

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

AGENDA

DATE: Tuesday 17 September 2013

TIME: 7.30 pm

VENUE: Committee Rooms 1&2
Harrow Civic Centre

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 4)

Chairman: Councillor Paul Osborn

Councillors:

Kam Chana
Tony Ferrari
Stephen Wright

Sue Anderson
Ann Gate
Graham Henson
Jerry Miles (VC)

Mano Dharmarajah

Representatives of Voluntary Aided Sector: Mrs J Rammelt/Reverend P Reece
Representatives of Parent Governors: Mrs A Khan/1 Vacancy

(Note: Where there is a matter relating to the Council's education functions, the "church" and parent governor representatives have attendance, speaking and voting rights. They are entitled to speak but not vote on any other matter.)

Representative of Harrow Youth Parliament

Reserve Members:

1. Chris Mote
2. Amir Moshenson
3. Christine Bednell
4. Marilyn Ashton

1. Bill Phillips
2. Victoria Silver
3. Sachin Shah
4. David Perry

1. Vacancy

Contact: Alison Atherton, Senior Professional - Democratic Services
Tel: 020 8424 1266 E-mail: alison.atherton@harrow.gov.uk

AGENDA - PART I

1. ATTENDANCE BY RESERVE MEMBERS

To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

- (i) to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
- (ii) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- (iii) the meeting notes at the start of the meeting at the item 'Reserves' that the Reserve Member is or will be attending as a reserve;
- (iv) if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend has been noted arrives after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member can only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival.

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 Committee;
- (b) all other Members present.

3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2013 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To receive questions (if any) from local residents/organisations under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 17 (Part 4B of the Constitution).

5. PETITIONS

To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4B of the Constitution).

6. REFERENCES FROM COUNCIL/CABINET

(if any).

7. REGENERATION IN NORTH HARROW, REPLICATING THE LESSONS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE BOROUGH (Pages 9 - 38)

Report of the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise

8. DEBT RECOVERY PROCESS (Pages 39 - 132)

Report of the Head of Collections & Housing Benefits

9. REPORT FROM THE ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT SCRUTINY REVIEW (Pages 133 - 192)

Report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning

10. SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBER REPORT (Pages 193 - 198)

Report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning

11. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (Pages 199 - 202)

Report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning

12. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2013-14 (Pages 203 - 246)

Report of the Divisional Director of Targeted Services

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Which the Chairman has decided is urgent and cannot otherwise be dealt with.

AGENDA - PART II

Nil

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

23 JULY 2013

Chairman:	* Councillor Paul Osborn	
Councillors:	* Sue Anderson * Kam Chana Mano Dharmarajah * Tony Ferrari	* Ann Gate * Jerry Miles * David Perry (4) * Stephen Wright
Voting Co-opted:	(Voluntary Aided) † Mrs J Rammelt Reverend P Reece	(Parent Governors) † Mrs A Khan
Non-voting Co-opted:	Harrow Youth Parliament Representative	
In attendance: (Councillors)	Asad Omar William Stoodley	Minute 423 Minute 421

- * Denotes Member present
- (4) Denotes category of Reserve Member
- † Denotes apologies received

416. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Graham Henson

Reserve Member

Councillor David Perry

417. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 10 – Scrutiny Work Programme Update

Councillor Sue Anderson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she used to be employed by Public Health. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

418. Minutes

Members agreed to consider the minutes of the Special meeting held on 9 July 2013 as a matter of urgency for the reasons set out on the supplemental agenda.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2013 and of the Special Meeting held on 9 July 2013 be taken as read and signed as a correct record subject to an amendment to Minute 397 in that Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane worked for London Councils Ltd.

419. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

420. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

RESOLVED ITEMS

421. Reference from Special Cabinet held on 6 June 2013 - Petition in relation to John Lyon Sports Centre

Members received a reference from Cabinet in relation to a petition which sought to stop the closure of the John Lyon Sports Centre to use by the swim school, external members and users.

The Chair welcomed the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, the Director of Planning and Peter Barnes, the Secretary of Borough of Harrow Swimming Club, to the meeting. The Committee agreed that whilst there was no provision in the Council's Constitution to allow members of the public to speak at the meeting that they would agree to allow the representatives of the petitioners to speak and ask questions.

The Chair invited Peter Barnes to state the concerns of the petitioners. Mr Barnes advised that notice had been served in June that the facilities would

no longer be available to the swimming club. He had been advised that there had never been planning permission for residents' use of the facility. The purpose of the petition was to ask the Council to look into the matter.

The Director of Planning outlined the chronology of the John Lyon Sports Centre in terms of the site history and a legal agreement dating back to 1995 which restricted the use of the site. The legal agreement included the stipulation that the sports hall and swimming pool were not to be used outside the school's normal hours or for any purpose other than permitted recreational use. The Section 106 agreement defined the permitted recreational use but that this was restricted to pupils, parents, teachers and others permitted by the Council. There was scope for the applicant to seek the Council's permission for other individuals to use the facility but to date he was unaware of any request to add others to the list of permitted users.

The Director of Planning reported that on 2 November 2012 a complaint about car parking had been received by the Planning Authority. The Planning Authority had investigated the complaint and written to the bursar of Old Lyonians School. A response had subsequently been received on 2 February 2013 which had highlighted the number of hours the school was open. The Planning Authority had written to the school again on 19 March 2013 indicating that there appeared to have been a breach of the legal agreement. At a meeting between the Chair of Governors, the head teacher and the Planning Department on 16 April 2013 it was accepted that there was a breach and the Planning Authority had sought clarification as to how this would be resolved. The Planning Authority had consistently reserved its position on formal enforcement preferring instead to engage with and seek resolution of breach voluntarily. Following the meeting in April, the school had subsequently written to the Planning Authority indicating that they were going to close the facility with effect 30 June.

In terms of the questions submitted by the lead petitioner, the Director of Planning advised that the role of the Planning Authority was to manage the planning process with sensitivity but mindful of its statutory nature. The Planning Authority was prepared to discuss the issues raised with the school but he could not pre-determine any change to the Section 106 agreement. Equally, the Planning Authority could not insist upon the school applying for a change to the agreement.

Peter Barnes expressed his gratitude for the detailed answer provided but stated that many of the sports clubs used the facility out of school hours and did not create traffic. The school had, over the years, transformed itself and now had a sixth form and therefore students with cars. The petition was to highlight that the disruption at prime times was caused by sources other than the sports clubs who were being incorrectly blamed for the parking problems / issues. It was felt that there may be a different agenda behind the school not permitting use by the sports clubs and it was difficult to understand why the school had not applied for a modification to the agreement.

Jackie Ware, the former manager of the John Lyon Sports Centre, advised the Committee that the swim club was successful in its own right with 1,000

children a week being taught to swim. Nineteen sports clubs had been affected by the closure.

A Member stated that the Borough of Harrow Swimming Club's use of the facility was surely be beneficial to John Lyon School and he sought clarification as to what officers could do resolve this issue. The Director advised that the Planning Authority could not compromise itself. There had, however, been discussion with Leisure Services and some time had been brokered for the swimming club's use of the Leisure Centre.

RESOLVED: That, the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Community Health and Wellbeing and Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services and Housing for consideration, in addition to the Corporate Director for Environment and Enterprise and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, as they may have more flexibility in achieving a solution to the issue.

422. Written Statement submitted by the Executive

The Committee received the written statement of the Executive which was a response to a request from two Members for the complete commissioning panel documents. This request had been rejected by the Executive.

The Director of Legal and Governance Services advised that the Regulations were intended to give members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee increased access to papers. The Regulations were designed to deal with items in the possession of the Executive and therefore if a report or paper was not submitted to Cabinet, it was not in the possession of the Executive. He confirmed that the written statement before Members had not been considered at a formal meeting of the Executive.

A Member stated that he would be more comfortable with the statement if it had been considered at a meeting of the Executive and legal advice had been given. He added that the Monitoring Officer should be given the opportunity to advise whether the Executive was acting lawfully. The Director advised that if such a paper were to be submitted to Cabinet it would be Part II (ie exempt from publication) and be available to all members of Council thereby negating the need for such a decision. He did, however, acknowledge the point made and suggested that a protocol with the Executive in relation to the provision of documents might be beneficial.

Following comments in relation to the circulation of Regulations and guidance to Members, it was suggested that consideration be given as to how such information could be communicated to Members.

A Member expressed the view that in order for the Committee to carry out its function it should be entitled to receive any document in the possession of the Executive.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the written statement of the Executive be rejected.

423. Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning which presented the draft Community Safety Plan for 2013/16 and the Strategic Assessment of crime and anti-social behaviour for 2012 which had informed the development of priorities and actions. The Plan would be submitted to Cabinet in September 2013.

The Chair welcomed representatives of the Borough Commander, Detective Chief Inspector Pete Stride and Sunil Galoria, Senior Intelligence Analyst, to the meeting. An officer outlined the content of the report advising that the form of the Plan was short and simple compared to previous years in order to avoid duplication of the content set out in the Strategic Assessment. In his view the most significant issue of note was that the pattern of crime in Harrow changed little year on year and that Harrow had 1,100 burglaries above the level of the safest borough in London. The new Borough Commander's ambition was for Harrow to be the safest borough in London.

Members then asked questions and made comments as follows:

- The distribution of SmartWater kits appeared to be a little haphazard and there needed to be engagement with residents. The officer reported that 13,000 kits were yet to be distributed and in hindsight a different distribution network may have assisted. It was, however, necessary for SmartWater to be used for a number of years before trends would be seen. DCI Stride reported that the expectation was that going forward recorded crime would reduce as a result of SmartWater but that there was, however, a need to manage expectation at the 'front door'. A crime unit had been established comprising 21 officers with a focus on burglary and robbery. It was important to note that it was not possible to stop burglars; they tended to move from one area to another.

Another Member questioned why the publicity of SmartWater had stopped and was advised that following the initial large take up of the kits there had been a decline and it might be that a fresh launch was required. DCI Stride added that the police were keen to actively discourage burglars and to engage with partners. In his previous borough of Brent, SmartWater had largely been a success due to the visibility of officers and visits to residents.

- In response to a question as to the profile of burglars and whether they tended to live in the borough, Mr Galoria advised that of those arrested 40% did not live in Harrow and 20% not even in London. Signs to deter burglars had been erected at the points of entry to the borough. Care and consideration was required in terms of the use of different languages in publicity.
- A Member requested clarification in that he had heard the Borough Commander report that Harrow had the third lowest level of overall crime in London on 4 occasions but that more recently he had reported Harrow as the seventh lowest. Mr Galoria advised that the Borough

Commander's chosen measure for comparison with other Boroughs was the total number of crimes committed across the MOPAC (Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) 7 crime types. Previous league tables had been based on the total number of crimes per thousand population. These different measures explained the difference in reported league table position.

- In responses to a Member's question in relation to youth on youth crime in the vicinity of schools, it was confirmed that this was not a huge issue.
- A Member commented that domestic violence did not appear to be addressed in the plan. DCI Stride advised that the priority of burglary had been set by MOPAC. In terms of domestic violence, consideration was being given to the purchase of cameras for officers in order for court action not to be so reliant on the victims, who were often reluctant to pursue prosecution. The officer added that domestic violence was a priority in the Community Safety Plan and that Harrow, due to its low crime levels, had the highest proportion of domestic violence in London.
- A Member questioned whether environmental health and food safety should be included in the plan. The officer advised that whilst he had hoped to include these issues as well as trading standards and potholes, it had not been possible this year because of late changes to accommodate the MOPAC plan and new Borough Commander's priorities. He hoped that these areas could be included in future plans.
- A Member expressed the view that retaining public confidence in the police would be a challenge in light of the spending review and different wards had different issues. The officer advised that the confidence in the police service related to fairness, civility and solving crime. A reduction in crime would result in more time to engage with the community. SmartWater distribution had resulted in 27,000 interactions with the public. DCI Stride advised that a quality call back process was in place. In terms of wards, Members were advised that limited resources had to be targeted effectively.
- With reference to the Harrow Police and Community Consultative Group (HPCCG), clarification was sought as to their funding situation and what measures were being taken to engage with community groups. The officer advised that HPCCG had lost its funding earlier than other CCGs in London as MOPAC felt it had not been performing the functions required. MOPAC was launching Community Safety Boards but it was currently unclear whether the HPCCG would be part of this. In terms of engagement with community groups, a number of voluntary groups had contributed to the Plan and had made valuable contributions including Mothers against Gangs and IGNITE. As the grants budget was reducing, it would be helpful if such groups could align themselves with the police.

- In response to a request for clarification on the purpose of Harrow Shield relationship project, the officer advised that it was funded by the Mayor and aimed to teach young people in schools about healthy relationships. It was a long term investment with the aim of reducing domestic violence.
- A Member stated that he was unhappy with the format of the plan as there was no baseline data, it was unclear what was to be delivered, by when and how it was going to be measured. It would also be helpful to have a recap of the previous year's targets to see if they had been met. In his view there was no other way of determining whether the Borough Commander was doing a good job. The officer undertook to look at these areas prior to the plan's submission to Cabinet.

The Chair thanked DCI Stride, Mr Galoria and the officer for their attendance and responses. He suggested that Members give some consideration as to how the Plan and Strategic Assessment could be scrutinised more regularly.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's comments on the draft Community Safety Plan be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

424. Business Continuity Update

Members received a report from the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an update on Business Continuity activity.

An officer outlined the content of the report advising that the Civil Contingencies team was one of the smallest in London. In his view, the current staffing level of 3 was the minimum requirement.

In response to a Member's question, the officer advised that the team had been working with public health since October 2012 and that there would be a test in November 2013. The results of tests were reported to the Corporate Strategy Board and the Governance and Risk Management Committee (GARM). A monitoring report was also submitted to GARM twice a year.

The officer undertook to provide the Chair with the GARM report and to submit the Business Continuity report to the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee alongside the IT Disaster Recovery report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

425. Scrutiny Work Programme Update

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning which provided an update on the projects currently underway as part of the scrutiny work programme.

A Member questioned the inclusion of NHS Health Checks and it was suggested that both this issue and Debt Recovery be discussed by the Scrutiny Leadership Group. In addition, Members requested clarification on

the Child's Journey through Care and the briefings that had previously been provided by the Children and Families Directorate.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the proposals for identifying further projects for inclusion in the work programme be agreed.

426. Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chair's Report

Members agreed to consider the report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning as a matter of urgency for the reasons set out on the supplemental agenda.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

427. Scrutiny Lead Member Report

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning which accompanied the reports from the Scrutiny Lead Members.

Members expressed concern that a briefing, which had been requested in relation to Environment and Enterprise, had yet not been received and that service plans only appeared to operate part way through the year. The Chair indicated that he would like a better process in terms of service plans to enable Scrutiny to comment and have input.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the actions proposed therein be agreed.

428. Termination of Meeting

In accordance with the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4B of the Constitution) it was

RESOLVED: At 9.52 pm to continue until 10.08 pm.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.32 pm, closed at 10.08 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR PAUL OSBORN
Chairman

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**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	17 September 2013.
Subject:	Regeneration in North Harrow, replicating the lessons in other parts of the borough
Responsible Officer:	Caroline Bruce, Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Environment and Enterprise Scrutiny Leads Cllr O'Dell Cllr Wright
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	North Harrow Investment Profile

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny requested a report on the work to reduce vacancy rates in North Harrow, and how the lessons can be transferred to other district centres in the borough. The report notes activities in North Harrow in the context of emerging national, regional and local strategies to stimulate economic growth. A separate report on reducing long term unemployment will follow at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October.

Recommendations:

That the Lessons Learnt be noted and Members consider whether those Lessons could be adopted elsewhere in Harrow.

Section 2 – Report

1. Introduction

Harrow Council has a corporate priority of “Supporting Our Town Centre, Our Local Shopping Centres and Businesses”. It also has targets to create 4,000 new jobs in the borough by 2026. Our high streets are a visible indicator of economic prosperity. Everyone can visit a district centre and count the number of empty shops. Whereas everyone can not count worklessness, or business survival rates in Harrow. From October 2011 to March 2012 the council invested circa £308k in North Harrow. The money was secured through a competitive bidding process from the Mayor of London’s Outer London Fund (OLF). The known percentage of vacant shop frontage when the bid was submitted was 23.09%. The rate in June 2013 was 6.47%. This report outlines the projects funded, the subsequent actions, and how this work could be transferred to other district centres. It is assumed that any lessons to be transferred would be done so on little or no budget. Finally, the report considers the economic impact of regenerating Harrow’s district centres in the context of the wider economy and emerging local, regional and national strategies to promote economic growth.

2. Background

In 2003, prior to the closure of the Safeway supermarket, the total vacant frontage in North Harrow was 1.46%. The supermarket accounted for 6.39% of frontage. In 2005/6 the vacancy rate had grown to 11.98% and this peaked at 23.09% in 2009/10. The table below shows North Harrow’s vacancy rates in the context of Harrow’s other district centres.

Table 1

Town Centre	% Frontage Vacant 2008/09	% Frontage Vacant 2009/10	% Frontage Vacant 2010/11	% Frontage Vacant 2011/12	% Frontage Vacant 2012/13
Harrow	5.62	7.77	6.41	8.95	9.49
Burnt Oak (part)	6.28	8.21	3.49	1.84	0.00
Edgware (part)	6.70	7.33	7.41	14.58	7.88
Kenton (part)	1.59	8.29	6.59	6.18	0.00
Kingsbury (part)	3.92	0.00	3.92	3.92	0.00
North Harrow	15.52	23.09	21.03	13.77	6.47
Pinner	3.58	3.63	2.99	3.55	4.80
Rayners Lane	10.34	11.83	9.87	10.66	10.54
South Harrow	4.49	4.34	1.49	3.08	3.65
Stanmore	1.65	0.80	4.95	0.00	0.80
Wealdstone	9.75	10.44	9.15	7.92	9.35
Belmont	11.04	12.66	10.01	6.60	3.33
Harrow Weald	3.21	3.21	3.98	8.35	10.52
Hatch End	3.17	7.13	6.66	4.06	3.11
Queensbury	5.58	5.06	9.08	7.50	9.68
Sudbury Hill (part)	0.00	6.27	3.27	3.27	0.00
Average Vacancy Rate	5.78%	7.50%	6.89%	6.51%	4.98%

Source: Harrow Council,
Planning

North Harrow was chosen for specific attention because of the high vacancy rate. In 2010 and 2011 a number of meetings were held with traders, ward councillors, community groups and the police to determine how the issue could be tackled. This resulted in an action plan for North Harrow. In the summer of 2011 the council secured funding from the Mayor's Outer London Fund (OLF). This led to the appointment of a Town Centre Manager and the delivery of a number of projects generated from the action plan. The OLF programme aimed to help develop a North Harrow Partnership, market and promote the centre, improve its infrastructure and provide greater flexibility in planning policy through the introduction of a Local Development Order.

Initiatives to market North Harrow included Autumn, Winter and Spring events, the launch of a North Harrow web site, production and distribution of a Business Directory, installation of new notice boards and planters, the purchase and installation of Festive Lights and a Visual Merchandising training programme for local traders. The local infrastructure was improved by partial resurfacing of Cambridge Road Car Park, and the installation of 9 new on-street parking bays. The introduction of a Local Development Order in July 2012 provided greater flexibility in planning policy and may have had an impact in attracting the Gym Group to North Harrow.

Table 2 Summary of projects funded

Outer London Fund Criteria	Project title	Budget allocation	Actual Spend
Working Together	Town Centre Management, admin and Local Development Order	£60,000	£55,668.73 (salary costs Town centre manager, local development planning officer, admin support and print costs)
	Good Practice Project	£5,000	
Love your high Street – websites, information pamphlets, markets Shop Front surgeries – shop front improvements	Promotion and Marketing		
	Visual Merchandising	£30,000	£20,742
	Community Notice Boards	£21,550	£21,550
	Town Centre Website	£3,400	£3,950
	North Harrow Business Directory	£6,000	£5960
Nurturing Street Life	Environmental Improvements		
	Planting Project	£2,000	£1920
Adjusting Places Car parking	Access		
	Car parking bays	£208,450	*£162, 479.64

Dressing Up – seasonal dressing, Festive Lights	Christmas Event		
	Banners	£2000	£1990
	Festive Lights	£12000	£11925
Love Your High Street – markets	Events Other		
	Spring Event	£10000	£10000
	Design Fund established with agreement of GLA post application for funds.	£10000	£6542
Total		£360,400	£307,727.37

The vacancy rate fell to 13.77% by June 2012, and the occupation of the former supermarket site by the Gym Group, helped North Harrow reach a low of 6.47% in 2013.

According to the criteria used by the GLA, the 16.62% reduction in vacancy rates could create up to 101 new jobs. The methodology assumes that 1 job is created for every 21m² of retail use. However, given the Gym Group is not retail, it is likely that less than 101 new jobs have been created.

Although OLF funding ended in March 2012, engagement has continued. This included supporting the development of the North Harrow Partnership, working with Genesis to attract an occupier to the former supermarket site, holding a series of markets in North Harrow to attract footfall, and continuing to promote the centre through its Investment Profile.

Parallel to all this work has been a focus on telling the story, The council's Communications service constantly promoted positive press stories to local and regional media. North Harrow received positive media coverage in the Harrow Observer, Harrow Times, BBC Asian Network, BBC Radio London, Look West London and the Londonist.

North Harrow was a place in decline. However, in the space of 6 months, school children were being asked to reflect on their shopping centre, and to create banners for that shopping centre. They were then able to visit the area and see their art work festooned from lamp posts. In the same period school children, parents, and community groups were brought together to perform at events, or to watch performances in North Harrow. By the Spring, residents were able to enjoy the biggest street market held in the area, which provided free space to new and established traders. These activities were used by the local press to constantly promote positive stories about North Harrow.

Potential businesses could read in the local press about North Harrow. They would learn about the Mayor of London's investment in the shopping centre, and the council's relaxation of planning controls (through the LDO). If their appetite for North Harrow was whetted, they were able to obtain more information from the council's Investment Profiles. Those Profiles outline the shopping catchment area, its demographics, parking spaces, planning policy, public transport routes, retail composition and commercial agents.

The management and delivery of the North Harrow programme was undertaken by a full time Town Centre Manager. The sheer volume of procurement, consultation, events management, co-ordination, financial management, and administering the GLA's claims procedures required a full time Town Centre Manager, a Local Development Officer, and administrative support.

The legacy of the North Harrow bid includes the new parking bays, Festive Lights, market stalls, planters notice boards and a North Harrow Community Partnership. The Partnership is chaired by a local solicitor and includes representatives from the police, Nower Hill School, Methodist Church, Headstone Residents Association, ward councillors and some traders.

It is difficult to state which interventions in North Harrow had the biggest impact on securing new businesses into the area and reducing the number of empty shops. However, the cumulative impact of investment and activity in North Harrow can be summarised as the creation of a new positive community image of the area.

3. Lessons learned.

There are specific issues that relate solely to North Harrow, but there are also generic issues common with other district centres.

Harrow's District Centres have between 1500 and 2,500 households within 500metres, and between 5,000 and 7,000 households within 1km. There is roughly a 14% churn in Harrow's population. Businesses can not assume that local residents are aware of the local shopping offer and should consider how they promote themselves and their centre to their immediate catchment area and surrounding travel to shop areas.

3.1 Site Specific issues

North Harrow had a specific issue with the closure of the Safeway Supermarket. This was complicated by complex issues around ownership of the site and the use of the site. The council engaged with the owners at a high level (the then leader of council), and also let it be known that it was investing significant time into promoting North Harrow. The relaxation of planning controls through the Local Development Order provided a message to would be occupiers that the council was willing to be flexible in its approach to change of use. The change of use granted through the LDO enabled the Gym Group to bring back into use 6.39% of frontage.

Lesson Learnt
High level engagement is necessary to resolve complex issues. The council needs to demonstrate it is serious about an area and in some cases demonstrate it can be flexible. The need for flexibility when a centre is in decline is reflected in the Local Development Framework (LDF).

3.2 Consultation

In meetings with the traders in 2010, specific issues were raised about the need for on street parking. Traders argued there was a need for additional on-

street parking bays. It was argued that it was inconvenient for shoppers to park in the car park, walk to the shops and make a quick purchase. The sites for 16 new parking bays were agreed with the then chair of the North Harrow Partnership, and funding was secured from the OLF to install the bays. However after statutory consultation with residents (and traders), the proposal for 16 parking bays was rejected, and 9 parking bays were installed.

Lesson learnt

The views of residents / shoppers and traders are not always consistent. When major investment is planned, consultation is important to evidence the need for that investment. (It should be noted, applicants for OLF had about a month to submit detailed applications).
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Scrutiny may wish to note that surveys of 400 Harrow shoppers, 237 Harrow independent traders were conducted in November 2012 and December 2012. The Shoppers survey found that shopping offers, are the biggest incentive to shop locally, and were far more important than parking. .

3.3 Business Regulation

During the work in North Harrow, there were a number of cases where new start up businesses were falling foul of the regulatory process, particularly in relation to building control, planning and environmental health legislation.

Lesson learnt

New businesses require “up front” advice on how they can conform to the regulatory framework. This would help reduce enforcement costs incurred by Harrow Council. More importantly, by helping new businesses, getting it right first time, it would also help reduce business costs.
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Please note, the council has now developed an on-line Toolkit to Regulation.

3.4 Street Markets

The North Harrow Town Centre Manager was retained for a short period after March 2012 to handle the transition period after funding ended. This included supporting the Community Partnership, and the delivery of a market to attract footfall to North Harrow. It was an ambition to create a regular market in North Harrow. Parallel to this, a council project Xcite secured £38,000 to support unemployed residents into self employment. The concept was to provide access to market stalls to enable budding entrepreneurs to test trade their goods and services.

A tender process was entered into which invited operators to use the stalls purchased through OLF. In return the operator was required to deliver street markets, provide additional stalls, ensure new market traders had the use of 10 stalls, and that markets would complement existing provision.

An operator was secured and a licence agreement entered into. Unfortunately, the level of success secured by the Spring Market in March 2011 was not repeated. The retailers in North Harrow complained about competition, ward councillors and partnership members raised issues about

market traders use of the on street parking bays, litter left by the traders, and the lack of quality and diversity of the shopping offer provided by the markets. The experienced street traders that took a stall complained about lack of publicity provided by the market operator. The new “unemployed” traders exhibited a number of support needs which suggested market trading was not suitable for them. The market operator and experienced traders had also raised concerns on whether North Harrow had sufficient footfall to sustain a regular market. The North Harrow Partnership called for the market to be closed. The market operator and council mutually ended the licence agreement.

Lesson learnt.

Establishing a new regular market in an area of relatively low footfall is difficult. The council does not have the funding to deliver the necessary publicity, and the ability to generate income through renting stalls for a private operator is best in areas of high footfall.

3.5 Local partnerships

The North Harrow Business Association, formed in 2011, does not appear to have been active in the last 18 months. A wider Community Partnership was established in September 2012. This included representation from the Methodist Church, Nower Hill School, the Safer Neighbourhood Team, local Councillors and is chaired by a business based in North Harrow.

The Economic Development Team attend the meetings and provide support and advice where needed.

This included supporting the Partnership in arranging

- a Festive Light “switch on” event in December 2012 including singing from St John Fisher School and
- a 2 day summer event in July 2013 including music, dancing and science, art exhibition from Nower Hill school and singing from St John Fisher School

The Partnership was not foisted onto North Harrow. The council organised early meetings and provided a draft constitution, but since then the Partnership has defined itself. An officer in the Economic Development Unit is continuing to support the Partnership. This has been on a voluntary basis as much of the work revolves around unpaid activities outside of office hours.

Hatch End, Pinner and Belmont Circle have long standing Traders Associations/community groups that have their own web site, arrange events and deal with other issues. Support from the Council is limited to technical and statutory areas. The focus of these groups is promoting their own centres, although they do liaise with the council when required, for example parking and loading proposals in Hatch End.

In 2012 a Traders Association was formed in South Harrow. An Economic Development Officer met with the Chair and supported the Traders Association through the provision of Festive lights which were distributed to the shops in the district centre in November 2012.

This year Traders' Associations have been formed in Kenton and Stanmore. The Kenton businesses established the Kenton Area Traders Association (KATA), and the council's Economic Development Unit has supported the Association by initially providing the Traders' Association toolkit, and attending meetings to offer advice on best practice elsewhere. A formal launch event is planned for 9th September.

Stanmore Traders had an initial meeting in July. In August, Bob Blackman MP Harrow East wrote to Harrow Council's Chief Executive highlighting concerns raised by traders relating to car parking, Anmer Lodge, Traffic Lights and Decorations for Festivals.

In Rayners Lane meetings were held with ward councillors, members of the community and traders in September 2011 and February 2012. The main issues initially identified were parking, low levels of footfall, empty shops and the maintenance and cleanliness of the service roads. Since then, parking issues have been rectified through the Council/TfL funded public realm improvements. 54 Traders were also provided with Festive Lights to adorn their Shop Windows for the festive season in 2011. However there was no enthusiasm amongst traders to develop a traders association or work with residents to form a community partnership. The ward councillors used their NIS budget to purchase a Christmas tree, lights and power supply..

The main issue is the maintenance and cleanliness of the service roads which is the responsibility of the business and residents. Despite numerous council and residents led initiatives i.e. police and community payback, alley-gating, environmental health checks, weeks of action, and enforcement projects where huge clear ups have been completed, these areas return to this state within weeks of any clean up. Due to reducing resources, the council cannot continue to clear up these private service roads.

Lesson learnt
It is very difficult to "impose" a Partnership in an area unless there is interest from the businesses and the local community. Traders Associations are usually established because there is a key issue that needs to be addressed and some businesses are "community minded" and see the benefit of working with the local community e.g. Hatch End, Pinner, North Harrow. Local Partnership groups provide a mechanism for traders to work with community groups. The council can advise new groups on a proposed constitution, questionnaire and survey forms and to develop an action plan for a District Centre. As mentioned above, district shopping centres have significant local catchment areas within walking distance. By working with local groups, businesses can market their goods and services.

3.6 Marketing and Publicity

The shopping offer in Harrow's 9 district shopping centres is diverse. A quick read of the investment profiles for the 9 centres show that the shopping offer is not limited to convenience grocers, pharmacists and fast food outlets. Taken cumulatively Harrow's centres offer everything one could need. For the home it is possible to find stores providing bathrooms, kitchens, windows, flooring, and furniture. There are traders offering every conceivable gift in

those 9 centres from jewellery to bicycles, cars, and hardware. If a resident requires a professional, Harrow's High Streets offer accountants, solicitors, opticians and dentists. The household kitchen can be filled by a local butcher, baker, fishmonger or grocer. Or if he or she wished, a resident can have a complete make over at a hairdresser, nail bar, beautician, tattooist, and then go to a laser surgery (to remove the tattoo). If you can not taste every cuisine in Harrow, then it is pretty close.

However, everyone living, working and studying in Harrow is not aware of that offer. The large volume of events funded by the OLF helped to market North Harrow, and the activities helped to draw footfall into the area. The events provided Harrow's Communications team with the content for news stories which were issued and covered by the local and regional media. This in turn helped stimulate investor confidence. North Harrow was unique in Harrow for its very high vacancy rates in 2010. In total just over £76k was spent through the OLF on banners, a web site, festive lighting, visual merchandising, events, business directory and community notice board. However, in 2012/13 the council spent only £3k in North Harrow. Once a critical mass is achieved, there is a need for less investment in an area. In Hatch End and Pinner it is the businesses that are responsible for Festive Lights, in Harrow Weald Waitrose sponsor the planters. In North Harrow events which involved the local community can draw in the whole community. A similar lesson was learnt from the Harrow Town Centre programme. In Harrow Town Centre college students made a short film which was projected onto the back of the town centre, a temporary art gallery was filled with pictures from school students, and school students produced the art work for banners in the town centre.

Our work in North Harrow highlighted that not all shoppers were aware of the local offer. They frequented the same shops, but did not venture along the rest of the district centre.

Lesson learnt

Positive news stories help market an area. Those positive stories can be created by local events, which in turn can be created and delivered by local partnerships.

The crux of this report is that local partnerships, events, and promoting the shopping offer were key to reducing vacancy rates in North Harrow. However, there are a range of other issues which businesses located in district centres engage with the council. These include car parking, street cleansing, community safety, and the public realm. In Quarter 3 of this financial year an Officer Group is being established to co-ordinate council activities. This Group could support the delivery of future action plans that Traders Associations may develop for their district centre.

4. Regeneration Impact of reducing vacancy rates

As stated in the introduction, our district centres and High Streets are a very visual indicator of economic health. However, to put those centres into context, there are 65,300 jobs and 11,085 enterprises in the London Borough

of Harrow (London Analysis, Size of Firms in London, 2001 to 2012 Office for National Statistics July 2013). In June 2013, 2.3% of the working age population were claiming Job Seekers Allowance, and 28% were economically inactive. The core strategy has a target of creating 4,000 new jobs by 2026. The Core Strategy also has a target that vacancy rates in Primary Shopping frontages should be no more than 10%. The table below demonstrates the maximum Job Creation impact of working in the district centres.

Employment Created by Reducing District Centre Vacancy Rates - June 2013

Centre	Vacancy rate - all frontages June 2013	5% vacancy rate, jobs created	0% vacancy rate, jobs created	1% drop in vacancy rate = x jobs
Belmont	3.33	-	7	2
Burnt Oak (part)	0	-	-	-
Edgware (part)	7.88	6	15	2
Harrow Weald	10.52	17	32	3
Hatch End	3.11	-	11	4
Kenton (part)	0	-	-	-
Kingsbury (part)	0	-	-	-
North Harrow	6.47	7	29	4
Pinner	4.8	-	57	12
Queensbury	9.68	13	27	3
Rayners Lane	10.54	75	143	14
South Harrow	3.65	-	37	10
Stanmore	0.8	-	4	4
Sudbury Hill (part)	0	-	-	-
Wealdstone	9.35	32	69	7
Average	4.94	-	-	-
Total Jobs Created	-	150	431	65

Based on a rate of 1 job per 21m² (based on the figures derived from the following papers produced by the GLA: *Working Paper 38 Employment Projections for London by sector and trend - based projections by borough; GLA 2009 and Working Paper 39 Borough employment projections to 2031, GLA 2009*).

Please note figures for Harrow Town Centre show 210 jobs being created if vacancy rates were reduced to zero. The number of jobs created in Harrow Town Centre would multiply fourfold if vacant office space was also brought back into use.

As part of the Medium Term Financial Savings (MTFS) for 2014/15 the Economic Development Unit will not have a revenue budget. It currently has one dedicated regeneration officer working with district centres, and focussing on place promotion and inward investment. Of the target of 4,000 new jobs, it is expected that 3,000 will be created in the Harrow and Wealdstone intensification area. This includes the development of the Kodak site, Colart site, and developments in the town centre.

At a national, regional, sub-regional and local level there are a range of evolving "Regeneration / Economic Development" strategies and programmes, which may provide opportunities to secure funds for Harrow. At

their core is an objective to create sustainable economic growth. In the 2013 Budget, the Chancellor announced the creation of Whole Place Community Budgets to promote large scale service transformation and test whether better outcomes can be achieved through co-designing programmes. At a sub-regional level, Harrow's Chief Executive is leading the West London Alliance Whole Place Community Budget proposal which has a focus on promoting economic growth. The West London proposal was one of nine successful Expressions of Interest submitted to the DCLG.

