide greater assurance to the Council of the following:

- Cost certainty – Transition, Service and Performance would be underwritten,
- Delivery of the IT Service in accordance with contractual performance standards,
- Delivery of investment and improvement in accordance with contractual timetables,
- Provision of the necessary staffing resource – Quality, Quantity and Responsiveness,
- Ensuring the necessary IT Support for delivery of business cases is available,
- Providing relationship management and managers,
- Provision of a service that is ITIL compliant,
- Provision of a service that is designed and delivered upon Industry Best Practice,
- Can avoid, mitigate and reduce risks that an internal service provider may create / experience.

Consideration has also been given as to whether the existing IT Service contract should continue.

However, it is considered that as an option exists to re-tender the IT Service contract, the opportunity for securing greater value from the contract should be taken especially as the market has fundamentally changed over the past three years since the contract was let. Additionally, further changes in the delivery of IT services will undoubtedly be required as the Council moves forward. IT Services represent the largest cost base within the Resources Directorate and the existing contractual arrangement provides little “headroom” in which to address the above matters.

The requirement for the Council to achieve significant savings targets between 2015 and 2020 as described earlier in this report is also a material consideration.

Delivery of the IT Service will inevitably require the delivery of major projects from time to time and this will need to be accommodated within the service scope.

The future IT contract will need to take account of all potential scenarios, such as transformation of one or more in-house services with reliance on IT or the possibility of sharing services with another local authority.

Furthermore, a contractual framework is proposed that gives the Council options and flexibility and an ability to “draw down” on the delivery capability of the IT partner to support major projects. Should a new IT supplier be selected as a result of the re-tender, the project anticipates, and has planned for, 6 months of transitional activity between them and the incumbent. There are specific clauses in the current incremental partnership agreement (Clause 56 and Schedule 24) that Capita will need to follow in the case of contract termination.

2.2.7 Options Compared

It is not currently possible to show the extent of potential savings that Harrow Council could achieve through sharing services with another Local Authority due to the limited data and information that the shared service market is able to provide at this time.

However, comparisons of internal options against the solutions proposed by external suppliers have been set out in Appendix 3 to this report.

Whilst a marginal financial benefit may exist from an outsourcing solution, there are some significant risks associated with pursuing such an option at this stage. In particular;

- There are potential risks arising from a disruption to services where a proposed relocation of activities is involved,
- A migration of systems,
- A loss of experienced personnel,

- The payback period is greater than 2 years.

The payback period is significant because of the scale and complexity of change the Council is likely to experience over the next 2 years in the current economic climate.

Significant one-off costs in people, processes and technology would be required in an outsourcing solution. External suppliers have indicated additional costs that would need to be recovered through the contract price or paid up front by the Council.

Internal options have identified the potential for 17% savings across the following services; Finance and Assurance, Human Resources and Shared Services and Collections and Benefits. These account for potential annual savings of £2.0m on an annual cost base of approximately £11.6m.

Potential savings from the IT Service as an internal option was not included in this exercise. Additionally, Procurement was excluded from the above calculations as any potential reduction in direct procurement service costs would be unlikely to have a sustainable and beneficial effect for the Council.

The overall payback period for the internal options is less than two years.

In view of the above, work was undertaken to assess whether other services should be included in a procurement exercise for IT Services. Basing a tender evaluation process on the inclusion of other non IT services that may or may not be outsourced could present a greater risk to the Council in terms of selecting the right IT partner to deliver the specified services. As a result it is recommended that procuring IT Services only through an approach to the market represents the best opportunity to secure the best supplier for delivery of the specified IT services. The future shape of the organisation is uncertain and therefore scalability and flexibility will need to be essential features of the contract to meet the changing needs of services in terms of addressing variations to the levels of IT support they may require.

Should a conclusion to approach the market be determined in relation to other services in the future, a separate procurement could be undertaken at that time.

Consequently, it is proposed that the internal options should be planned for and implemented in order for savings to be delivered from 2015/16. In progressing with the internal options, there will be a requirement to redesign the provision of support services going forward and to include relevant management and employee input in that process.

It is proposed that a review of this position be undertaken in no more than 18 months time to ascertain progress in terms of delivery of the internal options, the viability of a shared service, the evolving shape and size of the Council and with due regard to the evolving landscape for local government finance and the potential need for further savings.

In summary, this report therefore recommends;

- The exercise of the early break clause within the Incremental Partnership Agreement variation for the provision of IT Services to permit cessation from 24th November 2015.
- Not to extend the initial period of the Incremental Partnership Agreement currently scheduled to expire on 3rd October 2015.
- The re-tender of the IT Service contract under EU Procurement rules and in accordance with contract standing orders and delegate authority to proceed with the procurement to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and to bring a contract award recommendation to Cabinet for commencement of the IT Service contract.
- Authorisation for the Corporate Director of Resources to continue exploring the potential for a shared service arrangement with suitable partners.
- Approval of the launch of a two-year cost reduction programme aimed at achieving a savings target of 17% (i.e. £2.0m per annum) identified from the options analysis in Sub-Section 2.2.1 of this report.

2.3 Current situation

The Resources Directorate currently provides services to the Council, Schools and its Residents through the following service delivery models:

- Internally: Finance and Assurance, Human Resources, Payroll, Shared Services, Procurement, Collections and Benefits; and
- Externally: ICT and Business Transformation (BTP).

2.3.1 Baseline

The ICT service is currently outsourced to Capita in a contract that is scheduled to expire in October 2020 with a break clause permitting an earlier cessation from October 2015.

The annual revenue expenditure for IT services based upon the 2013/14 budget is £7.7M excluding capital expenditure and special projects. The annual revenue expenditure for

the remaining internal service budgets referred to in Section 2.3 of this report totals £12.6M.

The baseline revenue budget and staffing analysis is allocated within the Resources Directorate services as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Function	Estimated Cost – 2013/14				
	Cost of Staffing including on-costs	Other Direct Costs	Other Direct Overheads	Total Costs	Number of Staff
	(£m)	(£m)	(£m)	(£m)	#
Information Technology (IT)	0.5	6.4	0.8	7.7	7
Revenues & Benefits	3.2	-	1.3	4.5	99
Finance & Governance	3.0	-	0.6	3.6	56
Commercial & Procurement	0.8	-	0.1	0.9	14
Human Resources & Shared Services	3.0	-	0.5	3.5	71
Transactional Processing carried out in other Areas # #	0.2	-	0.0	0.2	7
Total	£10.7m	£6.4m	£3.3m	£20.4m	254
Notes:					
1. Costs exclude all Support Service Scheme Recharge as majority of Services included in above					
2. # Staff numbers relate to Harrow Staff only					
3. # # Numbers relate to transactional processing activity being carried out Access Harrow and is subject to validation. Other transactional activity carried out in other Directorates is being investigated.					

Note: The staffing numbers shown for the IT Service exclude staff employed directly by Capita.

2.3.2 Research

Primary research was undertaken to consider and evaluate the options identified in Section 2 of this report as follows:

- Over 20 London local authorities have been approached to determine their current “back-office” service provision arrangements for the services in scope. This included initial discussions about the potential for sharing services. From these discussions it was established that there was currently little or no appetite for sharing services.
- Local County Councils (i.e. Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and Surrey) were approached to determine their appetite for shared services and any potential interest for sharing services with Harrow Council. Both Hampshire and Surrey County Councils expressed an initial interest in discussions although only Hampshire County Council remain engaged in discussions regarding the future potential for a shared service.

- Specific shared services and joint venture arrangements were approached to determine whether it was possible and practical to join their partnership arrangements. These are referred to within Appendix 4 to this report.
- IT software providers were approached to determine the cost of replacing SAP and other systems.
- An informal “soft” market test was undertaken with six private sector outsourcing companies. These are referred to in Appendix 4 to this report.
- The potential difference in salary rates for similar roles performed in a number of regions within England was investigated to determine whether it would be financially beneficial to relocate one or more of the services to a lower cost location.

2.3.3 Client Engagement

Continued financial pressures arising from national “austerity” measures are likely to require Council services being supported in a very different way from how services are currently supported. Savings are likely to be driven by increased levels of self service and delivery by employees who may not always be present on site in the event that services should be outsourced.

Engagement therefore started early with service areas involving

- Workshops with selected managers and staff from in-scope services;
- Surveys with each Directorate Management Team; and
- Workshops with in excess of 30 managers from all Directorates to understand current perceptions of services and their likely appetite for receiving services differently in the future.

Additionally, a Stakeholder Consultative Group has been established with representatives from each of the Directorates as well as the Trade Unions. This group meets monthly and provides a communication channel into the main client groups for the in-scope services.

Engagement with Schools receiving support services provided through the Resources Directorate has also been undertaken. This comprised of an initial letter setting out the project terms of reference, two presentations to Head Teachers, meetings with School clusters and a conference for Head Teachers and Governors that was held in November. These have been to both update School

representatives on project progress and to seek their comments and views on options under consideration.

Employee and Trade Union Engagement

Presentations to staff within the services in scope were conducted during September and October to ensure that consistent and timely information was imparted. “Drop-in” sessions have been held for employees to attend and ask questions about the project and a dedicated Intranet page has been established for accessing project information and viewing frequently asked questions with the responses given. An email address is also available for employees to submit questions for response.

Trade Unions (i.e. GMB and Unison) have been invited to regular weekly meetings and Unison Trade Union representatives have attended the meetings to keep informed of project progress.

2.4 Why a change is needed

A key consideration is that irrespective of the strategic model determined, demand for IT Services and back-office transactional support services are likely to reduce. Concurrently with the above, other activities, particularly relating to channel shift, will increase volumes of online activity, data storage requirements and requirements for 24/7 system availability

It is anticipated that the existing “austerity” measures in place to reduce the national budget deficit are likely to continue beyond 2014/15 with further consequential financial challenges expected. Whilst a balanced budget has been determined up to 2015, there is a need to plan for further cost reductions accordingly. The need to mitigate the potential impact of any cost reduction to “front-line” services means that opportunities for improving efficiency within “back-office” services must be sought.

Additionally, the existing IT Service contract with Capita is scheduled to expire in October 2020 but comprises a break clause enabling the Council to achieve an earlier cessation date of October 2015 provided that written notice is given by September 2014.

It is anticipated that the achievement of further significant savings may only be realised by making fundamental changes to the way in which services are currently provided and delivered.

Consequently, the timing of the break clause within the existing IT Services contract and the likelihood of needing to achieve further revenue budget savings present an opportunity to consider and evaluate alternative options for service delivery in order to address the likely financial challenges ahead.

A Cross Party Member Steering Group, with representatives from the Conservative, Labour and Independent Labour Parties, was created to discuss progress on Project Minerva. They met on a regular basis to discuss the approach, findings and recommendations as set out within this report.

2.5 Implications of the Recommendation

The implications of the recommendations of this report are set out below.