At a regional level, the focus of the London Local Enterprise Partnership and Mayor of London's economic strategy is on concentrating on the activities and sectors which will deliver Jobs and Growth. At a local level Harrow's emerging Regeneration Strategy focuses on the three core themes People, Place and Business. It articulates the core activities necessary to provide the infrastructure (Place) that meets the needs of business and residents, supports business growth and provides residents opportunities to benefit from new jobs created.

5. Conclusion

There are lessons from North Harrow which can be transferred to other district centres in Harrow. There is a resource issue in doing so. A future consideration for Overview and Scrutiny could be to consider measuring economic impact to prioritise initiatives.

Table 4 Summary of Lessons that can be repeated elsewhere.

High level engagement is necessary to resolve complex issues. The council needs to demonstrate it is serious about an area and in some cases demonstrate it can be flexible, and this has been reflected in the Local Development Framework (LDF) where a centre is in decline.
The views of residents / shoppers and traders are not always consistent. When major investment is planned, consultation is important to evidence the need for that investment. (It should be noted, applicants for OLF had approximately a month to submit detailed applications).
New businesses require "up front" advice on how they can conform to the regulatory framework. This would help reduce enforcement costs incurred by Harrow Council. More importantly, by helping new businesses, getting it right first time, it would also help reduce business costs.
Establishing a new regular market in an area of relatively low footfall is difficult. The council does not have the funding to deliver the necessary publicity, and the ability to generate income through renting stalls for a private operator is best in areas of high footfall.
It is very difficult to "impose" a Partnership in an area unless there is interest from the businesses and the local community. Traders Associations are usually established because there is a key issue that needs to be addressed and some businesses are "community minded" and see the benefit of working with the local community e.g. Hatch End, Pinner, North Harrow. Local Partnership groups provide a mechanism for traders to work with

community groups. The council can advise new groups on a proposed constitution, questionnaire and survey forms and to develop an action plan for a District Centre. As mentioned above, district shopping centres have significant local catchment areas within walking distance. By working with local groups, businesses can market their goods and services.

Positive news stories help market an area. Those positive stories can be created by local events, which in turn can be created and delivered by local partnerships.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider the above in the context of other economic growth initiatives when making recommendationw on Regeneration initiatives in Harrow.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mark Billington, Head of Economic Development and Research, Tel 0208 736 6533

Background Papers:

Round One Outer London Fund Self Evaluation – Harrow Town Centre

Round One Outer London Fund Self Evaluation – North Harrow
Harrow Card Business Survey, Harrow Card Shoppers Survey

North Harrow District Centre

Inward Investment Profile



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Disclaimer

The information in this document is for guidance only. While every effort has been made to offer current and accurate information, all statements contained herein are made without responsibility on the part of Harrow Borough Council. None of the statements contained in this document is to be relied upon as a statement or representation of fact. Harrow Borough Council does not make or give any representation or warranty whatever in relation to statements made in this document.

1. North Harrow District Centre – Introduction

North Harrow is classified as a District Centre in the Council's Unitary Development Plan.

North Harrow District Centre is split between 3 wards Headstone North, Headstone South and West Harrow.

The District Centre is focussed around the Pinner Road/Station Road junction with North Harrow tube station (Metropolitan Line) located at the southern end of Station Road.

There is a Tesco Express located at 503 Pinner Road and a VB Cash and Carry (one of four in West London) has opened at 539-545 Pinner Rd on the site of Allied carpets.

2. Harrow and Surrounding Boroughs

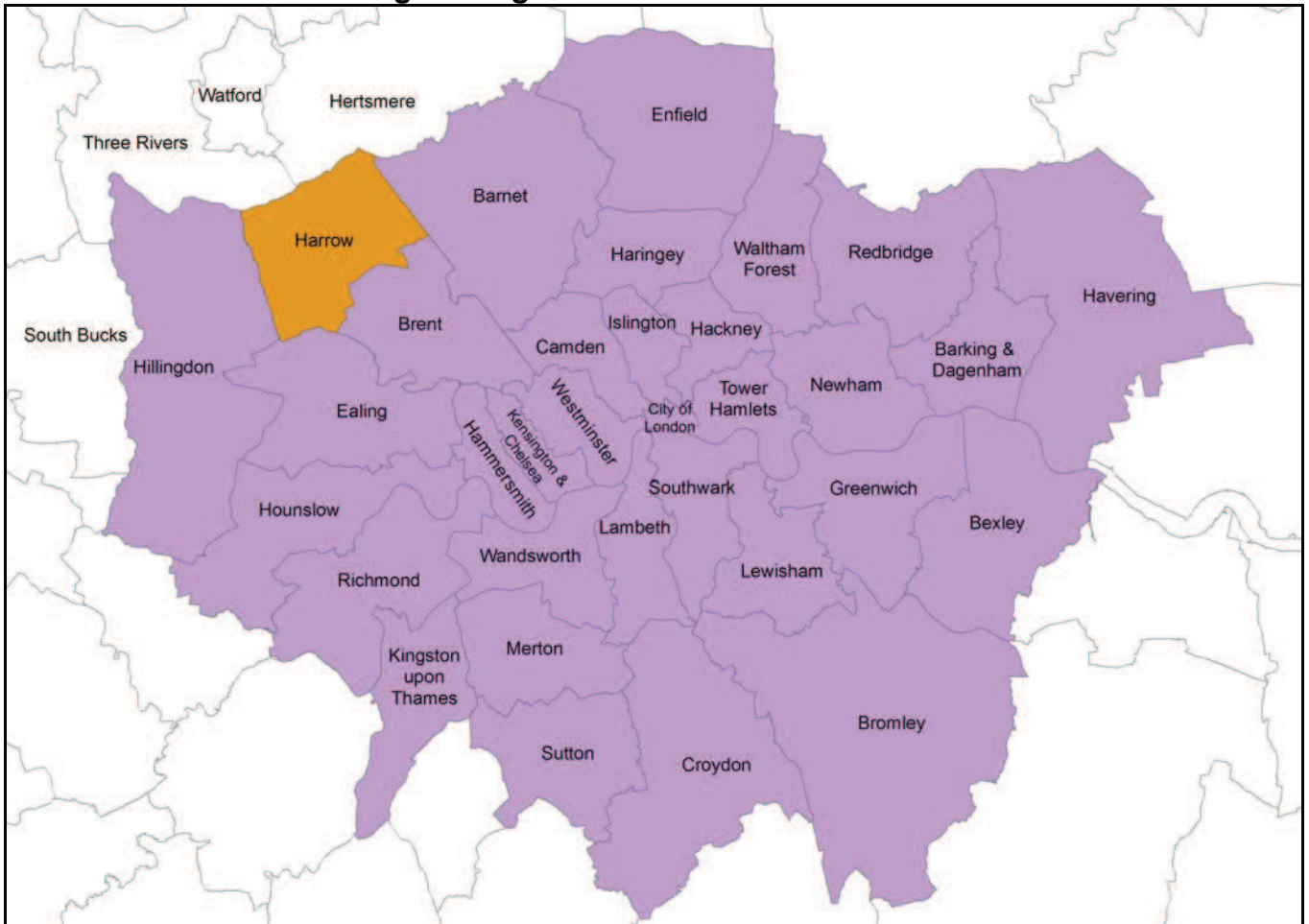


Figure 1: Map of North Harrow showing Bus Stops, Parking and Loading Bays

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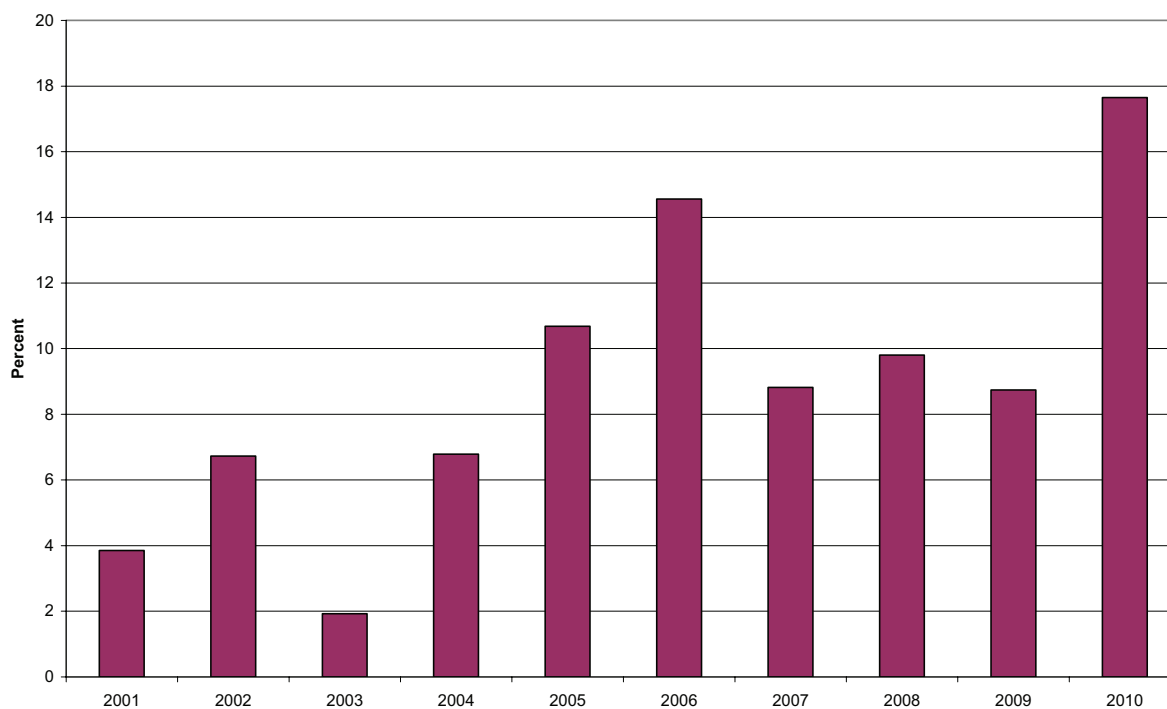
3. Retail Composition

Type of Business	No of Units
Food etc	
Bakers	1
Butcher	1
Cash and Carry	1
Grocers	8
Supermarket	1
Health & Personal	
Hair & Beauty	5
Dentist	1
Opticians	2
Jewelers	1
Chemist	3
House	
Bathrooms etc	1
Carpets	2
Furniture	1
Kitchen Design	1
Windows	1
Miscellaneous & Specialist	
Betting Shop	2
Bicycle Shop	1
Cards & Gifts	1
Car Sales	1

Type of Business	No of Units
Charity Shop	1
Electrical & Computing	1
Hardware & Household	2
Mobile Phone	2
Print & Design	2
Video hire	1
Newsagent	4
Post office	1
Professional & Property	
Accountants	2
Estate Agents	6
Insurance	1
Solicitors	2
Restaurant/Take Aways/Pubs	
Take-away/Restaurant	16
Public House	2
Services	
Dry Cleaners	2
Shoe Repair	1
Police Station (Safer Neighbourhood Office)	1

Source: Harrow Council Monitoring

Vacancy Rate – Proportion of Vacant Units (2001 to 2010)



Source: Harrow Council Monitoring

Available Property

Rents for a standard retail unit in North Harrow are between **£11,000 to £13,000 per annum** depending on exact location. This equates to **£15 to £17 per square foot**.

Available Property

Address	Description	Rent	Contact
55 Station Road North Harrow. HA2 7SR	Lock up shop a few doors from North Harrow Met. Line Station. Total gross floor area approx 700 sq.ft, kitchen and toilet.	£12,000 p.a. exclusive. Vacant. New lease by arrangement.	David Wilson
372 Pinner Road, North Harrow, HA2 6DZ	A1 lock up shop totaling 1,066 sq ft	£13,500.00 pa new full repairing and insuring lease for a term by arrangement.	David Charles
1 Broadway Parade			P K Properties

Local Estate Agents

The table lists a number of local estate agents in the area.

Company and Address	Telephone	Email and/or web site
David Wilson 29-31 High Street, Harrow-on-the-Hill, HA1 3HT	Tel: 0208 423 5933	david@davidwilsonproperty.com www.davidwilsonproperty.com
Ferrari Dewe Ferrari House, 102 College Road, Harrow HA1 1ES	Tel: 020 8427 4288 Fax: 020 8863 5466	enquiries@ferraridewe.co.uk www.ferraridewe.co.uk
David Charles 29 High Street Pinner HA5 5PJ	Tel: 020 8866 0001 Fax: 020 8868 2600	propertyconsultants@davidcharles.co.uk http://www.davidcharles.co.uk/
VDBM 30A Green Lane Northwood Middlesex HA6 2QB	Tel: 01923 845222 Fax: 01923 832142	property@vdbm.co.uk www.vdbm.co.uk/
Andrew Pearce 55 Bridge Street Pinner Middlesex HA5 3JR	Tel: 020 8868 2424	
P K Properties 451 Alexandra Ave Harrow HA2 9SE	Tel: 020 8429 4249	www.pkproperties.co.uk
Chamberlain Commercial Evans House, 107 Marsh Rd, Pinner, Middlesex, HA5 5PA	Tel: 020 8429 6899	http://www.chamberlaincommercial.com/ info@chamberlaincommercial.com

4. Business Rates

Business rates can be calculated from the Valuation Office agency web site (www.voa.gov.uk or telephone 020 8276 2800) or by contacting the Council's Business Rates department on 020 8901 2610 or visiting www.harrow.gov.uk/businessrates.

5. Planning

The Council recognises that North Harrow is suffering from high vacancy levels and has recently introduced a Local Development Order (LDO) to simplify the planning process in part of the District Centre.

What will the LDO permit?

The Local Development Order grants planning permission within designated parts of North Harrow (see map below) for changes of use of ground floor premises from the current use to the following:

A1 Shops

A2 Financial and professional services

A3 Restaurants and cafes

B1 (a) as an office other than a use within A2 (financial and professional services)

D1 Non-residential institutions specifically; health centres, day nurseries, public halls and non-residential education and training centres (subject to a maximum of 150 square metres)

The LDO will not permit changes of use to:

- A4 Drinking Establishments
- A5 Hot Food Takeaways

The LDO covers:

- 34 to 70 and 51 to 87 Station Road
- 340 to 378, 435, and 547 to 555 Pinner Road

How long does it last for?

The LDO lasts for three years although the council could extend, replace or remove it. The uses that have taken place during the lifetime of the LDO will be allowed to continue, but no further changes of use would be allowed without planning permission

Please note that:

- **The LDO also does not include existing and new extensions, or advertisements**
- **The LDO does not remove the requirement for consents obtained under other legislation such as licensing and building regulations**
- **The normal planning policy still applies in the areas not covered by the LDO.**

If you are interested in a property but need to check on its planning status, please contact the Council's Planning Policy Team on 020 8736 6082.

6. Local Population and Catchment Area Information

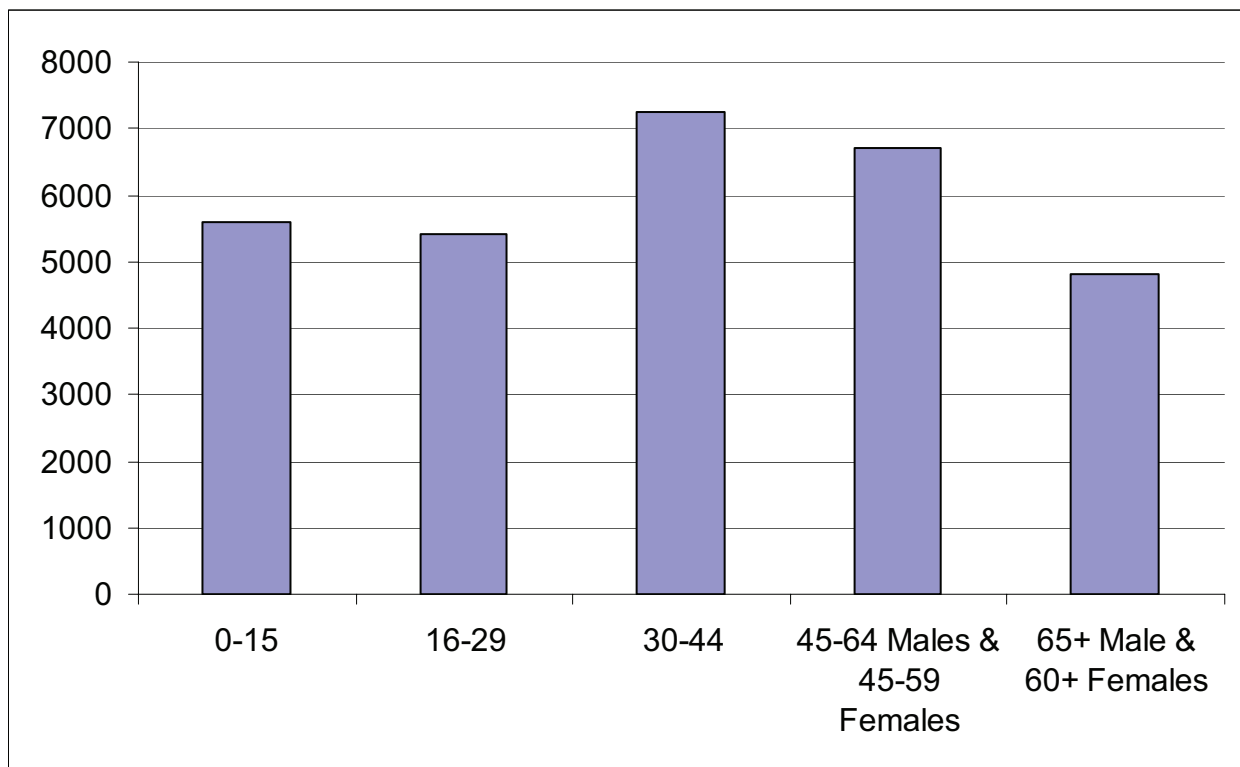
Within 0.5 kilometre of the centre of North Harrow, there is a population of around 5,000 people. This increases to 17,000 within a 1 kilometre radius. A total of almost 30,000 people live in the 3 wards around North Harrow.

Within 500 metres of North Harrow, 75% are classified as within Harrow Segments C, F & G. Within 1 kilometre, almost 84% of households are made of Harrow Segments B, C, F & G. (see **Appendix A** for explanation of Harrow segments and further information).

Population by Age in North Harrow Area (Headstone North, Headstone South & West Harrow Wards)

Age Group	Population
0-15	5590
16-29	5410
30-44	7240
45-64 Males & 45-59 Females	6720
65+ Male & 60+ Females	4800
Total	29760

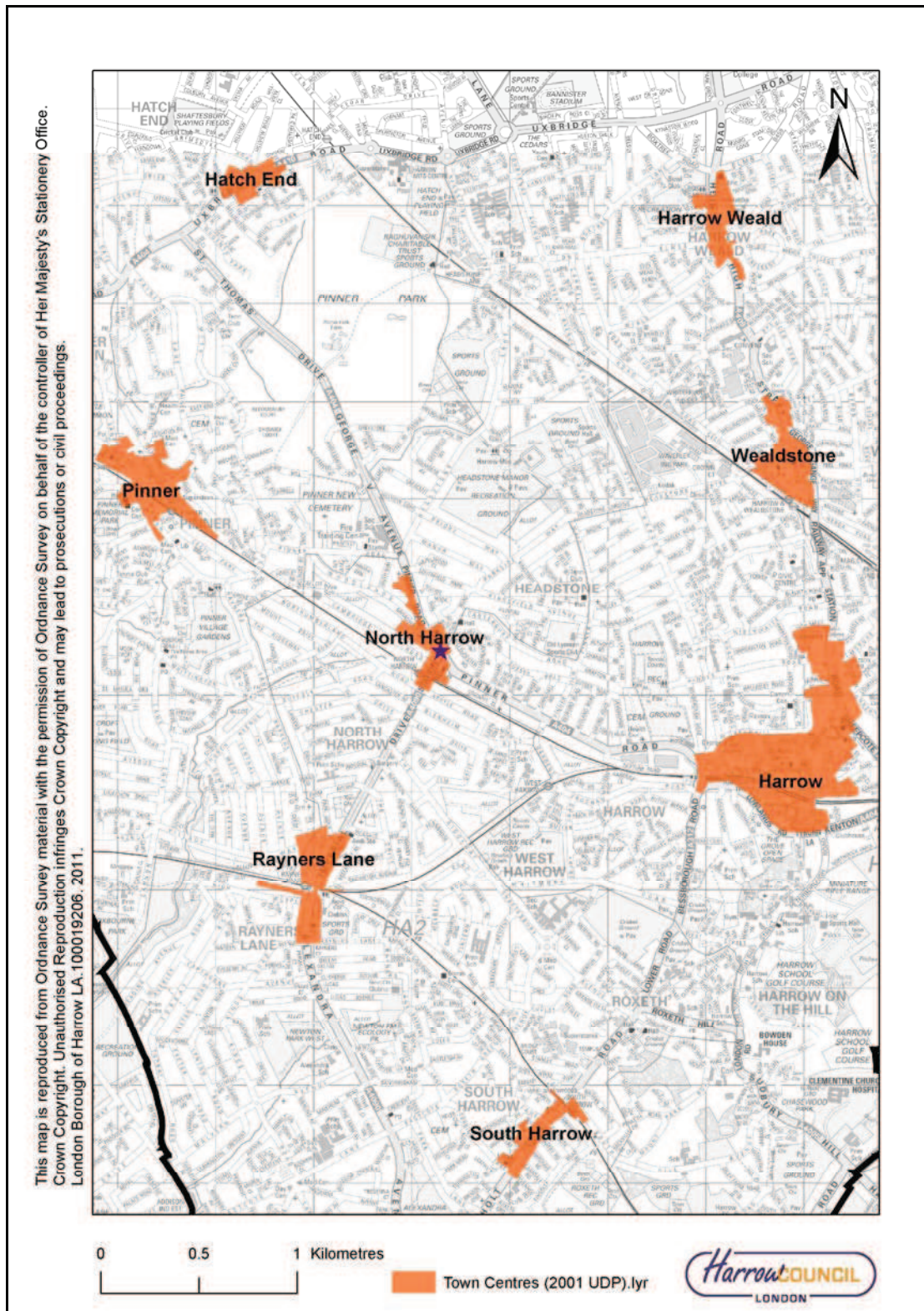
Source: Office for National Statistics - Mid-2009 Population Estimates (Harrow Analysis) © Crown Copyright 2010
Totals have been rounded to nearest 10



Map of North Harrow with Nearest Other District Centres

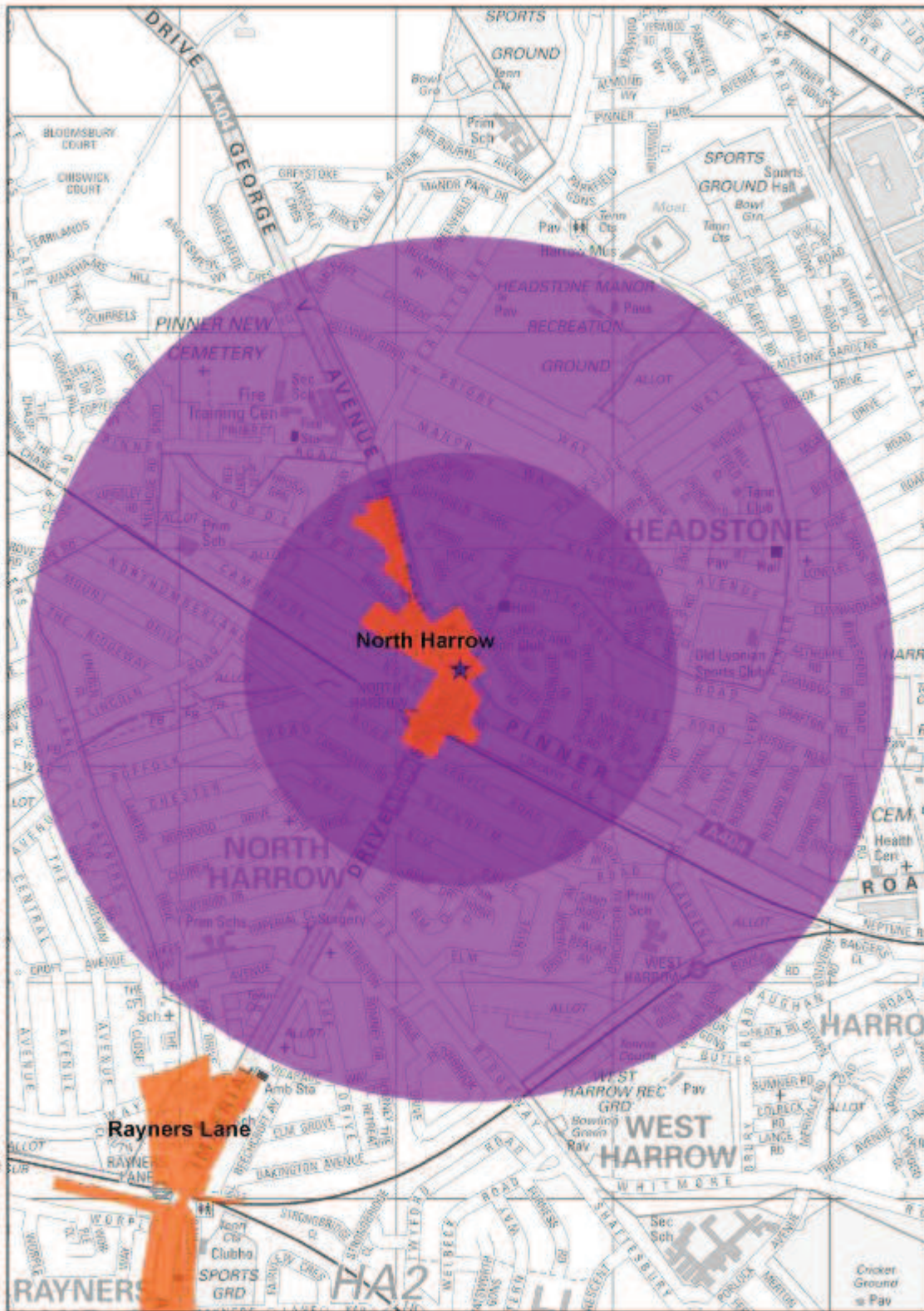
Closest Centres	Distance km (Miles)
Rayners Lane	1.3 km (0.8 miles)
Pinner	1.6 km (1.0 miles)
Harrow	1.8 km (1.1 miles)
Hatch End	2.6 km (1.6 miles)

Source: Harrow Council



Map Showing 0.5 Km And 1 Km Distances From North Harrow Town Centre

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7. North Harrow Underground Station

Pedestrian Entries and Exits – Weekday, Saturday and Sundays

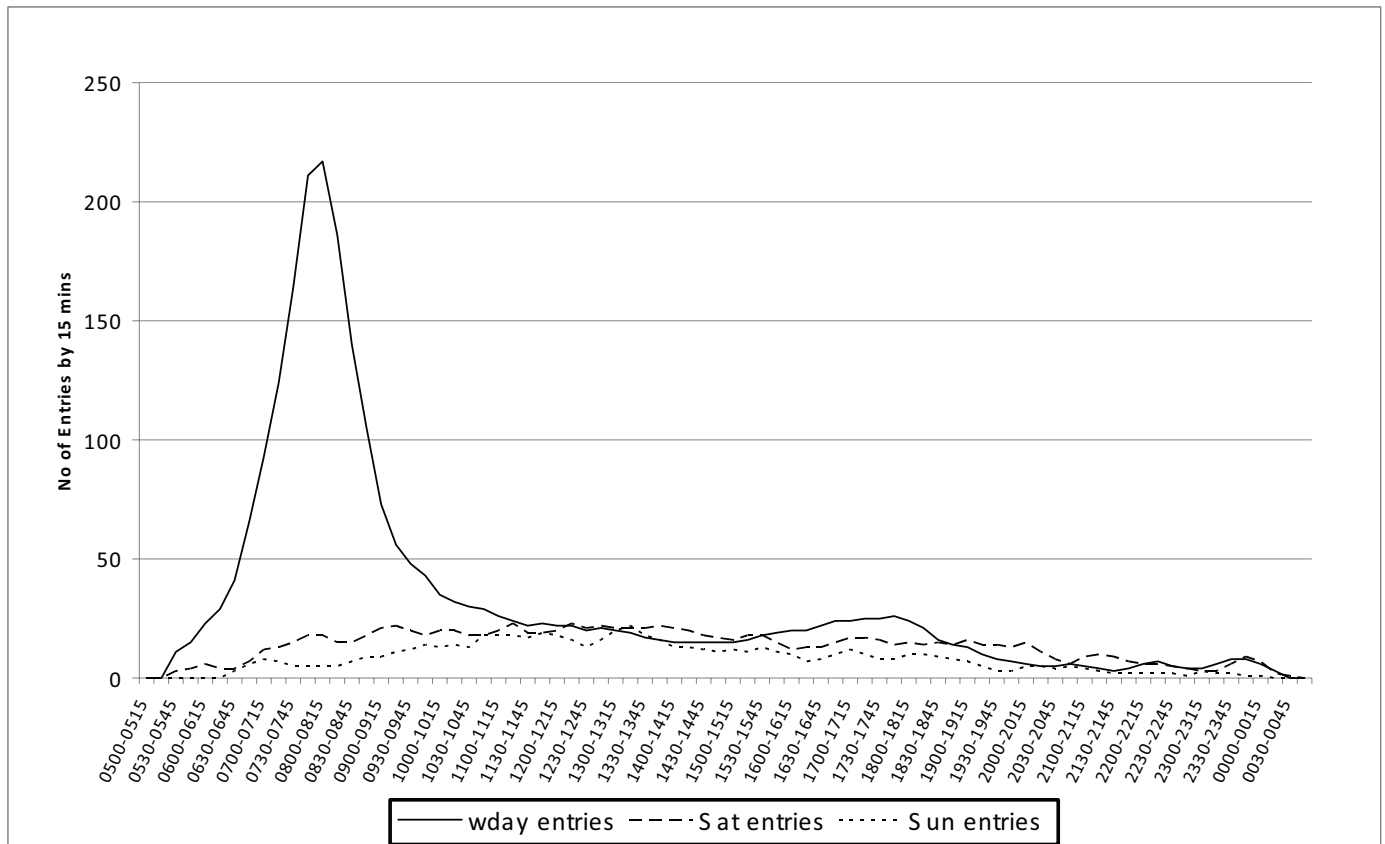
Around a total of **2400** people enter the tube station on a weekday.
Around a total of **2200** people exit the tube station on a weekday.

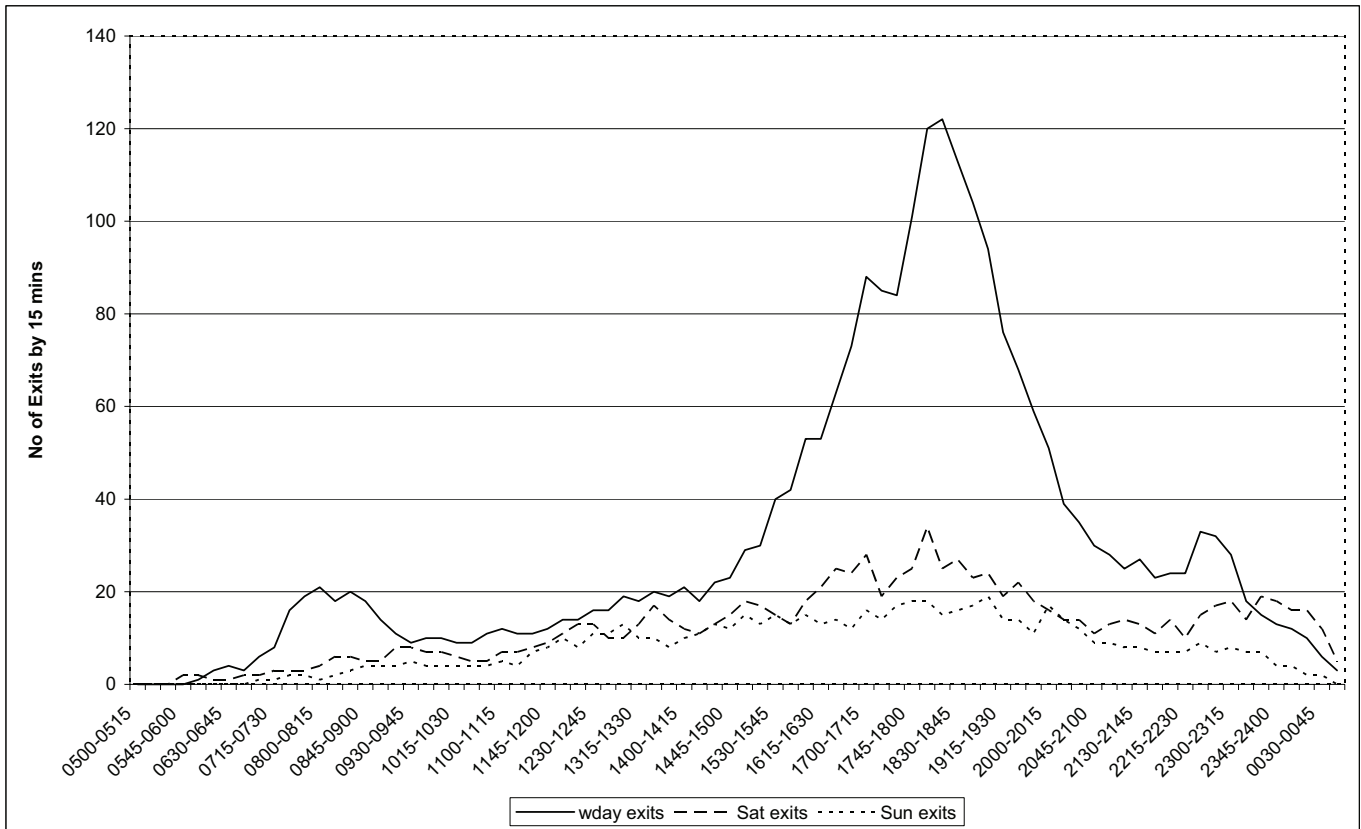
During the week, the **peak time** for people

- **entering** North Harrow Tube station is between **7.30 and 8 am**
- **exiting** North Harrow Tube station is between **6.00 and 6.30 pm**

This figure has grown steadily from an average number of entries of **1800** per day in 2001 to **2400** per day in 2010.

Source: Transport for London





Bus Routes

6 bus routes serve North Harrow District Centre.

- 183 Golders Green Station towards Pinner Station
- 615 University of Hertfordshire/Hatfield Business Park & Rayners Lane (peak evening only)
- H9 Harrow via Rayners Lane
- H10 Harrow via Kenton
- H18 Harrow via Belmont
- H19 Harrow

Car Parking

There is one hour free parking at the Cambridge Road car park located at the rear of the shops between Pinner Road and Station Road. There is also on street parking available in front of the shops on Station Road and Pinner Road.

Please see figure 1 for more information.

Pay & Display	Tariffs per Day	Days & Times
Cambridge Road Car Park	1 st hour free 40p per hour £3.10 over 4 hours	Mon-Fri 8.00am –6.30pm
Pinner Road Station Road	1 st hour free 40p per 30 mins £10 over 6 hours	Mon-Sat 8.00am –6.30pm
Devonshire Road Pinner View Bedford Road Rutland Road Oxford Road	20p per 30 minutes Max stay 2 hours	Mon-Sat 10.00am- 4pm

Source: Harrow Council

8. Appendix A

Borough of Harrow North Harrow Customer Insight January 2011

500m and 1000m Buffering around Pinner Road & Station Road



Produced by:

Harrow Council - Prevention: Crime Reduction Unit & Corporate Performance Team



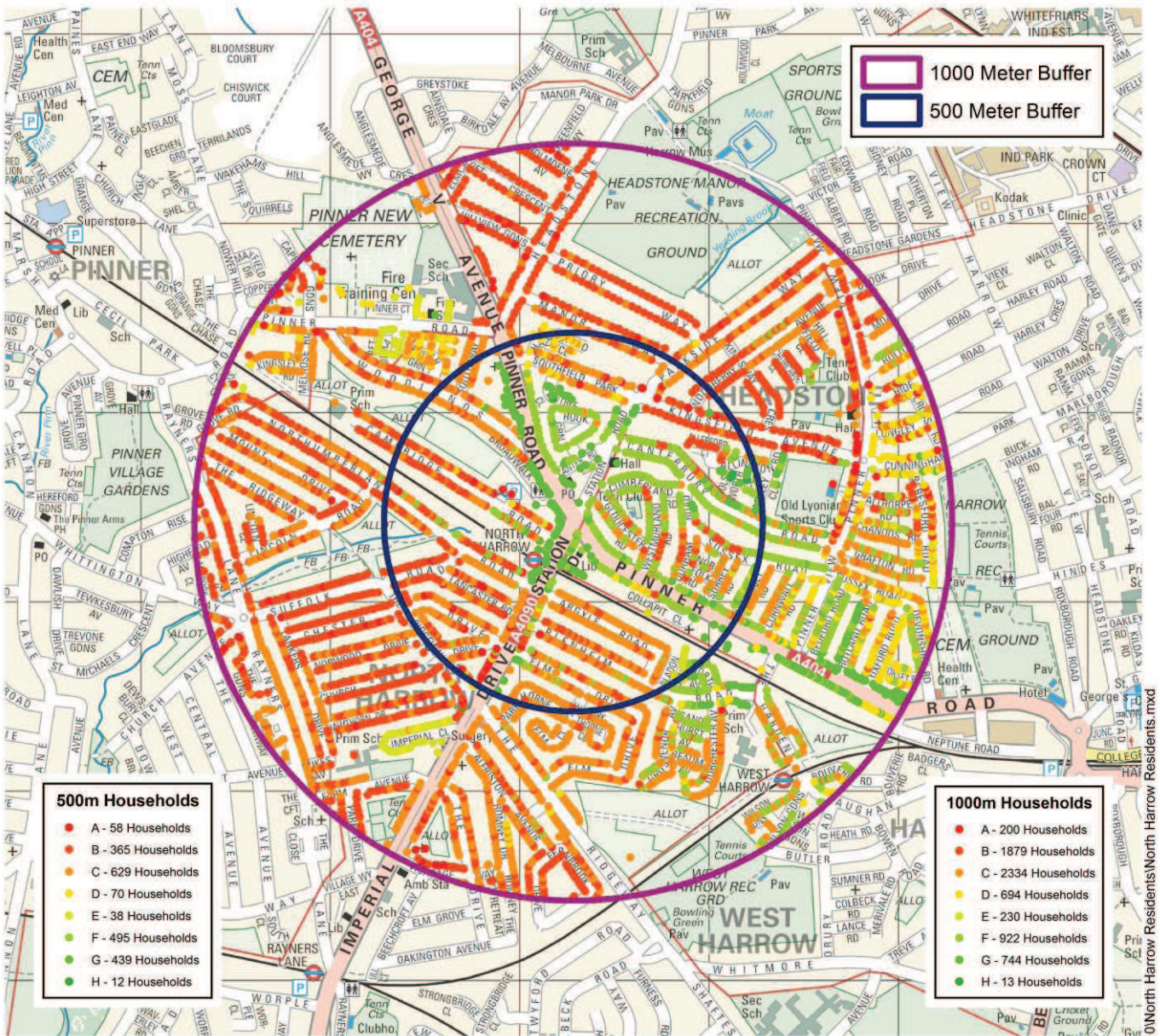
Customer Segments within 500m and 1000m Radius of Pinner Road & Station Road

North Harrow Residents

Households around Pinner and Station Road

24 January 2011

Source: Harrow Council: Experian, Customer Insight Data



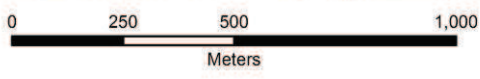
1000 Meter Buffer
500 Meter Buffer

500m Households

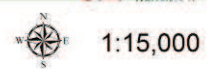
- A - 58 Households
- B - 365 Households
- C - 629 Households
- D - 70 Households
- E - 38 Households
- F - 495 Households
- G - 439 Households
- H - 12 Households

1000m Households

- A - 200 Households
- B - 1879 Households
- C - 2334 Households
- D - 694 Households
- E - 230 Households
- F - 922 Households
- G - 744 Households
- H - 13 Households



Crime Reduction Unit
 London Borough of Harrow
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O:\GIS 2010\North Harrow Residents\North Harrow Residents.mxd

Harrow Customer Insight – Experian Customer Segments

Harrow Experian Customer Insight Segments¹ are a snapshot of 2008 households to which we have added some local council, crime victim, health usage information & national Experian market data. Harrow has been segmented into 8 groups of customer behaviours to assist and support service planning & location and targeted communication strategies.

Breakdown of Harrow's households by Segment Vitality Profile 2009/10

Harrow's households by Segment, 2008

Source: Experian



- The map of the area shows that customer segments G & F are concentrated directly around Pinner Road and to the North East of the locality. Whereas towards the North West area of the locality customer segment C dominate within the 500m area and segments C & B within the 1,000m area outlined.
- The tables attached display the main customer characteristics and preferred communication channels of the locality. More detailed information on the segments can be provided if requested from the Corporate Performance Team: Management Information Development.

¹ © 2010 Experian Ltd

Experian Customer Insight²: 2,106 households are within 500 metres of North Harrow road junction, 75% of households are made up of 3 of the bespoke Harrow Customer Segments.

North Harrow Segment C 30% Borough Segment C 17%	North Harrow Segment F 23.5% Borough Segment F 24%	North Harrow Segment G 21% Borough Segment G 17%
Descriptions		
<p>Middle aged families in suburban neighbourhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Middle aged families ● Semi-detached with mortgage ● School age children ● Good incomes ● Regular savings ● Intermediate/lower professionals ● Non-smokers, low alcohol intake ● Active lifestyles ● Low levels of crime ● Pays council tax via direct debit ● Relatively low users of public services 	<p>Suburban larger families on moderate income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Families with children ● Suburban, semis or terraces ● Asian background ● Middle income ● Multi-person households ● Period of unemployment ● Relative higher benefit take up ● Non smokers & non drinkers ● Pay by cash ● High fear of crime but relative low victims of crime rates 	<p>Ethnic minorities in urban areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Urban areas ● Singles, co-habitees, lone parents ● Rented terraces or flats ● Periods of unemployment ● Diverse ethnicity ● Relative higher benefit take up ● Council tax summons & Parking Permits contacts
Communication		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High propensity internet use for information and services ▪ Less likely to use telephone ▪ Unreceptive to face to face communication ▪ Tend to gain information from local newspapers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Receptive to accessing information over the telephone and via mobile texts ▪ Prefer to gain some information face to face ▪ Prefer to gain some information from local newspapers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Like to use internet to gain information about services ▪ Like to access information and services via mobile telephones ▪ Tend to be unreceptive to gaining information face to face ▪ Tend not to use local newspapers for information

² Harrow Experian Customer Insight Segments © 2010 Experian Ltd – are a snapshot of 2008 households to which we have added some local council, crime victim, health usage information & national Experian market data. Harrow has been segmented into 8 groups of customer behaviours to assist and support service planning & location and targeted communication strategies.

Experian Customer Insight: 7,016 households are within 1,000 metres of North Harrow road junction, 83.8% of households are made up of 4 of the bespoke Harrow Customer Segments. (The figure includes the above 2,106 households in the 500 metres area)

North Harrow Segment C 33.3% Borough Segment C 17%	North Harrow Segment B 26.8% Borough Segment B 12%	North Harrow Segment F 13.14% Borough Segment F 24%	North Harrow Segment G 10.6% Borough Segment G 17%
Descriptions			
<p>Middle aged families in suburban neighbourhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Middle aged families ● Semi-detached with mortgage ● School age children ● Good incomes ● Regular savings ● Intermediate/lower professionals ● Non-smokers, low alcohol intake ● Active lifestyles ● Low levels of crime ● Pays council tax via direct debit ● Relatively low users of public services 	<p>Financially secure older couples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Older married couples, some retired ● Grown up children, non-dependent ● Large detached or semis ● 2 car households ● Good salaries ● Directors and managers ● Good health ● Low crime, low fear of crime ● Pays council tax via direct debit 	<p>Suburban larger families on moderate income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Families with children ● Suburban, semis or terraces ● Asian background ● Middle income ● Multi-person households ● Period of unemployment ● Relative higher benefit take up ● Non smokers & non drinkers ● Pay by cash ● High fear of crime but relative low victims of crime rates 	<p>Ethnic minorities in urban areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Urban areas ● Singles, co-habitees, lone parents ● Rented terraces or flats ● Periods of unemployment ● Diverse ethnicity ● Relative higher benefit take up ● Council tax summons & Parking Permits
Communication			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High propensity internet use for information and services ■ Less likely to use telephone ■ Unreceptive to face to face communication ■ Tend to gain information from local newspapers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High propensity to use internet for services ■ Receptive to accessing information and services over the telephone ■ Tend to be unreceptive to gaining information face to face ■ Tend not to use local newspapers for information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Receptive to accessing information over the telephone and via mobile texts ■ Prefer to gain some information face to face ■ Prefer to gain some information from local newspapers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Like to use internet to gain information about services ■ Like to access information and services via mobile telephones ■ Tend to be unreceptive to gaining information face to face ■ Tend not to use local newspapers for information

Appendix: Breakdown of Customer Segments

(Please note number of households as at 2008 so will exclude new developments in the area)

Customer Insight 500m radius		
Customer Code	Number of households 2008	%
A	58	2.75%
B	365	17.33%
C	629	29.87%
D	70	3.32%
E	38	1.80%
F	495	23.50%
G	439	20.85%
H	12	0.57%
Total	2,106	100.00%

Customer Insight 1000m radius		
Customer Code	Number of households 2008	%
A	200	2.85%
B	1879	26.78%
C	2334	33.27%
D	694	9.89%
E	230	3.28%
F	922	13.14%
G	744	10.60%
H	13	0.19%
Total	7,016	100.00%

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	17 th September, 2013
Subject:	Debt Recovery Process
Responsible Officer:	Fern Silverio, Head of Collections & Housing Benefits
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Jerry Miles – Corporate Resources Policy Lead Councillor Kam Chana – Corporate Resources Performance Lead
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Draft Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy Appendix B – Draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy Appendix C – Review of Debt Collection Process Equality Impact Assessment Appendix D – Localisation of Council Tax Equality Impact Assessment Appendix E – Debt Enforcement Flow Chart and glossary

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides an update to the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented on the 4th June, 2013 setting out the following information for Members as requested:

1. Effectiveness of all Debt Collection Policies within the Council
2. Draft Council Tax Debt Collection and Recovery Policy updated to include the corporate vulnerability criteria and checkpoints to identify vulnerability at key points in the process

3. Outcomes of the review of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy which includes the following proposed changes:

- Inclusion of Corporate Vulnerability Criteria
- Alignment of debt collection processes and checkpoints to identify vulnerability

Recommendations:

1. Members note the update on the effectiveness of the individual Service Debt Recovery Policies;
2. Members support the proposed changes within Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy and that the revised policy be taken to consultation;
3. Members support the proposed changes within the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy and that the revised policy be taken to consultation.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

Further to recommendations put forward from the Overview and Scrutiny Challenge Panel a review of both the Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy and the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy has been taken forward. This review has focussed on improving the debt collection process for vulnerable debtors and aligning debt collection processes, where possible across the Council.

This report provides Members of Overview and Scrutiny with information relating to the effectiveness of all Debt Collection policies, the draft Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy, the outcome of the review of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy and the proposed decision making timetable.

Effectiveness of current Debt Collection Policies

Council Tax

The current Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy is extremely effective and has supported upper quartile collection rates historically. However, whilst it is extremely good in providing very clear parameters for actions that will occur in the case of non-payment, and additionally caters for the majority through generic automated processes, it does not lend itself to flexibility when confronted with specific circumstances, for example vulnerability issues. As the Council is faced with an increase in cases requiring enforcement before payments are made, (mostly due to the recent Welfare Reforms being implemented), we have to recognise that recovering council tax arrears is about striking a balance between being firm with those who 'won't pay' and supporting those who 'can't pay'. Recovery can take time and, in some cases, if we are not able to recover the council tax debt in the financial year in which it is due, which must always be Harrows' principal objective, we may need to

look beyond the short term wins in exceptional circumstances; longer term we already achieved overall collections rates in excess of 98.5%, between 12-24 months, and it may be that this will become 24-36 months instead. This will however provide the balance although it may become a longer term “win” position.

Housing

The current Housing Rent Recovery Policy has led to upper quartile performance over a period of time and collection rates for 2012/13 were 99.86% (excluding arrears brought forward). As part of the process the Rent Arrears Recovery procedure sets out clear parameters for action to recover debt. It is versatile and flexible to cater for specific circumstances as it has to have regard for a number of pieces of legislation such as The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Equality Act 2010 and the Pre Action Court Protocol for Possession claims based on Rent Arrears.

The Housing Service works to prevent arrears by providing a money advice project via the CAB and undertaking Financial Health checks of all new tenants at sign up. This is followed up with early identification and intervention by a variety of methods including letters, telephone and personal contact. The Welfare Reforms pose a number of as yet unknown challenges to the organisation to ensure that collection rates are maintained at the current high levels. Analysis is currently underway to try and establish potential impacts going forward.

Adults

Historically, collection processes have reflected standard Council recovery processes for sundry debtors and as a result consists of up to three reminder letters automatically generated (and based on the age of the outstanding debt) sent out by the Corporate Accounts Receivable team, before referral back to the directorate for advice on recovery action.

It is important to note that the majority of debt invoiced for Adult service users is only raised following assessment of an individual’s ability to contribute towards services and therefore an understanding of why service users do not pay for their care is key to safeguard vulnerable Adults before corporate recovery action is taken.

Feedback, through the Adult Services consultation steering group and the complaints process, has played an important role in improving information sent out supporting these charges. The directorate is developing Client Liaison Officer roles to support the personalised approach. Contact is made directly with service users, and can include a home visit, to discuss the debt outstanding and understand (and resolve where appropriate) issues that mean a service user is not willing (or possibly can’t) settle the debt. This is a recent development but this approach has already proved successful in recovering a long outstanding debt of £7k.

Since the introduction of the Fairer Charging Contributions Policy in April 2012, there has been a reduction in the level of invoices being generated for contributions towards the cost of care as service users move to receiving cash

in the form of personal budgets to manage their outcomes directly. With the personal budget, assessed client contributions are deducted before the amount is paid to the service user. This approach is more effective, avoids debt building up and the requirement for recovery action.

Sundry Debtors

There are various types of debt collection areas within sundry debtors ranging from trade refuse to meals on wheels. The recovery process varies across debt areas however in general terms a standard in-house recovery process is undertaken (i.e. reminder letters and telephone contact) before either being referred to a debt recovery agency or referred back to the relevant service area should in-house recovery attempts fail. The majority of the council's overdue sundry debt is forwarded to the debt recovery agency with the exception of 'high risk' debt areas (e.g. some types of social care debt, many of which could be categorised within the corporate vulnerability criteria). The overall sundry debtor recovery rate under the current policy is relatively successful with collection rates consistently falling within the upper quartile.

Review of the Council Tax Debt Collection Policy

The draft Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy, attached at Appendix A, has been updated to reflect the concerns of Councillors that the collection process operates in a way that protects the Councils financial interest whilst also reducing the impact for vulnerable debtors.

A multi-agency Debt Collection Sub Group met on a regular basis throughout the review and helped to shape the draft Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy. Initially this group focused on ensuring additional short term processes were put in place whilst awareness took place for the Council Tax Support claimants who previously received 100% Council Tax Benefit.

Vulnerability

All Debt Collection Services and the multi-agency sub group have been involved in the development of the draft corporate definition of vulnerability. The Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy signs up to the corporate definition of vulnerability which is included, in detail, within the draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy at Appendix B.

Checkpoints within Council Tax Recovery

To ensure that every opportunity is taken up to identify whether the service is dealing with a vulnerable debtor checkpoints within the recovery process are being put in place. It is proposed that where a person alert identifies that the debtor may be vulnerable the officer will consider the case before moving forward with action. It is proposed to integrate the checkpoints at the following key stages of recovery within the Council Tax recovery process:

- Summons
- Cases sent to the Bailiffs

- Bankruptcy/Committal/Charging Order
- Sale of House

A pilot will be taken forward to trial the operation of the Council Tax checkpoints to identify how the process will work operationally and the resources required to deliver before full implementation which, dependant on the outcomes, will then include Housing Services and Sundry Debts.

The draft Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy has been updated to reflect the changes and is attached at Appendix A.

Corporate Debt Collection Policy

The review of the Corporate Debt Recovery policy has been taken forward as a direct result of concerns raised by members at Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The review has been taken forward by an internal Officer Working Group and in partnership with a multi-agency Debt Collection Sub Group. All of the proposed changes have been discussed through the Welfare Reform Governance structure. The draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy is attached at Appendix B to this report.

An interim report providing progress on the review was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on June 4th 2013. This report provides the outcomes of the review in response to the recommendations made by members:

Recommendation 1: 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.

Corporate definition of vulnerability

The draft Vulnerability Criteria has been updated to reflect the comments made by Councillors at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 4th June, 2013 and is included within the draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy attached at Appendix B. Processes have been put in place to ensure that, where possible, vulnerability is identified at an early stage. Services such as Children's (younger people leaving care and Families First), Concessionary Travel, Housing and Adult Social Care, are working with the Council Tax Recovery Service to develop processes to share vulnerability information. This should enable services to put a flag (person alert) on their system prompting identification of vulnerability at key points in the collection process. Currently, not all debt collection IT systems have the ability to insert flags and therefore reconfiguration of systems would have to be considered to take this forward.

A pilot is being taken forward to trial the process for identifying vulnerability at key stages of the recovery process with the Council Tax Recovery Service and data from Adult Services. This pilot will lead to the development of a mechanism for data sharing, highlighting vulnerability and the identification of the processes/resources that need to be put in place for the officer to consider the case before action is taken. Services have agreed that checkpoints will be put in place at key stages of their debt collection processes however are awaiting the outcome of the pilot to take this forward. The checkpoints that have been identified to date are:

Council Tax Checkpoints

- Summons
- Cases sent to the Bailiffs
- Bankruptcy/Committal/Charging Order
- Sale of House

Housing Checkpoints

- Notice Seeking Possession.
- Court Action.
- Application for an Eviction Warrant.
- Eviction

Data Sharing

To enable the vulnerability information to be shared effectively across the Council it will be necessary to put in place processes to share the information on a regular basis. When processes have been identified, a data sharing agreement can be drawn up which provides the detail of what information will 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.

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**

As stated in the previous report to Councillors on the 4th June 2013, the review of the integration of all debt recovery services has not looked at the development of a central recovery service. The review however has aligned the debt recovery processes to ensure that, where it is highlighted to the Council that customers have multiple debts, they will be dealt with in a consistent and transparent manner. The alignment of the debt collection processes has considered the statutory requirements for each process and a flow chart showing enforcement for each debt collection process is included at Appendix E to this report along with a description of the enforcement options.

Where it is highlighted that a customer has multiple debts owed to the Council, services will share this information and discuss repayment taking into consideration prioritisation of debt. 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. Where possible this information will be sought within the financial assessment process when talking to the customer however this information is not always provided.

It is the customer's decision to decide which debt they wish to pay off first. However, where debtors approach the Council with a view to amalgamating their debts, the Council will prioritise the debts that will have the most serious consequence if they are not paid. 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.	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.

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 processes in housing. The key objective of "Getting Closer to the Customer" has seen an investment in housing services to fund posts that will proactively prioritise and make personal contact with tenants as a direct result of Welfare Reform debt. Monthly analysis of rent arrears is being carried out to obtain greater detail on impact of the size subsidy since April 2013.

Housing Services are due to implement a Tenant Grant Scheme, approved at Cabinet in June 2013, to enable Council Tenants to move out of their property into the private sector. The service will ensure that the scheme's operational procedures include information sharing with other Debt Collection Services to establish whether there are arrears outstanding to Council Services. The team will ensure they work with the appropriate services to ensure arrears are paid before any grant is awarded. The scheme will also align with the vulnerability criteria as stated in the Corporate Debt Recovery Service.

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 Community Reference Group, will be monitoring the impacts of the welfare reforms which will include the levels of debt across the Council.

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 hoping that, through some of this activity, it will be able to gain feedback on the impacts of the changes and the level of debt within the community.

This information sharing will enable the Council and its partners to understand whether the mitigations that are being put in place are effective and whether any further mitigations need to be put in place. Continuous partnership working will enable this activity to be taken forward effectively.

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 has been developed to support people impacted by the economic situation and welfare reforms. The scheme brings together discretionary pots of funding that provide support to people which include the Emergency Relief Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payment and funding provided through the Xcite Programme to help people with travel costs.

As reported to the last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Help Scheme also intended to bring together a directory of support that was incorporated into an interactive web tool. This activity was to be delivered by the Council in liaison with the Voluntary Sector. In the interim a Voluntary Sector Consortium, Harrow Advising Together (HAT), has been successful in winning a lottery funding bid and a portion of this funding is to develop an online Advice Hub accessible through the web, email, live chat with an advisor, Facebook and telephone. There was a direct synergy between both the Councils vision of a directory of support and the Advice Portal and there was a risk of duplication and the possibility of a disjointed customer journey if both were developed. Therefore it has been agreed that the Council joins the consortium as a partner and support the development of the portal. A link to the portal will sit within the Help Scheme. The consortium will monitor the effectiveness of the portal.

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

Conclusion

In the wake of elevated scrutiny, an ever increasing focus on adherence to regulatory standards and ensuring that we all treat customers fairly, a different approach was required to recover debt. In contrast, amid a climate of austerity and budget cuts, Harrow Council needed to do things differently. There is a real danger that council tax collection rates are likely to fall in the present year because of the impact of welfare reform and the localisation of the council tax support scheme, resulting in many households receiving a bill for the first

time. Interestingly, facts and figures collated by CAB show that 87% more people sought online advice about council tax this April compared to the same month in 2012 – and that’s before the real extent of the changes start to kick-in. In reviewing our policies and processes we have taken into account our obligations as a public sector body when spending tax-payers money. We are also moving away from allocating all defaulted accounts to a bailiff relatively early in the process and instead introducing a diverse recovery strategy that hopefully will have significant benefits in terms of increased revenues and time to recovery. What’s more, it develops “engaging with citizens” in a way that it is tailored to their situation and is not only morally right, it creates an environment where the problem is less likely to recur the following year.

In a climate of increased financial hardship, only by having a well-designed strategy, properly segmenting debt, having multiple channels for recovery and being flexible to change can Harrow increase collection rates, reduce operational cost and improve the citizen experience. We therefore believe that this report takes into account members concerns, the recent government guidance on good practice in the collection of Council Tax arrears, the CAB’s proposals for changes to its “collection protocols”; all of which extend the range of recovery options to help us to improve the “customer journey”, by avoiding so many cases going to the bailiff and help us to improve collection rates.

Further Action

Both the Corporate Debt Management Policy and the Council Tax Debt Collection Policy have been reviewed as a result of the recommendations from Members at Overview and Scrutiny. Both policies have been redrafted and will now require consultation to ensure stakeholders in Harrow are able to give their view on the proposed changes.

Financial Implications

The revised recovery policy seeks to ensure that, while a robust approach to recovery is taken against those who ‘won’t pay’, a sympathetic and fair approach is taken in the case of those who genuinely struggle to pay, for example, by making arrangements to pay arrears over a manageable but extended period of time. This strategy means that, in some cases, we are not able to recover the full council tax debt in the financial year in which it is due, but by taking this approach we expect to achieve overall collection rates in excess of 97.5%. “It is still too early to accurately forecast what our collections/arrears will be at 31 March 2014, but by way of comparison, at the end of July 2012 our in-year collection was 39.89% of the annual net collectable debt, and at the end of July 2013 the in-year collection rate was 39.18%. Considering that £3.8m was passported to the working age localised council tax support recipients, this is a good achievement.

However, Harrow has had to lower its tax base rate by 1% which in effect reduces the tax take from council tax. This was a direct consequence of the introduction of the local council tax support scheme as bad debt provisions of £1m were estimated to be additionally required due to expected non payment

from the working age claimants. This amount assumes a 30% non-collection rate on the amount being passported to claimants. It is therefore imperative that any collection policy does not inhibit the authority's work in maximising its collection rate, especially as the Council becomes more and more dependent on local taxation and other locally generated fees and charges to compensate for cuts to central government grant.

Outstanding debt across the Council is reviewed regularly for likely collection or potential write off of debt no longer considered recoverable, and the revenue impact forecast as part of monthly financial processes to ensure the adequacy of corporate provisions. However increases in provisions (arising from reduced recoverability) are likely to result in the need to redirect scarce Council resources and should be minimised through robust recovery processes.

Performance Issues

There may be in year collection performance issues as the revised council tax recovery policy allows for more flexibility for those genuinely experiencing financial difficulties. The high collection rates historically realised may well take longer to achieve in future or may actually plateau at a lower level. The balance is to ensure they still reach the 97.5% expected as part of the tax base calculation, although this is 1% lower than previous years.

Environmental Impact

There are no direct environmental impacts.

Risk Management Implications

Collecting monies from debtors who may be vulnerable, especially those financially vulnerable because they have previously received 100% council tax support, will be difficult which may pose a risk to Council Tax collection. Harrow has factored in lower collection rate for the amount of council tax passported to these claimants. It is hoped, that the revised recovery policy will support those with genuine difficulties but there is a risk that collection profiles may not be met.

There is also risk of potential conflict with the wider corporate collection priorities if Departments compete in an uncoordinated way to collect money from residents. However the adoption of the generic vulnerability policy, the data sharing protocols adopted and the additional check points at key recovery stages will support coordinated recovery actions and hopefully lead to successful collections.

Equalities implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out in relation to the review of the Corporate Debt Collection Policy. The EqIA is currently a working document and has been updated as the review has progressed.

The EqIA will be updated further when the consultation with stakeholders is complete.

The review of the Debt Collection policy falls within a programme of mitigations that are being taken forward to support people affected by the changes of the Welfare Reforms.

The Welfare Reforms will impact residents living in Harrow as the total amount of benefit received in the borough will be reduced by approximately £8 million. However this could increase as we do not understand whether there will be any further impacts through the introduction of Universal Credit and Personal Independent Payments. The breakdown to date of the numbers affected is included within the table below:

When	What	Who	How many affected	Total forecast loss
1.4.13	Council Tax Support	Working age households claiming Council Tax Support	11,200	£3.8m
1.4.13	Size Criteria	Working age households living in Council and Housing Association properties	583	£700,000
6.13 to 9.13	Benefit Cap	Working age households not in receipt of certain benefits e.g. Working Tax Credit and Disability Living Allowance	687	£3.5m
10.13 roll out	Universal Credit	All working age households claiming benefits	Not known	Not known
6.13 roll out	Personal Ind. Payments	Working age Disability Living Allowance recipients	Forecast 560,000 nationally	Not known

Through the activity carried out to develop the Local Council Tax Support Scheme an EqIA was developed and presented to Cabinet on the 13th December, 2012. This EqIA shows the impact of localisation of Council Tax Support on the nine protected characteristics and is attached at Appendix D.

Housing has been working with CAB to support tenants affected by welfare reforms. CAB has been visiting a sample of tenants to raise awareness, give advice and talk through options available. The report from this activity is being brought together and will provide a profile of those tenants interviewed. This report was presented to Councillors at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on the 4th June, 2013.

As can be noted by the table, the welfare reforms have not yet all been implemented and we are not clear on how they may impact residents. Therefore it is difficult to provide a detailed analysis of the impact of all the changes. However work is being carried out to get an understanding of the cumulative impacts.

All changes that are taken forward will be monitored closely through the welfare reform governance structure to understand their effectiveness. This will be through a quarterly dashboard that will monitor the overall impacts of welfare reform and the economy.

In relation to debt collection, services are in the process of investigating how, and where possible, the information to monitor the nine protected characteristics can be brought together in relation to the collection of debt.

The draft Vulnerability Criteria will support the identification of vulnerable debtors to the Council and will ensure that appropriate actions are taken forward in respect of individual circumstances.

Feedback from both complaints and the external agencies that we are working with will provide quantitative and qualitative data which will support monitoring.

Corporate Priorities

The report addresses the Council's concerns on how we deal with income collection from those who are vulnerable. The revised recovery policies and adoption of vulnerability criteria ensures those genuinely suffering hardship or who are vulnerable can have bespoke payment arrangements which are outside of the normal process and allows for this to be considered on a case by case basis on merit.

Although the changes to processes will not eradicate errors totally, the changes will provide members with greater assurance that check points are in place to support officers in carrying out difficult tasks in a more supporting and equitable way to those who most need our help and genuinely "can't pay" immediately.

Section 3 - 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:

None

Draft Harrow Council Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy

August 2013

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Background

This document is Harrow Council's Council Tax Collection and Recovery Policy which sets out our approach and our statutory duties to collect Council Tax.

Council Tax is collected from residents within Harrow and contributes towards Harrow Council Services such as the collection of rubbish, social services, housing and education. Some of the money collected through Council Tax pays for services run by the Greater London Authority (GLA) such as police, fire and other emergency services.

The amount of Council Tax paid to the Council is based on the valuation of the property residents live in.

Aims of the policy

The aims of the policy are:

1. To advise residents of their Council Tax liability as soon as possible
2. To help residents receive all the Council Tax discounts, allowances and exemptions they are entitled to.
3. To strive towards achieving national and local collection targets
3. To maximise the take-up of Council Tax Support (also known as Reduction) and other benefits as appropriate.
4. To ensure we liaise with Advice Agencies to ensure our residents have information and advice to support them in the payment of their Council Tax
5. To collect Council Tax fairly and efficiently and promote cost saving collection methods
6. To offer a wide choice of payment options to help our residents to pay their Council Tax whilst ensuring we offer the most efficient and economical methods to reduce costs to the Council
7. To minimise the Council Tax arrears and maximise collection by taking timely recovery action in line with a set recovery timetable.
8. To act quickly when a resident falls in arrears
9. To be firm, fair and consistent while following regulations, and ensure that the recovery procedure is understandable
10. Where the resident is defined as vulnerable under the Councils vulnerability criteria and this is known to the Council Tax office, to take action according to

individual circumstances and enter into sustainable payment arrangements wherever possible.

Our approach to collection of Council Tax

It is our duty to maximise Council Tax income for the benefit of all residents living in Harrow. We will take a 'firm but fair' approach to recovery and enforcement striking a balance between the need to sustain and improve the collection rate, our obligation to all residents and satisfaction of our policies and Government requirements.

Paying Council Tax

The Council's financial year runs from April 1st through to March 31st the following year. The annual bill is sent in March each year.

The Council Tax bill can be paid in either 10 or 12 monthly instalments. Customers can request to pay over 12 months but the request must be made by a specific date, before the financial year begins to ensure instalments are in place for the following financial year. If this is not requested, the legal default number of instalments is 10 from April to January. We also offer half yearly and annual schemes for all Council Tax payers.

Instalments of Council Tax are due on the 1st April and finish on either the 1st January or the 1st March dependant on whether you pay by 10 or 12 monthly instalments. In some circumstances Council Tax bills will be issued during the calendar year and in some of these instances the instalment could end on the 1st February.

We offer a variety of ways to pay the Council Tax bill to give you the opportunity to pay in the way that most suits you.

The different ways you can pay your Council Tax are:

- We encourage payment by Direct Debit. It is the cheapest way to collect payments and that helps us to reduce costs. If you pay by Direct Debit we offer various payment dates over 10 or 12 months, on the 1st, 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th and 25th of each month. This is the only method of payment where you can pay your Council Tax later than the 1st of the month and you won't be considered to be late in your payment. This method of payment is also very secure and once set up there is no chance of the payment not being made because you have forgotten to pay. In the unlikely event that an error is made by us, or your Bank or Building Society, you have a guarantee that a full and immediate refund will be made.

Payments can be made over our 24 hour telephone line by calling the automated telephone payment service which accepts all cards except American Express and Diners Cards – call 020 8424 1220. If a Council Tax payment is made by credit card

there is a 1.5% transaction charge. No charge will be made if payment is by debit card.

- Online payments can be made by using sort code 60-10-10 (National Westminster, St Anns Road, Harrow Branch) and account number 61742473.
- Payments can also be carried out on line through a smart phone by scanning the QR code on the Council Tax bill.
- Payments by cash and card can be made by using the payment kiosks at the Civic Centre between the opening hours 8.30 to 19.00

Vulnerability

We recognise that there are people who are especially vulnerable because of their circumstances. The vulnerability criteria is included at Appendix A to this policy and defines who we will consider as vulnerable and how this is reflected in the approach to debt collection. All Debt Collection Services within the Council have signed up to the vulnerability criteria.

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. We will look at each case individually and take the appropriate action dependant on the circumstances.