2.5.1 Resources and Costs

The recommendations contained within this report are anticipated to require resources for the following strands of work.

1. There will be a need to undertake and manage the procurement of the IT Service contract under EU Procurement rules and it is anticipated that external assistance will be required to support this process.
2. There is likely to be a resource requirement within services in order to support, progress and implement their internal options including an investment in IT.
3. There will be a need to establish a Transformation Programme including appropriate resourcing to manage and track progress and benefit realisation incorporating a benefit tracking tool and reporting framework.

The internal option “one-off” costs of approximately £1.3m are to be met through a combination of service revenue budgets and the medium term financial strategy implementation reserve.

The Council is considering a Competitive Dialogue process for the procurement of the IT Service contract and will make a final decision about the process in due course. The procurement would be designed to enable down-selection from the initial pool of bidders to allow final negotiations with those presenting the most advantageous, to allow the Council to achieve the optimal outcome within the cost parameters specified above.

The financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report will be incorporated within the budgetary planning process for 2015/16.

2.5.2 Staffing and Workforce Considerations

At the point at which detailed proposals are prepared for the implementation of the internal options, Equalities Impact Assessments will need to be undertaken and due regard had to any potential adverse impact that these may have on

employees and Trade Unions. There will also be a need to consider and conduct any appropriate consultation with employees and stakeholders affected.

Community Safety

It is not currently anticipated that there are any implications on community safety with regard to this report.

2.6 Legal Implications

Duty of Best Value

Under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999, Local Authorities are under a general Duty to secure Best Value services. The duty is to *“make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.”*

The recommendations in this report will help to achieve Best Value

Contract

The Council can end the existing IT Services contract on 12 months' prior written notice and the main Incremental Partnership Agreement expires on 3rd October 2015 unless the parties agree to renew it.

Procurement

The value of the proposed new IT Services contract over its lifetime is higher than the current EU financial threshold for Services and so the procurement and award of the contract is subject to the full application of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

The award of the contract is also subject to the Council's own Standing Orders in respect of High Value contracts and Financial Regulations. As a result, Cabinet approval will be required for the award of the contract.

An indicative timetable for the procurement exercise, based on a Competitive Dialogue approach is included in Table 3 below. This may change dependent upon the approach taken and any other relevant procurement factors.

Table 3

Timing	Activity	Assumptions
Feb 2014	Issue OJEU Issue PQQ and ISOS ¹ Bidder Day	January Cabinet approve the re-tender exercise Service specification for ITO needs to be determined
Mar 2014	PQQ submissions and evaluation	
July 2014	Issue ISDS ² and Contract Documentation	
Aug – Dec 2014	Detailed Dialogue (if required) Selection of Preferred Supplier Build discussions into contract	
Jan – Sep 2015	Contract Award and Transition	

Public Sector Equality Duty

Decision makers should have due regard to the public sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties. They are not duties to secure a particular outcome.

The equalities impact will be revisited on each of the options as they are developed.

Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. It is important that Cabinet has regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material such as consultation responses. The statutory grounds of the public sector equality duty are found at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

¹ Invitation to Submit Outline Solutions

² Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) Tackle prejudice, and
- (b) Promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race,
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership

It is important that robust equalities impact assessments are completed. The potential for adverse impact has been identified but before a proposal is progressed, a full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken to assess whether the potential is likely to occur and to consider any mitigating actions to be taken.

The equalities impact will therefore be revisited for each of the internal options as they are developed.

2.7 Financial Implications

The Council is expecting to experience cost reduction targets of up to 30% across service areas commencing 2015/16. This is currently an estimate that cannot be more accurately determined at present although it is being applied for planning purposes.

The annual value of the services in scope is approximately £20m.

The financial implications arising from the internal options indicate the potential for securing annual savings of £2.0m per annum (i.e. 17%) on an initial investment of £1.3m. This would achieve a payback period of less than two years. Savings will also be sought from the IT Service contract to contribute towards the savings target.

The internal option investment costs of approximately £1.3m are to be met through a combination of service revenue budgets and the medium term financial strategy implementation reserve.

The proposed savings outlined above are additional to any savings already submitted and agreed under the Council's mid term financial savings (MTFS) programme.

There are also anticipated costs that will need to be quantified and considered for any support needed for a re-tender of the IT Services and Project Minerva. It is currently anticipated that these will be met from the medium term financial strategy implementation reserve.

There are no anticipated effects on income collection or tax.

Any procurement process required in pursuance with the recommendations in this report will be conducted in accordance with EU procurement rules and Council standing orders as appropriate.

2.8 Performance Issues

The internal options proposed for the delivery of services are likely to see services delivered in a different way in the future if further significant savings are to be realised. For example, there are likely to be opportunities for increased channel shift towards online and telephone service provision, and away from the more expensive face-to-face provision.

Current key performance indicators for the IT Service and the performance associated with them are shown in tables 4 to 7 below.

Table 4 - Service Availability

Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Target	Cumulative Score for 12 month period ending November 2013
SA01	Telephony	99.88%	99.96
SA02	Internet (including harrow.gov.uk)	99.79%	99.92
SA03	Aggregated Business Apps SLA for Key Apps (MSI)	99.16%	99.60
SA03.1	Email	99.36%	99.62
SA03.2	Office (via thin client)	99.36%	98.76
SA03.3	Remote Access - Citrix	99.36%	98.29
SA03.4	i-World – Capita	97.86%	99.62
SA03.5	Framework-I – Devolved	97.86%	98.90
SA03.6	Libraries – Devolved	97.86%	100.00
SA03.7	Northgate OHMS – Capita	97.86%	99.79
SA03.8	IKEN – Capita	97.86%	99.93
SA03.9	EMS – Capita	97.86%	100.00
SA03.10	MVM M3 – Capita	97.86%	99.97
SA03.11	Radius ICON – Capita	97.86%	100.00
SA03.12	Modern Gov – Capita	97.86%	100.00
SA03.13	Civica Parking – Capita	97.86%	99.91

Table 5 - Service Desk

Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Target	Cumulative Score for period ending November 2013
SD01	Abandoned Calls (IT Service Desk queuing) The percentage of lost calls over 20 seconds, due to queuing time at the IT Service Desk during Core Service Hours	6.00%	2.31

Table 6 - Helpdesk Services

Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Target	Cumulative Score for period ending November 2013
SD02	Priority 1 Respond within 15 minutes and achieve full fix or workable workaround as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within 4 (four) hours within Core Service Hours	95.00%	97.65
SD02A	Premium / VIP Services	95.00%	97.51

Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Target	Cumulative Score for period ending November 2013
	Respond within 1 Hour and achieve full fix or workable workaround as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within 18 hours within Core Service Hours		
SD03	Priority 2 Respond within two hours and achieve full fix or workable workaround within 18 hours within Core Service Hours	95.00%	93.34
SD04	Priority 3 Respond within one day and achieve full fix or workable workaround within 36 hours within Core Service Hours	95.00%	94.60
SD05	Priority 4 Respond within five days and achieve full fix or workable workaround within 90 hours within Core Service Hours	95.00%	99.17

Table 7 - IMAC/Authorised User Set Ups

Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Target	Cumulative Score for period ending November 2013
MAC01	Installs, Moves, Adds, Changes and Authorised Service User Set-ups	98.00%	98.67
MAC01.1	Minor office move 3 days		100.00
MAC01.2	Minor office move (more than 4 people) 3 days		100.00
MAC01.3	Meeting Room IT (AV equipment) Supported during Core Service Hours 3 days		100.00
MAC01.4	Agreed timescales: New Starter/Leaver		97.38

Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Target	Cumulative Score for period ending November 2013
	5 days		
MAC01.5	Agreed timescales: Authorised Service User System Access or Denial 4 hours		100.00
MAC01.6	Agreed timescales: Network Password Reset 4 hours		98.84
MAC01.8	Authorised Service User Active Directory role changes within 24 hours subject to Core Service Hours		100.00

The recommendations within this report are aimed at ensuring the Council has planned and prepared for potential cost reduction pressures anticipated from 2015/16 onwards. However, specific performance outputs for internal options and the IT Service will need to be developed and agreed as part of the business case for the changes concerned and any subsequent implementation plans. In the event that the internal options cannot be delivered as planned, a further report on proposed actions may be submitted to Cabinet.

Should the Council not wish to proceed with the internal options, there will still be a need to identify savings in order to meet the anticipated financial pressures from 2015/16 onwards. The option to outsource some or all of the services in scope would remain but is unlikely to be achievable within the timescale remaining up to 2015/16 and therefore could not guarantee a full year's equivalent of savings from that year.

2.9 Environmental Impact

There are no direct environmental impacts anticipated from the recommendations contained within this report. However, there may be indirect benefits achievable through the re-tender of the IT Service contract particularly for example in terms of increased online / electronic processing, increased self service supporting increased opportunities for mobile and flexible working and the provision of more energy efficient hardware wherever reasonably practicable.

The above may have the effect of reducing reduce greenhouse gas emission through reduced car travel, reducing electricity usage through more energy efficient hardware and reducing paper

documents issued to customers and thus contributing to the sustainability of woodland and plantations.

The recommendations proposed within this report, if agreed, will permit a continued local provision of services thus potentially benefiting the local economy and maintaining local employment.

2.10 Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? Yes

Risks associated with the project are documented on the project risk register and proactively managed through the Project Reporting arrangements.

2.11 Equalities implications

There is no prescribed manner in which the equality duty must be exercised. However, the council must have an adequate evidence base for its decision making. This can be achieved by gathering details and statistics on who use the facilities. A careful consideration of this assessment is one of the key ways in which the Council can show “due regard” to the relevant matters.

Where it is apparent from the analysis of the information that the proposals would have an adverse effect on equality then adjustments should be made to avoid that effect (mitigation).

The duty is not to achieve the objectives or take the steps set out in s.149. Rather, the duty on public authorities is to bring these important objectives relating to discrimination into consideration when carrying out its functions.

“Due regard” means the regard that is appropriate in all the particular circumstances in which the authority is carrying out its functions. There must be a proper regard for the goals set out in s.149. At the same time, the council must also pay regard to any countervailing factors, which it is proper and reasonable for them to consider. Budgetary pressures, economics and practical factors will often be important, which are brought together in the Equality analysis form.

The weight of these countervailing factors in the decision making process is a matter for the Council in the first instance.

An overview Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the project and was considered by the Equalities Impact Assessment Quality Assurance Group at their meeting of 17th December 2013.

As the IT service is presently outsourced, it is not currently anticipated that there will be any significant implications for Harrow Council employees and its stakeholders. If the recommendation to re-tender the service is agreed, due regard to equalities considerations will be addressed through the procurement and commissioning process.

In relation to internal options, these will need to be supported by full Equalities Impact Assessments and any relevant consultation as appropriate in order that due regard may be had to their impact. Where internal options require a key decision to be made, these will be brought to Cabinet for consideration and decision together with their Equalities Impact Assessments.