The Council must be aware that a person is vulnerable and all services are working together to ensure, where this information is known, it is shared as appropriate. To ensure that every opportunity is taken up to identify whether the service is dealing with a vulnerable debtor checkpoints have been put in place at key points of the recovery process. If you have been highlighted as vulnerable we will consider the case at the following key stages in the collection process and take action as appropriate:

- Summons application
- Cases sent to the Bailiffs
- Bankruptcy/Committal/Charging Order

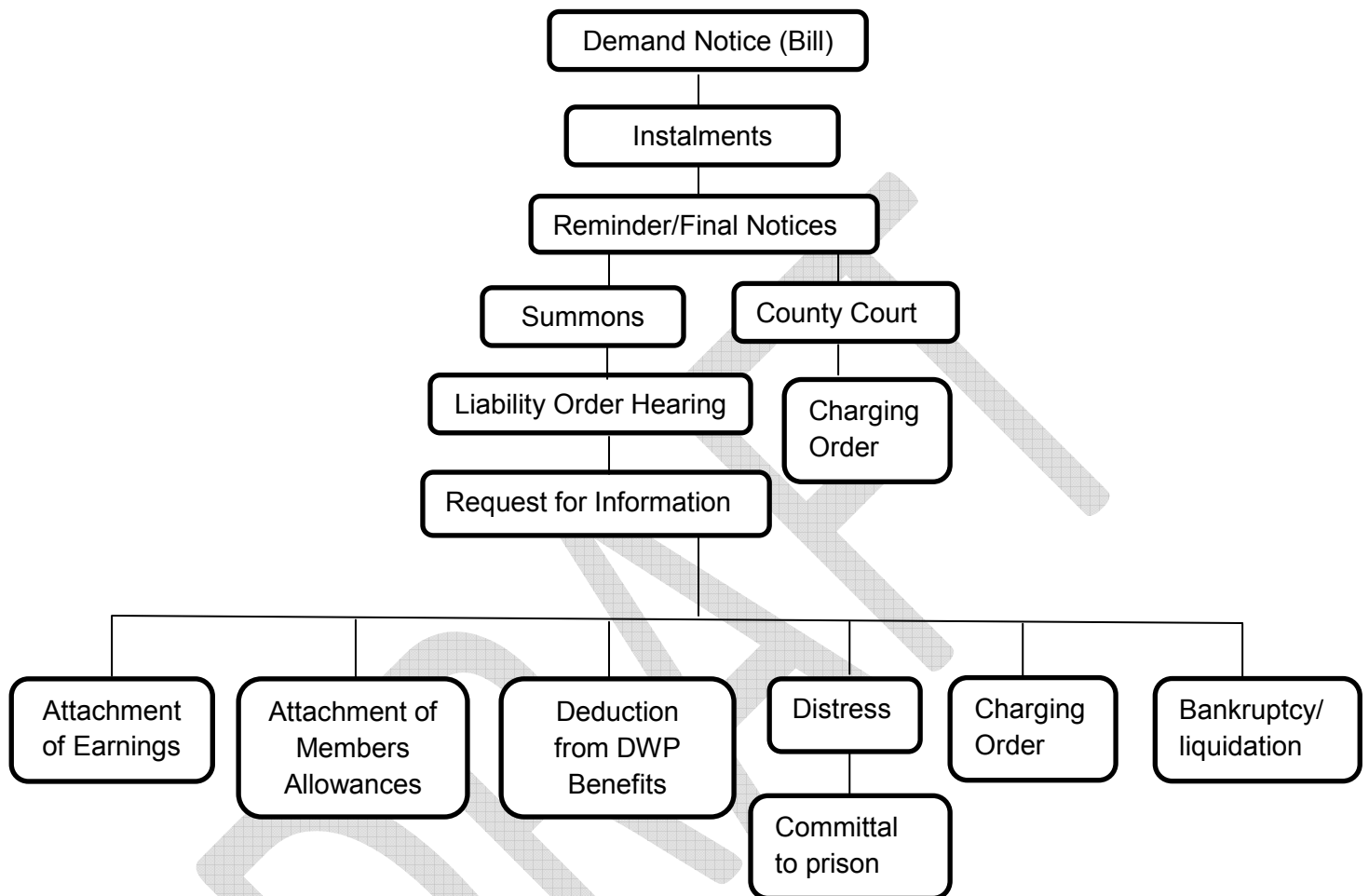
We will ensure that we maximise the take-up of benefits and work closely with Advice and Support Organisations in Harrow to ensure that you are given good quality information and support as required.

The Legal Framework

The Council must follow the legal framework for the collection and recovery of Council Tax from residents in the borough as laid out in the Local Government

Finance Act 1992 and Statutory Instrument SI 613, The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992- as amended.

The framework for the collection of Council Tax debt is outlined below:



The Council Tax Policy sits within the Corporate Debt Collection Policy and therefore will follow any local arrangements/policies in relation to the collection of debt.

Collection Processes

Council Tax Bill

At the start of each financial year, in mid-March, the Council will send out the Council Tax Bill for the year April through to the following March, to everybody on the Council Tax records that is shown as being responsible for payment. This is called the Demand Notice and this will include information about all the schemes available that can reduce the amount due to the Council i.e. discounts, exemptions and Council Tax Support. This bill will be based on your circumstances known at the time and calculated to the end of the financial year. If the Council Tax office knows your

circumstances are due to change a new bill will be issued to you nearer the time of the change e.g. if you are getting a student reduction and the course is due to end. If you are receiving a reduction that you do not believe you should be getting you must notify the Council Tax office within 21 days to notify of the changes of circumstances.

The bill will also include a statement regarding any credits or outstanding amounts from previous years.

When a bill is sent out later than 30 April, for example when someone moves in part way through the financial year, then the payment period will be shorter and there will be fewer instalments.

Council Tax Support

When you are in arrears and contact us because you are unable to pay, and you are on low income, we will encourage you to apply for Council Tax Support if you have not already done so.

We will apply the same recovery process whether you are in receipt of Support or not. If a new application for support is made, or your circumstances have changed, we will continue to collect the instalments as they appeared on the last bill. Once Support is awarded, this will reduce the remaining instalments, or if the account is overpaid for the year, the credit will be used to reduce any future liability unless you request a refund.

The Council's approach to Council Tax Collection

We have a legal duty to collect Council Tax. Recovery practices must be efficient and economic. Delays in collection or non-recovery of debts leads to high administrative costs and results in lower resources available for other Council services with higher charges being passed on to other residents.

Whilst we acknowledge that late or non-payment happens for many reasons many of you regularly do not make payments by the due dates. Regular late and non-payments by the residents of Harrow costs us thousands of pounds annually. These sums could be used to provide more services or reduce the overall Council Tax for everyone. Therefore we will diligently pursue those residents who pay late or do not pay at all, in order to maximise income and reduce the effects of increased costs.

We will, however, provide assistance to you if you are struggling to pay by signposting you to advice and support. We will also ensure that all available allowances, discounts, and support will be granted where appropriate. This will be done at the earliest possible time, in order to ensure the amount of Council Tax liability is correct.

There will be instances where you are unable to pay the full amount owed and therefore we can be contacted, at any stage in the process, to make an arrangement for payment. However we should be contacted as soon as possible to avoid further costs being added to the debt. Contacting the office will not result in recovery or bailiff costs being withdrawn but will allow you to make a payment arrangement (within the rules) which will make it easier to pay even at this late stage.

As stated earlier in the policy, we recognise that there will be some residents who are considered especially vulnerable because of their circumstances and where this is the case we will aim to look at these cases individually, and if necessary apply a discretionary bespoke payment arrangement to facilitate payment.

Reminders/Final Notices

If you do not pay your instalments as they become due, we will send you a Reminder Notice to advise you of the amount of arrears. We will ask you to pay the missed instalment by a given date, normally 14 days after the date on the reminder, and to ensure that future payments are made by the due date.

If the missed instalment is received by the given date we will not take any further action; but if it remains unpaid then we will cancel the instalments and issue a summons of the full year's tax.

If the instalment is received by the given date, but another instalment is not paid, then we will send a second reminder. If the missed instalment is received by the given date we will not take any further action; but if it remains unpaid then we will cancel the instalment arrangement and issue a summons for the full year's tax.

If the account is brought up to date but falls behind for the 3rd time then we will not send you any further reminders. Instead you will automatically lose your right to pay by instalments. If that happens, the full balance on your account will become payable and we will take Court action to enforce the payment of debt by issuing a summons for the full year's tax. A summons will cost you a further £125 which will be additional to the debt owed.

If your account has already been closed or the arrears relate to a previous year where you no longer have the right to pay by instalments you may receive a final notice rather than a reminder notice. At this point you have lost the right to pay by instalments and only full payment within the given period, normally 7 days, will prevent a summons being issued.

A checkpoint has been included at summons application stage and therefore where there is a personal alert on the system identifying that somebody may be vulnerable the officer will consider the case before moving forward to issue a summons.

Summons

When we want to issue a summons we have to go to Court and make a Complaint stating that the Tax remains unpaid. If the Court agrees then the summons is issued. This work costs the Council extra money to administer and the Council also has to pay the Court a fee for each summons issued. These costs are added to the Council Tax account and therefore you would have to pay this additional cost of £125. When we send a summons we provide information regarding this and we ask you to contact us to discuss payment if you cannot pay in full.

We will expect payment of the full balance plus the costs of the summons before the date of the hearing of the summons. In some cases we can accept an arrangement for payment.

Joint and Several Liability

This means that we can hold two or more persons liable for the whole of the Council Tax. We may hold you jointly and severally liable if you are the joint owners or joint tenants or live in the property with other people who have the same legal interest in the property as you. We may also hold married and unmarried couples joint and severally liable, whether or not both have the same legal interest in the property. If you are treated as joint and severally liable for the whole Council Tax, you cannot just pay what you think is your share. You are still liable for the whole of the Council Tax.

Our bills will be addressed to all the liable persons in the property however summons will be sent individually to each liable party. If payment is not made we will take action for recovery of the debt against any or all of the parties. We will endeavour to make arrangements for payment with any or all of the parties, but where we cannot make satisfactory arrangements we may continue our action against any or all of the parties.

What happens at Court

When we issue the summons we tell you when the summons will be heard and where. We add on the costs of the summons and we ask for payment in full by the hearing date. If the full amount, including the costs, is paid in full before the Court Hearing no further action will be taken and the case will be noted as fully paid and no application for the liability order will be made.

A bench (panel) of lay Magistrates or a District Judge will conduct the hearing. We will provide you with information when we send the summons that tries to answer as many enquiries as possible. We cannot advise what time we may go in to Court and there may be a long wait.

We have specialist officers who conduct the Court Hearings. They are experienced and have worked consistently hard with the Court staff and officials over a period of

time to ensure that the proceedings run as smoothly as possible and that they conform to the Legislative requirements in every respect.

At the court hearing we will ask the Magistrates to issue a Liability Order. If you do not have a valid defence the Court is obliged to issue the Liability Order. There are very few valid defences and these are listed below:

- There is no entry in the valuation list in relation to the dwelling
- The tax had not been properly set
- A bill and subsequent notices must have been sent in accordance with the regulations
- The amount demanded has been paid
- More than six years have elapsed since the day on which the sum became due (i.e. the date the bill was issued)
- Bankruptcy or winding up proceedings have been initiated

If you do not attend the court hearing we will make the application for a Liability order in your absence. These orders give us powers to take further action to recover the outstanding debts.

If you are unable to pay the full amount immediately, we can still be contacted to discuss an arrangement for payment on the understanding that the application for a Liability Order and additional costs will continue to proceed. In these cases, we will not take any enforcement action on the Liability Order if the arrangement is maintained.

After Court

Once a Liability Order has been granted, you will be sent an information request. You will have 14 days in which to return the relevant employer or income and expenditure information. The request form will ask you questions about your employment status. We will then use this information to decide the appropriate recovery action to take. This is a statutory request and if it is not returned, penalties can be issued.

If you do nothing, further recovery action will be taken (unless a payment arrangement has already been agreed with the Council prior to the Liability Order hearing). Further action will generally mean that your case will be issued to Bailiffs and this may incur substantial additional fees and charges.

How we can enforce Payment

The main ways we can enforce payment of the Council Tax debt are as follows:

If you are working - and we have your employers details an Attachment of Earnings Order may be sent to your employer who will make deductions from your

wage/salary until the debt is cleared. If there are arrears due for more than 1 Council Tax year the Order will be made on the oldest debt first. The law allows us to make up to two Orders at a time and in some cases this will happen. The amounts to be deducted are specified in regulations. A table showing the percentage deductions will be sent to you.

If you are claiming Universal Credit (or until this is in place you are claiming Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance or Pension Credit) - a request may be sent to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for deductions to be made from your Benefit. We have no discretion on the amounts deducted as they are specified in Regulations.

Attachment to Members Allowances - only applies to elected Members when we claim up to 40% of their allowances to clear unpaid Council Tax. This process is available in respect of an elected member of any billing authority or any major precepting authority (with the exception of the City of London and the Metropolitan Police) against who a liability order has been granted.

An Attachment Order of Members Allowances is sent to the Local Authority where you are an elected member with an instruction to make deductions from attachable allowances that are payable to you.

Bailiffs - may be instructed to remove and sell your goods to the value of the debt that you owe to Council Tax and any outstanding charges. Unless a payment arrangement has been agreed, most cases will be passed to the Bailiffs. If the Bailiffs are instructed you will receive a warning letter 5 days before the Bailiff visit. For every bailiff letter issued or visit made to your home a fee is charged and this will be added to the Council Tax debt.

The Bailiff follows a strict code of conduct agreed with us and must also abide by our Terms and Conditions of their contract.

We will ensure that, as far as possible, the information the Bailiff holds is as up-to-date and accurate. The Bailiffs are expected to behave in a fair and consistent manner and any complaints we receive are treated very seriously and investigated thoroughly. There is a separate governing body which deals with complaints about bailiff action. Details about this are in the bailiff code of conduct on our website.

Charging Orders - can be used for debts of over £1000. We can apply to the County Court or High Court for a charge to be put on your property. If we are granted a charging order we can apply to the Court to force an order for sale of your property to pay the Council Tax arrears including all the costs incurred. These costs can be substantial and you could risk losing your home if this route is taken.

Bankruptcy - if appropriate we will also consider taking the steps to enforce payment of the debt by commencement of bankruptcy proceedings. Again this is a protracted, expensive and time consuming exercise and, similar to orders forcing the

sale of your property and committal proceedings, and is only engaged if appropriate. However we have found it to be a cost effective method of recovering arrears, and in some circumstances this is the only appropriate action we can take to secure payment. The costs of this type of action will be claimed from you.

Before moving forward with bankruptcy proceedings we will consider the following factors:

- The amount of Council Tax owing
- The consequences to you of a bankruptcy order
- Whether you have contacted us to discuss the arrears, or attempted to clear the arrears
- Whether you have responded to our request for information concerning your financial affairs
- Your financial circumstances, including:
 - o The value of any assets owned by you
 - o Whether you are able to make payments to 3rd parties, such as mortgage repayments, credit card payments and utilities.

We will always send a letter giving you 14 days to clear the outstanding arrears before the bankruptcy proceedings are issued. This letter will also warn you of the adverse consequences and the costs involved in bankruptcy proceedings however non-receipt of this letter will not prevent us from issuing bankruptcy proceedings.

We will consider whether bankruptcy is appropriate and will weigh in the balance evidence concerning your income including receipt of benefits.

We will always give clear timescales as to what will happen next in the event that the recovery action escalates.

We will keep records of the different actions carried out showing how the matter was eventually referred for bankruptcy following non-payment.

Committal – If payment has not been received then we may decide that the appropriate way forward is to apply to the Magistrates' Court for your commitment to prison. This action will only be taken forward in cases where bankruptcy or charging orders are not appropriate, and in cases where the bailiff has attempted to collect the debt but has been unsuccessful. Before taking this action we will advise you of our intention and again will give you another opportunity to pay in full. We will also ask again for employer information and your income details.

If Committal is taken forward it will result in the issue of a warrant which will result in your arrest and transportation to Court. At Court you will be required to explain why the tax remains unpaid. The Court will hold a full investigation into your means and circumstances and will decide whether there has been culpable neglect or wilful refusal to pay. The Court can make an arrangement to pay the debt by Court Order

and may issue a suspended sentence until the sum is paid by a specific date. The Court can remit the debt or it can impose an immediate prison sentence of up to 90 days.

All Notices are served in accordance with the legislation and this could be to the last known address. For recovery purposes the notice is considered served unless it has been returned by the Postal Services.

We can be contacted to discuss your Council Tax at any stage of the recovery process

Absconders

We will use whatever records are legally available to us, from various sources in order to trace you if you have vacated a property without leaving a forwarding address. Any costs incurred by us will be passed on to you.

Write offs

Whilst we will always pursue the collection of outstanding debts, there will be occasions where the debt is unrecoverable. At this stage we will consider whether the debt should be written off. If a write off is required we will follow the guidance in the Council's Financial Regulations and the following authorisation process will be taken forward:

- Debts up to £10000 are to be authorised by the Service's Head of Service in accordance with any scheme of delegation in place
- Debts between £10000 and £25000 require Portfolio Holder approval; and
- Debts over £25000 require Cabinet approval

Case examples have been provided at Appendix B to help you understand the Council Tax Collection process.

Appendix A

Vulnerability Criteria

Introduction

Harrow Council recognises that some people require additional support to be able to manage their financial affairs and their circumstances may make them vulnerable. This note defines who the Council 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 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

If a person is considered to be vulnerable, under the criteria listed below, their case will be highlighted on the appropriate IT system/s. This will notify all services that they need to look into the individuals circumstances, and/or contact the relevant professional support worker before any further action is taken.

Vulnerable Groups

A person 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 person 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

The person has a mental health need and it prevents them from managing their financial affairs effectively and need support.

Learning Disability

A person 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 person 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 person 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 person 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 person 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 person, 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 people leaving care and may be unable to manage their financial affairs without support and would be considered as vulnerable.

Homelessness

A person who is homeless or about to be made homeless and is unable to manage their financial circumstances would be considered as vulnerable.

Bereavement

A person 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 person 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 the Council and are detained will be considered as vulnerable.

Non-European Economic Area (EEA) and Refugees

A person 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.

This list is not exhaustive. If somebody is highlighted to the Council as vulnerable, either from internal or external communications their individual circumstances will be considered.

It is acknowledged that there may be instances where vulnerability may not be identified however the Council is working in partnership with external agencies to ensure these instances are minimised.

Appendix B

Case Examples

Ms. A receives her annual bill in March and her instalments run from 1 April to 1 January.

She pays her April instalment on 1 April, but does not pay her 1 May instalment. We send a reminder on 16 May asking for payment by 30 May. She still does not pay. On 1 June the instalment facility is cancelled and the full amount for the year becomes payable. We send a summons on 3 June.

If the full amount on the summons is not paid by the Court hearing date, we will ask for a liability order and if successful, examine the options for further recovery.

Mr. B receives his annual bill in March and his instalments run from 1 April to 1 January.

He pays his April instalment on 20 April, after we send out a reminder on 17 April. He pays May, June and July on time but pays his August instalment on 21 August after we send out another reminder on 17 August.

He does not pay the September instalment. Although no further reminders will be sent, our automated system cancels the instalment arrangement and the full amount for the year becomes due.

If we receive the full amount within 7 days, no further action is taken and the instalment arrangement resumes next year. Otherwise a summons is issued.

Mrs. C has been sent a summons. She does not appear at Court on the hearing date and a liability order is granted.

We send her a letter advising that a liability order has been granted and warning that further recovery action will be taken in fourteen days, unless full payment is made.

She contacts us and cannot afford to pay the whole amount. She is in employment. She explains why she cannot pay in full and we agree that an arrangement or an attachment could be appropriate in this case.

We will ask for payment up to date in a lump sum and ask her to return the information request with her employer's details. We will arrange a direct debit to pay the remainder of the tax plus costs over an agreed period. Providing the direct debit payments go through as expected, no further action is taken and the direct debit continues next year. If the direct debit is cancelled or payments are unpaid, we will make an attachment of earnings based on the employer's details.

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Draft Harrow Council
Corporate Debt Recovery Policy
“Collecting money responsibly, sensitively and effectively”

August 2013

Introduction

Harrow Council levies rent and charges for a variety of services and is responsible for the collection of local taxes. Harrow Council has a duty to its residents to ensure prompt and cost effective billing, collection and recovery of all sums due to the Council. Whilst the majority of customers do pay on time arrears of payment can arise for a variety of reasons.

Delays in the collection of the debt owed to the Council results in less funding available to provide services to the local community.

This document is an overarching draft policy setting out the Council's proposed approach to debt collection providing a framework for debt collection services across the Council. This policy links the specific recovery policies for the different income types to the Council ensuring 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 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 on and maintain upper quartile collection rates.

Harrow 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 ensuring that both preventative and early recovery action is taken.

The Council will consult on this policy and when it is finalised the Debt Collection Services will update their individual debt recovery policies to reflect the principles of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy.

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 the debtor to prevent debt occurring. We will work with debtors to ensure they maintain a minimum payment to ensure arrears do not increase.

To deliver this effectively customers can expect Harrow Council 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 Working with independent organisations i.e. Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to ensure debtors are given independent advice
 - o Internal staff are trained in the maximisation of benefits uptake, debt collection and negotiation skills.
- Staff will treat customers with respect at all times and respond courteously
- To offer a wide choice of payment options to help our residents to pay their bills to the Council whilst ensuring we offer the most efficient and economical methods to reduce costs to the Council
- Advise 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 customers owe more than one debt to the Council consideration will be given to a hierarchy of debt in order to identify priority debts.
- Use data collected by the Council and 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.

The Council would expect that customers who have a debt, or who have a liability to pay a charge to the Council would follow the following principles:

- Pay amounts due promptly to ensure receipt by the Council on or before the date that payment is due
- Inform the Council promptly of any changes to their circumstances that may affect the amount to be paid or the ability to pay

- Notify the Council promptly if their address changes
- Contact the Council promptly if it is believed the amount charged is not correct, both where the amount may be too much or too little
- Contact the Council promptly if unable to pay an amount that is due
- Respect the Council, its 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 the Council

Vulnerability Criteria

Harrow Council recognises 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 the Council 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 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 Council does not have one integrated IT system where all debt with the council is collated. Therefore the effective operation of this policy is reliant on processes being put in place to enable Officers 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 going to be undertaken 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.

The intention is that if a person 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 individuals 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 debtor 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 person 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 person 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

The person has a mental health need and it prevents them from managing their financial affairs effectively and need support.

Learning Disability

A person 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 person 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 person 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 person 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 person 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 person, 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 people leaving care and may be unable to manage their financial affairs without support and would be considered as vulnerable.

Homelessness

A person who is homeless or about to be made homeless and is unable to manage their financial circumstances would be considered as vulnerable.

Bereavement

A person 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 person 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 the Council and are detained will be considered as vulnerable.

Non-European Economic Area (EEA) and Refugees

A person 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 the Council as vulnerable, either from internal or external communications their individual circumstances will be considered.

Management of financial affairs criteria

The criteria the Council's 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

It is acknowledged that there may be instances where vulnerability may not be identified however the Council is working in partnership with external agencies to ensure these instances are minimised.

The Council is 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, as well as feedback from consultation on the policy, will influence this criteria and its operation.

Methods of Payment

The Council offers a range of payment methods for customers to pay their bills to the Council. These include Direct Debit, Online and Telephone Payments, Cash and Cheque. Direct Debit is the Council's 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 Harrow Council 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 Council 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. The Council 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 the Council 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	Can result in eviction

Priority	Debt Type	Commentary
	Rent	
3.	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

Table 2

Debt Type	Commentary
Fuel debts	Can result in disconnection
Income Tax and VAT	Can result in bankruptcy or imprisonment
County Court Judgements	Can result in Bailiff action, Attachment of Earnings or bankruptcy
Fines or compensation/costs orders	Can result in imprisonment
Maintenance/child support	Can result in repossession of goods or even imprisonment
Hire purchase will be considered if necessary for work i.e. car	Can result in repossession of goods
Water rates	Can result in Bailiff action/disconnection
Maintenance or Child Support	Can result in Bailiff action or imprisonment

Multiple Debts

Some customers may owe more than one debt to the Council. If the customer is also on a low income or experiencing financial hardship the Council needs to be clear on the debts it considers 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 the Council to recover debts without having to resort to enforcement action. However where debts are not paid enforcement, including court action, will be necessary. The Council 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

The Debt Recovery Agents contracted with the Council have signed up to the Council's corporate vulnerability criteria and Code of Conduct.

Writing Debts off

If all appropriate recovery methods have been exhausted and the council is unable to recover the debt then a recommendation will be put forward that the debt is written off. All debts to the Council will be actioned in accordance with its Financial Regulations.

Monitoring the Policy

The Council 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.

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 review, function, strategy, project, procedure, restructure)</p>	<p>Review of the Corporate Debt Collection Policy</p>
<p>Which Directorate / Service has responsibility for this?</p>	<p>Collections and Housing Benefits - Finance</p>
<p>Name and job title of lead officer</p>	<p>Fern Silverio – Head of Service, Collections and Housing Benefit</p>
<p>Name & contact details of the other persons involved in the EqIA:</p>	<p>Bernie Beckett, Consultation Project Manager Tel: 020 8736 6726 Email: bernie.beckett@harrow.gov.uk</p>
<p>Date of assessment:</p>	<p>Version 1 Version 2 – updated 8th August, 2013 to reflect updated activity and support Overview and Scrutiny Report to be presented at Committee on the 17th September, 2013. Version 3 – updated 15th August, 2013 with information from Housing Version 4 – Updated 16th August 2013 following Corporate Debt Collection Meeting Version 5 – Updated 3rd September, 2013 with data from Housing and further to comments from the Welfare Reform Project Board.</p>

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Stage 1: Overview

<p>1. 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)</p>	<p>The review of the Council Tax Debt Recovery Policy falls within a programme of mitigations that are being taken forward to support people affected by the changes within the Welfare Reforms. The review has been taken forward to specifically address concerns raised by members and addresses the following recommendations: Recommendation 1 The central debt recovery service should develop a process for the identification of vulnerable</p>
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residents and reviewing their cases at appropriate stages in the central debt recovery process.

A draft vulnerability criteria has been developed through engagement with a multi-agency Community Reference Group, multi-agency Debt Collection Sub Group and through discussions within the Welfare Reform Governance Structure. This criteria is included within the draft Corporate Debt Recovery Policy, attached at Appendix B to the Overview and Scrutiny report dated 17th September, 2013.

Services have agreed that proposed checkpoints will be put in place at key stages of the Debt Collection processes. 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 before full implementation. 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.

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 Scrutiny Report at Appendix E.

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 7) within the report to Scrutiny shows the hierarchy of debts.

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 impacts of welfare reforms where information which will include the levels of debt across the Council. 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 hoping, that through this activity, feedback will be provided on the impacts of the changes and the levels of debt 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 has been developed to support people impacted by the Economic situation and welfare reforms. The 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, live chat with an advisor, Facebook and telephone. The advice portal is intended to increase the reach and cost

	<p>effectiveness of advice and support services across Harrow. A link to the portal will sit within the Help Scheme.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>2. What factors / forces could prevent you from achieving these aims, objectives and outcomes?</p>	<p>Lack of commitment from internal debt collection services Lack of involvement from external agencies Feedback from the consultation does not agree with the proposals</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>Internal Staff from all Debt Collection Services which include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accounts Payable - Revenues - Housing - Community Health and Wellbeing (Adults) <p>will all be required to sign up to the Corporate Debt Collection Policy</p> <p>External Customers who are experiencing financial difficulties and who have debts with Council Services External agencies who liaise with the Council regarding customers who have debt with the Council</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>Overall responsibility for the development of the Corporate Debt Collection Policy is led by the Collections and Housing Benefit Service. The responsibility for development 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 (Adults) <p>In relation to the delivery and development of a Corporate Vulnerability Policy and effective Data Sharing all services have responsibility to help shape and deliver the Vulnerability Policy and ensure effective data sharing is carried out</p>

4a. How are/will they be involved in this assessment?

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An internal Corporate Debt Working Group has been set up to take forward the changes and includes representation from the following services:

- Revenues
- Housing
- Accounts Payable
- Community Health and Wellbeing (Adults)
- Children's
- Access Harrow
- Risk, Audit and Fraud
- Legal

This group meets on a regular basis and has to date developed the draft Corporate Vulnerability Criteria which is being taken to the meeting of Scrutiny on the 4th June, 2013. The group's activity feeds in to the multi-agency Debt Collection Sub Group which then in turn feeds through the Welfare Reform Governance Structure.

The multi-agency Debt Collection Sub Group has been developed to help inform and shape the changes and this group includes representation from the following internal/external services:

- Councillors
- Housing
- Revenues
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Children's
- Access Harrow
- Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD)
- The Law Centre
- CAB
- Age Concern
- Bailiffs (Chandlers Ltd and Newlyn's plc)

This group meets on a regular basis and has fed in to changes in the Council Tax Debt Recovery Policy and is now feeding in to the corporate debt collection activity. Outcomes from this group are taken through

	<p>the Welfare Reform governance structure. There will be a consultation to give stakeholders the opportunity to shape the Corporate Debt Collection Policy</p>
<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) 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</p> <p>(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)</p>	
<p>Age (including carers of young/older people)</p>	<p>Council Tax currently have – info to be provided 3.9.13</p> <p>Housing have 487,793 debtors and the level of debt outstanding is £1,319,461. 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) Whilst applying this directly to those cases with rent arrears the data does exist for a report to be run, this would require a report request being raised in plenty of time and was not achievable within this report timescale.</p> <p>The numbers of vulnerable people as defined in the draft vulnerability criteria are currently unknown as the policy is not yet in place however figures will be gathered (where possible within the current IT systems) when the policy is agreed and operational</p>
<p>Disability (including carers of disabled people)</p>	<p>People with disability are impacted by 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.</p>
<p>Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>This information is not currently available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services</p>
<p>Marriage / Civil Partnership</p>	<p>This information is not currently available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services</p>

Pregnancy and Maternity	This information is not currently available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services
Race	This information is not currently available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services. However the vulnerability criteria includes people who have language difficulties because they do not understand either written or spoken English especially where they do not have enough support from their family who can speak or read English.
Religion and Belief	This information is not currently available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services
Sex / Gender	This information is not currently available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services
Sexual Orientation	This information is not currently available and is unlikely to be able to be captured within the current IT systems across all debt collection services
<p>6. 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>The Welfare Reforms will impact residents in Harrow as the total amount of benefit received in the borough will be reduced by approximately £8m however this could increase as we do not understand whether there will be any further impacts through the introduction of Universal Credit and Personal Independent Payments.</p> <p>The figures available currently on the impacts of these changes are:</p> <p>Council Tax Support – Working age households – 11,000 impacted</p> <p>Size Criteria – Working age households living in Council and Housing Association properties – 583 impacted</p> <p>Benefit Cap – Working age households not in receipt of certain benefits which include Working Tax Credit and Disability Living Allowance – 687 impacted</p> <p>Universal Credit – All working age households claiming benefits – numbers not</p>

	<p>known</p> <p>Personal Independent Payments – Working age Disability Living Allowance recipients – numbers not known.</p> <p>The Localisation of Council Tax Support EqIA that was put to members at Cabinet in December 2012 shows the impact of the changes to the localisation of Council Tax to Council Tax Support claimants and is attached at Appendix C.</p> <p>The Debt Collection Policy is being reviewed as a result of the welfare changes and concerned raised by members at Scrutiny Committee regarding vulnerability and alignment of processes.</p> <p>The draft Vulnerability Criteria will support the identification of vulnerable debtors to the Council and will ensure that appropriate actions are taken forward in respect of individual circumstances.</p>				
<p>7. Have you undertaken any consultation on your proposals? (this may include consultation with staff, members, unions, community / voluntary groups, stakeholders, residents and service users)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Yes	No		
Yes	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>					
<p>Who was consulted?</p>	<p>What consultation methods were used?</p> <p>Consultation booklet and</p>				
<p>What do the results show about the impact on different equality groups (protected characteristics)?</p>	<p>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>				
<p>Currently the draft policy is being</p>	<p>Consultation booklet and</p>				

<p>developed in partnership with all internal services and with an multi-agency Debt Collection Sub Group and the Community Reference Group.</p> <p>A consultation is planned over the period 23rd September, 2013 to 1st November, 2013</p>	<p>questionnaire will be placed on the Councils website and responses can be made through hard copy/email/telephone/completion on the web</p> <p>Consultation booklet and questionnaire will be circulated to all members of the Community Reference Group and Debt Collection Sub Group</p> <p>Face to face consultation with Debt Advice Agencies and Voluntary Sector Workshops to be advertised</p>		
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Stage 3: Assessing Impact and Analysis

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?

Protected Characteristic	Positive	Adverse	Explain what this impact is, how likely it is to happen and the extent of impact if it was to occur.	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)
Age (including carers of young/older people)			To be completed when the consultation is complete.	
Disability				

(including carers of disabled people)					
Gender					
Reassignment					
Marriage and Civil Partnership					
Pregnancy and Maternity					
Race					
Religion or Belief					
Sex					
Sexual Orientation					
Other (please state)					
<p>∞ Cumulative impact – Are you aware of any cumulative impact? 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.</p> <p>Example: 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</p>		<p>The review of the Debt Collection Policy has been put in place to mitigate the impact of welfare reforms and therefore should have a positive impact ensuring that residents who are in debt to the council are dealt with in a consistent and transparent manner and vulnerability is highlighted at an early stage in the debt collection process.</p> <p>Many people impacted by the welfare reforms will experience a cumulative impact as they will be affected by more than one of the changes to benefits.</p> <p>The breakdown of the numbers affected by the changes within the welfare reforms are shown in Section 6 of this EqIA.</p> <p>Through working with public health on the impacts of the welfare reforms a</p>			

<p>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.</p>	<p>diagram showing the possible implications to health for people living in poverty. This diagram is attached to this EqlA at Appendix A.</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. (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>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>Foster good relations between people from different groups</p>
<p>Are there any actions you can take to meet the PSED requirements? <i>(List these here and include them in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)</i></p>		
<p>11. 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)</p>	<p>Disability (including carers)</p>
<p>No</p>	<p>Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>Marriage and Civil Partnership</p>
	<p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>Race</p>
	<p>Religion and Belief</p>	<p>Sex</p>
	<p>Sexual Orientation</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)</p> <p>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>
<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>Q11a. If your EqIA is assessed as outcome 3 or have ticked ‘yes’ in Q11, explain your justification with full reasoning to continue with your proposals.</p>

<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>			
<p>Area of potential adverse impact e.g. Race, Disability</p>	<p>Action proposed</p>	<p>Desired Outcome</p>	<p>Target Date</p>
			<p>Lead Officer</p>
			<p>Progress</p>

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>15. Do you currently monitor this function / service? Do you know who your service users are?</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>No</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No
Yes	No		
<p>16. What monitoring measures need to be introduced to ensure effective monitoring of your proposals? <i>(Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)</i></p>			
<p>17. How will the results of any monitoring be analysed, reported and publicised? <i>(Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)</i></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>			

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.

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?

20. How will the impact assessment be publicised? E.g. Council website, intranet, forums, groups etc

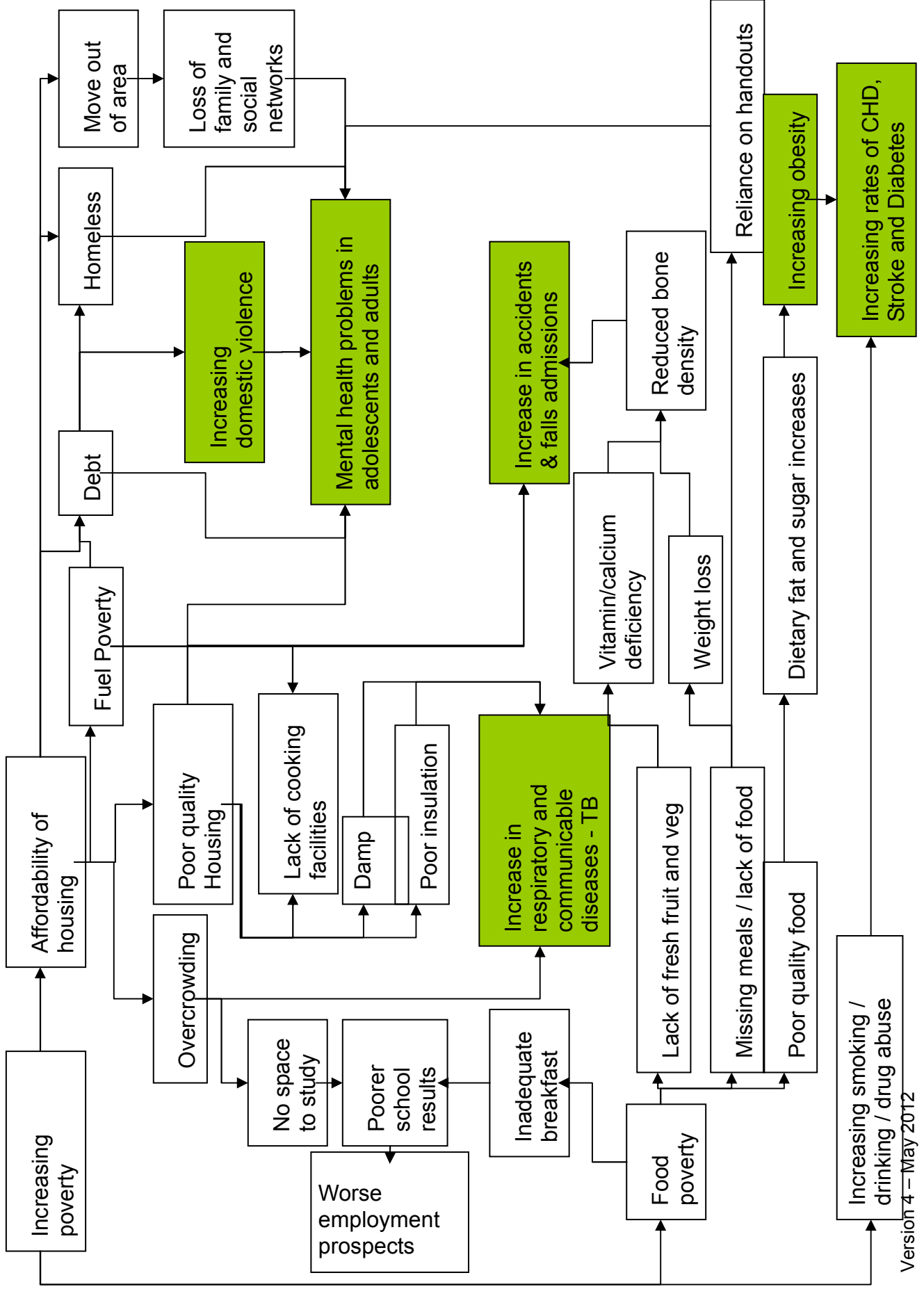
Stage 8 - Organisational sign Off (to be completed by Chair of Departmental Equalities Task Group)

The completed EqIA needs to be sent to the chair of your Departmental Equalities Task Group (DETG) to be signed off.

21. Which group or committee considered, reviewed and agreed the EqIA and the Improvement Action Plan?

Signed: (Lead officer completing EqIA)	Signed: (Chair of DETG)
Date:	Date:

Appendix A.



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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>A new localised Council Tax support scheme in place of the existing national Council Tax Benefit scheme.</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 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>Name & contact details of the other persons involved in the EqIA:</p>	<p>A multi-agency group has been developed to oversee the development of the Equality Impact Assessment. This group has membership from the Voluntary Sector including CAB, Mind in Harrow, Harrow Mencap, Harrow Carers, Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD), Age UK, HASVO, Harrow Equalities Centre, Landlords Association, Tenants and Residents Association, Councillors, Unions, Representatives from Harrow Council Services.</p>
<p>Date of assessment:</p>	<p>EqIA was opened on the 7th February, 2012. The document has been monitored and updated on a regular basis by a multi-agency Steering Group. The current document is at Version 22</p>

Stage 1: Overview

The Welfare Reform Act received Royal Assent on 8th March 2012, abolishing the current system for Council Tax Benefit. The Local Government Finance Act received Royal Assent on the 31st October, 2012 and includes legislation to give Local Authorities the responsibility for the development of localised Schemes for providing support for Council Tax with 90% of the funding that is currently provided.

The timescales are very tight with implementation of a new scheme required in April 2013. The grant settlement is expected to be provided on the 17th December, 2012 and therefore the schemes have initially been shaped using estimated grant allocation provided by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Harrow Council's aim is to implement a localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme that initially covers the first two years of delivery – 2013/14 and 2014/15 in Harrow within budget and on time, whilst mitigating any future financial risk. Within Harrow and thereafter in this Equality Impact Assessment this scheme is to be known as a Council Tax Support Scheme.

§ Within the Act Council Tax Support claimants who are pensioners will be protected by draft prescribed requirements regulations. Local Authorities must develop approaches to meet their local needs but should consider the impact on the most vulnerable when designing their schemes

A multi-agency Steering Group has been developed to work with the council to ensure the scheme is developed to reflect the needs of the local community.

Following a steer from the Leadership Group and CSB, and subsequent confirmation from the Portfolio Holder, it was agreed that savings cannot be found from elsewhere within the Council. A new scheme will therefore be developed that manages the funding gap of approximately £3.8m in the year 2013-2014 and approximately £5.1m in the year 2014-2015. These savings figures have increased since consultation following receipt of expected grant figures for Council Tax Support from Department of Communities and Local Government.

1. 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)

	<p>The consultation was based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The scheme design will be developed within the statutory framework o The scheme will be developed to meet the resources made available from the Government o The scheme will provide support to the most vulnerable groups in Harrow within the funding available o The scheme will encourage people into work and will not provide any disincentives to work <p>The consultation materials gave examples of the main rules within Council Tax Benefit that could be changed to meet these principles. The consultation booklet and survey are an appendix to the Cabinet Report.</p> <p>As a result of the consultation three model schemes are being put to Cabinet for consideration and their details are included within the Cabinet Report. Council Tax Support Schemes 1 and 2 have been shaped through feedback from the consultation activity and both sit within the resources available to deliver Council Tax Support. Scheme 3 has been developed following the announcement from the DCLG that a transitional fund is available providing Local Authorities implement a scheme to meet with the Governments criteria and would require an overspend if implemented.</p>
<p>2. What factors / forces could prevent you from achieving these aims, objectives and outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not being able to meet the timescales that have been proposed by the Government - New Scheme not adopted by 31 January 2013 as required by the Government. - IT not in place by 31st January, 2013 - Lack of funding and resources to support implementation. - The Council is taking the risk that there will be an increase in claimants in the next two years. . - Risk of challenge
<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>The Department of Communities and Local Government have developed an EqIA on the proposals and this document highlights the following customers that may be affected by the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working age claimants - The existence of other vulnerable groups amongst working age claimants e.g. carers or disabled - Low income claimants

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Authorities <p>The following customers/stakeholders within Harrow were identified initially through modelling of Council Tax Benefit data and activity carried out with the Steering Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing Council Tax Benefit claimants - Future Council Tax Benefit claimants - Workforce – Housing Benefit, Council Tax Teams and Access Harrow - Other Council Services - Voluntary Organisations supporting vulnerable people - Precepting Authorities (GLA, Police, Fire) - Council Tax payers - Residents (if funding has to be found elsewhere could affect other services) - Families with children - Lone parents - Carers - Part time and full time workers and are claiming Council Tax Benefits - People who are disabled and are claiming Council Tax Benefits - Single people and couples without children - People with mental health issues - People who are on a low income and do not have a good education and therefore unable to earn more - young people leaving care - low paid workers <p>Harrow Council's Housing and Council Tax Benefits Department has the overall responsibility for developing and delivering the scheme</p> <p>Council Tax Department</p> <p>Harrow's partners are the precepting authorities – police, fire, Greater London Authority (GLA)</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? 	

The Local Government Finance Bill states that precepting authorities must be consulted before the draft scheme is published and therefore meetings were held with representatives to agree how this consultation was taken forward. In line with Government advice the formal consultation was carried out with the GLA before the public consultation started on the 11th June, 2012. The GLA provided their formal response to the consultation which has been included as an appendix to the Cabinet Report.

Representatives from the GLA and Harrow Council are included in the pan London Council Tax Reduction Working Group hosted by London Councils. This group is working together to understand the proposals and how they can be implemented across London.

The precepting authorities including GLA, Police and Fire Services are members of Harrow's Consultation Steering Group that has been developed to oversee the consultation ensuring it is open, transparent and feedback shapes the new scheme. The representatives have agreed to remain on the distribution list and will attend meetings where specifically requested due to limited resources. The GLA are also part of the West London Council's Council Tax Support workshop hosted by Harrow Council and as a result meet with West London Authorities on a monthly basis.

Harrow Service Managers also attend London Council's Benefit Managers and pan London Council Tax Support meetings.

The Council Tax Section were given the opportunity to give their view through the consultation process and the Divisional Director of Benefits and Collections is a member of the Steering Group.

The Multi Agency Sub Group, with membership from the Steering Group, has met monthly to update the Equality Impact Assessments for the changes to Council Tax Benefits.

Stage 2: Monitoring / Collecting Evidence / Data

(The data quoted in this section was derived from analysis of Council Tax Benefit caseload as at 1/9/12)

5. What information is available to assess the impact of your proposals? Include the actual data, statistics and evidence (including full references)

4a. How are/will they be involved in this assessment?

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>63% of the current Council Tax Benefit caseload are working age (all data is to be audited before final report and will be included as an end note to ensure clarity)</p> <p>Analysis of current Council Tax Benefit caseload for working age customers shows 3.89% are aged 18-24, 19.69% between 25-34, 34.76% between 35-44, 29.62% between 45-54 and 12.04% are 55-60.</p> <p>67% of the caseload are families with children (of the 67%, 68% are from smaller families and 32% are larger families (3+ children))</p>
Accessibility (including carers of disabled people)	<p>Analysis of current Council Tax Benefit caseload for working age customers shows that 15.4% are disabled (as per definition of Group A) and 1.6% are carers (shown as receiving Carers Allowance within current caseload)</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>This information is not currently collected within the current IT system. Efforts were made to capture this information through the consultation activity however completion of the monitoring elements of the form was not consistent and therefore the information could not be relied upon.</p>
Marriage / Civil Partnership	<p>Data is provided for 'couples, analysis of current Council Tax Benefit caseload for working age customers shows that 37.79% are couples. Efforts were made to capture further information specifically regarding marriage/civil partnerships through the consultation activity however completion of the monitoring elements of the form was not consistent and therefore the information could not be relied upon.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>This information is not currently collected as the IT system and claim forms need updating. Efforts were made to capture this information through the consultation activity however completion of the monitoring</p>

	elements of the form was not consistent and therefore the information could not be relied upon.
Race	This information is not currently collected as the data is incomplete. Efforts were made to capture this information through the consultation activity however completion of the monitoring elements of the form was not consistent and therefore the information could not be relied upon.
Religion and Belief	This information is not currently collected as the IT system and claim forms need to be updated. Efforts were made to capture this information through the consultation activity however completion of the monitoring elements of the form was not consistent and therefore the information could not be relied upon.
Sex / Gender	Analysis of current Council Tax Benefit caseload for working age customers shows that, of the person making the claim, 42% are male and 58% are female. Where there is a couple claiming the sex of the claimant has been used in these statistics. 34% of people claiming Council Tax Benefit are lone parents, of these 96% are female.
Sexual Orientation	This information is not currently collected as the IT system and claim forms need to be updated. Efforts were made to capture this information through the consultation activity however completion of the monitoring elements of the form was not consistent and therefore the information could not be relied upon.
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? Include this data (facts, figures, evidence, key findings) in this section.	<p>The following EqIAs have been developed on a national basis:</p> <p>Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – Local Finance Bill (updated version released June 2012): Localising Council Tax - identifies the impacts of the proposals on a national basis. This EqIA does identify the net impact the overall policy may have on the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working age council tax benefit claimants - Council tax payers - Any recipients of local services that may be reduced in order to meet any funding shortfall. <p>Race Equality Foundation – Housing benefit and welfare reform: impact of all</p>

the proposed changes for Welfare Reform on black and minority ethnic communities. This EqIA identifies the proposals for Housing benefit and welfare reform will impact Black and Ethnic Minority groups as they are disproportionately represented in low-income working and non-working households. .

Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) – Impact assessment for the Household Benefit Cap – identifies the impacts on the proposal to restrict the total amount of welfare a household can receive to meet with the average take-home pay of working households. Whilst Council Tax Benefit is excluded from these proposals, the impacts of these proposals will identify with those that will be impacted by the Localisation of Council Tax Support. This EqIA identifies the net impact of the overall policy on the following groups:

- Families who are both out of work and are either
- Larger than average, in the most part with three or more children and are therefore receiving larger than average Child Tax Credit payments and Child Benefit payments; or
- Situated in high rent areas and thereby receiving large Housing Benefit payments; or
- Both of these factors combined.

- Harrow is identified as having approximately 700 households that will be affected by this policy in the year 2013/14.

- The Steering Group are working to integrate the Health Impact Assessment (Appendix 2) and the Equality Impact Assessment and a draft template has been produced that is at Appendix 1. This activity is in progress and further work will be required to identify relevant data to help inform both Impact Assessments.

The consultation included both quantitative and qualitative activity to bridge gaps.		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 Steering Group (multi agency partnership) brought together a calendar of activity which ensured all key stakeholders were given the opportunity to give their view and shape the new Council Tax Support scheme. Regular reviews were carried out throughout the consultation process to ensure gaps in the consultation were bridged by further activity.</p>	<p>The consultation included the following activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone survey with 1010 residents including 310 Council Tax Benefit claimants • Written survey with members of Harrow Council's Residents Panel – 1130 were distributed and 616 (55%) completed surveys returned. • Consultation booklet and survey circulated widely 	<p>The proposals for the development of the Council Tax Support Scheme in Harrow have been shaped as a result of the feedback collected throughout the consultation. The detailed feedback reports are attached as appendices to the Cabinet Report.</p> <p>The adverse impacts have been summarised below:</p> <p>Feedback from the telephone survey – focussed solely on vulnerability asking residents for their views on which and to what extent different groups in the population might be affected by the changes. The results of this survey were weighted in line with the population statistics for Harrow.</p> <p>Respondents were asked to identify the groups they felt would be most</p>		

<p>All residents within Harrow have been made aware of the consultation and various levels of activity have taken place to ensure all groups identified in Section 3 have been given the opportunity to give their view.</p>	<p>across Harrow with the opportunity to respond by telephone, email and freepost. The consultation booklet was also provided in easy read – 346 surveys were returned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific web pages that gave the opportunity to complete the survey on line – 152 were completed on line • Facebook and Twitter • 71 Road shows, 'Go to' days, Events, workshops, face to face meetings which included specific events/ workshops/ Meetings and discussion groups. Over 4000 people were spoken to. • Letters sent out over an 8 week period inviting residents to these events <p>All engagement mechanisms used (bar the telephone survey that focussed only on identifying and impacts on vulnerable groups) asked the same questions to ensure consistency.</p> <p>The feedback has been collated, written up and analysed and a meeting of the Steering Group has been held to discuss the feedback and draft schemes that</p>	<p>impacted by the changes – these responses are listed under 'Unprompted'. Respondents were also provided with a list of groups of people that have been identified as being affected by the changes through the data modelling and their responses are listed under 'prompted'.</p> <p>The groups identified through both of these questions in order of impact are:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Unprompted</td> <td>Prompted</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Household including</td> <td>People who are registered disabled</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Somebody who is registered</td> <td>Lone parents</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disabled</td> <td>Carers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>People on a low income</td> <td>Families with children</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unemployed</td> <td>Part time workers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lone parents</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>There was a recognition that all Council Tax Benefit claimants would be impacted by the changes as they are likely to have to pay more towards their Council Tax.</p> <p>People were generally consistent in their responses regardless of the demographic group of the respondent.</p> <p>Feedback from the Residents Panel survey - A written postal survey was carried out with members of Harrow's Residents Panel. The survey was consistent with the questionnaire used on the web and in hard copy within the Consultation Booklet and therefore asked questions both on the groups that may be impacted by the change and specific questions relating to the different ways the rules could be changed to make the required savings.</p> <p>The Residents Panel was recruited to be as representative of the boroughs population as possible however the respondents, in the main, were white British (65.1%), male (54.7%) and over 55 (approx. 70%). Only</p>	Unprompted	Prompted	Household including	People who are registered disabled	Somebody who is registered	Lone parents	Disabled	Carers	People on a low income	Families with children	Unemployed	Part time workers	Lone parents	
Unprompted	Prompted															
Household including	People who are registered disabled															
Somebody who is registered	Lone parents															
Disabled	Carers															
People on a low income	Families with children															
Unemployed	Part time workers															
Lone parents																

have been shaped following the outcomes of the consultation.

6.1% of the Residents Panel have reported that they receive Council Tax Benefit.

When asked about the impact of the changes on groups the following were mentioned:

Unprompted

- Disabled people
- Single parents
- Carers
- Elderly people
- Low paid workers

Prompted

- People who are disabled
- Carers
- Lone parents
- Families with children
- Single people and couples without children
- Part time and full time workers

Feedback from the survey (web and hard copy) - The survey was included both within the Consultation Booklet and also available on the Consultation website for completion online. People were given the opportunity to respond either by freepost, telephone or the consultation email address. The questions were consistent with those included in the Residents Survey

When asked about the impact of the changes on groups the following were mentioned:

Unprompted

- People with a disability
- Lone parents
- People on a low income
- Pensioners
- Carers

Prompted

- People with a disability
- Lone parents
- Families with children
- Carers
- Part time/full time workers
- Children
- Single/couples without children

Feedback from the face to face activity

The face to face activity gave the opportunity to discuss the changes in detail to understand the impacts of the changes.

Many groups agreed that there would be groups in the community who would be affected more than other groups. The majority highlighted people with disabilities as being a group that will be impacted by many changes. Other impacted groups included lone parents, carers, large families and people with mental health issues.

Formal response from Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD)

HAD raised concern that disabled people will be disproportionately affected by having to pay more council tax because of the cumulative effects of the Welfare Reforms. The full response is available as an appendix to the Cabinet Report.

Formal response from Harrow Mencap

Harrow Mencap's response was collated from a focus group as well as the Charity's experience of working with families, carers and users of their services. Their key concerns related to the adverse impact that people with disabilities experience because of the cumulative effects of the Welfare Reforms particularly as they felt that people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty. The full response is available as an appendix to the Cabinet Report.

Formal response from the Greater London Authority

– a formal response has been received from the Greater London Authority. This contains no feedback in relation to equalities however the full document is attached to the Cabinet Report.

(The data quoted in this section (unless otherwise stated) was derived from analysis of Council Tax Benefit caseload as at 1/9/12)

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?

Protected Characteristic	Positive	Adverse	Explain what this impact is, how likely it is to happen and the extent of impact if it was to occur.	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)
Age (including carers of young/older people)			<p>The Government have protected Council Tax Benefit claimants who are pensioners from the changes to Council Tax Benefit and therefore these proposals will impact all working age claimants. There are currently 10,882 working age claimants and all will be on a low income as Council Tax is a means tested benefit and uses the Governments needs allowance which is dependent upon family circumstances.</p> <p>Through all three proposed schemes working age Council Tax Support claimants will be required to pay more or something towards their Council Tax in the future.</p> <p>It was recognised by the majority of people that responded to the consultation that these changes would impact 'low income' working age families with children. All families that receive Council Tax Benefit are on a low income and therefore all Council Tax Benefit claimants have been highlighted across the board.</p> <p>Currently 64% of Council Tax Benefit working age</p>	<p>All of the three schemes continue to not take Child Benefit and Child Maintenance into account as income when assessing for Council Tax Support to mitigate the impact of the changes upon families with children.</p> <p>Awareness Campaign - includes activity to reach all Council Tax Benefit claimants especially targeting the group of people who receive 100% Council Tax Benefit. This will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance booklet for Voluntary Organisations and staff - Training sessions for relevant departments. Staff and Voluntary Organisations - Initial letter with booklet that will be sent to all Council Tax claimants detailing the support that is available - Information sessions for claimants at Access Harrow - Articles/inserts in local press, Harrow People, Homing In and all other appropriate newsletters etc. - Help pages being developed by Communications on the Web - Information in Council Tax Bills

<p>claimants receive 100% Council Tax Benefits, all of whom will have to pay something towards their Council Tax under all the proposed schemes.</p> <p>The level of contribution could be seen as low however in relation to this group's overall income the increase could be a substantial percentage.</p>	<p>67% of Council Tax Benefit claimants are working age families with children of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 68% are smaller families (2 children and under) - 32% are larger families (3+ children) <p>Within this protected characteristic the consultation has identified that the changes to Council Tax Benefit could have a particularly high impact on working age large families including lone parents because large families are more likely to live in larger properties which fall into higher Council Tax banding and to be cumulatively impacted by the overall Welfare Reforms. More information is given under cumulative impacts.</p> <p>Children's Services have also identified that young children could be disproportionately affected by these changes because poverty levels would increase in those families with children. Where there is a risk of unemployment evidence shows families are at higher risk of turning to substance/alcohol misuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Envelope highlighting changes to ensure opened - Posters on inside of bus routes in Harrow - Messages sent out via social media <p>Hardship fund to be developed with criteria to support the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Collection policy to be reviewed to mitigate the risk of non collection</p> <p>The new operating model within Children & Families Services will deliver improved co-ordination of services, earlier identification of problems and swift effective early help.</p> <p>Housing delivering 1:1 support with families who are hardest hit by the benefit caps.</p> <p>Work programmes specifically targeted at Council Tax Support claimants</p> <p>Working alongside the mitigations workstream within the Welfare Reform Project Group. The proposed mitigations include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Debt and financial advice including benefit check - Development of a foodbank in Harrow - Co-ordination of second hand school uniform schemes - Recycled and reuse of furniture
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		<p>Children's Services have also identified that care leavers who could be moving from supported living arrangements into their own accommodation could be adversely affected by having to pay more towards their Council Tax. There are approximately 30 care leavers annually that accessed Council Tax Benefits through their move into independent accommodation.</p>	
<p>109 ability including carers of disabled people)</p>		<p>15.42% of people currently claiming Council Tax Benefit are shown as having a known disability (this will not include some disabled people on passported benefits as this information has not been required when completing an assessment for Council Tax Benefit however will be input within the new Support Scheme).</p> <p>All the surveys received a response rate of at least 15% from people with disabilities however both the web and telephone surveys received response rates of over 25%.</p> <p>The face to face activity included events/discussion groups with users of Harrow Advisory Disability Services, Harrow Mencap, MIND in Harrow and Bentley Day Centre. Discussion groups were also held with the Deaf Drop in sessions and all Neighbourhood Resource Centres where people with disabilities also participated in much of the face to face activity held.</p> <p>There was a strong feeling within some of the activity that the Government should not be targeting vulnerable people and should be making</p>	<p>Within Council Tax regulations there are already protections in the form of discounts and exemptions. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § People who have a severe mental health disability that appears to be permanent. This includes people with Alzheimer's disease, strokes and other similar illnesses. IF all the residents in the household fall into this category the property could be exempt from Council Tax otherwise some charge will still be levied. § People with disabilities whose homes have been adapted for their use may be entitled to a disabled band reduction. This means that their Council Tax will be calculated as if their property is one band lower than it would normally be. <p>Model Scheme 1 helps to reduce the effects of the changes by giving additional support to people with disabilities by having a higher level cap on the Council Tax liability (90% instead of 81.5% for all others). Criteria for the protected group is included within the Cabinet Report.</p> <p>All three schemes will mitigate the impact of the changes on people with disabilities by:</p>

		<p>the savings elsewhere.</p> <p>Within the consultation the majority of respondents highlighted people with disabilities as the group they felt would be impacted the most because of the cumulative impacts of the welfare reforms and because they felt that people with a disability are more likely to find it more difficult to access employment due to their illness/employer prejudice/accessibility to work programmes.</p> <p>Both Harrow Mencap and Harrow Association of Disabled People provided feedback relating to the disproportionate effect these changes would have on people with disabilities because of other changes which include changes to work related benefits, having to contribute to all care costs, loss of concessionary travel especially if DLA was taken into account as income. They also raised concern regarding the potential loss of DLA through the new PIP Scheme which would then have an impact on the amount of Council Tax Support if the household no longer fell into the protected category. Both organisations state that people with disabilities are less likely to be able to equally access good education and employment.</p> <p>Approximately 1.6% of Council Tax Benefit Claimants are carers (shown as receiving Carers Allowance within current caseload)</p> <p>Through all the survey activity at least 4% of people that responded stated they were a carer however through the hard copy survey we received 25% who stated they were carers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continuing to not take Disability Living Allowance into account when assessing income for Council Tax Support <p>continuing to take no non dependant deductions where the claimant or partner is receiving care component of Disability Living Allowance</p> <p>Awareness Campaign - includes activity to reach all Council Tax Benefit claimants especially targeting the group of people who receive 100% Council Tax Benefit. This will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance booklet for Voluntary Organisations and staff - Training sessions for relevant departments. Staff and Voluntary Organisations - Initial letter with booklet that will be sent to all Council Tax claimants detailing the support that is available - Information sessions for claimants at Access Harrow - Articles/inserts in local press, Harrow People, Homing In and all other appropriate newsletters etc. - Help pages being developed by Communications on the Web - Information in Council Tax Bills - Envelope highlighting changes to ensure opened
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		<p>The face to face activity was held through events, meetings and discussion groups with carers at all the Neighbourhood Resource Centres, Harrow Mencap event, Carers Revival Meetings and the CNWL Carers event.</p> <p>Throughout the majority of the consultation activity feedback suggested that carers were identified as one of the groups who would be highly impacted because of the proposed changes. People felt they would be impacted because they had limited household income and limited employment options because of their caring duties. People also felt that carers already have extra outgoings as a result of their caring duties. There was a strong feeling, particularly in the face to face activity, that carers save the Government and Local Authorities money because they are providing the care for those in need however receive little or no help to carry out this responsibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Posters on inside of bus routes in Harrow - Messages sent out via social media <p>Hardship fund to be developed with criteria to support the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Collection policy to be reviewed.</p> <p>Work programmes specifically targeted at Council Tax Support claimants</p> <p>Working alongside the mitigations workstream within the Welfare Reform Project Group. The proposed mitigations include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Debt and financial advice including benefit check - Development of a foodbank in Harrow - Co-ordination of second hand school uniform schemes - Recycled and reuse of furniture
Gender Reassignment		<p>Households claiming Council Tax benefit who have non dependants who are disabled or are carers could be liable for a decrease in their Council Tax Benefit due to the proposed changes to the non-dependant deductions. This would have an effect on the non- dependants, who would be expected to contribute more towards the household's Council Tax bill.</p> <p>No information to suggest specific adverse or positive impact</p>	<p>Request has been put to the current IT provider for Council Tax Benefits to update their system to monitor all nine protected characteristics.</p>
Marriage and		<p>No information to suggest specific adverse or</p>	

Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity			Request has been put to the current IT provider for Council Tax Benefits to update their system to monitor all nine protected characteristics.
		<p>positive impact</p> <p>No information to suggest specific adverse or positive impact</p> <p>Monitoring information is not currently collected on this specific characteristic in relation to claimants of Council Tax Benefits however the monitoring information was included on the telephone survey/residents panel/web and hard copy surveys. Many people did not complete this element of the information however the numbers of those that completed this information are as follows:</p> <p>Telephone Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asian or Asian British – 34% - Black or Black British – 8% - Mixed background – 3% - White or White British – 51% - Other background – 2% - Refused – 3% <p>Residents Panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asian or Asian British – 19% - Black or Black British – 3.2% - Mixed background – 2% - White or White British – 68.5% - Other background – 1.5% - Refused to say – 6% <p>Hard copy survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asian or Asian British – 35% - Black or Black British – 13% - Mixed background – 3% 	<p>Awareness Campaign - includes activity to reach all Council Tax Benefit claimants especially targeting the group of people who receive 100% Council Tax Benefit. This will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance booklet for Voluntary Organisations and staff - Training sessions for relevant departments. Staff and Voluntary Organisations - Initial letter with booklet that will be sent to all Council Tax claimants detailing the support that is available - Information sessions for claimants at Access Harrow - Articles/inserts in local press, Harrow People, Homing In and all other appropriate newsletters etc. - Help pages being developed by Communications on the Web - Information in Council Tax Bills - Envelope highlighting changes to ensure opened - Posters on inside of bus routes in Harrow - Messages sent out via social media <p>We will work with the Voluntary Sector to ensure all materials are accessible to those whom English is a second language.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White or White British – 33% - Other background – 3% - Refused to say – 0% <p>Web</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asian or Asian British – 28% - Black or Black British – 5% - Mixed background – 3% - White or White British – 65% - Other background – 5% - Refused to say – 0% <p>Overall the responses to the surveys reflect the diverse population within Harrow which is approximately 46.6% White British and 53.4% Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups.</p> <p>Face to face activity with specific communities included events/meetings/discussion groups held with Harrow Elders, Hayaan project (Somalian Elders), Afro Caribbean Association, Afghan events, Harrow Women’s Centre, Tamil Association drop in, Afghan Payaan AGM, Harrow Women’s Association (meeting of Asian women)</p> <p>There has also been concern raised that many large families of low income may be of ethnic origin and therefore may be adversely affected by the changes because of the cumulative impact of all the welfare reform changes. We do not have the monitoring information to be able to substantiate this however families with children have been highlighted both in the ‘Age’ protected</p>	<p>Hardship fund to be developed with criteria to support the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Collection policy to be reviewed.</p> <p>Work programmes specifically targeted at Council Tax Support claimants</p> <p>Working alongside the mitigations workstream within the Welfare Reform Project Group. The proposed mitigations include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Debt and financial advice including benefit check - Development of a foodbank in Harrow - Co-ordination of second hand school uniform schemes - Recycled and reuse of furniture
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			characteristic and cumulative impacts and therefore have been considered within both proposed schemes. Some claimants may be impacted through language barriers and therefore Awareness Campaign needs to consider this. No information to suggest specific adverse or positive impact	
Religion or Belief			There are 42% male and 58% female Council Tax Benefit claimants. Where there is a couple claiming the sex of the claimant has been used in these statistics. Within the consultation the following information has been captured: Overall there were more responses from women than men, the only exception being the Residents Panel survey where 55% of the responses were from men. 34% of people claiming Council Tax Benefit are lone parents. 96% of lone parents that are currently claiming Council Tax Benefit are women and therefore there is an impact for this protected characteristic. All surveys highlighted lone parents as one of the adversely impacted groups and the reasons given were because lone parents may have limited ability to be able to access work and do not have other means of accessing money to pay their	Request has been put to the current IT provider for Council Tax Benefits to update their system to monitor all nine protected characteristics. All of the three schemes continue to not take Child Benefit and Child Maintenance into account as income when assessing for Council Tax Support to mitigate the impact of the changes upon lone parents. Awareness Campaign - includes activity to reach all Council Tax Benefit claimants especially targeting the group of people who receive 100% Council Tax Benefit. This will include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance booklet for Voluntary Organisations and staff - Training sessions for relevant departments. Staff and Voluntary Organisations - Initial letter with booklet that will be sent to all Council Tax claimants detailing the support that is available - Information sessions for claimants at Access Harrow - Articles/inserts in local press, Harrow People, Homing In and all other appropriate

Council Tax.

<p>newsletters etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Help pages being developed by Communications on the Web- Information in Council Tax Bills- Envelope highlighting changes to ensure opened- Posters on inside of bus routes in Harrow- Messages sent out via social media- Online benefits calculator <p>All materials will be made available in other languages as required</p> <p>Hardship fund to be developed with criteria to support the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Collection policy to be reviewed.</p> <p>Work programmes specifically targeted at Council Tax Support claimants</p> <p>Working alongside the mitigations workstream within the Welfare Reform Project Group. The proposed mitigations include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Debt and financial advice including benefit check- Development of a foodbank in Harrow- Co-ordination of second hand school uniform schemes- Recycled and reuse of furniture <p>The council will work with the voluntary sector to ensure that the awareness campaign is inclusive</p>
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			<p>Request has been put to the current IT provider for Council Tax Benefits to update their system to monitor all nine protected characteristics.</p> <p>Housing delivering 1:1 support with families who are hardest hit by the benefit caps.</p> <p>The new operating model within Children & Families Services will deliver improved coordination of services, earlier identification of problems and swift effective early help.</p>
Sexual Orientation		No information to suggest specific adverse or positive impact	Request has been put to the current IT provider for Council Tax Benefits to update their system to monitor all nine protected characteristics.
<p>(The data quoted in this section was derived from analysis by the Corporate Performance Team using a snapshot of data from the Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit caseload data at June 2012</p> <p>110</p> <p>9. Cumulative impact – Are you aware of any cumulative impact? 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.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p><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</i></p>		<p>The Government's analysis does not show the effects of other changes to parts of the local government finance or welfare system.</p> <p>There is likely to be a cumulative impact as the Welfare Reform Act 2012 proposes to make major changes to the Benefits system. This project is a workstream of the Welfare Reform Project Board where Harrow Council services and partners are working together to identify the impacts of all the proposed changes. These will be identified and any mitigating factors recorded and included within this EqIA.</p> <p>Technical Reforms for Council Tax – Changes under the Local Government Finance Act 2012 allow Councils to charge full Council Tax on second homes and to abolish Class A and C exemptions. This could result in higher costs for Landlords which may be passed on to tenants who could also be affected by the changes to Council Tax Benefits.</p> <p>Community Health and Wellbeing (Adults) – possibility of a cumulative impact as a result of the introduction of the Contributions Policy. A snapshot of Adult Social Care client data was taken on the 12th October</p>	

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.

and this information has been used to inform the data. There has been difficulty in matching the data and therefore these figures are approximate.

Within the snapshot there are 4001 clients of Adult Social Care. Of this number there are approximately 1,266 who are in community based settings and in a household receiving Council Tax Benefit however approximately 75% of these are pensioners. The remaining 25% working age Adult Social Care clients are living in a household that is receiving Council Tax Benefit and therefore could be affected by the changes. Approximately 1.8% of Adult Social Care users who are community based, receiving CTB and making a contribution towards their care. These changes could affect access to care if care users are unable to make a contribution because of lack of money.

Over 50% of these Adult Social Care users that are impacted by the changes to Council Tax Benefits live in social housing so could be affected by multiple benefit impacts.

The Council is looking at ensuring increased Council Tax charges are taken into account when assessing for contribution towards Adult Social Care.

Duty to prevent homelessness - Impact of Council Tax Benefit changes could contribute to Harrow's homelessness duties if Council Tax Benefit Claimants are made homeless

- Because of additional financial pressure due to multiple changes
- Because of recovery of Council Tax Benefit arrears or inability to pay rent because prioritise Council Tax payment.