There are 254 posts within the scope of the proposed cost reduction programme of which approximately 40 to 50 may be deleted under the options proposed. Therefore, the following immediate measures are proposed to be effected, other than in exceptional circumstances authorised by the Corporate Director Resources, to mitigate against the potential impact arising from this:

- Recruitment freeze for vacant posts
- Use of agency staff or staff on short term contracts for vacant roles.

A potential for adverse impact has been identified relating to the protected characteristics of age, race, disability and gender although this cannot be more precisely determined at present. However, full Equalities Impact Assessments will be undertaken as internal options are developed and due regard will be given to any potential adverse impact identified with mitigating actions considered accordingly.

It is currently anticipated that “Minerva” will become a programme management role that will include ensuring Equalities Impact Assessments have been undertaken and due regard given to any potential adverse impact and mitigating actions. The timings and frequency of proposal monitoring arrangements will be determined having regard to the nature and extent of the options to be progressed and may include key stakeholders in their preparation and evaluation.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that the results of any monitoring will be analysed, reported and publicised in the manner determined and agreed as appropriate for the specific proposal under consideration.

2.12 Corporate Priorities

The recommendations contained within this report support the corporate priority for being “cleaner, safer and fairer”. By making efficiencies and improvements through “back-office” processing, it is anticipated that the effects of any changes on “front line” resources may be minimised thus ensuring seamless service provision and safeguards for those customers most in need.

3 Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Simon George Chief Financial Officer

Date: 11 December 2013

Name: Matthew Adams on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 20 December 2013

4 Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Alex Dewsnap Divisional Director
Strategic

Date: 11 December 2013 Commissioning

5 Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Gary Alderson on behalf of the
Corporate Director
(Environment &
Enterprise)

Date: 11 December 2013

6 Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Rob Bonneywell, Project Minerva Project Manager
Tel: 020 8416 8902 (Int Ext 8902)

Background Papers: None.

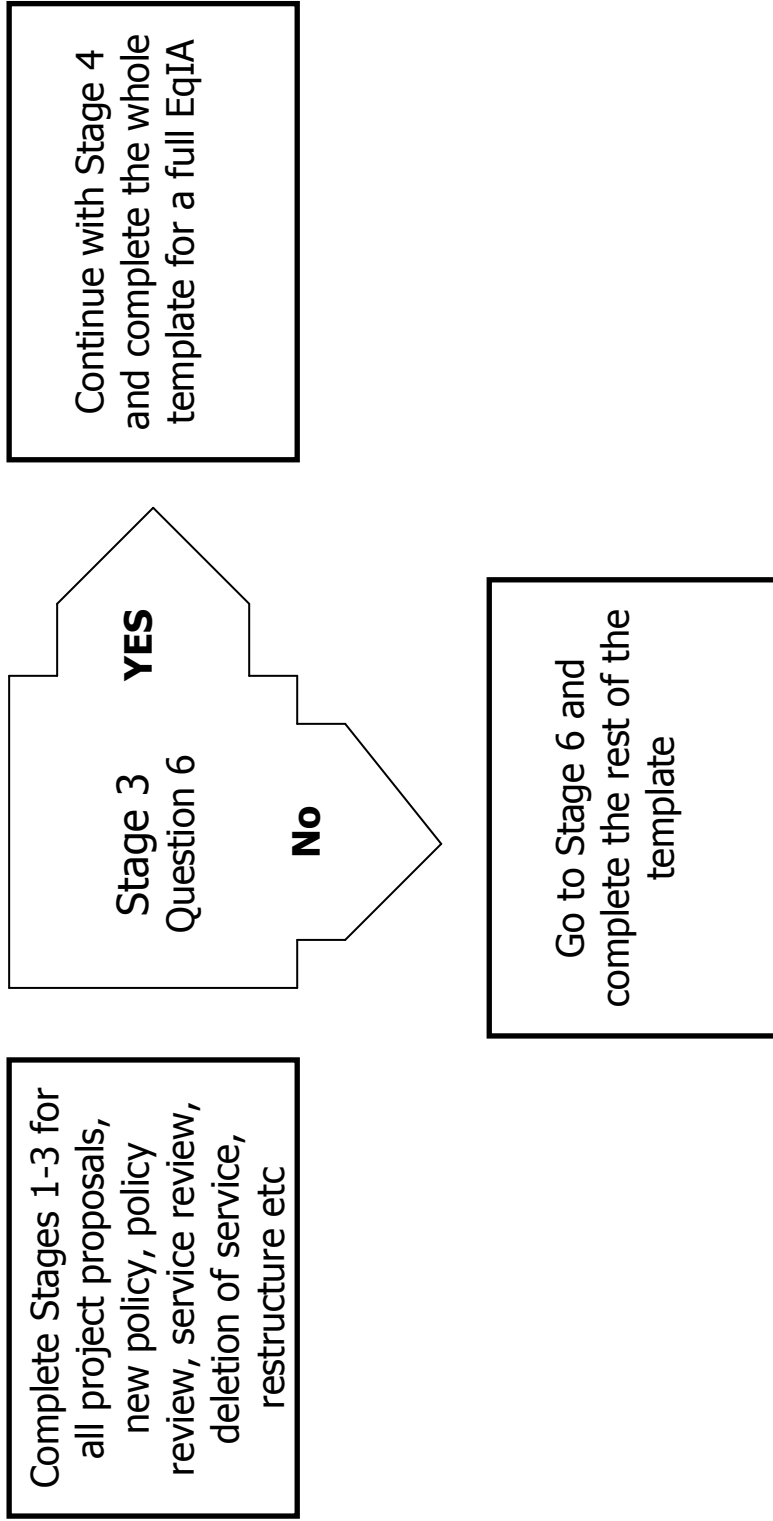
**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]

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Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

In order to carry out this assessment, it is important that you have completed the EqIA E-learning Module and read the Corporate Guidelines on EqIAs. Please refer to these to assist you in completing this assessment.

It will also help you to look at the EqIA Template with Guidance Notes to assist you in completing the EqIA.

Type of Project / Proposal:	Tick	Type of Decision:	Tick
Transformation		Cabinet	
Capital		Portfolio Holder	
Service Plan		Corporate Strategic Board	
Other		Other	
Title of Project:	Project Minerva		
Directorate / Service responsible:	Resources		
Name and job title of lead officer:	Rob Bonneywell – Project Manager		
Name & contact details of the other persons involved in the assessment:	Neil Gann – Project Support Simon Peck – Project Support		
Date of assessment:	18 th October 2013		
Stage 1: Overview			
1. What are you trying to do? (Explain proposals e.g. introduction of a new service or policy, policy review, changing criteria, reduction / removal of service, restructure, deletion of posts etc)	Project Minerva was set up to investigate ways in which the Council could look to reduce service costs by up to 30% for the four financial years commencing from April 2015. It has followed a systematic examination of alternative service delivery options including re-designing services, sharing resources with other authorities and outsourcing all or part of the services in scope. A key reason for the project is to bridge the “funding gap” that could otherwise exist in 2015/16 as a consequence of reductions in revenue support grant allocated in accordance with the comprehensive spending review, although the specifics of these reductions have not yet been		

communicated to Councils.

The Council currently has a balanced budget for 2013/14 and 2014/15 which includes the delivery of savings of £22.8m over those two years. However, it is anticipated that the national 'austerity' measures already in place to address the national budget deficit are likely to continue up to 2020 and possibly beyond. The Council therefore needs to plan for further potential cost reduction challenges in addition to the £75m of savings it has already identified for achievement between 2010 and 2015.

Within the current economic and financial climate, the future service delivery model will need to change if further significant cost reductions are to be achieved. The protection of "front line" services is considered to be a pre-requisite to ensuring that the Council can continue to deliver services that meet customer requirements and support and protect people that are most in need. Consequently, planning for the future delivery of services needs to be undertaken now in order for cost reductions to be delivered by 2015/16.

To facilitate the evaluation of cost reduction options, primary research has been undertaken into the potential for a shared service arrangement with another Local Authority, outsourcing services to a private contractor, implementing internal changes delivered through the services concerned, replacing the SAP system and relocating "back-office" services to cheaper alternative locations.

Additionally, the initial period of the existing Incremental Partnership Agreement with Capita expires on 3rd November 2015 but may be extended by up to five years by giving at least 12 months written notice. The variation to the above agreement for the provision of IT Services expires on 24th November 2020 and contains a break clause provision that can be exercised subject to giving prior at least 12 months prior written notice. As such, it has been considered prudent to also review and consider the current outsourced IT Service

arrangements within the context of the above and the likelihood for changes in future demand for the provision of IT Services and back-office transactional support services. It is also anticipated that other activities, particularly relating to channel shift, will increase volumes of online activity, data storage requirements and requirements for 24/7 system availability in the future. The IT Service also represents the largest cost base and there have been significant changes in the market over the past three years in particular.

Following evaluation of the various cost reduction options outlined above, recommendations have been submitted for consideration by Cabinet. These include proceeding with a cost reduction programme through the implementation of the internal option that has identified a potential savings target of £2.0m per annum across the following services in scope; Finance and Assurance, Human Resources and Shared Services and Collections and Benefits. The annual cost base of these services is approximately £11.6m and the savings target represents 17%.

If approved, the recommendations contained within the Cabinet report will enable the Council to embark on a two-year cost reduction programme aimed at achieving an annual savings target of £2.0m from 2015/16. However, where appropriate, some service options may be delivered earlier than the target date. The recommendations also facilitate the re-tender of the existing IT Service contract to better support and facilitate achievement of the Council's corporate priorities and secure greater value.

As there are 254 posts in scope within the Resources Directorate and the internal options identify potential savings of £2.0m per annum, there is a potential for approximately 40 to 50 posts to be deleted through the cost reduction programme.

	Residents / Service Users	Partners	Stakeholders
<p>2. Who are the main people / Protected Characteristics that may be affected by your proposals? (all that apply)</p>	Staff	Age	Disability
	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity
	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex
	Sexual Orientation	Other	
<p>3. Is the responsibility shared with another directorate, authority or organisation? If so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the partners? • Who has the overall responsibility? • How have they been involved in the assessment? 	<p>Internal and external options have been examined and considered regarding the potential for cost reduction across the Resources Directorate. A decision has not yet been taken as to a preferred option(s). The options to be examined may also affect Schools in terms of their Finance, HR and Payroll Service provision, Capita as the incumbent service provider for IT services, residents and other local stakeholders in terms of the Collections and Benefits Services and Harrow Council staff in terms of support services such as HRD, Health and Safety and Pensions.</p> <p>A decision concerning the approach to be taken is anticipated to be made by Cabinet. Subject to approval, a full predictive EqIA for any options to be progressed under the cost reduction programme will then be undertaken.</p> <p>It is however currently anticipated that "Minerva" will become a managed programme overseeing the various internal options to be progressed and the retender of the IT Service ensuring that these are planned and effectively managed by the services in scope. This includes a provision within the range of activities identified for Equalities Impact Assessments and Consultation as appropriate. Overall responsibility for the programme will rest with the Corporate Director Resources in consultation with Portfolio Holders and in compliance with</p>		

relevant Council standing orders. Key decisions will be taken by Cabinet where applicable.