Groups identified as being most likely to be impacted by these changes could be:

- Large families
- Ethnic minority families; and
- Lone parents

	<p>The mitigations for the wider welfare reforms are being developed through the Welfare Reform Project Board which include representation from all Directorates. The mitigations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government funding via Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) - New welfare provision following abolition of Social Fund - Hardship fund to be provided as a direct result of the consultation
<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>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>Policy decision was taken by the Portfolio Holder to design a scheme that met the funding available from the Government for the Localisation of Council Tax Support to protect other service budgets.</p>	<p>Modelling has been carried out to ensure the schemes protect the most vulnerable whilst balancing the need to make savings to avoid cuts in other services.</p>
<p>Foster good relations between people from different groups</p>	<p>Are there any actions can you take to meet the PSED requirements? <i>(List these here and include them in the Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)</i></p>
<p>1 → ∞</p>	<p>Please see Action Plan that has been developed at Stage 5 which includes all mitigations.</p>
<p>Extent of consultation with different groups and inclusion of the Voluntary Sector within the Steering Group has ensured wide opportunity to respond and much commonality in relation to concerns about who would be most affected regardless of whether respondents came from that protected group or not.</p> <p>Discussions are being held with the Steering Group in relation to their ongoing involvement in the wider implementation of the</p>	

	Welfare Reforms. As part of this ongoing role the Steering Group have advised that they want to be involved in the ongoing monitoring of Council Tax Support.								
<p>11. 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>									
	Age (including carers)	Disability (including carers)	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion and Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Yes	x	x				x		x	
No			x	x	x		x		x
<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>11 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>12 If the analysis shows unlawful conduct under the equalities legislation, you should not proceed with the proposal. (select outcome 4)</p>									
Stage 4: Decision									
<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>									
<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.</p>									

(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**, explain your justification with full reasoning to continue with your proposals. N/A

Stage 5: Making Adjustments (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 proposed	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Progress
Age - All working age Council Tax Benefit Claimants/families with children/lone parents/children	Develop Council Tax Support Schemes that take account of feedback from consultation and meet the principles for the scheme including to continue to not take Child Benefit into account when assessing for Council Tax Support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimising the impact for working age families with children Council Tax Support claimants - Providing some protection for families with children/lone parents/children - Scheme implemented within the resources available from the Government therefore avoiding additional reductions in 	31.1.13	Fern Silverio	Schemes developed and being put to December Cabinet alongside this EqIA

	<p>An awareness campaign is to be developed to ensure all Council Tax Benefit claimants understand why the changes are taking place and what it means for the individual. This will include signposting and information on support available. All of this information will be developed to be inclusive to all Council Tax Benefit claimants.</p> <p>There will be an opportunity for people to carry out a benefit check including for CTS using an online calculator.</p> <p>The Awareness Campaign will include a feedback report.</p>	<p>other services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness of the changes - Feedback to residents how their views have shaped the new scheme - Manage expectations to ensure that all Council Tax Benefit claimants understand they will have to pay towards their Council Tax Bill 	1.12.12 – 30.4.13	Nicola Rae/Bernie Beckett	Communications and Awareness Campaign finalised.
	<p>Hardship Fund is being developed, this will be used to help those experiencing genuine hardship as a result of the changes to Council Tax</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hardship fund developed with clear criteria that supports the most vulnerable - Policy developed 	31.3.13	Jenny Townsley/Bernie Beckett	Multi agency sub group set up to take forward development of Hardship Fund as part of overall mitigations for wider

	Support pay their Council Tax bills	that aligns with other mitigations from welfare reforms			welfare reforms
	An action plan is being developed to include all mitigations developed by both the Steering Group and Welfare Reform Project Board.	- Impact minimised for groups affected by Welfare Reforms	Ongoing	Welfare Reform Project Board	Action plan currently being developed
	Ability to monitor all nine protected characteristics for equality monitoring which will require upgrade of IT system and update of claim form	- Ability to adhere to equality requirements for monitoring service delivery	31.3.13	Jenny Townsley/Susan Hopkins	Request has been put to the current IT provider for Council Tax Benefits to update their system to monitor all nine protected characteristics. User group is meeting to update claims form – date to be confirmed
Disability	Model Scheme 1 has been developed to help reduce the effects of the changes by giving additional support to people with disabilities by having a higher level cap on the Council Tax liability (90% instead of 81.5% for all others). Criteria for this group is	- Minimising the impact for people with disabilities who are Council Tax Benefit claimants - Scheme implemented within the	31.1.13	Fern Silverio	- Schemes developed and being put to December Cabinet alongside this EqIA

	<p>included within the Cabinet Report.</p> <p>All three schemes have continued to disregard DLA when assessing for Council Tax Support and do not take non dependant deductions where the claimant or partner is receiving DLA care component and the disability premiums will remain.</p>	<p>resources available from the Government therefore avoiding additional reductions in other services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Mark Billington</p>	<p>Currently in operation</p>
	<p>People with disabilities are able to access elements within work programmes and can also volunteer for Work Choice which is run by CTEC</p>	<p>- Providing the opportunity for people to be able to access work programmes</p>			<p>-</p>
<p>Race</p>	<p>All as age</p>				
<p>Sex</p>	<p>All as age</p>				

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>Proposing to monitor through the following mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complaints - Appeals - Applications to the Hardship Fund/Welfare Assistance Scheme - Level of arrears 		
<p>15. Do you currently monitor this function / service? Do you know who your service users the service?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>16. What monitoring measures need to be introduced to ensure effective monitoring of your proposals? <i>(Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)</i></p>	<p>- Collection of monitoring information relating to nine protected characteristics in relation to four areas of monitoring as above.</p>		
<p>17. How will the results of any monitoring be analysed, reported and publicised? <i>(Also Include in Improvement Action Plan at Stage 5)</i></p>	<p>- Monitoring reports will be developed and put to the multi-agency Steering Group for discussion on a quarterly basis.</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>- the GLA have complimented the extensive consultation process used to inform the policy</p>		

Stage 7 – Reporting outcomes

The completed EqJA must be attached to all committee reports and a summary of the key findings included in the relevant section within them.

EqJA's will also be published on the Council's website and made available to members of the public on request.

A summary of the impacts is provided in the table below. Officers are recommending that Scheme 1 is adopted as the Council Tax Support scheme because:

- It meets the principles of the scheme
- Maintains the existing protections in relation to disregarding DLA and Child Benefit; and
- Minimises the effect of the cap for people with disabilities

Table 4	
Protected Characteristic	Impacted group
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § All working age claimants will be required to contribute towards their Council Tax Bill § 7,001 working age claimants currently receive 100% Council Tax Benefit – all will be required to contribute towards their Council Tax Bill § Working age large families will be adversely impacted due to the cumulative impact of Welfare Reforms § Working age lone parents will be adversely impacted as they have a limited ability to be able to access work and they also could have a lack of support. § Children could be adversely impacted due to increased poverty levels § Young people leaving care who are moving into their own accommodation § Non-dependants would be expected to contribute more towards the households Council Tax bill
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § People with disabilities due to cumulative impacts of Welfare Reforms and difficulties in accessing employment § Carers because likely to have extra outgoings and less likely to be able to access full time employment
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Large families may be of ethnic origin and therefore may be affected by the changes
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Lone parents are more likely to be women and for those claiming Council Tax Benefit 96% are female lone parents.
<p>No specific adverse effect has been identified for the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Pregnancy and maternity § Gender reassignment § Religion or belief § Sexual orientation 	

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, review 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 impact assessment will be publicised on the Council website and through the Steering Group.</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>Signed: (Lead officer completing EqIA)</p>		<p>Signed: (Chair of DETG)</p>
<p>Date:</p>		<p>Date:</p>

APPENDIX E – 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.

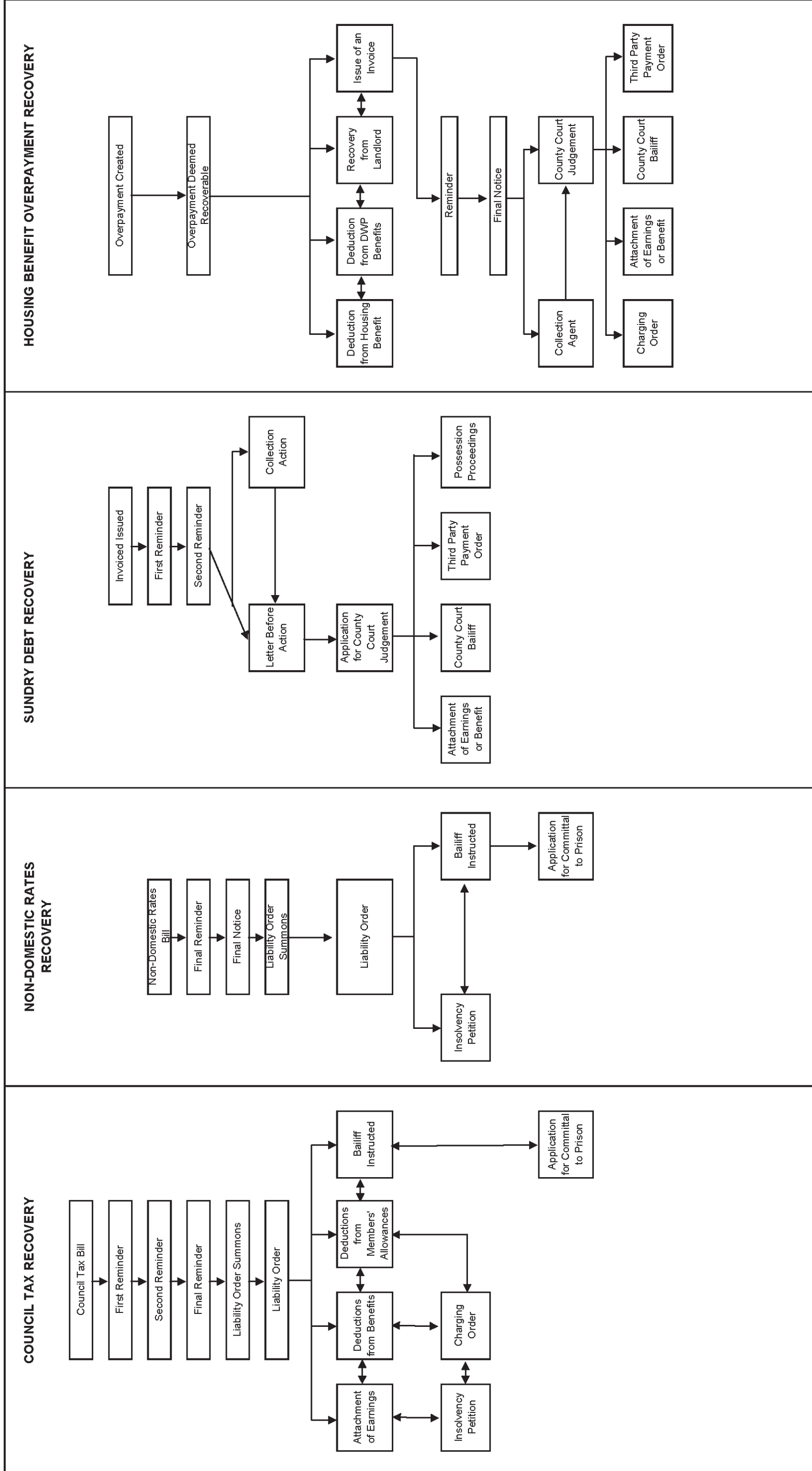
If the debtor does not appear in court, the Council asks the Magistrates' Court to issue a warrant for arrest with bail. This means that a Warrant Officer can arrest the debtor and bail them to appear in court at a later date. If the debtor does not appear at court after being bailed, the Council asks 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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ENFORCEMENT OPTIONS



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**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	17 th September 2013
Subject:	Report from the Accessible Transport Scrutiny Review
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap Divisional Director – Strategic Commissioning
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Philip O’Dell – Performance lead Environment and Enterprise Councillor Stephen Wright – Policy lead Environment and Enterprise
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Report from the Accessible Transport Scrutiny Review Appendix A: Evidence from the Accessible Transport Scrutiny Review

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report outlines the findings and recommendations of the Accessible Transport Scrutiny Review with regard to the accessibility of public transport in the Borough.

Recommendations:

Councillors are recommended to:

- I. Consider the report of the Accessible Transport 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

Despite much of the work done by the Council and its partners, significant barriers to accessible transport still exist. Accessibility to transport is an issue raised time and time again by residents of Harrow – both by residents with

disabilities and without. These concerns have been the main drivers for this review.

The review group has sought to identify the extent and significance of barriers to accessible transport in Harrow by interacting and travelling along with residents. With this knowledge, the review group has suggested improvements for the Council to undertake in cooperation with its partners.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. However, if the report's recommendations are accepted, the services considered will provide detail of any costs likely to be incurred.

Performance Issues

There are no performance issues associated with this report.

Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact associated with this report. However, if the report's recommendations are accepted, this may encourage the use of public transport.

Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

An Equality Impact Assessment was not carried out as the report includes no proposals for service change. Where changes result from the acceptance of this report's recommendations, these will be accompanied by an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Corporate Priorities

- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.
- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Simone van Elk, Scrutiny Officer, 020 8420 9203

Background Papers: No

September 2013

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Accessible Transport

Report from Scrutiny Review Group

Members of the review group

Councillor Sue Anderson (chair)

Councillor Marilyn Ashton

Councillor Jerry Miles

Councillor John Nickolay

Councillor Stephen Wright

Tony Wood – Harrow Public Transport Users Assn

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1. CHAIR'S FOREWORD

1.1 Accessibility to transport is an issue raised time and time again by residents of Harrow – both by residents with disabilities and without. The concerns expressed by residents have been the main drivers for this review. During the review, we have sought to identify the extent and significance of barriers to accessible transport in Harrow and with that knowledge, suggest improvements for the Council and Transport for London (TfL) to undertake.

1.2 I would like to thank the residents who attended our seminar as well as the residents who took the time to complete our consultation. I would also like to extend a thank you to the two residents who gave up their time to travel through the borough with members of the review group - they were instrumental to the conclusions of this review. The support from many community groups in informing their members about the review is much appreciated also.



1.3 The local bus company Metroline has cooperated with the review by attending our seminar and contributing valuable information. The double-decker bus they provided enabled those attending the seminar to get familiar with the bus in a quiet environment and with the assistance of staff. I would like to thank Metroline for their cooperation and support.

1.4 I also want to thank the representatives from London TravelWatch, Harrow Community Transport, London Sovereign, Metroline, London Underground Limited and Transport for London who attended our round table discussion. They provided us with valuable

information, were open to discuss the difficulties identified during the review and joined us in thinking about potential solutions.

1.5 The officers of Harrow Council have been very supportive of our work and I would like to thank all of them for contributing their knowledge and time - sometimes at short notice: Peter Barron, Matthew Patterson, Stephen Kelly, Hanif Islam, David Eaglesham, Phil Greenwood, Ann Fine, Paul Newman, Mohammed Ilyas, Paul Najsarek and Fern Silverio. I also want to extend a special thanks to the scrutiny officer supporting this review, Simone van Elk, for all her hard work.

1.6 A final thanks to the co-optee to this review, Tony Wood, for contributing his time as well as his extensive knowledge and expertise which have proved to be invaluable.

1.7 The policy around provision of public transport cuts across many different organisations and as such it can be challenging for the Council to impact on outcomes directly. We have made a number of recommendations to Cabinet which we hope will strengthen the Council's work on accessible transport and influence the work of its partners.

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

Councillor Sue Anderson

Chair of the Accessible Transport review

2. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

2.1 Residents of Harrow have indicated repeatedly that the accessibility of transport in the borough is of concern to them. The review has included a seminar with residents, journeys through the borough with two residents with different disabilities and a consultation to gain an understanding of the positive and negative aspects of the accessibility of public transport in the Borough.

2.2 Truly accessible transport enables people to travel from door-to-door. As well as looking at transport provided by Transport for London (TfL) and train companies, the review has also focused on the Council's provision of public highways (roads, highways and pavements). While public highways aren't strictly modes of transport, they are a necessary means to reach any transport. The interaction between the Council and transport providers has been a constant factor. The members of the review group have therefore met with Council officers to gain information as well as organise a roundtable discussion with both officers and providers of transport to discuss issues raised by residents and the possibilities for improvements.

2.3 The budgets available to improve the accessibility of transport are generally limited. This not only prohibits large scale projects from taking place but also means that smaller works need to be carefully prioritised. In that context, this review has sought to make a number of recommendations that are efficient and (relatively) cost-effective as well as identify priorities for future works that are of a larger scale and more costly.

2.4 The aims of the review have therefore been to:

- identify the issues arising from using public transport on the life opportunities of people with disabilities or with restricted mobility, as well as other residents in Harrow
- identify priority developments in Harrow to enhance the life experience for people with disabilities or restricted mobility – several priorities could be identified but cost may determine the priority
- support the Council's lobbying position with Transport for London
- support the development of the town centre

2.5 The review group has focused on the accessibility of *public* transport. Concessionary travel such as Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard scheme and Community Transport are not open to the general public and as such these services including their eligibility criteria have not been a part of this review.

3. POLICY BACKGROUND

Responsibilities for the provision of public transport

3.1 TfL provides the overall majority of public transport in London: tube, overground, buses, Docklands Light Railway (DLR), riverboats and tram services. Bus routes are generally provided by bus companies commissioned by TfL, while TfL manages the underground and overground services either directly or via a limited company.

3.2 The train services in London are provided by a number of different companies, some sharing train routes. Stations that allow interchanges between different modes of transport are generally managed by only one of the organisations using the station.

3.3 Harrow Council is responsible for the provision and maintenance of a large proportion of the streets in the borough. This includes the provision of even pavements, dropped kerbs, arrangement for crossings, traffic signs and the provision of bus stops – this includes kerb height and street markings but not the bus shelters or travel information.

3.4 The Council is also responsible for implementing some of the transport policies identified by the Mayor of London. The Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) lists the Mayor's plans for the overall development of public transport in London for the period up to 2031. The MTS lists six goals, three of which are particularly relevant to the accessibility of transport:

- to enhance the quality of life for all Londoners
- to improve transport opportunities for all Londoners
- to support the delivery of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and its legacy¹

The Council sets out how it will support the implementation of the MTS in its Local Implementation Plan (LIP), for which TfL provides funding.

Funding situation

3.5 The budget provided to the Council via the LIP for 2013-2014 is £1,743,000, of which £126,000 is spent on projects specifically designed to increase accessibility. The Council does take account of accessibility requirements in all its transport projects, so an additional £87,000 from the LIP is estimated to be spent on improving accessibility as part of other projects.

¹ These goals were set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy of May 2010 on page 6 and 7 of the Executive Summary.

3.6 Another source of funding for infrastructure and transport comes from building developments in the borough. The Council assesses whether a planning application requires new or additional transport infrastructure, and in those cases a financial contribution towards those infrastructure developments is required. In the past few years, these contributions have amounted to roughly: £0.6m in 2010-11, £0.2m in 2011-12 and £3.4m in 2012-13.

3.7 In addition, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) sets a non-negotiable levy per square metre for developments in the borough. The CIL is estimated to generate £1m per year in the next 10 years. The current arrangements for the CIL haven't fully addressed the decisions about how to spend the revenue - parts of the revenue could be used to improve accessibility of transport.

3.8 Harrow Council's total infrastructure bill is estimated at £137m, of which an estimated £60m is designated to be spent on transport. Funds to improve accessibility are limited compared to the number of improvements that could be made, and especially compared to the cost of the larger improvements such as step-free access at stations. A previous study has made a rough estimation that the costs of installing lifts at Harrow-on-the-Hill station would total in the region of £25m.

3.9 The responsibilities for providing public transport are shared between several organisations, so decisions about and funding for improving accessibility to public transport are mostly also shared. TfL prefers to participate in projects where funds are to some extent matched by the borough or other participating organisations.

4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The significance of accessible public transport

4.1 Residents have provided the members of the review with a wealth of information about the importance of access to public transport as well as an account of how transport enables them to visit shops, central London and access any of a number of other services. Despite significant barriers to travel, the two residents that participated in the journeys through the borough indicated that they use public transport frequently and travel widely.



4.2 Unfortunately, other residents have indicated that it was difficult for them to travel long distances, use certain modes of transport or travel during rush hour, and some felt restricted to local venues or only one mode of transport. One resident, who uses public transport frequently, commented that she has never been able to travel alone - she is nearly thirty. She felt there were too many things that could go wrong which make travelling alone too risky. Members are concerned by the barriers that exist for access to services but also crucially to finding suitable work. Having to travel to work exceptionally early in the hope of having space on a bus for your wheelchair is difficult enough when your employer allows flexible working hours, let alone when employers can't or won't.

4.3 Unexpected circumstances only serve to increase these difficulties. One resident tells a story of when she was travelling with her father. At the station they wanted to get off, they couldn't see the employee with the ramp, so her father left the train to try and find the employee. While he was off the train, the doors started closing and the train started to

leave. This resident couldn't have reached the open doors button herself to try to stop the train from leaving. If a fellow passenger hadn't used the emergency stop, which meant the train stopped at that platform, she would have been stuck on that train by herself. There may not be another accessible station along the route and even if there was, employees at any given station or even on the train don't know a person with a wheelchair is on that train and needs assistance.

4.4 Members were concerned that the two participants in the journeys through the borough indicated they both know several people with disabilities who don't use public transport at all. The stress caused by using public transport prevents many of their friends from travelling. One participant in the seminar indicated that it can be intimidating to use public transport; another resident's only suggestion to improve the accessibility of public transport in Harrow was to have good eyesight. These are incredibly unfortunate reminders of the barriers to accessible public transport that still exist.

4.5 The Council offers a volunteer based travel mentor scheme, the Harrow Travel Training and Buddying Project, that supports people who find public transport inaccessible in using public transport, where the training of the volunteers and their travel is funded by TfL. Members were pleased that a representative from Metroline bus suggested using this scheme for the bus company's training to address awareness issues, and agreed that this should be included as a recommendation for other local bus companies.

Recommendation A
Local bus companies should be offered the opportunity to gain awareness of disabled passengers' travel needs by participating in the Harrow Travel Training and Buddying Project (Harrow Council's travel mentoring scheme) as part of bus driver induction training.

Pavements and footpaths

4.6 The Council does a routine cycle of inspections of the roads in the Borough which is the basis for a programme of repairs. It keeps a score of the number of defects in a road as well as a record of the Council's ability to modify the defects. These records are used as a basis to determine which works have priority. If the Council is aware of where disabled residents live, this is taken into account in the assessment. Streets works in that area become a priority for the Council to resolve.

4.7 Participants in the review have identified difficulties created by uneven pavements. The paving between the town centre and Morrisons underneath the main road was shown to

be a particularly significant example as the bricks are placed in a circle and the surface is uneven and textured. Several residents have mentioned they have difficulties moving across this area in their wheelchair or with their rollator. One resident even opts to use the bicycle lanes despite the associated risks.

4.8 A resident at the seminar indicated that the Rayners Lane estate has a lack of dropped kerbs. The dropped kerb near the H12 bus stop on one side of the road has even been removed, which makes the bus service significantly less accessible.

4.9 Shared spaces - where a single, level surface is shared by all vehicle and pedestrian users, such as for example on Exhibition Road in Kensington and Chelsea – are difficult for Visually Impaired People (VIP) to navigate due to the lack of demarcations between road and pavement that help keep a straight line and can prevent traffic accidents. Members are concerned by the potential risks of shared spaces and would encourage the Council to provide adequate demarcations between roads and pavements for VIP's.

4.10 When road works, building works or gas works are taking place, the Council aims to provide adequate space and temporary ramps. It also liaises with companies about prospective street works and provides letter drops to residents who live in the neighbourhood to make them aware that works will be happening.

4.11 Members have noticed that notifications about obstructions to roads aren't always adequate. Parts of the pavement on Headstone Road and Junction Road are fenced off due to building work on Bradstowe House. The fencing blocks off a dropped kerb at that specific corner and the space left on the pavement at the corner is quite narrow, which risks someone in a wheelchair becoming stuck. Unfortunately, there were no notifications on the fencing that the dropped kerb at that corner had become unusable. Members feel it should be relatively easy to provide notifications at this and other sites in the borough with similar problems.

Recommendation B
Where road works are taking place and pavements have become impossible or extremely difficult for residents with mobility difficulties to use (including those in wheelchairs), the Council should provide clear signage ahead of the obstruction.

4.12 The Council is responsible for the provision of traffic signs in the borough. A resident with a visual impairment who uses a white cane mentioned how easy it is to miss the pole a sign is placed on and subsequently bump one's head against the sign.

Recommendation C

Traffic signs should be installed so that they do not cause an obstruction to people with visual impairments. This could include being mounted on walls instead of pavements or the use of longer posts to ensure the sign itself is well above head height.
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4.13 Members of the review group were informed that when designing any new infrastructure, one of the main aims of the Council is to reduce accidents. Members were pleased to hear that Harrow has either the second lowest or joint lowest number of road accidents in London. In the consultation the crossing between Stanmore Hill, Church Rd and The Broadway was mentioned as particularly dangerous for pedestrians. Currently, it isn't obvious that the traffic lights aren't programmed to accommodate pedestrians crossing. A resident suggested including a pedestrian phase in the traffic lights' sequence. The Council is working with TfL to investigate the crossing including adjusting traffic signals in the area and monitoring the impact on traffic flow in the area to see if a pedestrian phase could be introduced in the traffic lights' sequence of the crossing.

Recommendation D

The safety of the crossing between Stanmore Hill, Church Road and The Broadway should be investigated including the options of introducing a pedestrian phase in the traffic lights' sequence or, if this is not possible, providing safety warnings that indicate the traffic lights' sequence is not designed to safeguard pedestrians. The Council should make improvements where necessary.

4.14 Members were shown during one of the journeys how difficult it can be for Visually Impaired People to walk in a straight line. Members expressed their surprise at how challenging it can therefore be to cross wide, level crossings safely. The resident participating in the journey mentioned he sometimes ends up metres down the road by the time he has crossed. The example shown during a journey was crossing Wilson Gardens while walking from Vaughan Road to The Gardens in West Harrow. These situations could potentially be quite dangerous due to traffic.

Recommendation E

Future consideration should be given to include tactile paving and bumps across the full length of wide, long, level crossings to ensure these can be used as pathways by Visually Impaired People.

4.15 A specific difficulty raised by a resident with a Visual Impairment is that he can get lost quite easily. One resident explained that once he's lost, it is difficult, if not impossible, to find his way again without help. He can't call anyone for help because he'd be unable to describe his surroundings accurately enough. The current solution is to just wait for someone to walk past and ask for help, which can sometimes take 15 to 20 minutes. The resident indicated that the provision of talking GPS systems would be a great improvement.

Bus stops and buses

4.16 Harrow Council is going to great lengths making all bus stops in the borough accessible. In the borough there are more than 430 bus stops and 87% of them will be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant at the end of the financial year. The Council's target is to make the bus stops in the borough compliant by 2015, which would be ahead of TfL's target for London. This can include installing new accessible bus stops near existing stops that can't be improved or moved. All TfL commissioned buses are required by TfL to be equipped with ramps and wheelchair spaces.

4.17 One participant at the seminar described buses as his lifeline and described the H18 bus service as superb. Other residents identified several issues with bus services, some specific to certain stops and bus routes, others more structural.

4.18 According to residents at the seminar, many bus stops are cluttered with fixed bins, lamp posts and signs. This means that even if the kerb has got the right height and the ramp works properly, there can be a lack of space on the kerb for passengers in wheelchairs to get on and off the bus. Members were informed that when the Council creates a new bus stop all aspects of accessibility including a clear pavement, are taken into account. For existing bus stops this is more difficult as for example there can be utility mains in the ground or private land can surround the stop.

4.19 During the seminar it was mentioned that often bus drivers will say that the kerb at certain bus stops isn't suitable to use the ramp, so they're unable to let passengers in

wheelchairs off. It can be unclear to passengers which stops are accessible at any given time. TfL regularly monitors its transport services via the London Mystery Traveller Survey where older and disabled passengers monitor bus service independently while under cover. The monitor shows that 98% of wheelchair users are able to successfully board their first bus.

4.20 An elderly resident at the seminar commented that especially when a bus has been delayed, the bus tends to leave the bus stop very quickly. This makes it difficult to find a seat in time for passengers who are (a bit) unstable on their feet. There can be a tension between the needs of passengers and the schedule of the bus drivers, including their schedule for changing buses and breaks. According to the London Mystery Traveller Survey older and disabled passengers are able to get to a seat or grab hold in time 90% of the time. TfL will continue to work with bus operators on the 10% of bus drivers who currently do not comply with these basic safety considerations.

Recommendation F

The Council should encourage transport providers to regularly remind bus drivers of the necessity to provide sufficient time before leaving the bus stop for elderly passengers or passengers with mobility difficulties to find a seat.
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4.21 Alongside these general difficulties to have fully accessible buses, issues specific to certain stops were also identified. One example is that the bus stop at Harrow and Wealdstone station on The Bridge (for the buses going into the town centre) isn't accessible with the ramp. One resident has used it several times, and every time the ramp has broken because of the severe gradient between the pavement and the ramp.

4.22 Members were interested to find out whether bus drivers would be able to log issues with specific bus stops and feed these comments to the Council. Members have received comments from TfL's Consultation Delivery Surface Planning team that it wouldn't be practical for bus drivers to actively audit bus stops. Members do feel that even if bus drivers can't audit stops, their expertise in using these stops means they should be able to feed comments about the accessibility of stops back to the Council.

Recommendation G

Bus drivers possess first-hand experience of the accessibility of specific bus stops and should be encouraged to report specific concerns. The Council should cooperate with bus
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companies to gain access to that information and consider it as part of its annual work programme for road works.

4.23 Residents have fed back that when using a bus while in a wheelchair, communication with the bus driver is extremely difficult. Asking the bus driver for assistance is difficult, if not impossible, while waiting on the pavement to enter the bus. Once inside the bus conversations with the driver are equally difficult due to the distance between the driver and the wheelchair space and the noise from traffic and other passengers. In the wheelchair space of the bus there is a special button which makes a distinct sound so the bus driver knows to extend the ramp at the next stop. A resident at the seminar commented that often the bus driver doesn't hear this sound. Members noticed this happening several times during one of the journeys through the borough. Currently the only solution is for the passenger to shout loud enough for the driver to hear. Bus companies have informed members that this bell is used so regularly by other passengers it no longer serves to notify the drivers of the need for assistance. While members realise this situation can be difficult for drivers, they feel the presence of a passenger in a wheelchair on the bus should enable bus drivers to distinguish between legitimate and inadvertent use of the special bell.

4.24 Another difficulty experienced by wheelchair users when using buses, is that often the wheelchair space is taken up by buggies. Notices indicate that wheelchair users should have priority, but this isn't always adhered to. Bus drivers can be reluctant to intervene and instruct passengers to fold down their buggies. There is very little space to manoeuvre in the bus itself, which makes it difficult for people to fold their buggy while the person in the wheelchair finds their space in the bus at the same time. Bus drivers could wait to extend the ramp until the buggy has been removed, but unfortunately this doesn't always happen.

Trains, underground (tube) and overground

4.25 Trains have become more accessible for residents with visual impairments. Audible announcements in trains and tube about the stops to follow have been particularly helpful. However, only a limited number of stations in Harrow are accessible for people in wheelchairs. One participant of the seminar in use of a wheelchair does not use the train, underground or overground at all, and just relies on buses. During the seminar, the point was made that there should be more moveable ramps on trains and at stations. During the roundtable this point was re-emphasised when it was explained that a lack of ramps was a problem across London's train and underground network.

Recommendation H

The Council should press partners to provide sufficient ramps at stations with step-free access to enable passengers to use all platforms.



4.26 Even when a station is designated as wheelchair accessible, members agreed that there are still significant barriers to travelling. One significant restraint to travelling by train while in a wheelchair is that train stations require people in wheelchairs to book for assistance 24 hours in advance. This also happens at stations where there is always enough staff to assist. Often staff will let people on a train without booking in advance, but as they aren't obliged to there is always a risk they won't. Always knowing 24 hours in advance where one is going is severely restrictive compared to other passengers who have much more freedom in deciding their travel plans.

4.27 Furthermore, the options to travel late in the evening on trains are restricted for passengers in wheelchairs. For example the staff at Harrow and Wealdstone only work till 11.30pm, without whose assistance exiting the train becomes impossible in a wheelchair. Residents also commented on their reluctance to catch the last train in case the journey was disrupted or cancelled, there wouldn't be any options to fall back on.

4.28 Members recognise that making travelling more flexible for people with mobility difficulties would probably involve a significant increase in staff as well as coordination, which in turn creates substantial costs. Members think it is regrettable that budget constraints may mean it's not possible to provide passengers in wheelchairs with similar travel options to other passengers. Yet organisations such as Network Rail and TfL may still be able to identify in their travel information times when staff are always available at

specific stations, and whether there are stations where assistance does not need to be booked in advance.

Recommendation I

The Council should consider encouraging travel providers such Transport for London and rail operators to provide travel information that includes the times staff are available at specific stations, and stations where assistance for train journeys does not need to be booked in advance should be highlighted.

4.29 Members have been informed by residents that using public transport with a disability means one is less flexible, which in turn means that unexpected changes can be distressing and create massive difficulties. One resident has provided the review group with a number of examples where she almost got stuck on trains if not for the assistance of nearby staff and fellow passengers. This resident, who uses a wheelchair, therefore possesses a wealth of knowledge about accessible stations, roads, bus stops and alternatives in Harrow and surrounding areas – all useful, if not necessary, for her to be able to use public transport. Since some passengers can't always easily locate staff themselves to get assistance in such circumstances about travel options, the risk of a passenger becoming stuck on a train without an accessible option seems quite high. Members feel staff should be trained to always check whether passengers with disabilities are travelling on their services when these services become disrupted, diverted or terminated.

Recommendation J

The Council should encourage transport providers to include in their staff training full consideration of the travel needs of passengers with disabilities or other special requirements in those cases when journeys are disrupted, diverted or terminated. This specifically applies to train, underground (tube) and overground journeys.

Recommendation K

The Council should encourage transport providers to make it their staff's responsibility to ensure that passengers with accessibility requirements receive appropriate assistance and advice on alternative accessible options when journeys get disrupted, diverted or terminated. This specifically applies to trains, underground (tube) and overground.

Stations

4.30 A limited number of stations in Harrow are step-free; namely Harrow & Wealdstone, Pinner, Headstone Lane and Hatch End. Not all of those stations provide step-free access from train to street, but many just from platform to street. Residents have indicated a number of station they feel should be made step-free: Harrow-on-the-Hill was frequently mentioned, but also Rayners Lane, Kenton and even Stanmore station, though officially labelled step-free, was mentioned a number of times.

4.31 Stanmore station is officially marked as step-free but due to the long, narrow and steep ramp and the exit from the car park to the road, in reality it is not. Members have visited Stanmore station and commented that the step-free route from the platforms to the bus stops was roughly 400 meters long and contains a very uneven and really steep slip road into the car park. In addition, the ramp between the car park and the station is also rather long and requires significant stamina for passengers in manual wheelchair to use alone. A significant concern is that until TfL acknowledges that Stanmore is not in fact step-free, it will be difficult to get help with funding or design. Members are pleased to hear that the Council continues to inform TfL of these difficulties and would suggest working together with the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital as they would likely share concerns about the lack of step-free access at this station.

4.32 There can also be difficulties for passengers in exiting the trains at Stanmore Station. Only one of the three platforms at the station is level with the trains. This means passengers with mobility issues, especially those using a wheelchair, can arrive at a platform where they require assistance from staff with a ramp to exit the train. Without help from fellow passengers it may prove difficult to alert staff that this assistance is needed as the bells to notify staff are placed on the walls on the platform.

Recommendation L
That the Council should cooperate with the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital to lobby TfL about the improvements needed to ensure Stanmore Station is functionally as well as technically step-free.

4.33 Positive news is that funicular lifts are being installed at Greenford station, which is a relatively cheap method of providing step free access. The suggestion was made to use them at more stations. These stations would require wide staircases.

4.34 Members were surprised to find that all the lifts on the concourse at Harrow & Wealdstone station have a small metal bar next to the lift doors making it more difficult for wheelchairs users to press the buttons for the lift. Following the round table discussion, London Underground Limited has indicated that, although it may take some time, they are working to remove these barriers.

4.35 At the seminar there was resounding agreement that Harrow-on-the-Hill station should be made step-free, as well as it being mentioned ten times in the consultation. In addition to the review, Harrow-on-the-Hill station has been consistently identified as an issue by (disabled) residents in consultations with the Council. As well as being the principal concern identified by London TravelWatch at their user engagement event in Harrow, November 2012.

4.36 One resident with a Visual Impairment commented that even though he is very familiar with Harrow-on-the-Hill bus station, it is still difficult for him to find the right bus. There are many buses, it is very noisy and there are many doors leading in and out of the station, all of which make the station difficult to navigate without help. In addition, members were informed that as the bus stops are on an island surrounded by a busy road, the safety of passengers at the bus station could also be improved.

4.37 Members were pleased to note all the ongoing work by Council officers to lobby TfL for step-free access at Harrow-on-the-Hill station. TfL has commissioned a new study into the costs of adapting Harrow-on-the-Hill station. The breakdown of costs for individual sections of the work is an important factor in determining future funding requirements for the Council. Rather than doing everything at once, one option could be to improve the station over time. Members suggested that the Council and TfL also look into getting sponsorship from private companies, in a similar way to the Emirates Airline cable car in East London.

Recommendation M

As part of the Council's continued efforts to secure step-free access at Harrow-on-the-Hill station, consideration should be given to the option of finding private funding.
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4.38 During our first journey through the borough, a resident using a wheelchair explained that when travelling from Harrow and Wealdstone station, the staff have recently only helped people in wheelchairs onto the fast trains where they used to assist them onto slow trains as well. A freedom pass, which enables older and disabled residents to use certain

forms of public transport for free, does not cover journeys on fast trains but only on slow trains, which can create additional difficulties. One result has been that Carpenders Park station, which is accessible for people in a wheelchair via a manual boarding ramp, can't be reached as the fast trains do not stop there. Members are concerned that even at a station with step-free access; passengers with mobility issues can't use all the services available.

4.39 Members were shown during a journey how the hand rails provided at many stations make it much easier for Visually Impaired People to enter and exit stations. When the hand rails don't run all along the wall but are interrupted, such as for instance at North Harrow station, it makes navigation more difficult. This should be a relatively cost-effective problem to solve.

Recommendation L

The Council should encourage partner organisations to provide hand rails at stations that run uninterrupted from street to platform for the benefit of Visually Impaired People.
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Travel information

4.40 Members appreciated the continuous efforts made by TfL to provide comprehensive travel information, but still felt some improvements could be made. A positive comment received from a resident with a Visual Impairment is that currently the audible announcements in the tube are made slightly before the tube arrives at the next stop, which provides sufficient time to reach the door.

4.41 Residents raised several concerns about the travel information provided:

- London Transport provides good connections, but one respondent in the consultation did comment that particularly if one is not a frequent traveller, finding the appropriate accessible travel information can be difficult.
- Announcements at bus stops and train stations are often either visible or audible but not both.
- The digital displays at bus stops that indicate when the next bus is coming are only visible; announcements regarding delayed or cancelled trains are often only audible or the visible announcements have a severe delay.
- Announcements on the tube such as "Take care, the next station has a wide gap between platform and train", are mostly only audible.

Recommendation O

Travel information should be both visible and audible where possible. Consideration should be given to expanding the information shown on digital displays for passengers with hearing difficulties as well as investigating the option of providing audible announcements at bus stops in the interest of passengers who are visually impaired.

Consultation with residents

4.42 Members are pleased that TfL has incorporated engagement with disability groups into its work, such as the 'secret shopper' monitor of bus services and extensive consultation with residents including disability groups while creating its transport policies.

4.43 Members were also pleased to note that the Council in turn ensures the LIP is widely consulted on with residents and disability groups. When any infrastructure or transport is designed by the Council, the Harrow Association of Disabled people (HAD) are asked for feedback. Other groups are also consulted: the Harrow Public Transport Users' Association, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Age concern and advisors to the Council's Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel (TARSAP). In addition, the transport planning team liaise with housing officers, undertake site visits and consult occupational therapists. The transport planning team has also set up a separate group to consult residents with disabilities, which aims to meet twice a year.

4.44 TARSAP makes recommendations to the Council on:

- Traffic management;
- The management and control of parking both on and off-street;
- The operational aspects of public transport in the borough.

The members of the TARSAP are mainly Councillors from all parties, with three other advisors on the committee. There are a limited number of organisations that can nominate advisors to TARSAP, but HAD unfortunately is not included in that list.

Recommendation P

The Council's inclusion of disabled residents in plans about transport in the borough is significant, but could be improved by changing the terms of reference of Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel (TARSAP) to enable a representative from a disability group such as the Harrow Association of Disabled people (HAD) to become an advisory member. This will enable continuous input from a representative on any of the Council's proposals to change infrastructure.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Members were pleased to see the hard work that's done by the Council and its partner organisations to improve accessibility to public transport. The majority of bus stops in the borough are accessible; travel information is continuously improved; transport providers and the Council continue to engage with passengers about their requirements.

5.2 Unfortunately, significant barriers to accessible transport still exist. Residents have consistently expressed difficulties they experience ranging from physical barriers to significant worries and concerns. Travelling quickly and easily for people with disabilities or elderly and frail residents is extremely difficult. When there are special circumstances, such as travel late at night or services being cancelled, problems become exacerbated.

5.3 To overcome all barriers to accessible public transport would be a Herculean task. Despite limited budgets and many competing priorities, members have identified some improvements that can be made. Though in many cases the Council can't directly ensure transport becomes more accessible, members feel it can definitely use its relationships with partners to improve the accessibility of transport in the borough further.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A)** Local bus companies should be offered the opportunity to gain awareness of disabled passengers' travel needs by participating in the Harrow Travel Training and Buddying Project (Harrow Council's travel mentoring scheme) as part of bus driver induction training.
- B)** Where road works are taking place and pavements have become impossible or extremely difficult for residents with mobility difficulties to use (including those in wheelchairs), the Council should provide clear signage ahead of the obstruction.
- C)** Traffic signs should be installed so that they do not cause an obstruction to people with visual impairments. This could include being mounted on walls instead of pavements or the use of longer posts to ensure the sign itself is well above head height.
- D)** The safety of the crossing between Stanmore Hill, Church Road and The Broadway should be investigated including the options of introducing a pedestrian phase in the traffic lights' sequence or, if this is not possible, providing safety warnings that indicate the traffic lights' sequence is not designed to safeguard pedestrians. The Council should make improvements where necessary.
- E)** Future consideration should be given to include tactile paving and bumps across the full length of wide, long, level crossings to ensure these can be used as pathways by Visually Impaired People.
- F)** The Council should encourage transport providers to regularly remind bus drivers of the necessity to provide sufficient time before leaving the bus stop for elderly passengers or passengers with mobility difficulties to find a seat.
- G)** Bus drivers possess first-hand experience of the accessibility of specific bus stops and should be encouraged to report specific concerns. The Council should cooperate with bus companies to gain access to that information and consider it as part of its annual work programme for road works.
- H)** The Council should press partners to provide sufficient ramps at stations with step-free access to enable passengers to use all platforms.
- I)** The Council should consider encouraging travel providers such Transport for London and rail operators to provide travel information that includes the times staff are available at

specific stations, and stations where assistance for train journeys does not need to be booked in advance should be highlighted.

J) The Council should encourage transport providers to include in their staff training full consideration of the travel needs of passengers with disabilities or other special requirements particularly when journeys get disrupted, diverted or terminated. It should be the staff's responsibility to ensure the passengers receive appropriate assistance and advice on alternative accessible options. This specifically applies to trains, underground (tube) and overground.

K) The Council should encourage transport providers to make it their staff's responsibility to ensure that passengers with accessibility requirements receive appropriate assistance and advice on alternative accessible options when journeys get disrupted, diverted or terminated. This specifically applies to trains, underground (tube) and overground.

L) That the Council should cooperate with the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital to lobby TfL about the improvements needed to ensure Stanmore Station is functionally as well as technically step-free.

M) As part of the Council's continued efforts to secure step-free access at Harrow-on-the-Hill station, consideration should be given to the option of finding private funding.

N) The Council should encourage partner organisations to provide hand rails at stations that run uninterrupted from street to platform for the benefits of Visually Impaired People.

O) Travel information should be both visible and audible where possible – consideration should be given to expanding the information shown on digital displays for passengers with hearing difficulties as well as investigating the option of providing audible announcements at bus stops in the interest of passengers who are visually impaired.

P) The Council's inclusion of disabled residents in plans about transport in the borough is significant, but could be improved by changing the terms of reference of Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel (TARSAP) to enable a representative from a disability group such as the Harrow Association of Disabled people (HAD) to become an advisory member. This will enable continuous input from a representative on any of the Council's proposals to change infrastructure.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Councillors	
Councillor Sue Anderson	London Borough of Harrow
Councillor Marilyn Ashton	London Borough of Harrow
Councillor Jerry Miles	London Borough of Harrow
Councillor John Nickolay	London Borough of Harrow
Councillor Stephen Wright	London Borough of Harrow
Tony Wood	Co-optee, chair Harrow Transport User's Association
Council Officers	
Peter Barron	Principal planning officer
David Eaglesham	Service manager Traffic and Highway network management
Ann Fine	Transport policy officer
Phil Greenwood	Head of major development projects
Hanif Islam	Senior Professional Transport Planning
Stephen Kelly	Divisional Director of Planning
Paul Newman	Team leader Traffic management
Matthew Patterson	Senior Professional – LDF team leader
Fern Silverio	Divisional director collections & benefits
Mohammed Ilyas	Policy Officer Equalities and Diversities
Paul Najsarek	Corporate Director Community, Health and Wellbeing
Simone van Elk	Scrutiny Officer
External witnesses	
Tim Bellenger	Director Policy and Investigation, London Travel Watch
Gerry Devine	Chair of Trustees, Harrow Community Transport
Paul Giles	Performance Delivery Manager, London Sovereign
Colin Izzard	Service Delivery Manager, Metroline
Stuart McManus	management trainee, Metroline
Mohammad Hashmi	LUL Deputy Station Manager Wembley Central
Scott Lester	Regional Borough Programme Manager, TfL

September 2013

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Accessible Transport

Appendix A:

Evidence from Accessible Transport Scrutiny Review

Members of the review group

Councillor Sue Anderson (chair)

Councillor Marilyn Ashton

Councillor Jerry Miles

Councillor John Nickolay

Councillor Stephen Wright

Tony Wood – Harrow Transport User's Association

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1. NOTES ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT REVIEW - MEETING OFFICERS

THURSDAY 14TH MARCH

Present:

Councillor Anderson (chairman)	Peter Barron, Principal planning officer
Councillor Ashton	David Eaglesham, Service manager Traffic and Highway network management
Councillor John Nickolay	Ann Fine, Transport policy officer
Councillor Miles	Phil Greenwood, Head of major development projects
Councillor Wright	Paul Newman, Team leader Traffic management
Tony Wood, chairman of the Harrow Public Transport Users' Association	Fern Silverio, Divisional director collections & benefits
	Simone van Elk, Scrutiny officer

1. Welcome

Councillor Anderson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The review looks at accessibility of transport and to discover potential leverage for negotiations with Transport for London (TfL), as well as looking at small changes that could improve accessibility. The scope of the review was to look at all disabilities: visible as well as invisible, residents in wheelchairs as well residents with prams or large luggage. An important question is what the priorities of disabled residents are for change and how that is taken into account in decision-making.

Tony Wood commented that the Harrow Public Transport Users' Association has been lobbying Transport for London (TfL) for 20 years to make Harrow on the Hill station accessible. There was a scheme to install 5 lifts in Harrow on the Hill station with total costs of £35m. At that time five stations were considered top priority by TfL, of which Harrow on the Hill was one. When five years ago the funding for the scheme fell through, not only was the scheme cancelled, but TfL also removed Harrow on the Hill station entirely from its priority list. It is difficult to comprehend why the station is no longer a priority. The first priority should be to get Harrow on the Hill station back in the queue for adaptation.

2. Discussion

The council's transport policies:

Ann Fine explained that the council's transport policies are derived from the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS), which lists three key priorities for improving accessibility:

- 1) Improving the transport opportunities for all Londoners
- 2) Enhance the quality of life for all Londoners
- 3) Improve the safety and security for all Londoners

Harrow Council has produced the Harrow Transport Local Implementation Plan (LIP) in response to the MTS, which explains how the council will contribute to implementing the MTS and which follows Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations and the Equality Act. The strategy is widely consulted on with residents including disability groups.

The approach in the LIP was not to see disabled residents as a separate group but incorporate their requirements into every aspect of the strategy. The LIP contains more than a 100 individual policies. A separate document, the Transport and Disabilities Procedures, contains 16 separate policies from the LIP that refer directly to accessibility. The first five of these policies can't be done by the council on its own – they require other organisations and funding.

The council actively lobbies TfL for changes to stations in Harrow. The funding from Harrow Council itself can only have a small impact. TfL provides funding through the LIP to implement the policies in the LIP. Currently the council gets slightly less than £2.5m a year for various transport initiatives. There is a formula that decides the amount of funding based on population size weighted for deprivation criteria. The borough doesn't have many traffic accidents and so scores low on deprivation. 23% of the funding from the LIP is specifically assigned to improve accessibility. *[That would amount to £575k – see addendum for clarification]* Everyone interprets accessibility differently so there are very many things this money can be spent on. The money from the LIP is distributed amongst improvements to kerbs, public seating, bus stops, travel training

etc. Concessionary travel is not included in the LIP nor funded through the LIP. The LIP covers the period 2011 to 2013/14 but some policies plan 20 years ahead.

The mayor has dropped the requirement for councils to provide a new LIP as producing it is a long and costly process. Instead, the mayor has asked for an update of the current LIP which would include new policies. Councillor Wright asked how the LIP was approved. Ann Fine answered that this was approved by Cabinet and adopted by full Council.

Implementation of transport policies

Paul Newman explained how the council implements its transport policies:

a) *Bus stops*. TfL determines which buses are used, but Harrow Council is responsible for providing the bus stops. TfL provides funding to convert bus stops to make them fully accessible. There are more than 430 bus stops in the borough, of which 87% will be DDA compliant at the end of the financial year. The council's target is to have 100% compliant by 2015, which would be ahead of TfL's target.

b) *Station accessibility*. It is deeply disappointing that Harrow on the Hill is not accessible. Disabled people can access many stations on the Chiltern line, but can't get off at Harrow, which is also disappointing for the town centre. The council continues to lobby TfL to improve accessibility at Harrow on the Hill station.

c) *Public Realm*. The work in Public Realm contains two elements: maintaining the current infrastructure and providing new infrastructure. The department keeps a score of the number of defects in a road and the council's ability to modify the defects. This is used as a basis to determine which works have priority. When the council is aware of where disabled residents live, this is taken into account and works in that area become a priority.

The aim of the council is to reduce accidents when designing infrastructure. Harrow is either the best or joined best borough in London when it comes to number of accidents. The council uses refuges, tactile crossings, different coloured markings, etc. to making crossing as easy as possible. The census revealed that the borough has an increasing number of elderly residents. Providing benches or informal seating makes it easier for people to get about. Many people are concerned that seating attracts unwanted visitors, which is why the location of seating is carefully selected and CCTV is used where possible. In addition, there is a government initiative to declutter streets by getting rid of unnecessary signs to improve access to streets and facilities.

d) *Traffic signals*. These are managed and operated by TfL. The Council makes a contribution to the costs of traffic lights in the borough. Signals include tactical devices to assist people with disabilities. A new countdown device is being tested on several locations in London which shows how many seconds are left till the light changes. A countdown traffic light is on TfL's programme to be installed on the crossing of Sheepcote Lane and Station Road.

e) *Disabled parking bays*. TfL provides a budget for disabled parking bays. H-bars on roads are non-enforceable but people do adhere to them which helps clear traffic. The budget for the bays is £35,000 this year compared to £65,000 last year, which also has to cover staff time. The provision and enforcement of parking is funded by Harrow Council and the council also provides parking concessions to residents. The council also provides a booklet about parking in Harrow for residents and works with outside organisations to spread information to residents like the national organisation for parking and the guide for disabled parking, and provides information to companies for their phone apps and sat navs.

e) *Street works*. Lots of the work in this area consists of replacing pavements. In those cases the council tries to provide adequate space and temporary ramps, liaises with companies about prospective street works and does letter drops so people are aware the works will be happening.

f) *Walking and cycling*. Harrow council is trying to get funding to improve facilities.

g) *Partner organisations*. Harrow Association of Disabled people (HAD) are always asked for feedback about any designs. Other groups are also consulted: the Harrow Public Transport Users' Association, CAB, Age concern and TARSAP advisors. In addition, we talk to housing officers, do walks about estates and speak to occupational therapists.

David Eaglesham added that of the £2.5m annual LIP funding £350,000 is for projects specifically aimed at improving accessibility. [*£350k would amount to 14% - se addendum for clarification*] However, other transport projects also take account of accessibility issues because all aspects of a project are considered and are always subject to consultation, so all the money the council spends is deployed towards accessibility in some way. Accessibility is also affected by works on the highway and Harrow council has joined the

London Permit scheme, which puts conditions on utility companies the council works with to ensure disabled people have sufficient access during works.

Tony Wood added that the Department for Transport has a fund to increase the accessibility of train stations but only stations outside London can apply - stations in London have to go through TfL to get funding. DfT should change that condition. In addition, there is currently a vacancy for an advisor for TARSAP. Tony suggested that HAD sends a representative. They're not currently on the list to be able to nominate someone. Ann Fine added that in the past HAD haven't been able to physically attend the TARSAP meetings, but that may be different now.

Councillor Nickolay asked since Network rail has made Harrow and Wealdstone accessible, whether they'd be able to make Harrow on the Hill accessible. He added that there are also smaller things that can be changed like inconsiderate parking by the public. Tony Wood commented that Harrow on the Hill station is owned by TfL, but used by LUL and Chiltern so the funding situation is quite complicated, where as Harrow and Wealdstone station owned by Network rail and used by LUL, LO, TOC's (Southern and London Midland).

Main areas of planning

Peter Barron presented main areas of planning that relate to accessibility:

a) General direction of planning. In the Core Strategy Harrow town centre, along with Wealdstone and Station Road, is an intensification area. In terms of public transport it is the most accessible area in the borough and is therefore the local focus for growth. The Area Action Plan (AAP) further develops the plans and proposals in the Core Strategy. There is a strong commitment in the Core Strategy to lobby the Mayor for improved access. This is linked with similar policies in the LIP. The policies are directed towards housing growth and retaining the designation of Harrow town centre as a Metropolitan centre by the GLA. There are only 12 metropolitan town centres in London at the moment, so this should help when TfL reviews its priorities for access improvements to stations.

b) Lifetime neighbourhoods. Homes can be designated as lifetime homes by fulfilling certain design criteria which make those homes adaptable for future accessibility requirements. However, if the wider urban environment isn't also accessible then the accessible home on its own is worthless. When creating lifetime neighbourhoods, consideration is given to shops, walking environment and safe spaces. Policy 2 of the Development Management Policies DPD commits Harrow Council to providing lifetime neighbourhoods. A second policy in the DPD relates to access requirements and will form the basis for supplementary planning documents on design and accessibility. New developments have to include disabled parking in their designs, even when the buildings wouldn't include other parking facilities. That is included in our own local targets for lifetime homes. Most large residential schemes include parking in their design.

c) Individual developments When a planning application is submitted we assess whether it generates a financial contribution to the infrastructure made necessary by development, so whether it would for instance require new bus stops or other transport infrastructure. And the council then requires a contribution. The contributions flowing from planning obligations have been limited: £0.6m in 2010-11, £0.2m in 2011-12 and £3.4m in 2012-13.

d) Funding improvements through planning The emerging Community Infrastructure Levy sets a non-negotiable charge per square metre as a basis for different types of development. The Council has prepared a draft charging schedule which will undergo 2 stages of consultation and will hopefully be adopted mid 2013. The CIL is estimated to generate £10m over the next 10 years. Harrow's total infrastructure bill is £137m, of which £60m is designated for transport.

The results of the 2011 Census are now being received from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This shows that 14.6% of the borough's population describe themselves as having a limiting long term illness.

The effectiveness of the Council's planning policies is monitored annually through Harrow's Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR).

Residents are consulted for all major planning documents. In addition HAD, Disabled Go, Mind in Harrow and Age UK are specifically consulted on all Development Planning Documents.

Harrow on the Hill station

Councillor Nickolay commented that imaginative planning was needed for Harrow on the Hill station. The bus station at Harrow on the Hill could potentially be relocated. South Kensington station has managed to jump

the queue by making a deal with the council, TfL and a developer. That's perhaps one way to make progress.

Peter Barron commented that the Dandara site is still an allocated site for redevelopment to deliver other objectives for the area. The bus station is already accessible but additional capacity is required. The core strategy sets out requirements that planned developments have to be realistic and deliverable. It was felt not realistic to commit to a new bus station at the time. Small changes are probably more realistic at the moment and there is a possibility of additional bus standing space on College Road or Kymberley Road as part of funded public realm improvements.

Councillor Ashton commented that she was the portfolio holder in 2006 when the planning application was made. Dandara had bought the site and made a planning application. Dandara owns 51 College Road, but they don't own all the access to the site. This makes it complicated. When the college no longer had the funding to relocate, the scheme fell through. Regardless of what would take its place, if the college can't move, the Dandara site can't be developed. Bits of funding from planning would help, because unless the council matches funds, TfL won't help with Harrow on the Hill Station.

Peter Barron commented that if the Dandara site would be developed, the CIL could make funding available. But even then, the council could only top up funding from elsewhere, not match other funding exactly. Phil Greenwood added that there could be other ways forward. The detailed costs for adapting the station matter a lot. Rather than doing everything at once, maybe the area could improve over time. For example, get lifts from the street onto the concourse so there is a throughway through the station and add lifts from the concourse to the platforms later. Lobbying TfL becomes easier with such plans.

Ann Fine added that TfL is currently studying the idea of lifts in the station, which would be funded through the sites TfL owns in the borough. There is a policy in the LIP that if TfL sells land it owns in the borough, parts of the proceeds have to be reinvested in the borough. TfL will still decide how to use the funds. The fact that TfL is commissioning this study is a breakthrough. Tony added that in the rail liaison meeting a senior planner from TfL has alluded that a partnership approach could be viable. Ann Fine commented that when TfL talks about partnership funding, that doesn't automatically mean 50% from TfL and 50% from the council. The fund matching would show interest from the borough, so it would negotiations to show a small amount from the borough.

Councillor Wright asked about the basis for the transport documents. How much is based on the priorities of disabled groups? Ann Fine answered that there are certain difficulties because when these people don't have access, they move to more accessible locations which makes contact more difficult. Making certain stations accessible could lead to increased demand. It is difficult for residents with disabilities to provide the council with information. The council has a statutory obligation for our planning documents, so in response to these difficulties, the transport planning team has set up a separate group to consult residents with disabilities. This group now meets twice a year, because they can't meet more often. It is also difficult for these residents to be representative of their groups – they can express what they personally expect, but find it difficult to speak on behalf of a group.

David Eaglesham added that changes to Harrow on the Hill station is unlikely to feature in TfL's next business plan. However, if Harrow brings forward a significant contribution it could be discussed. However, it is unclear what the size of the contribution should look like.

Peter Barron commented that Harrow on the Hill station is a constant issue in feedback in consultations with disabled residents. However, if a huge proportion of the £10m CIL funding would be spent on Harrow on the Hill station other improvements would get less funding or wouldn't be done at all. Tony Wood asked whether a site development can include a CIL and section 106 levy at the same time. Peter Barron answered that the CIL would replace Planning Obligations as the means for securing general contributions towards infrastructure, but that site specific technical requirements may still necessitate Planning Obligations for individual proposals.

Stanmore Station

Councillor Ashton added that we should also consider Stanmore station and the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital. Stanmore station is at the end of the Jubilee line and is an important station for commuters. It is misleading to say that Stanmore station is accessible. The ramp includes a step and the car park is difficult to access in a wheelchair. Until TfL admits that Stanmore is not in any way step free, we won't get any funding or help. We should look at getting money out of the development of the hospital. The hospital can't function properly until that station is accessible so it's in the hospital's interest to encourage TfL to match fund adjustments to Stanmore station.

Peter Barron added that the council is involved in the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital's planning application. It is a big project and requires significant funding. Money from the hospital development could be used for Stanmore station but that would take funding for the new hospital or there would need to be more enabling residential development on the Green Belt site. The Stanmore station site has a car park which TfL are interested in redeveloping, which could fund work at the station. It was also pointed out that the Core Strategy contains a commitment to seek the use by TfL of receipts from sale/redevelopment of its land in the borough to fund public transport improvements in the borough.

Tony Wood: that car park is in high demand, so selling it for development would be a bad idea but double decking it might be a good option. The car park in Rayner's Lane is unusual in that a quarter of it is owned by the council. Harrow could also open up to new bus services. David Eaglesham commented that the current focus is to improve the bus services around the hospital, not the stations.

Concessionary travel

Fern Silverio explained about the council's concessionary travel policies. Currently about 60,000 residents use concessionary travel: 42,000 are recipients of freedom passes, 13,000 recipients of blue badges and 5,200 are taxi card scheme users. There are 230,000 residents in the borough and combined with people that work in the borough, there is a great % of people that use concessionary travel. Freedom passes and blue badges are national policies.

Three years ago the concessionary travel process was reviewed and new processes implemented. With regards Blue Badges an external contractor was appointed to now assess all applications: the rejection rate for renewal applications currently stands at 41% and 27% for new cases. The amount of blue badges in circulation has a knock-on effect on the amount of disabled parking bays. In the coming months the overall number of badges will continue to reduce and possibly go down to approximately 9,000 blue badges. This will mean that disabled bays will be freed up if they are no longer being used by illegitimate Blue Badge holders. Another knock on effect might be that general parking spaces may be increased if it transpires that some disabled parking bays can be removed which in turn would increase parking revenue which could offset the increased costs of concessionary travel generally. The costs of concessionary travel are £9.5m per annum.

Harrow also operates a discretionary taxi card scheme for residents with mobility problems. This allows subsidised taxi transport for scheme members who must pass a mobility assessment to qualify. It is funded by both a Harrow contribution (approximately £250k) and a grant from TfL. TfL contributes £9.5m to the London scheme, of which around £300k is allocated to Harrow. which is around £2m less this year than they used to contribute. The scheme used to subsidise around 60,000 taxi trips annually but for 2013/14 Harrow is reducing its contribution to the scheme by £200k. The reductions in funding by both Harrow and TfL means residents are currently being consulted on options to ensure the scheme stays within the reduced overall budget. This may well have an impact on accessibility to transport which could be mitigated by bus routes.

The above reduction in service is sensitive and our extensive consultation will ensure we engage service users on the reasons why the changes to the scheme are necessary. From analysis carried out we know that around 1500 to 1700 residents currently use the card, of which 415 people use 45% of all trips. We are trying to understand who this key group are as from an EQIA point of view, it is important to assess need and to try and put in proposals that actually meet need.

The costs of concessionary travel have increased for the council, as over the past 5 years TfL has taken subsidy away as well as increased the travel fares - by 5.6% for 2013/14 for example which is much more than inflation. The taxi card scheme will need to become self funded from TfL contributions only. As more residents become elderly, more demand will be placed on the scheme. The PCT provides free transport to get patients to and from hospital, but the service can mean long journeys for residents as the driver goes around pick up points before going to the destination. This translates into 2 plus hour trips for an ill resident to get to hospital so residents tend not to use the facility and use the taxi card scheme instead. This results in cost shunt from PCT to Harrow and in residents using their taxi card trip allowance to make hospital trips rather than for their leisure which is what the scheme was intended for; to increase quality of life.

Current strategy is to reduce cost on discretionary concessionary travel. With the financial pressures the council is faced with and the decreasing budget, there is no other alternative. The question is which options we continue to provide. This is also relevant in light of welfare reforms, so we have to consider what our strategic objectives are.

Councillor Nickolay asked whether there is a compensating factor at work. If there is a drop in blue badges, then there should be a drop in its use. Fern Silverio answered that people with blue badges from outside the borough will still visit the borough. The drop is only in the badges provided by Harrow, but this would likely have an impact on car parking. Councillor Nickolay asked whether freedom passes pay for themselves. Fern answered that they don't. They are paid for from the Parking ring fenced account but as this is not enough to cover expenditure, it is topped up from the general fund. Costs are based on usage. It costs about £200 a year per person. David Eaglesham added that the surplus made from parking rates is used to fund freedom passes, which is £4m after the costs for providing the parking and enforcement are subtracted. Ann Fine commented that providing freedom passes is compulsory for pensioners and those qualifying through specific disabilities. The council also used to provide a large number of discretionary freedom passes. However pressures to find savings have meant that this has now been reduced considerably.

Councillor Miles asked about the company doing the assessments for the freedom passes. Fern answered that the new cases are assessed by one company, but as they didn't have sufficient capacity, existing cases were reviewed by the previous contractor. Councillor Miles asked whether the council always abides by the companies' recommendations. Fern answered that their decision is final. The assessment process has been standardised and no longer relies on GP endorsements. Tony Wood asked who paid for the Mayor's 60+ travel card. Fern Silverio answered that the mayor pays those in full.

3) Next steps

Councillor Anderson explained that the information from this meeting would be synthesized in the review group's final report, where they hope to provide constructive proposals. The review group will also travel through the borough alongside disabled people. Ann Fine recommended that access to outdoor spaces be included in those journeys, which is a valuable but often neglected area of access for disabled people. David Eaglesham commented that the focus should be on the whole journey. Tony Wood recommended travelling with partially sighted in addition to people with mobility issues. Councillor Anderson commented that the review aims to engage with residents with mental health problems, autism, and an entire spectrum of disabilities.

David Eaglesham added that there are currently significant reorganisations going on within our departments so it may be uncertain who is able to participate in the review further down the line. Ann Fine commented that the reorganisation has already damaged the relationship with TfL. No one has been assigned to be the contact for TfL. David Eaglesham commented that the funding coming from TfL is based on the current arrangements.

Peter Barron added that an important aspect of funding is that the preparation for CIL is a technical exercise. The governance arrangements for CIL, however, haven't been agreed on yet. Lots of departments will want to draw on funding from CIL. Phil Greenwood commented that the current arrangements consider how to collect, raise and administer CIL, but the decision of how to spend the revenue is an entirely different question.

Addendum notes meeting officers– clarification funding from LIP to improve accessibility – David Eaglesham

The term accessibility is confusing and needs to be clearly defined. In respect of the TfL programme this relates to all users. However, in terms of the scope of the scrutiny review accessibility this means just people with disabilities.

About 7% of the TfL transport programme for 13/14 is dedicated specifically to people with disabilities. That is £126,000 of a total £1,743,000. The remaining schemes in the programme can also include elements of improving disability access although the focus is not exclusively on that. The quantity of funding dedicated to this element is difficult to determine but could be an additional 5% of the remaining £1,617,000, so about an additional £87,000

To summarise:

Total TfL budget for 13/14	£1,743,000
Specific disability access projects	£126,000
Proportion of projects that support disability access	£87,000
Spend on disability access	£213,000

Total percentage of budget

12%

2. NOTES JOURNEY THROUGH BOROUGH WITH NICKY BAKER ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT REVIEW Wednesday 24th April

Present

Councillor Anderson, Councillor Wright

Nicky Baker (volunteer)

Simone van Elk (scrutiny officer)

1. Journey itself

Met Nicky Baker at the HAD office, Headstone Drive	
Walked to Harrow and Wealdstone station	12 minutes
Arrived at Harrow and Wealdstone station	3 minutes to reach the platform employee arrived several minutes before train to assist with the ramp
Fast train to Watford Junction	
At Watford Junction station	3 minutes to go outside, 3 minutes to get back to the platform employee arrived 3 minutes before train to assist with the ramp
Fast train back to Harrow and Wealdstone station	
'Walked' to bus stop in Wealdstone high street (stop F)	10 minutes from station to bus stop
Bus stop got moved, so 'walked' to George gangway	7 minutes from bus stop to bus stop
Waited for bus	
Bus 140 to town centre	2 minutes to get on the bus
Bus stop across from Debenhams	2 minutes to exit the bus
'Walked' via St Georges to end of Junction Road	20 minutes
'Walked' to Harrow bus station	10 minutes
Waited for bus	
Bus 340 to bus stop in Wealdstone High Street (stop G)	
'Walked' to HAD office	5 minutes

2. Practical difficulties

Trains

- Nicky explained that when travelling from Harrow and Wealdstone station in a wheelchair, recently the staff have only helped people in wheelchairs onto the fast trains. The reason is unclear; Nicky has asked staff but they also don't seem to know why. Nicky commented that it would be great if the review could find out the reason why. Officially a freedom pass does not cover journeys on a fast trains but only on slow

trains. As staff at Harrow & Wealdstone station aren't allowed to put wheel chair users on slow trains, this could create difficulties when tickets are checked. Luckily, so far it hasn't been a problem.

- Nicky doesn't have enough range in her arms to press the buttons to call for the lift at Harrow & Wealdstone station or Watford Junction station. When entering Harrow and Wealdstone station from Masons Avenue, a person in a wheel chair has to go onto platform 6 to get the lift up to the concourse. The buttons for the lift on platform 6 are remarkably close to a steel pillar, while on the concourse above the platforms, there is a metal rail on the floor just in front of the buttons of the lift to platform 5. Both make it more difficult to position a wheel chair close to the buttons. Nicky also can't reach the buttons in the lift itself.
- Trains don't stop at the same place on the platform every time, so the person in the wheelchair and the employee with the ramp could easily be at the wrong place on the platform. This means that sometimes one needs to move along the platform quite quickly to be able to catch the train.
- According to TfL's step-free tube guide map, Carpenters Park Overground station is accessible via a manual boarding ramp. Nicky commented that because staff won't put people in wheelchairs on slow trains from Harrow & Wealdstone, they actually can't get to Carpenters Park.
- Nicky commented that when travelling back from central London late at night in a wheelchair, she is restricted in her choice of trains by the time the staff finishes work. Without the staff to provide the ramp, Nicky wouldn't be able to alight from the train and the staff at Harrow and Wealdstone only work till 11.30pm. Additionally, Nicky usually catches an earlier train to be able to remedy any unusual circumstances.
- Nicky comments that a problem specific to deaf people travelling by train is that they're likely to miss announcements about delays and cancellations.

Buses

- The bus stop at Harrow and Wealdstone station isn't accessible with the ramp. Every time Nicky has used a bus there, the ramp has broken because of the severe gradient between the pavement and the ramp.
- Instead of the bus stop at Harrow and Wealdstone station, Nicky uses the stop in Wealdstone high street. On this occasion, the bus stop has been moved to George gangway. The temporary stop at George gangway is on a long slope and the bus stop is towards the top, which means it can be quite difficult for people in manual wheelchairs to access.
- When using a bus Wheelchair users have a special button to make the bus stop. This makes a special sound that indicates to the driver that the wheelchair user wants to exit the bus so they know to extend the ramp. According to Nicky, often the bus driver doesn't hear the sound and doesn't put the ramp out.