Stage 2: Evidence / Data Collation

4. What evidence / data have you reviewed to assess the potential impact of your proposals? Include the actual data, statistics reviewed in the section below. This can include census data, borough profile, profile of service users, workforce profiles, results from consultations and the involvement tracker, customer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, research interviews, staff surveys; complaints etc. Where possible include data on the nine Protected Characteristics. (Where you have gaps (data is not available/being collated), you may need to include this as an action to address in your Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)

The following table has been taken from the Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13 and employee data records relating to the Resources Directorate for the services in scope. Consequently, there may be variances between the data shown as different sets of base data have been referenced and compared for the purposes of the analysis.

	Resources Directorate 468 employees	Whole Council Workforce 5,125 employees	Harrow Community Data 2011 Census	Resources Directorate services in scope (254 posts)
Ethnicity	BAME	36.08%	57.75%	36.40%
	White	52.08%	42.25%	41.84%
	Unknown	11.84%	0.00%	21.76%
Sex	Male	22.36%	49.40%	33.05%
	Female	77.64%	50.60%	66.95%
Disability	Yes	1.81%	16.40%	0.84%
	No	93.66%	83.60%	84.52%
	Unknown	4.53%	0.00%	14.64%
Age	16 to 24	3.34%	11.7%	3.35%
	25 to 34	17.39%	30.4%	20.08%
	35 to 44	22.67%		23.85%
	45 to 54	32.76%	23.6%	24.69%
	55 to 64	21.15%		12.97%
65+		2.69%	14.1%	0.42%
	Unknown	0.00%	0.00%	14.64%

	Resources Directorate 468 employees	Whole Council Workforce 5,125 employees	Harrow Community Data 2011 Census	Resources Directorate services in scope (254 posts)	
Religion or Belief	Christianity	11.00%	37.30%		
	Hinduism	4.12%	25.30%		
	Islam	1.44%	12.50%		
	Judaism	0.57%	4.40%		
	Jainism	0.51%	No category		
	Sikh	0.39%	1.20%		
	Buddhism	0.20%	1.10%		
	Zoroastrian	0.02%	No category		
	Other	0.86%	2.50%		
	2.78%	2.09%	9.60%		
	82.48%	78.81%	6.20%		
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	15.92%	No category		
	Gay Woman/				
	Lesbian	0.06%			
	Gay Man	0.08%			
	Bi-sexual	0.14%			
	Prefer not to say	1.07%			
	Other	0.04%			
	Unknown	82.69%			
Pregnancy/ maternity in last 2 years?	6.62%	4.02%	No category		
	93.38%	95.98%			
Same gender assigned at birth?	99.57%	95.47%	No category		
	0.00%	0.00%			
	0.43%	4.53%			

Data included within this section has been obtained from the Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13 and employee data records for the Resources Directorate services in scope. The age profile of the workforce in proportionate terms and in comparison to the 2011 census is shown below. The 14.64% shown as “unknown” for the ages of Resources Directorate posts in scope relates to posts that are either currently vacant or filled by agency personnel.

Age	Whole Council 5,125 employees			Excluding Schools 2,375 employees			Harrow Community Data 2011 Census	Resources Directorate Services in Scope (254 posts)
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013		
16 to 24	3.66%	3.00%	3.34%	2.73%	2.21%	1.47%	11.7%	3.35%
25 to 34	19.32%	40.39%	17.39%	15.05%	36.50%	14.15%	30.4%	20.08%
35 to 44	24.04%		22.67%	22.39%		21.68%	23.85%	
45 to 54	30.86%	54.28%	32.76%	31.36%	58.09%	33.14%	23.6%	24.69%
55 to 64	20.16%		21.15%	25.78%		25.81%	12.97%	
65+	1.97%	2.33%	2.69%	2.69%	3.20%	3.75%	14.1%	0.42%
Unknown								14.64%

Data included within this section has been obtained from the Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13 and employee data records for the Resources Directorate services in scope. The composition of the workforce in proportionate terms that is disabled in comparison to the 2011 census is shown below:

Disabled	Whole Council 5,125 employees			Excluding Schools 2,375 employees			London Councils Data 2013 Exc Schools	Harrow Community Data 2011 Census	Resources Directorate Services in Scope (254 posts)
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013			
Yes	1.84%	2.02%	1.81%	3.63%	3.58%	3.33%	5.08%	*16.40%	0.84%
No	98.00%	97.77%	93.66%	96.29%	96.30%	96.25%	-	*83.60%	84.52%
Unknown	0.16%	0.22%	4.53%	0.08%	0.12%	0.42%	-	-	14.64%

*Not the same definition - in the 2011 census, 16.4% of Harrow residents self classified their health to be not good. A target has been set for Harrow Council for 3% of its workforce to declare they have a disability.

Age (including carers of young/older people)

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Disability (including carers of disabled people)

Data included within this section has been obtained from the Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13. The composition of the workforce in proportionate terms that has the same gender as they were assigned at birth in comparison to the 2011 census is shown below:

	Whole Council 5,125 %	Excluding Schools 2,375 %
Yes	95.47%	99.58%
No	0%	0%
Unknown	4.53%	0.42%

There is no data included for this characteristic within the Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13 as there is currently no requirement to report on this.

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Data included within this section has been obtained from the Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13. The proportion of the workforce that has been pregnant and / or taken maternity leave within the past two years is shown in the table below.

	Whole Council 206 of 5,125 %	Excluding Schools 98 of 2,375 %
Percentage of workforce who have been pregnant and/or taken maternity leave in the two years to 31 st March 2013	4.02%	4.13%

Pregnancy and Maternity

Data included within this section has been obtained from the Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13 and employee data records for the Resources Directorate services in scope. The ethnic composition of the workforce in proportionate terms in comparison to the 2011 census is shown in the table below.

Ethnic Classification	Whole Council 5,125 employees			Excluding Schools 2,375 employees			London Councils Data 2013 Exc Schools	Harrow Community Data 2011 Census	Resources Directorate Services in Scope (254 posts)
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013			
Asian	22.64%	23.77%	24.08%	20.48%	20.52%	21.60%	10.67%	42.59%	30.54%
Black	8.82%	9.33%	9.00%	13.96%	14.32%	14.11%	20.39%	8.24%	5.44%
Mixed	2.15%	2.21%	2.15%	1.91%	1.87%	1.89%	2.75%	3.97%	0.42%
Any other ethnic group	1.32%	1.19%	0.86%	1.44%	1.29%	0.80%	1.85%	2.95%	0.00%
Total BAME	34.92%	36.49%	36.08%	37.79%	37.99%	38.40%	35.67%	57.75%	36.4%
White	56.36%	54.46%	52.08%	56.16%	55.06%	54.44%	64.33%	42.25%	41.84%
Unknown/Unclassified	8.71%	9.05%	11.84%	6.05%	6.95%	7.16%	8.03%	0.00%	21.76%

Data included within this section has been obtained from the Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13 and 2011 census and is compared in proportionate terms in the table below.

Religion and Belief	Whole Council 5,125		Excluding Schools 2,375		Harrow Community Data 2011 Census	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Christianity	11.00%	13.09%	37.30%			
Hinduism	4.12%	4.00%	25.30%			
Islam	1.44%	1.64%	12.50%			
Judaism	0.57%	0.59%	4.40%			
Jainism	0.51%	0.42%	No category			
Sikh	0.39%	0.51%	1.20%			
Buddhism	0.20%	0.25%	1.10%			
Zoroastrian	0.02%	-	No category			
Other	0.86%	0.97%	2.50%			

No Religion/Atheist	2.09%	2.78%	9.60%
	78.81%	75.75%	6.20%
Unknown			

Data included within this section has been obtained from the Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13 and data records for the Resources Directorate services in scope. The gender composition of the workforce in proportionate terms and in comparison to the 2011 census is shown in the table below.

Sex	Whole Council 5,125 employees			Excluding Schools 2,375 employees		London Councils Data 2013 Exc Schools	Harrow Community Data 2011 Census	Resources Directorate Services in scope (254 posts)
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012			
Male	24.07%	23.34%	22.36%	37.71%	38.95%	37.68%	49.40%	33.05%
Female	75.93%	76.66%	77.64%	62.29%	61.05%	62.32%	50.60%	66.95%

Data included within this section has been obtained from the Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13. The sexual orientation of the workforce in proportionate terms and in comparison to the 2011 census is shown in the table below.

	Whole Council 5,125		Excluding Schools 2375	
	%		%	
Heterosexual	15.92%		18.11%	
Gay Woman/ Lesbian	0.06%		0.08%	
Gay Man	0.08%		0.08%	
Bi-sexual	0.14%		0.21%	
Prefer not to say	1.07%		1.18%	
Other	0.04%		-	
Unknown	82.69%		80.34%	

<p>Socio Economic</p>	<p>Options are currently being considered and assessed but no decision has yet been taken as to whether and how to proceed. Consequently, the potential impact of the options submitted by service areas has not been assessed in more detail by them at this stage. However, based upon the achievement of annual cost savings of £2.0m, it is anticipated that approximately 40 to 50 posts could potentially be deleted. Workforce planning measures will therefore be put in place to mitigate as far as reasonably practicable the potential implications that may arise from this and these are set out in more detail in this document. Data has been obtained in relation to staffing for the Resources Directorate and census data is also available to compare and review the potential impact of any options that may subsequently be agreed for implementation. Where options relate to specific service delivery methods and impact upon Harrow Council residents and stakeholders, service specific data will be used as far as reasonably practicable with any gaps being identified within the Improvement Plan. The recommendation to re-tender the existing outsourced IT Service is currently anticipated to have a minimal local socio-economic impact.</p> <p>The general equality duty set out in the Equalities Act 2010 applies to procurement and commissioning by virtue of Schedule 19 to that Act. The general equality duty also applies to bodies which are carrying out public functions (in relation to those functions only). For those authorities, the general equality duty will also apply to their procurement and commissioning, in so far as procurement and commissioning are part of the exercise of those public functions. This provision means that any contractor working on behalf of the Council will be obliged to comply with the general Equality Duty as set out in the 2010 Act.</p>
<p>416</p> <p>5. What other (local, regional, national research, reports, media) data sources that you have used to inform this assessment?</p> <p>List the Title of reports / documents and websites here.</p>	<p>Harrow Equalities Centre website (harrowequalitiescentre.org.uk) indicates that Harrow is made up of people from at least 137 different countries and, based upon the seven religions listed in the standard tables from the census, has the highest level of religious diversity of any local authority in England and Wales.</p> <p>Based upon the 2011 census, Harrow has a population of 239,100 residents. Additionally, the following are of note:</p> <p>Of the resident population, 49.4% are male and 50.6% are female.</p> <p>14.1% of the population are over the age of 65 compared to 11.1% for London generally.</p> <p>53.7% of couples are married compared to a national average of 46.6% and accordingly ranks Harrow Council highest in London for married couples. In contrast, Harrow is ranked last in London for single people never married or registered</p>

in a same-sex civil partnership; 31st for people living in a registered same-sex civil partnership; 31st for separated; last for divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved and last for cohabiting couples.

30.9% of Harrow's residents are White British, ranking Harrow fourth lowest nationally. The GLA's 2011 Census Ethnic Diversity Indices show that Harrow is ranked 7th nationally for ethnic diversity (based on the 18 ethnic group classification), with a score of 5.27. Diversity indices measure the number of different/distinct groups present in the population and the sizes of these distinct groups relative to each other.

Harrow's Indian group is the borough's largest minority ethnic group, with a population of 63,050 (26.4%), ranking Harrow 2nd nationally, after Leicester.

The Harrow Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13 has been used to obtain data about the organisational composition and that of the Resources Directorate.

Stage 3: Assessing Potential Disproportionate Impact

6. Based on the evidence you have considered so far, is there a risk that your proposals could potentially have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the Protected Characteristics?

	Age (including carers)	Disability (including carers)	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion and Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Yes									
No									

YES - If there is a risk of disproportionate adverse Impact on any **ONE** of the Protected Characteristics, continue with the rest of the template.

- § **Best Practice:** You may want to consider setting up a Working Group (including colleagues, partners, stakeholders, voluntary community sector organisations, service users and Unions) to develop the rest of the EqIA
- § It will be useful to also collate further evidence (additional data, consultation with the relevant communities, stakeholder groups and service users directly affected by your proposals) to further assess the potential disproportionate impact identified and how this can be mitigated.

0 - If you have ticked 'No' to all of the above, then go to **Stage 6**

Although the assessment may not have identified potential disproportionate impact, you may have identified actions which can be taken to advance equality of opportunity to make your proposals more inclusive. These actions should form your Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7

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Stage 4: Collating Additional data / Evidence

7. What additional data / evidence have you considered to further assess the potential disproportionate impact of your proposals? (include this evidence, including any data, statistics, titles of documents and website links here)

Employee data records have been obtained from HR and used for comparative purposes with the census, Harrow Annual Equality in Employment Monitoring Report 2012/13 and Harrow Equalities Centre website (harrowequalitiescentre.org.uk). The Staff Survey 2011 has also been referred to for the purposes of completing this assessment.

8. What consultation have you undertaken on your proposals?

As no firm proposals have been agreed at this stage, there has been no formal consultation undertaken. There have been two rounds of staff briefings conducted in September and December and there have been client engagement workshops and meetings with Schools representatives. There have also been employee “drop-in” sessions, and weekly meetings with employee representatives (i.e. Trade Unions). Representatives from all directorates and the unions have attended monthly Stakeholder Consultative Group meetings. There has been a programme of briefings that took place from 10th December to inform employees about the proposed Cabinet recommendations and detailed Equalities Impact Assessments and consultation will be undertaken as appropriate subject to the Cabinet decision on 15th January 2014. The cumulative effect of the internal options will be monitored and reviewed as options are developed through a new programme. The arrangements for achieving this and giving due regard to any potential adverse impact and mitigating actions are set out within the action plan to this assessment.

Who was consulted?	What consultation methods were used?	What do the results show about the impact on different groups / Protected Characteristics?	What actions have you taken to address the findings of the consultation? (This may include further consultation with the affected groups, revising your proposals).
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Stage 5: Assessing Impact and Analysis

9. What does your evidence tell you about the impact on different groups? Consider whether the evidence shows potential for differential impact, if so state whether this is an adverse or positive impact? How likely is this to happen? How you will mitigate/remove any adverse impact?	
Protected Characteristic	Adverse / Positive
Age (including carers of young/older people)	<p>Explain what this impact is, how likely it is to happen and the extent of impact if it was to occur.</p> <p>Note – Positive impact can also be used to demonstrate how your proposals meet the aims of the PSED Stage 9</p> <p>There are approximately 40 to 50 posts that may potentially be deleted under the internal option. Consequently, there may be a potential for a differential impact based upon age as the greater proportions of the Resources Directorate services in scope are resourced by employees within the age range of 25 to 54 (i.e. 68.62%). There are only a small proportion of workers aged 16 to 24 and 65+.</p>
	<p>What measures can you take to mitigate the impact or advance equality of opportunity? E.g. further consultation, research, implement equality monitoring etc (Also Include these in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)</p>
	<p>Subject to Cabinet approval of the proposed recommendations, options will be progressed requiring full Equalities Impact Assessments in their own right and consultation as appropriate. Equality Monitoring arrangements to obtain, measure and evaluate the effects of any proposals to be implemented will also be established and kept under review. Additionally, in the interim, the following measures (other than in exceptional circumstances authorised by the Corporate Director Resources) will be effected to mitigate the potential effects arising from the internal options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment freeze for vacant posts • Use of agency staff or staff on short term contracts for vacant roles ,
Disability (including carers of disabled people)	<p>There are approximately 40 to 50 posts that may potentially be deleted under the internal option. Consequently, there may be a potential for a differential impact based upon disability. The Staff Survey 2011 suggested that 7% of the Council workforce were disabled. Whilst the proportion of disabled employees within the Resources Directorate (determined from employee records) is shown as 0.84%, this figure is likely to be</p>
	<p>Subject to Cabinet approval of the proposed recommendations, options will be progressed requiring full Equalities Impact Assessments in their own right and consultation as appropriate. Equality Monitoring arrangements to obtain, measure and evaluate the effects of any proposals to be implemented will also be established and kept under review. Additionally, in the interim, the following measures (other than in exceptional</p>

			understated based upon the Staff Survey 2011 results.	circumstances authorised by the Corporate Director Resources) will be effected to mitigate the potential effects arising from the internal options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment freeze for vacant posts • Use of agency staff or staff on short term contracts for vacant roles,
Gender Reassignment			There is insufficient information recorded via employee data records on which to determine any potential impact.	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			There is insufficient information recorded via employee data records on which to determine any potential impact.	
Pregnancy and Maternity			There is insufficient information currently recorded via employee data records on which to determine any potential impact and this may be subject to change dependent upon the timing for any potential changes to be progressed.	
Race			There are approximately 40 to 50 posts that may potentially be deleted under the internal option. Consequently, there may be a potential for a differential impact based upon race as 36.4% of the Resources Directorate services in scope are resourced by employees who are within a BAME grouping.	Subject to Cabinet approval of the proposed recommendations, options will be progressed requiring full Equalities Impact Assessments in their own right and consultation as appropriate. Equality Monitoring arrangements to obtain, measure and evaluate the effects of any proposals to be implemented will also be established and kept under review. Additionally, in the interim, the following measures will be effected (other than in exceptional circumstances authorised by the Corporate Director Resources) to mitigate the potential effects arising from the internal options:

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment freeze for vacant posts Use of agency staff or staff on short term contracts for vacant roles,
Religion or Belief			There is insufficient information recorded via employee data records on which to determine any potential impact.	
Sex			There are approximately 40 to 50 posts that may potentially be deleted under the internal option. Consequently, there may be a potential for a differential impact based upon gender as the greater proportions of the Resources Directorate services in scope are resourced by female employees. (i.e. 66.95%)	<p>Subject to Cabinet approval of the proposed recommendations, options will be progressed requiring full Equalities Impact Assessments in their own right and consultation as appropriate, Equality Monitoring arrangements to obtain, measure and evaluate the effects of any proposals to be implemented will also be established and kept under review.</p> <p>Additionally, in the interim, the following measures will be effected (other than in exceptional circumstances authorised by the Corporate Director Resources) to mitigate the potential effects arising from the internal options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment freeze for vacant posts Use of agency staff or staff on short term contracts for vacant roles,
Sexual orientation			There is insufficient information recorded via employee data records on which to determine any potential impact.	

	Yes		No
<p>10. Cumulative Impact – Considering what else is happening within the Council and Harrow as a whole, could your proposals have a cumulative impact on a particular Protected Characteristic?</p> <p>If yes, which Protected Characteristics could be affected and what is the potential impact?</p>	<p>As the internal options affect 254 posts within the services in scope, there is the potential for a number of personnel to be affected by the cost reduction programme. There is a potential that 40 to 50 posts may be deleted by the proposed cost reduction options if approved. There may be a potential for the age, disability, race and sex protected characteristics to be affected by proposed options although this will depend upon other factors taking place at that time and the nature of the options concerned. It is not possible to be more precise about the potential impact at this stage as this will be dependent upon a number of factors.</p>		
<p>10a. Any Other Impact – Considering what else is happening within the Council and Harrow as a whole (for example national/local policy, austerity, welfare reform, unemployment levels, community tensions, levels of crime) could your proposals have an impact on individuals/service users socio economic, health or an impact on community cohesion?</p> <p>If yes, what is the potential impact and how likely is to happen?</p>	Yes		No
	<p>As the internal options affect 254 posts within the services in scope, there is the potential for a number of personnel to be affected by the cost reduction programme. There is a potential that approximately 40 to 50 posts may be deleted by the proposed cost reduction options if approved. However, it is not possible to be more precise about the potential impact of options proposed at this stage as this will be dependent upon a number of factors.</p>		
<p>11. Is there any evidence or concern that the potential adverse impact identified may result in a Protected Characteristic being disadvantaged? (Please refer to the Corporate Guidelines for guidance on the definitions of discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act) available on Harrow HUB/Equalities and Diversity/Policies and Legislation</p> <p>It is not possible to establish whether a protected characteristic is likely to be disadvantaged by any potential adverse impact at this stage. Therefore, in the box below, the “no” option has been selected based upon the current position whilst recognising that this will need to be kept under review and may change as options are progressed.</p>	<p>Is there any evidence or concern that the potential adverse impact identified may result in a Protected Characteristic being disadvantaged? (Please refer to the Corporate Guidelines for guidance on the definitions of discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act) available on Harrow HUB/Equalities and Diversity/Policies and Legislation</p>		

	Age (including carers)	Disability (including carers)	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion and Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Yes									
No									
<p>If you have answered "yes" to any of the above, set out what justification there may be for this in Q12a below - link this to the aims of the proposal and whether the disadvantage is proportionate to the need to meet these aims. (You are encouraged to seek legal advice, if you are concerned that the proposal may breach the equality legislation or you are unsure whether there is objective justification for the proposal)</p> <p>If the analysis shows the potential for serious adverse impact or disadvantage (or potential discrimination) but you have identified a potential justification for this, this information must be presented to the decision maker for a final decision to be made on whether the disadvantage is proportionate to achieve the aims of the proposal.</p> <p>§ If there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should not proceed with the proposal. (select outcome 4)</p> <p>§ If the analysis shows unlawful conduct under the equalities legislation, you should not proceed with the proposal. (select outcome 4)</p>									
Stage 6: Decision									
42	2. Please indicate which of the following statements best describes the outcome of your EqIA (tick one box only)								
44	<p>Outcome 1 – No change required: the EqIA has not identified any potential for unlawful conduct or disproportionate impact and all opportunities to advance equality are being addressed.</p> <p>Outcome 2 – Minor adjustments to remove / mitigate adverse impact or advance equality have been identified by the EqIA. <i>List the actions you propose to take to address this in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7</i></p> <p>Outcome 3 – Continue with proposals despite having identified potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to advance equality. In this case, the justification needs to be included in the EqIA and should be in line with the PSED to have 'due regard'. In some cases, compelling reasons will be needed. You should also consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the adverse impact and/or plans to monitor the impact. (Explain this in 12a below)</p> <p>Outcome 4 – Stop and rethink: when there is potential for serious adverse impact or disadvantage to one or more protected groups. (You are encouraged to seek Legal Advice about the potential for unlawful conduct under equalities legislation)</p>								
<p>12a. If your EqIA is assessed as outcome 3 or you have ticked 'yes' in Q11, explain your justification with full reasoning to continue with your proposals.</p> <p>There are 254 posts in scope of which approximately 40 to 50 may potentially be deleted under the internal options, subject to approval. However, It is not possible to establish whether a protected characteristic is likely to be disadvantaged by any potential adverse impact at this stage as this will be dependent upon a number of factors. There are no firm proposals in place at</p>									

this stage, merely options for consideration. Subject to Cabinet approval to progress with the options recommended, full Equalities Impact Assessments and consultation will be required where appropriate and due regard had to the implications of the specific proposals for progression. Monitoring arrangements to determine the effects of the proposals and to give consideration to any mitigating actions will also be established as part of the proposal implementation plans.

Stage 7: Improvement Action Plan

13. List below any actions you plan to take as a result of this Impact Assessment. This should include any actions identified throughout the EqIA.

Area of potential adverse impact e.g. Race, Disability	Action required to mitigate	How will you know this is achieved? E.g. Performance Measure / Target	Target Date	Lead Officer	Date Action included in Service / Team Plan
Race, Disability, Sex and Age	Statistical data available concerning the workforce composition and stakeholders that may be affected will be considered and evaluated prior to progressing with any agreed options. Where potential for adverse impact is identified, mitigating actions will be considered and due regard given to potential implications under the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.	Subject to Cabinet approval, performance measures / targets will be determined in relation to the specific options to be progressed.	To be determined as part of the project plan for the option under consideration	To be determined as part of the project plan for the option under consideration	To be determined as part of the project plan for the option under consideration
Race, Disability, Sex and Age	Permanent recruitment for vacant positions within the services in scope is "frozen" unless exceptional circumstances apply. Use of agency or temporary personnel to fill the vacant roles on a short term basis will be permitted.	Reasons for exceptional circumstances applying will need to be submitted to the Corporate Director Resources to obtain authority to recruit on a permanent basis. This action	Immediate effect.	Tom Whiting	Immediate effect

Race, Disability, Sex and Age	The assessment and actions identified from internal option assessments will be monitored and reviewed through Programme Minerva to ensure that due regard is given to any adverse impact identified and mitigating actions from a project and cumulative perspective.	will minimise the potential impact of any agreed cost reduction programme on permanent personnel.	Programme Minerva will ensure that Project Plans include the requirement for an EqIA to be conducted and ensure that this is achieved. The cumulative impact of the proposals will be monitored and reviewed through the programme and the overview EqIA reviewed as a consequence.	To be determined as part of the overall programme and individual project plans for the option under consideration	Rob Bonneywell	To be determined as part of the overall programme and individual project plans for the option under consideration
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Stage 8 - Monitoring

The full impact of the proposals may only be known after they have been implemented. It is therefore important to ensure effective monitoring measures are in place to assess the impact.

<p>14. How will you monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? What monitoring measures need to be introduced to ensure effective monitoring of your proposals? How often will you do this? <i>(Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7)</i></p>	<p>Subject to Cabinet approval, this will be considered and addressed by each service area responsible for implementing the specific options proposed. It is currently anticipated that “Minerva” will become a programme management role that will include ensuring Equalities Impact Assessments have been undertaken and due regard given to any potential adverse impact and mitigating actions. The timings and frequency of proposal monitoring arrangements will be determined having regard to the nature and extent of the options to be</p>
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	progressed and may include key stakeholders in their preparation and evaluation.
15. How will the results of any monitoring be analysed, reported and publicised? (<i>Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 7</i>)	Subject to Cabinet approval, this will be considered and addressed by each service area responsible for implementing the specific options proposed. However, it is anticipated that the results of any monitoring will be analysed, reported and publicised in the manner determined and agreed as appropriate for the specific proposal under consideration.
16. Have you received any complaints or compliments about the proposals being assessed? If so, provide details.	None.
Stage 9: Public Sector Equality Duty	
17. How do your proposals contribute towards the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires the Council to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups. (Include all the positive actions of your proposals, for example literature will be available in large print, Braille and community languages, flexible working hours for parents/carers, IT equipment will be DDA compliant etc)	Foster good relations between people from different groups
18. How do your proposals contribute towards the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which requires the Council to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
Subject to Cabinet approval, the manner in which proposals contribute towards the PSED will be determined in relation to the specific options to be progressed.	

Stage 10 - Organisational sign Off (to be completed by Chair of Departmental Equalities Task Group)

The completed EqIA needs to be sent to the chair of your Departmental Equalities Task Group (DETG) to be signed off.

18. Which group or committee considered, reviewed and agreed the EqIA and the Improvement Action Plan?		EqIA Quality and Assurance	
Signed: (Lead officer completing EqIA)	Rob Bonneywell	Signed: (Chair of DETG)	Alex Dewsnap
Date:	16 th December 2013	Date: 20 th December 2013	20 th December 2013
Date EqIA presented at the EqIA Quality Assurance Group	17 th December 2013	Signature of ETG Chair	Alex Dewsnap

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

CABINET – 15 JANUARY 2014

REFERENCE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 DECEMBER 2013

MINERVA PROJECT UPDATE

Members received a report from the Corporate Director of Resources which set out progress to date on a new Council project, Project Minerva, which was forward planning for savings in a number of Council departments post 2015. The Project was also considering future plans in relation to the Council's IT and Business Transformation Partnership services currently managed under a partnership agreement with Capita.

The Chair drew Members attention to the tabled documents which included appendix to the report of the Corporate Director. The Corporate Director advised that the appendix focused on the analysis of the recommendations and that it had been necessary to table the document as the information had not be ready to be made available in the public domain at the time the agenda was printed and circulated.

Members, in noting that the appendix contained some Part II exempt information, agreed that they would agree a motion to exclude the press and public, and subsequently to re-admit them as the need arose during their discussion.

The Corporate Director outlined the content of his report and went through the details of appendix 1. He reported that all of the private sector providers consulted had indicated that they would fundamentally change the way services were delivered. For example, those consulted had indicated that it would be cheaper to provide services from other areas in the country and that savings would be delivered by the wage differential. In addition, none of the Councils running shared services used SAP but instead used Agresso.

The Corporate Director drew Members attention to pages 8 and 9 of the tabled documents which detailed the proposed recommendations to Cabinet in January 2014. The conclusion of officers was that, in terms of the contract with Capita, the opportunity should be taken to go back to the market at the contract break. The market had indicated that there would need to be a six month hand over period should the procurement lead to a change of supplier. There would also need to be a consideration in terms of timing around the election process.

Members then made comments and asked questions as follows:

- A Member expressed the view that it was important to get the processes right and surprise at the readiness of some Councils to engage in shared services. He stated that it was important to keep options open. The Corporate Director advised that the figures quoted in Appendix 1 were net of profit margin and that the cost to the client side would require consideration. Further savings may be derived from scale as a result of a shared service.

- In terms of a shared arrangement it was questioned how much political control Councillors would have in a shared arrangement and whether there was a political will to lose some of that influence. The Corporate Director advised that Members would need to satisfy themselves in this regard before a shared service was progressed.
- A Member expressed the view that the Council should perhaps confine itself to considering sharing services with London Boroughs rather than further afield in order to be comparable.
- In terms of outsourcing, concern was expressed at the regeneration effect and local economic impact. The Corporate Director advised that 56% of those staff that could potentially be affected lived in the borough.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director and other officer for their attendance and responses. He requested that a further report be submitted to the Committee prior to the election. The Corporate Director advised that subject to the decision of Cabinet in January 2014, there would be progress with the OJEU notice but that it would be helpful to report to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That (1) the progress on Project Minerva to date be noted; (2) a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee; and (3) the Committee's comments be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Background Documents:

Draft minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17 December 2013

Contact Officer:

Alison Atherton, Senior Professional Democratic Services
Tel: 020 8424 1266
Email: alison.atherton@harrow.gov.uk

REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	15 January 2014
Subject:	Council Insurance Renewals 2014
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Simon George, Director of Finance and Assurance
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Tony Ferrari. Portfolio Holder for Finance
Exempt:	No, except for Appendices 1&2, which are exempt on the grounds that they contain “exempt information” under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Exempt (Part II) – Tender Evaluation Appendix 2 – Exempt (Part II) - Evaluation Model

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out an overview and the outcome of the competitive tendering process undertaken to seek new contracts through the Insurance London

Consortium (ILC) for the provision of Property and Liability insurance.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to approve the award of the contracts for Property and Liability insurance from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019 as specified in Appendix 1 (Part II report).

Reason: (For recommendation)

Harrow is committed to the procurement of its external insurance arrangements through the Insurance London Consortium (ILC) under the terms of a Section 101 Agreement signed by the Leader of the Council.

An open tender process was conducted according to EU procurement rules for Part A Service contracts.

A pre-defined evaluation model was constructed to fairly evaluate each tender against a set of criteria established by the ILC and their appointed insurance brokers.

The bidders detailed in Appendix 1 (Part II report) achieved the highest total scores in the evaluation process.

Section 2 – Report

A. Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 Harrow Council is a member of the Insurance London Consortium (ILC), a group of nine boroughs whose aim is to reduce the cost of risk through a long-term collaborative commitment to risk management excellence and to achieve value for money for in relation to the cost of the Council's insurance provision through economies of scale.
- 2.2 The other member boroughs of the Consortium are Camden, Croydon, Haringey, Islington, Kingston, Lambeth, Sutton, and Tower Hamlets.
- 2.3 Each member borough has a nominated representative and all boroughs have equal voting rights.
- 2.4 Members are committed to the Consortium under a Section 101 Agreement, which was signed by the Leader of the Council with the authority of the Council's Legal Services team. Under the terms of the

Agreement a member borough must give 12 months notice of their intention to withdraw from the Consortium. Croydon is appointed as the Accountable Body and therefore, under the terms of the agreement, is the contracting party on behalf of the ILC in relation to commercial contracts, subject to the achievement of a majority vote.

- 2.5 The ILC strategy is to include all insurance policies within its remit upon the expiry of existing long-term agreements.
- 2.6 The current Property and Liability insurance contracts expire on 31 March 2014, as a result of which it has been necessary to re-tender these contracts in line with EU procurement legislation.

B. Background

- 2.7 Following the demise of the London Authorities Mutual Ltd (LAML), Harrow joined together with former LAML members to form the ILC with the aim of reducing the cost of risk for the public sector through a long term collaborative commitment to risk management excellence.
- 2.8 The Consortium initially operated under an informal memorandum of understanding. Having obtained the necessary authority from Legal Services and the Leader of the Council, the agreement was subsequently formalised by way of a Section 101 Agreement setting out the member's rights and responsibilities.
- 2.9 The first joint ILC insurance procurement was undertaken in late 2009. The Property and Liability insurance contracts were tendered, as a result of which ILC members achieved competitive terms and conditions for contracts commencing on 1 January 2010. A further successful tender exercise was undertaken two years ago culminating in the contracts being awarded for a two year period commencing 1 April 2012.
- 2.10 As the existing long-term agreements on the Property and Liability insurance contracts expire on 31 March 2014 it has been necessary for the Consortium to undertake a full procurement exercise in accordance with EU procurement legislation.

Procurement

- 2.11 As the Accountable Body, Croydon led the procurement exercise on behalf of all Consortium members.
- 2.12 An open tender process was conducted according to the EU procurement rules for Part A Service contracts. Tenders were sought for a minimum three year period, with additional scoring available for extensions to a maximum of five years in order to ensure continuity of cover, reduce the amount of time spent on tenders, and take

advantage of a hardening market, whilst providing flexibility for the Council in the event of unforeseen market changes.

- 2.13 Historically the Consortium tenders have been run as open tenders with very specific terms sought. Whilst these have been successful in terms of price and additional benefits obtained, the number of bidders has declined, with only two bids received at the last tender. In an attempt to engage competition, the following actions were taken:
- The Government Procurement Service established Pro 5 framework, which includes 31 insurance markets, was used as recommended by the majority of the member borough's procurement teams
 - An insurance broker was contracted under the terms of the framework as an intermediary to encourage response
 - Market feedback was sought from insurers early in 2013 in order to understand the issues they experienced with ILC tenders
 - The market approach was softened in order to encourage bids from those markets who previously struggled with the ILC requirements, including a process during the tender enabling bidders to question / challenge the terms sought
 - The tender period was extended to 60 days to allow potential bidders time to understand and respond to our approach
 - A fully attended market presentation was undertaken at the broker's premises in order for bidders to appreciate our approach

Evaluation of Tenders

- 2.14 The basis of evaluation for the insurance tender is calculated according to the balance of importance between price and quality for each lot and is specified in the table below. The same evaluation criteria applies to all consortium members and is based on experience from previous consortium tenders and advice from independent insurance consultants acting on behalf of the ILC.

Lot	Price %	Quality %
Lot 1. (Property)	67	33
Lot 2. (Liability)	67	33

- 2.15 An initial price evaluation is undertaken for each member; the cost per borough is added together and averaged. The bidder's variance from the average is then calculated and points are added or deducted for every percentage point from the average.
- 2.16 The price evaluation also includes points for the variance from the maximum acceptable annual aggregate, therefore a similar calculation is undertaken and points are awarded to bidders offering annual aggregates that are lower than the maximum acceptable aggregate.

- 2.17 Details of the price evaluation score specific to Harrow are contained within Appendix 2 (Part II report).
- 2.18 To ensure there is no cross-sharing of risk, bidders are requested to price each Consortium member according to their individual insurance requirements and claims experience.
- 2.19 The breakdown between price and quality seeks to achieve a balance between price; term, which includes a 'rate guarantee'; and other added value items such as improvements in cover over and above the minimum policy cover specification.
- 2.20 Thorough criteria were devised to evaluate the outcome of the quality bids, broken down between variations; multi-year deal; and added value.
- 2.21 The quality evaluation is undertaken at Consortium level, rather than for each borough, as all Consortium members benefit equally from any policy enhancements available.
- 2.22 Under the heading of variations, additional points are awarded where bidders offered enhanced cover over and above the minimum policy cover specification.
- 2.23 For the multi-year deal, additional points are available for bidders offering in excess of the minimum specified contract and reduced premiums in return for improved claims experience.
- 2.24 Additional points are also available for added value to bidders offering extra benefits perceived to be favourable to the Consortium, such as a risk management allowance, and Corporate Social Responsibility.
- 2.25 The winning tender for each lot is then decided on the basis of the highest scoring bid for the Consortium as a whole.

Implications of the Recommendation

- 2.26 Specific details of the cost implications are outlined in Appendix 1 (Part II report)
- 2.27 The contracts tendered are subject to rate guarantees, providing financial stability for the Council whilst not locking boroughs in to long-term agreements that could limit options they may wish to pursue as a result of the public sector austerity measures

C. Options considered

- 2.28 Harrow is contractually obliged to re-tender its Property and Liability insurance contracts through the ILC under the terms of the Section 101 Agreement. Accordingly, in view of the forthcoming expiry of existing

long-term agreements there was no alternative to re-tendering the insurance contracts as part of the Consortium.

2.29 Whilst the Council accepts a large element of risk with regards to insurance claims and maintains an insurance fund to cover such eventualities, it is unable to accept open ended insurance risks hence the requirement for insurance cover. 'Catastrophe' cover is therefore procured through the insurance market.

2.30 Consideration was given to whether the existing levels of deductible (policy excess) and aggregate continue to provide adequate financial protection, whilst delivering best value to the Council. The deductible is the first amount of each and every claim that is payable by the Council and the aggregate is the maximum financial liability attaching to the Council in any one policy year for all Property and Liability claims, thus restricting the financial exposure to insurable risk. Advice has been sought from independent insurance consultants and an independent actuary as to whether premium savings could be achieved through increasing policy deductibles. However their advice was that little savings would be achieved in this way, as based on the Council's claims experience there have been few claims exceeding the existing deductibles.

Legal Implications

ILC members are committed to the Consortium under a Section 101 Agreement, which was signed by the Leader of the Council with the authority of the Council's Legal Services team. Under the terms of the Agreement a member borough must give 12 months notice of their intention to withdraw from the Consortium. The Council is therefore contractually bound to enter into the contracts.

The procurement process as detailed in this report meets the requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, EU procurement requirements and the Council's duty to secure best value under the Local Government Act 1999.

Financial Implications

The total revenue cost associated with the contract is specified in Appendix 1 (Part II report).

There is sufficient budget provision to cover the cost of the insurance premiums.

Performance Issues

The award of the contracts will support the Council in providing value for money by striking a measurable balance between price and quality through

evaluation criteria designed in a way to identify bids offering a quality service whilst offering best value insurance services.

There are no specific performance indicators affected by the award of the contracts.

In the event that the contracts were not awarded the Council would have no financial protection for its assets and liabilities and would be faced with unlimited potential financial liability for claims made by and against the Council.

Environmental Impact

No Environmental Impact has been identified as a result of the proposed award of contract.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

The key risk is that a challenge is made, thus jeopardising the commencement date of the contract and potentially leaving the Council without adequate insurance. The risk of a successful challenge has been mitigated as far as possible, as the tender has been run in accordance with legal and procurement advice sought by the Accountable Body.

Risk of delivery failure is minimal with the supplier's financial status and standing required to meet minimum standards both at inception, and for the duration of the contract.

Equalities implications

No equalities implications have been identified as a result of the proposed award of contract.

Priorities

The decision to award this contract will support the Council in providing value for money by striking a measurable balance between price and quality through evaluation criteria designed in a way to identify bids offering a quality service whilst offering best value insurance services.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dawn Calvert on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 11 December 2013

Name: Stephen Dorrian on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 10 December 2013

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington on behalf of the
Divisional Director
Strategic
Commissioning

Date: 6 December 2013

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker on behalf of the
Corporate Director
(Environment &
Enterprise)

Date: 5 December 2013

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Karen Vickery, Service Manager – Insurance
E-mail: Karen.vickery@harrow.gov.uk
DDI: 0208 424 1995

Background Papers: None

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]

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REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	15 January 2014
Subject:	Senior Management Structure
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Director of Legal and Governance Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Senior Management Structure agreed by Cabinet 2011 Appendix 2 – Proposed Senior Management Structure

Summary and Recommendations

This report explains the recent consultation on the deletion of the post of Chief Executive and revised membership of the Corporate Strategy Board, updates Cabinet on discussions with the Chief Executive, and seeks a decision about a new senior management structure.

Cabinet is asked to determine whether to:

Delete the post of Chief Executive from the Council's management structure with effect from 1st March 2014; and/or
Make any changes to the senior management structure.

Reason:

To make clear the Council's senior management arrangements and budget position.

Background

The current senior management structure agreed by Cabinet in December 2011 is at appendix 1, the proposed new one at appendix 2. When the current structure was approved, it was agreed that it would be reviewed 18 months after implementation.

On 23rd October 2013 the Leader of the Council met with the Chief Executive to formally consult him on a proposal to delete his post and to introduce a new senior management structure. The consultation document was shared with trade unions, the Corporate Board and with the Leaders of all political groups.

Following consideration of the proposal, the Chief Executive asked the Leader that he be allowed to retire at the end of February 2014, and to receive his pension together with £30,000 for loss of office.

The Pension Committee agreed the payment of the pension on 6th November 2013.

The consultation with the Chief Executive closed on 22nd November 2013, by which time written responses were received from the Chief Executive, Unison and the Leader of the Labour Group.

The Chief Officers' Employment Panel agreed the Chief Executive's severance package on 26th November 2013.

Councillors, staff and stakeholders were advised of the Chief Executive's decision to retire on 27th November 2013.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee held a challenge panel to understand the proposals on 4th December 2013, and their reflections will be considered by Cabinet in due course.

The Chief Executive has delegated his responsibilities to Paul Najsarek to act as Head of Paid Service in his absence until the end of February. On 27th February 2014 Council will be asked to approve the appointment of Paul Najsarek as interim Head of Paid Service until after the local government elections in May 2014, at which point a decision will be taken on the permanent arrangements.

Options considered

The senior management structure of the Council is a matter for Cabinet to determine, so it could leave it unchanged, albeit with a vacancy in the post of chief executive, agree to the proposed new structure, or suggest another one.

Why a change is needed

The proposal set out in the consultation document was developed following discussions within the Cabinet about the cost of the Council's senior management structure. The proposed deletion of the post of Chief Executive will recognise savings of approximately £240,000 per annum. The Leader emphasised that her proposals were based on the need to deliver cost

savings and were in no way a reflection on the current Chief Executive, whose contribution to Harrow over the past 6 years has been both significant and of immense value.

Recognising the local elections in May 2014, the Leader proposed that any arrangements to discharge the Head of Paid Service role be temporary, to allow the Administration who will then run the Council the most flexibility to have a structure which best supports it.

The Council is required to appoint a Head of Paid Service, a function currently included in the Chief Executive's role. The Leader proposed that this function be undertaken by one of the Corporate Directors until June 2014. The role of Returning Officer is also currently part of the Chief Executive's role, and it is proposed that this returns to the Monitoring Officer.

One of Harrow's former Chief Executives, Sir Tony Redmond, was also the Council's Director of Finance, and many other Councils have made changes to their most senior officer's role, including sharing the role between Councils and incorporating other responsibilities including public health, regeneration and corporate services.

Responses to the Consultation

Process

Criticism is made that the above process did not follow the Council's policy and procedures and that on previous occasions consultation had been wider involving other members, staff and stakeholders.

The process followed was in accordance with all relevant statutory and contractual requirements. It is recognised that in previous consultation exercises there may have been wider engagement, however this is not a requirement and it was important to progress the changes proposed in a timely way.

Timing

Respondents urged that the process be delayed until after the local government elections. In seeking to save money from the Council's budget, the Leader was keen to ensure the full year effect of the savings could be realised for the 2014/15 financial year. This would not be possible if the decision is delayed until after the May election.

Stability

It was argued that the role of Chief Executive provides important stability during a period of unusual political change. It was noted that the Chief Executive last restructured the senior management team in December 2011 and built a strong and stable senior management team. However given the continuing financial challenges, the Leader adjudged that it was right that two years later it should be reviewed. The potentially destabilising impact was recognised by the suggested strengthening of the Corporate Board with the addition of the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers. Additionally the Leader assured the Corporate Board that she had no intention of making further changes ahead of the May 2014 local government elections.

Capacity

It was observed that given the financial challenges ahead the Council cannot afford to lose senior management capacity. At the time of his 2011 restructure the Chief Executive also committed to reduce senior management numbers from '30 to 20'. He was of the view that the organisation could achieve its objectives with a less 'top heavy' management structure, a view shared by the Leader. The Leader recognises that to achieve his commitment the Chief Executive would be unlikely to propose deleting his own role, however in terms of capacity the Leader is confident that the strengthened Corporate Board will be no less capable of delivering the council's objectives through to the election and beyond.

Conflict of interest

The proposal that a Corporate Director also undertake the Head of Paid Service role was criticised as having an inherent conflict of interest as the post holder would be unable to balance service and corporate interests.

By way of background the Corporate Director role was established in order to provide the Corporate Board with more strategic and corporate leadership. Any member of the Board should therefore be able to balance their directorate and corporate interests. In addition, the suggestion to make the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers permanent members of the Corporate Board will both provide strengthened governance and address any potential conflict should it emerge.

Equalities impact

The Council recognises its responsibilities to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 including its responsibilities as an employer and its general equality duty as a public authority under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has carried out an equalities impact analysis of the proposals and has concluded that there are no specific equalities implications relating either to service delivery or to employment issues arising out of this report. The Council will continue to take full account of its equalities responsibilities through the implementation of any proposals.

Legal Implications

The decision rests with Cabinet as to whether it deletes the non statutory Chief Executive post from the complement and approves changes to the duties of Chief Officers.

The power to appoint a new Head of Paid Service after 28 February 2014 rests with Council.

Functions of the local authority can only be delegated to member committees, cabinet members or officers. The Corporate Strategic Board does not have delegated functions and its composition is ultimately determined by the Head of Paid Service.

Financial Implications

The total cost of additional payments made to the Chief Executive on leaving is £30k. In addition the interim Corporate Director and Head of Paid Service will receive an allowance of £10k p.a. in addition to their normal salary (£13k with employers on costs).

Savings of £280k per annum are included in the draft 2014/15 budget that was taken to Cabinet in December.

The saving is entitled "To delete the post of Chief Executive and associated Business Support".

The Saving is a permanent reduction in the base budget.

Performance Issues

The position of Chief Executive oversees the performance of the Council and is the accountable officer for overall performance. The proposed restructure places this responsibility on the Acting Head of Paid Service, who will make the necessary arrangements to ensure that robust performance of the Council is maintained.

From the perspective of performance indicators that the Council monitors, this restructuring will have positive impacts on the total number of senior managers and also on the difference between the top paid Council Officer(s) and the lowest paid, which supports the Administration's priority of Fairness.

Environmental Impact

None

Priorities

The Council has three priorities: 'Cleaner, Safer, Fairer'. The proposals to delete the post of Chief Executive will reduce the difference between the top paid staff and the lowest paid staff within the Council and makes management savings in order to protect front line services during this time where the Council has to consider significant savings in its budgets. On this basis this proposal positively contributes to the delivery of the Council's 'Fairer' priority.

Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Simon George

on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 12 December 2013

Name: Linda Cohen

on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 10 December 2013

Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Alex Dewsnap

Divisional Director
Strategic
Commissioning

Date: 9 December 2013

Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker

on behalf of the
Corporate Director
(Environment &
Enterprise)

Date: 9 December 2013

Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Hugh Peart, Director of Legal & Governance Services

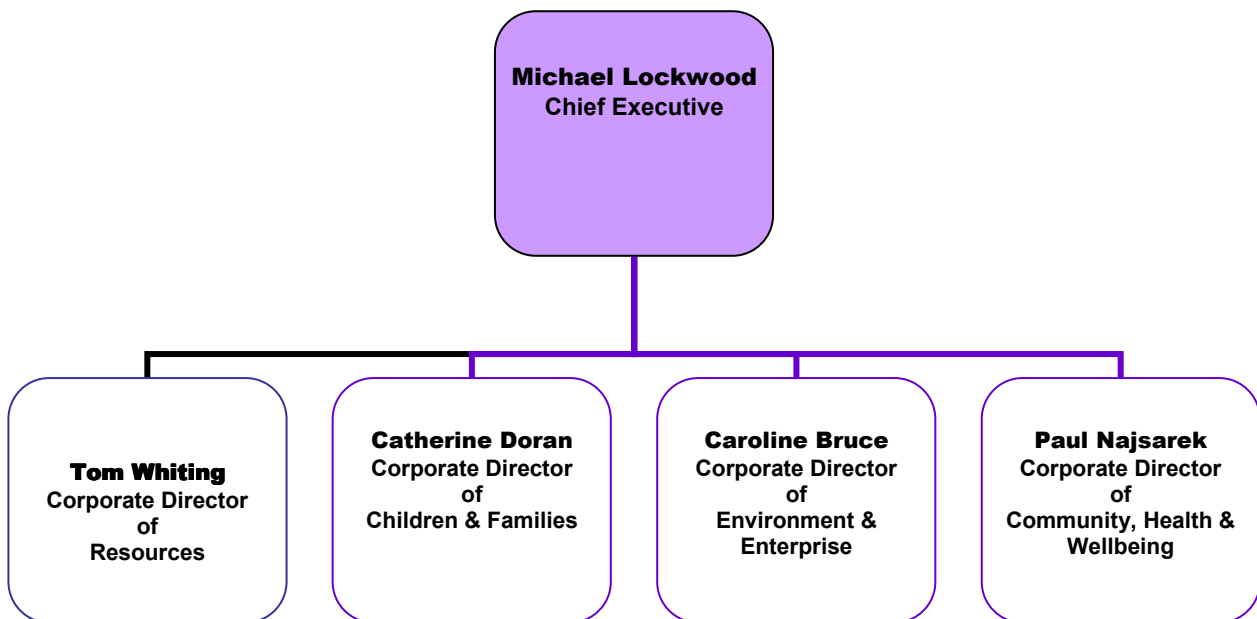
Background Papers: None

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

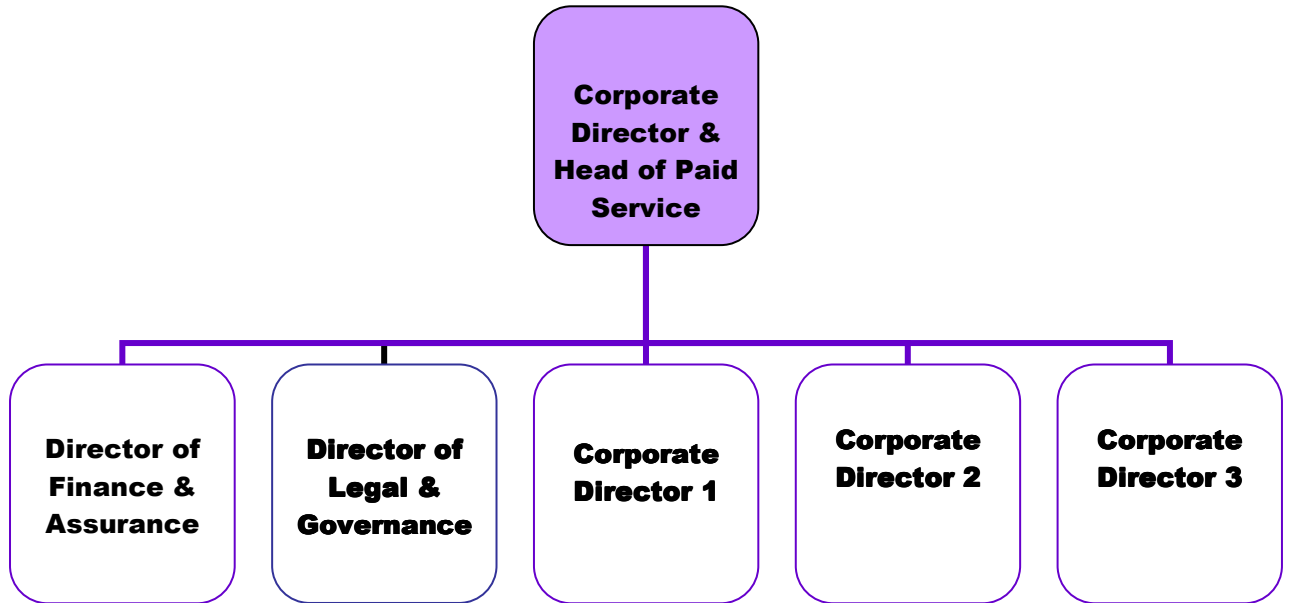
NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]

Senior Management Team agreed by Cabinet 2011



Proposed Senior Management Team



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