Streets, pavements, crossings

- Nicky comments that different crossings have different times allocated for pedestrians to cross, so whether there is enough time depends on the specific crossing. Since she uses an electric wheel chair, she can get across quicker than people in manual wheel chairs.
- Due to building of an apartment block, parts of the pavement on Headstone Lane and Junction road are fenced off. Unfortunately, the fencing has also been placed over a dropped kerb which means people using wheel chairs can't get off the kerb at that corner. The space left on the pavement at the corner is very narrow, which means turning is difficult. Nicky only discovered this problem as she was already on the pavement. There were no notifications any of us could see that exiting the kerb at that corner had become impossible in a wheelchair. Nicky also hadn't received any leaflets warning her of the changes.

Other difficulties

- Nicky mentioned that travel at peak times is very difficult due to lack of space. Because Nicky is seated relatively low, people don't see her in a crowded train or bus or tube. The result is that people tend to move towards her because they think there is space. According to Nicky this can feel like she's being overrun.
- Councillor Wright asked whether Nicky had considered working in Central London. Nicky answered that she would be worried about getting to work in rush hour, which is why she preferred working in Harrow and the surrounding area. Even in her current job, her hours are from 07.30 till 15.30 to avoid rush hour traffic.
- Nicky's parents own a van which they use to drive her round. When it breaks down, Nicky's alternative route to work is the 140 bus. To get to work on time, she *has to* get the 7.17am bus, because all later buses are too busy for her to fit on.

3. Staff

- An employee from London Overground at Harrow and Wealdstone station explained that they provide the ramp for access the train but are not allowed to help people onto the train by giving them a push, even

when the ramp is too steep for a person to use. That way they can't be held accountable for injuries. There isn't always a great run up to the ramp because of buildings on the platform so it can be hard for people to get on the train.

- Nicky mentioned that staff are generally more helpful when they know you.
- Communicating with the bus driver is difficult for Nicky because of the distance between the driver and the wheelchair space, the other passengers in between and the noise. Sometimes, while Nicky is already on the bus, the bus driver doesn't extend the ramp out properly when Nicky wants to alight. This means Nicky has to shout through noise and crowd on the bus to get the driver's attention. Especially when it's busy, this can be difficult. Asking the bus driver for assistance with any issue is difficult enough while on the bus, let alone while still standing on the pavement waiting for the ramp to extend.
- Officially, buggies should always be folded on a bus. When people bring buggies on the bus, in the very best case, the driver will tell when entering that they have to fold their buggy. There is very little space to manoeuvre in the bus itself, which makes it difficult for people to fold their buggy while the person in the wheelchair finds their space in the bus at the same time. Alternatively, when someone in a wheelchair wants to use the bus, the driver could delay the bus at the stop and not extend the ramp till the buggy has been folded. Finally, a bus driver could decide not to move the bus until the buggy has been folded down. Unfortunately, this does not always happen.

4. Lived experiences

- Nicky comments that she is not able to travel alone and that she has never travelled alone. She's almost thirty. There are too many little things that can go wrong; it's too risky for her.
- Because using public transport with a disability means you're less flexible, (sudden) changes can be distressing and can create massive difficulties. Nicky possesses a wealth of knowledge about accessible stations, roads, and modes of transport in Harrow and surrounding areas – all useful, if not necessary, for her to be able to use public transport. Having that knowledge makes it easier to adapt. But she still requires other people's assistance.
- Nicky tells a story of when she was travelling with her father. At the station they wanted to get off, they couldn't see the employee with the ramp, so her father left the train to try and find the employee. While he was off the train, the doors started closing and the train started to leave. Nicky couldn't have reached the open doors button herself to prevent the train from leaving. If a fellow passenger hadn't used the emergency stop, which meant the train stopped at the platform, she would have been stuck on that train by herself. There may not be another accessible station along the route and even if there is, employees at that station don't know a person with a wheelchair is on that train and needs assistance.
- If a train gets terminated, it might not stop at an accessible station. Nicky tells another story where she was on a train that got terminated. Luckily the train manager was near her so it was easy to talk to him about how Nicky would be able to leave at an accessible station. In this instance, the train manager sprinted down the train to warn the machinist to stop the train at the next accessible station, so Nicky could at least get off the train and out of the station and then home somehow.
- During one of Nicky's journeys from London Euston to Harrow & Wealdstone, the lift at the platform she got off at was not working. This meant she had to stay on the platform to catch the next train in the same direction, get off at Watford Junction and get on a train back to Harrow and Wealdstone. The train from Watford Junction stops at a different platform than the one from Euston which meant there was a working lift on that platform, which meant she could leave the station.
- During the journey, the councillors got some sense of the stress that can occur while travelling. Nicky mentioned that she knows quite a number of people who don't use public transport precisely because they feel scared and anxious. This provides a significant barrier to people being able to travel independently. This can be even scarier if you suddenly become disabled.

3. NOTES JOURNEY THROUGH BOROUGH WITH HASMUKH MEHTA ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT REVIEW Thursday 16th May

Present

Councillor Sue Anderson

Mr Hasmukh Metha (volunteer)

Simone van Elk (scrutiny officer)

1. Journey itself

Met Mr Mehta at Harrow on the Hill bus station
Bus 140 to West Harrow
Arrived at Lascelles Avenue (stop WX)

From the bus stop on Lascelles Avenue, we walked around West Harrow on our way to North Harrow station:

Crossed Lascelles Avenue turned into Ford Close walked down Ford Close and followed it's turn to the right walked through pedestrian area around flats through to Butler Road turned left onto Butler Road took a wrong turn left into Bowen Road towards Marshalls Close walked to the crossing between Bowen Road and Butler Road turned left into Butler Road turned right into Drury Road walked down to crossing with Vaughan Road turned left into Vaughan Road walked to crossing between Vaughan Road and Wilson Gardens crossed Wilson Gardens and walked down The Gardens to the entry of WestHarrow station.

From WestHarrow station:

Metropolitan line to Rayners Lane

Bus H10 to North Harrow station

Metropolitan line to Harrow on the Hill station

Walked from Harrow on the Hill station down the north side of College Road to the corner of Station Road

Walked back to Harrow on the Hill bus station along the sound side of College Road

2. Practical difficulties

Buses and bus stops

- Mr Mehta has Harrow on the Hill bus station for many years, so is very familiar with it. It is still difficult for him to find the right bus by himself as there are so many buses, it is very noisy inside and outside the station and there are many doors leading out of the station. As a result, he always asks someone for help to get to the right bus.
- The audio announcements on the buses tell Mr Mehta where his stop is. Before the audio announcements, he used to rely on counting the stops. When he uses the same bus regularly, he'll also recognise where the bus is by the movements it makes: when it swerves in to stops, when it makes sharp turns, where it waits for crossings, etc.
- Sometimes it is difficult to hear the announcements or the bus drivers due to noise. The volume of the announcements depends on the specific bus: the announcements on the 114 bus route are all right, the announcements on the 183 bus route are sometimes quite soft.
- Bus stops often have digital signs which show when the next buses are due. Unfortunately, this information is only visible and not audible. Mr Mehta prefers the tube to the bus, as with buses he can't check how long he'd have to wait. Why wouldn't bus stops have a button that provides that same information via loudspeakers?

Trains, tube and stations

- Mr Mehta finds Harrow and Wealdstone station a difficult station to navigate. Entering the station is ok, but moving up and down the concourse is a hassle. Harrow on the Hill station is easier to use as he knows his way round.
- Mr Mehta uses the hand rails along the stairs and along the entrance of WestHarrow station to enter the station and the platforms. He prefers using the rails next to the wall as the ones in the middle often gets interrupted. At WestHarrow station, the hand rails do not run all the way along the entrance up to the stairs to the platform. The little sections at stations where the hand rails are interrupted are more difficult to navigate.
- When trains are level with the platform, they are easily accessible for people in a wheelchair. But this does make it more difficult for Mr Mehta to alight from the train. It is more difficult to feel the opening between the train and platform with his white cane as there is no gap to indicate where the exit is. Usually there isn't much time at the station to alight from the train.
- Normally, once Mr Mehta has alighted from the train and has found either the wall or the strip of tactile paving on the platform, he follows people's voices to direct him towards the exit of the platform.
- Nowadays announcements on the tube are made slightly before the tube arrives at the next stop, which provides time to get to the door. Announcements used to be made (almost) at the time of arrival, which did not provide sufficient time.
- At the tube stations on our route (North Harrow, Rayners Lane, Harrow on the Hill), the tactile pavement leads up to the ticket barriers but Mr Mehta does require assistance to be able to swipe his card on the barriers.

Pavements, streets and roads

- Mr Mehta can be nervous to cross busy roads on his own, for example Lascelles Avenue, even if they have a respite in the middle. Due to traffic, he also chooses to cross Ford Close halfway down the road instead of at the corner Lascelles Avenue.
- The crossing of main roads is the most difficult for Mr Mehta. He has to rely on people to help him.
- Both Ford Close and Butler Road have very uneven pavement, and on Butler Road the stones have small ridges. Many people trip up here, including sighted people.
- It is difficult for Mr Mehta to walk in a straight line by himself, which is why the sides of a road can serve as important guides. When front gardens are turned into driveways and especially when they are placed opposite dropped kerbs, the pavement, front garden and sometimes road become level. This means there is hardly anything to distinguish between the different sections of the street with a white cane. Mr Mehta quite often walks into people's front gardens. The south side of Butler road between the crossings of Bowen Road and Drury Road is especially difficult in this regard.
- Pavements have poles with traffic signs and other notices placed on them. If Mr Mehta happens to miss the pole with his white cane, he can still bump his head on the notice board. It would be easier if the signs were placed on the wall instead of a pole on the pavement.
- As well as poles with traffic signs, A-boards also obstruct the pavement. On the north side of College road leading for Harrow on the Hill station to Station road, there are quite a number of A-boards in the way.
- Often hedges in front gardens are overgrown and hang over the road. Walking into these shrubs, especially if they're brambles, roses or nettles, can be painful. Councillor Anderson comments that if a hedge is placed in someone's garden, it is the home owner's or tenant's responsibility to trim the hedge. If they don't, there is a special number to call at the council. Council officers can then write to the occupants of the house that they should trim their hedge. If they don't, the council can trim the hedges itself but will then charge the occupant.
- The crossing between Vaughan road and The Gardens that crosses Wilson gardens is quite wide as well as level. This means that aside from the respite in the middle, there aren't bearings to help keep a straight line. Mr Mehta can often end up meters down the road by the time he has crossed. Bumps in the road and tactile paving could prevent this difficulty.
- The pavement of College Road is very wide which makes it difficult to navigate. Mr Mehta generally uses the north side of the road, despite the many A boards, as the south side has many junction cabinets, telephone boxes and public seating places near to the road.
- A new idea in the design of roads and pavements is 'shared space'. A shared space is a single, level surface that shared by all streets users. Wide level roads are very difficult to navigate for VIP (Visually Impaired People) as there are no bearings to help keep a straight line, which makes it difficult to get from A to B. In addition, they can't see traffic coming, so it is potentially more dangerous as well.
- Mr Mehta walks the wrong way about once every 6 months. He doesn't get panicked though, but just asks for help. Once he's lost his bearings, it is difficult, if not impossible, to find his way again without help. A difficulty he experiences is that he can't call a friend on the phone because he can't describe his surroundings. He just waits for someone to walk past so he can get help. This can sometimes take 15 to 20 minutes, as he lives in a neighbourhood where it can be quiet during the day. Fortunately, he doesn't get afraid or worried or panicked. This may be the case for other VIP though.

Other

- For Mr Mehta 80% of his navigation is based on hearing; the remaining 20% is based on his other senses. Obviously his memory plays a big part in his ability to navigate as he can recognise the distance between different familiar points on his route, for instances trees, crossings and gates.
- When Mr Mehta travels to unfamiliar places, he will get travel advice by phoning London Transport and will note down the advice with his Braille machine. He always asks people for assistance to find his way and often also asks the driver of for example the bus to alert him to his stop.
- Mostly people are very helpful as well as most staff. People will often offer Mr Mehta a seat on the bus or tube and offer to help him at crossings or warn him when he seems to have lost his way.
- Electric cars are very quiet. Where as with normal cars, a blind person can hear them coming and more easily avoid them, and can hear them coming down roads and thus identify where side roads are, with electric cars this isn't possible. There is a campaign to introduce a slight mechanical noise to electrical cars.
- One of the best things in recent years has been the introduction of audible announcements in public transport. It makes it easier for VIP to travel independently.
- One improvement that would make a great difference is the provision of talking GPS systems. That way, VIP wouldn't get lost so easily anymore.
- A minor difficulty for Mr Mehta is that every train has different seats at different places. Some seats fold while many don't, some face forward, some face the sides. He understands that the fold away seats provide space for wheelchair users. All buses have different layouts as well which make them more difficult to navigate. It depends on the line of the bus what the layout is like.

3. Lived experiences

- Mr Mehta is quite independent and he's not afraid to ask other people for help, which makes travelling easier for him. But many people he knows are afraid or nervous to travel alone.
- Mr Mehta is active in many organisations, works in the local college in Wembley, participates in campaigns of the national federation of the blind and often goes into central London. He is personally quite satisfied with public transport and his ability to get around.

4: ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT SEMINAR ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT REVIEW MONDAY 13th MAY

Present

<p>Councillor Sue Anderson (chair) Councillor Jerry Miles Councillor John Nickolay Councillor Stephen Wright Tony Wood, Harrow Public Transport User Association</p> <p>Felicity Page, Senior Professional Scrutiny Simone van Elk, Scrutiny Officer</p>	<p>Raymond Rawlison, Age UK Gwen Batham, Age UK Nicky Baker, HAD Tim Stockman, Harrow Mencap Yvonne Lee, Harrow Mencap John Clifton, Harrow Epilepsy Support Group Norman Bell, Middlesex Association for the Blind Steven Jones, Safety standards manager, Metroline bus company Jacqui Carter, Garage manager, Harrow Weald at Edgware, Metroline bus company Mark Mervyn, Bus Driver, Metroline bus company Raksha Parmar, Operations Support Manager, Metroline bus company Peter Barron, Principal planning officer, Harrow Council</p>
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Points raised

1) Experiences of Public Transport

A) Positive comments

- H18 bus service is superb.
- Bus lines serve as a lifeline for one participant
- All buses have disabled access.
- General public are helpful when they see a person using a white cane
- Metroline provides a good response to problems
- Accessibility of public transport is getting better

B) Negative comments

Stations

- Harrow on the Hill station is not step-free

Trains and underground

- One participant in a wheelchair does not use the train, underground or overground at all.
- It can be stressful waiting for assistance at a train station and not knowing whether the assistance will be there on time.
- Train stations require people in wheelchairs to book for assistance 24 hours in advance. Even at stations where there is always enough staff.

Buses and bus stops

- Especially when a bus has been delayed, the bus tends to leave the bus stop very quickly. This makes it difficult to find a seat in time.
- The bus stop outside Harrow and Wealdstone station on The Bridge isn't accessible with a ramp. One participant has gotten stuck on a bus as the ramp broke while entering the bus at this particular stop.
- Bus stop in Wealdstone high street has been moved, but the digital display doesn't reflect this.

- The notice that this bus stop had been moved was only visible if you faced away from the road.
- Notices about bus stops that have been moved, don't contain information about how long the disruption is scheduled to be.
- Buses don't always stop next to the kerb.
- To exit a bus while in a wheelchair, often one has to yell at the driver to get the ramp extended.
- Bus drivers often say kerbs aren't suitable for using the ramps.
- Often, kerbs at bus stops have bins and signs to don't leave enough space for the ramp to be used.
- The bus stop across from the Waitrose in Harrow and Wealdstone had its shelter removed. Comment was added that this was done to put in a replacement, but due to technical problems the replacement shelter had been delayed.

Pavements and street works

- The Rayners Lane estate has a lack of dropped kerbs. The dropped kerb near the H12 bus stop on one side of the road has even been removed.
- Road works in Wealdstone high street reduce accessibility.

Travel information

- The announcements on buses are often either visible or audible – not both.
- Signs and announcements can be improved to reflect accurate travel information in multiple ways.
- Announcement regarding cancelled trains are often only audible and don't show on the displays.
- Announcement concerning the gap at platforms need to be visible as well as audible.
- Displays should provide real time travel information.
- Making complaints can be difficult as there are many different companies and providers involved.
- When a complaint is made to TfL, there is no option to get feedback on the complaint.

Other

- Full access doesn't just relate to physical accessibility.
- Using public transport can be intimidating.
- Travelling during rush hour is very difficult.
- People with invisible disabilities don't get the same helpful response from the general public
- One participant felt restricted to venues that were local.

2) Improvements

Stations

- Harrow on the Hill should be made step free.
- Maybe the lift shafts of the post office could be used to make Harrow on the Hill step-free
- Rayners Lane should be made step free
- Maybe the private sector could fund cable cars or lifts at stations.
- Currently, funicular lifts are being installed at Greenford station, which is a cheap method of providing step free access. They do require wide staircases. They could be used at more stations.

Trains and underground

- There should be more moveable ramps on trains and at stations.

Buses and bus stops

- Some bus seats are placed so high that it is difficult to use for short people.
- Often, people place their buggies in the space for wheelchairs. The existing policy is that people are requested to remove their buggy, but they are not required to. The new policy would be that wheelchair users are priority, but this still doesn't require people to remove their buggy. The signs on buses are becoming stricter in asking people to remove their buggies.
- Make buses so that two wheelchair users could use the same bus at the same time. This could also solve some of the problems around wheelchair space in buses being used for buggies.
- Many bus stops are cluttered with fixed bins, lamp posts and signs. They should be audited by bus drivers.
- The current policy of the Metrolink bus company is that if a ramp on a bus fails during a journey, the bus should immediately be taken to a garage.

Pavements and street works

- Kerbside works in the borough are on a three year programme – this needs to be quicker.
- The pavement between the town centre and Morrisons underneath the main road is placed in a circle, is uneven and very textured. It is incredibly difficult to use in a wheelchair, with a rollator or with a buggy.

Travel information

- Comments and complaints to London buses can be improved as there are so many different bus companies. It is unclear where to complain.
- Travel information should be accurate, real time and always both visible and audible.
- In stations, there is often a lack of sign posts to the 'disabled access area', e.g. the elevators.

Other

- Bus companies require wheelchair users to back into the pad in the space for wheelchairs due to health and safety requirements. However, other adults can decide themselves whether they want to sit, stand, hold on to any handles or not. Wheelchair users aren't allowed to assess those risks themselves.
- When in a wheelchair in public transport while it's crowded, it can feel like you're being overrun.
- Dial-a-Ride offers a great service. However it is difficult to book as the phone lines are generally overwhelmed with calls between 9am and noon.
- The taxicard scheme is easy to use in Harrow. When farther out of the borough, taxis can be more difficult to arrange. You can get charged for long waits of the taxi.
- There should be a holistic approach to accessibility, for instance with bus stops are accessible and where dropped kerbs are placed.

5. RESPONSES CONSULTATION ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT REVIEW

Number of responses	14
Online responses	11
Paper	3

Question 1: Please tell us how often you use each to get around the borough

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Couple of times a year	Hardly ever/never
Pavements and footpaths	12	2			
Bus	1	6	2		3
Underground/Tube	1	5	2	1	2
Overground/ Train		6	2	1	5
Taxi		1	1	4	5
Private Car	6	3	2		2
Concessionary travel		1			8
Other	1		1		5

Comments question 1	
ATR1	I would like the opportunity to say that grass verges are badly looked after and that ma
ATR5	Freedom pass ongoing use
ATR7	Bicycle
ATR10	Bicycle

Question 2: Please tell us how accessible each of the following is when you travel

	No difficulties	Minor difficulties	Severe difficulties	Inaccessible
Buses	5	4	1	1
Bus stops	7	3	3	1
Overground/ Trains	6	3	4	1
Train stations	5	1	3	3
Underground/Tube	3	2	6	3
Tube stations	3	2	2	2
Pavements and footpaths	5	7	2	
Pedestrian crossings	8	4	2	
Other:	3			

Comments question 2	
ATR5	<p>Stanmore underground station has 48 steep steps to the platforms, and a very long and tortuous ramp from the car park only for wheelchair users. Lift(s) are desperately needed, particularly as the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, currently being rebuilt and enlarged, is close by, and additional buses planned to transport people to and from the Hospital.</p> <p>Harrow-on-the-Hill station (underground and overground) is another station that should have lifts installed. It is a very busy central hub for the town and totally inaccessible for the disabled.</p> <p>Crossing at Stanmore Hill/Church Rd/The Broadway is highly dangerous with numerous accidents having taken place, including one recent fatality. Pedestrian phase is desperately needed to be included in the traffic lights sequence.</p>
ATR6	Have to drive a distance to access public transport
ATR7	Harrow on the Hill station needs lifts from street to ticket hall and ticket hall to platforms
ATR8	<p>I am filling this for my son who is adhd and autistic. The buses are crowded the 186 is dangerous there are always incidents on it so I pick him up from Harrow on the hill due to this. The station guards are extremely rude. He has a freedom pass which app is being stopped which the council will have to provide transport. Surely it is cheaper to provide a freedom pass than daily transport to school! When my sons pass sometimes doesn't work the staff are rude to him. When he started school they would not let me on the platform with him even though he is autistic. They made me pay for a platform pass. The pavements are wonky and all the roads have potholes in that damage your car felbridge Vernon drive are the worst!</p>
ATR9	<p>Stairs at Harrow on the Hill station are very difficult.</p> <p>Some buses are high of the ground + the kerb is high.</p> <p>Pavements are very uneven</p>
ATR11	Harrow on the Hill station needs access, lifts or escalators for people with mobility problems, since there are a larger number than usual of stairs.
Paper 2	Difficult without appropriate help

Question 3: How often do any of the following create difficulties when travelling?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Couple of times a year	Hardly ever/never
Length of travel time via accessible route	1		1	2	8
Attitude of staff	1	1	1	1	8
Attitude of general public	1	1	1	2	7
Accuracy of travel information	1		1	3	7
Other:					6

Comments question 3	
ATR6	Have to wait a longtime when there is o one only bus available
ATR8	As above buses are dangerous people push and swear. My daughter was punched on the 186. Wealdstone is full of people with mental health problems who hang around drinking. The community police do nothing to make it safe only the churches patrol on a friday and saturday to try and make it safe!

Question 4: Please list your top three suggestions to improve your ability to get around the Borough:

ATR2 1	Lifts at Harrow on the Hill station
2	Lifts at Rayners Lane station
3	Lift at Kenton station
ATR3 1	Lifts at Harrow on the Hill station
2	Lifts at Rayners Lane station
3	Lift at Kenton station
ATR4 1	Improve provision for cyclists. Better road surface particularly at edge of lanes where cyclists ride.
ATR5 1	Stanmore underground lifts
2	Stanmore Hill/The Broadway pedestrian crossing improvement.
3	Harrow-on-the-Hill Station lifts
ATR6 1	Provide bud service where is none
2	divert existing bus routes not covered
ATR7 1	speed up buses by providing express services to places like Ealing, Heathrow etc
2	provide a direct bus service from Harrow Bus station to Central Middlesex Hospital
3	More bike lanes, where possible segregated from other road traffic
ATR8 1	Sort out the people drinking in the street in wealdstone and drug dealers
2	bus cameras on buses esp 186!
3	train all staff at harron the hill as the are rude and verbally abusive. When I was collecting for the adhd there they told me i was pocketing the money!
ATR9 1	Lift at HOTH station
ATR10 1	More frequent buses
ATR11 1	Improve Harrow on the Hill station access
Paper1 1	If eyesight was good I would be able to travel
Paper2 1	Ask the right questions for this form
2	Think about questions before you write them.
3	Use your imagination

Question 5: Please describe what impact your access to public transport has on your daily life.

ATR5	Makes for limited use of public transport.
ATR6	To have access to details of bus routes so as to shorten the time wasted. Free parking available for people attending council meeting (Council reps etc)
ATR7	Major importance - enables me to travel widely and avoids need to use the car.
ATR8	I have to use my car I would prefer to use public transport to save the environment.
ATR9	I am very lucky to live where there are so many different types of transport and so many services
ATR10	A great deal - for journeys to shops, and underground and overground trips to central London and more locally.
Paper 1	Unable to travel due to eyesight
Paper 2	Load of hassle

Question 6: How do your experiences of public transport impact on your ability to take longer journeys out of the Borough, for example to central London?

ATR4	I avoid busy times as I find standing for extended periods difficult.
ATR5	Journeys out of the Borough, particularly central London, are rare. Occassionaly I am driven by car.
ATR6	London Transport provides good connections it would be helpful if advice is available to workout your journey perticulaly when you are not a frequent traveller
ATR7	Good experience generally, as long as I can still climb the steps to Harrow on the Hill station.If this becomes impossible due to physical deterioration, using Harrow and Wealdstone will make life more difficult.
ATR8	There are no direct buses from belmont to Northwood hills why does it take 3 buses when lots of children go to school there!
ATR9	Engeneering works are a nuisance since some weekends they are on many different routes. If I have to take the Piccadily line the stairs at South Harrow station are also difficult
ATR10	As written above - it's very useful to have the good transport links to central London that we do.
ATR11	Have to go via Pinner instead of Harrow on the Hill.
Paper 1	Not applicable see question 5
Paper 2	No difference

Question 7: 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	7
Yes, affecting hearing	1
Yes, a learning disability	
Yes, affecting mobility	3
Yes, affecting vision	1
Yes, mental ill-health	
Other:	2
Total	14

Comments question 7	
ATR4	Standing for extended periods or on buses is difficult.
ATR8	my soin is autistis and has adhd
ATR10	Epilepsy

Question 8: Please provide us with your postcode (this information will only be used to identify whether problems are specific to a certain area. This information will not be used to identify you):

ATR1	HA7 2EF
ATR2	HA1
ATR3	HA1
ATR4	HA2 6DH
ATR5	HA7 4BJ
ATR6	HA3 9JE
ATR7	HA1 4QP
ATR8	
ATR9	HA1 2PR
ATR10	HA3 8LF
ATR11	HA5 4QL
Paper 1	HA3 7DJ
Paper 2	HA2 8LA
Paper 3	

6. NOTES ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT SCRUTINY REVIEW Tuesday 18th June

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Councillor Sue Anderson (chair)	Tim Bellenger, Director Policy and Investigation, London Travel Watch
Councillor Jerry Miles	Gerry Devine, Chair of Trustees, Harrow Community Transport
Councillor John Nickolay	Paul Giles, Performance Delivery Manager, London Sovereign
Councillor Stephen Wright	Colin Izzard, Service Delivery Manager, Metroline
Tony Wood, Harrow Public Transport Users' Association	Stuart McManus, management trainee, Metroline
	Mohammad Hashmi, LUL Deputy Station Manager Wembley Central
	Scott Lester, Regional Borough Programme Manager, TfL
Simone van Elk, Scrutiny Officer, Harrow Council	Hanif Islam, Senior Professional Transport Planning, Harrow Council
	Stephen Kelly, Divisional Director of Planning, Harrow Council

Apologies were received from Councillor Ashton.

2. Presentation on Transport issues identified by Harrow residents by Tim Bellenger, London TravelWatch

Presentation and comments

Tim Bellenger explained the role of London TravelWatch and its findings concerning transport in Harrow. London TravelWatch is a statutory body, funded by the London Assembly, responsible for representing passenger interests across the entire public transport network in London. The organisation also functions as an appeals body for complaints that haven't been resolved by individual transport operators.

In November, London TravelWatch organised a transport user engagement event in Harrow. During this event, two major issues were consistently raised. The first is the lack of step-free access at Harrow-on-the-Hill station. The second is the access to Northwick Park Hospital and the lack of step-free access at Northwick Park station. Though Chiltern Railways uses both stations, they aren't able to apply for all the funds to improve access to stations through the Department of Transport (DfT), but instead would have to get funding via the Mayor. Another issue identified is the access at Sudbury Hill Harrow station.

Improved access would likely generate additional patronage. London TravelWatch will publish research later this year that identifies that increasing accessibility is seen positively by passengers in general, not just passengers with mobility difficulties. It improves passengers' perceptions of getting value for money. Another publication of London TravelWatch to be published later this year focuses on the design of buses and trains. The general public values vehicles with a large space for wheelchair users and buggies. Increased accessibility has positive effects for the whole community, not just the members of the community that have disabilities, such as people with temporary disabilities and people who are less abled-bodied as well as people with small children, buggies and luggage.

It is positive to see that the Council strives to have 100% of its bus stops accessible by 2015. One of the additional benefits of accessible bus stops, is that it makes bus services more reliable as it becomes easier for drivers to use the stop.

London TravelWatch is working on a project with the Royal National Institute of the Blind and Transport for All regarding A-board advertisements on public highways. For both completely blind and partially sighted

people they can form a significant obstruction on the road as many A-boards are put at random places on the pavement. The policy regarding A-boards varies across London Boroughs. The principle put forward by London TravelWatch is 'on the way – not in the way'.

Tony Wood commented that the Northwick Park Public Transport Liaison Group has decided at a recent meeting that, though the accessibility of Northwick Park station is important, the group would focus its efforts on the accessibility of Harrow-on-the-Hill station and the bus links from there to the hospital.

Sudbury Hill Harrow station

Councillor Nickolay commented on Sudbury Hill Harrow station which is used by Chiltern Railways. As Chiltern Railways main turnover comes from customers travelling long distances, they are reluctant to invest in stations where their fast trains don't stop, or to increase the number of stations the fast trains do stop at. Tim Bellenger commented that Sudbury Hill Harrow station currently doesn't have machines to top up Oyster card, which means that when passengers top-up their Oyster cards elsewhere the proceeds don't go to Chiltern Railways. Councillor Nickolay commented that it might be necessary to put an extra rail track to ensure that Chiltern Railways can let the fast trains pass the slow trains. Tim Bellenger suggested there may be scope to reopen the Great Western route for trains to the North if the HS2 line is placed in a tunnel, which would free up space on the Chiltern line. Hanif Islam commented that there had been a meeting with Chiltern Railways concerning Sudbury Hill Harrow station. Step-free access would have to be provided at both ends of the station. Chiltern Railways has indicated it would help if the Council is willing to fund the ticket machines. A feasibility study together with Ealing Council and Brent Council into improvements to the public realm along a wider corridor from South Vale along through Roxeth has just been completed. The study includes plans to adapt footways, parking, bus stops and step-free access at stations. Two challenges have been identified. The first is funding, which the Councils are now looking into. The other difficulty is that a section of private land is required for the works.

Bus stops

Hanif Islam mentioned that TfL has opened a possibility for additional funding to improve the accessibility of bus stops. The Council could potentially get more funding if the deadline to have all bus stops accessible was moved forward. Hanif Islam answered that that was a possibility. Colin Izzard asked if this funding was part of the LIP funding. Scott Lester answered that the Mayor had set up an additional fund for accessible bus stops over and above the funding through the LIP. The costs for making all bus stops in Harrow accessible this year is estimated at £0.5m.

Harrow-on-the-Hill station

Councillor Wright suggested raising money for step-free access at Harrow-on-the-Hill station via commercial fundraising, comparable to the Emirates Airline or the Barclays Bicycle hire scheme. The Council would need to consider what they could offer big business in return, for example advertisements on the concourse. One might even consider changing the name of the station. Tony Wood commented that in the current economic climate, one might need to take a cautious view. Scott Lester added that there would still be an extra maintenance liability for TfL. The results of the Chancellor's Spending Review would soon be announced public which could have a significant impact on available budgets.

Stephen Kelly explained the Council's work to create a context in which the accessibility of Harrow-on-the-Hill station would be a bigger priority. Firstly, Harrow's reputation for investment and its pedestrian footfall isn't as high as say Camden. This has an influence on the priority that is given for accessible stations in the Borough. The sense has to be created that an area is improving. If the forecast pedestrian growth rate is above the national average, local stations move up in priority for funding. The Council is committed to helping growth happen. Harrow itself is changing as well with increased developments and intensification. The Core Strategy has identified the heart of Harrow as an intensification area. The Greater London Authority (GLA) and TfL have funds specifically targeted to the heart of Harrow. The Council has worked to ensure that additional capital investment is reinvested in Harrow itself. Work is also being done with the Outer London Fund to create a critical mass of people and investments. Major developments in the town centre, such as the Lowlands recreation centre, drive movements into the town centre. All this work done around planning has a slow burning impact but it does influence priorities.

The Council is also considering the scheme for adaptations to Harrow-on-the-Hill station itself: Is the current scheme the only possibility or could there be several linked schemes? What would be the cost of each individual part? Is the Council able to pay for one of the sections and are partners able to pay for the others? How does all this fit together? Installing lifts from the concourse to platforms would happen on Network Rail Land which brings specific costs due to safety considerations, technical requirements, and regulatory

approval. If TfL would fund the costs of going down to the platforms, other parties might be able to help passengers get up to the concourse. There are possibilities for funds via the Mayor's growth fund or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). If the scheme is divided into bite sized chunks, it aids the discussion with TfL about the priority of the business case.

Finally, Harrow-on-the-Hill station is scheduled to be used a pilot for commercialisation. The Council is in active negotiations with TfL about the reinvesting the funds from commercialisation back into the station. If the quality of the facilities in and around the station improves, this could lead to an increase in passengers and an increase of the station's profile.

Colin Izzard commented that he had seen early designs for the station and wondered how plans impacted on Harrow-on-the-Hill bus station. The stops are on an island surrounded by a busy road and the many buses using the station, so there is room for improvement. Hanif Islam commented that the bus station is a potential site for redevelopment. Options are constrained by a nearby office block and the Network Rail Land at the back. Stephen Kelly commented that compared to several years ago, the response from TfL is much more positive to improve access at Harrow-on-the-Hill. As the context around Harrow-on-the-Hill changes, TfL weighs the importance of this station differently. Scott Lester added that the business case for putting lifts in Harrow-on-the-Hill station hasn't changed substantially with a changed context as the cost-benefit ratio for TfL stays the same. TfL will still have to put in £2m for every £1m the Council puts in. TfL is always looking for extra capital from other partners. The station at Edmonton is a good example where DfT sponsored the project for £800k, the borough used its entire LIP funding for a year and TfL also funded part of the works.

Tony Wood suggested the Council could use a similar financial structure as was done for works in Pett's Hill, where the borough effectively loaned funds from TfL and paid them back via their LIP funding for three years. Stephen Kelly answered that the Council can indeed look at different financial constructions. The situation has changed from looking at TfL to fund the project to the Council looking at what it might contribute itself. If the Council can fund part of the works as a separate individual project, it could look at potentially investing capital spend, CIL money and 106 funds.

Tony Wood mentioned that the costs of the original scheme were £35m, which included 5 lifts. Two lifts would create access to the concourse, while the other lifts would provide access to the different platforms. Apparently, the costs of the scheme haven't increased in price over the years. Councillor Wright suggested raising a ramp to have a bridge across the platforms which would create access from the car park. This would involve removing the booking hall area in favour of the use of Oyster cards. Tony Wood commented that one of the recurrent comments from people with disabilities is that they do not want to be treated differently. In addition, TfL was likely to only want one line of ticket barriers to control as opposed to multiple ones.

Tony Wood commented that step-free access at Harrow-on-the-Hill station should become the top priority of the Council for the next few years for allocating funding. If the Council would put all its efforts into one project it might create a slightly greater chance for change.

A-boards

Tim Bellenger suggested the Council look at its enforcement policy for the placement of A-boards. The Royal Borough of Kingston had implemented a strict policy where A-boards can't be placed on the public highway. Other councils are more pragmatic in their enforcement and offer businesses guidance on where to put the A-boards.

3. Discussion topics

- **Pavements and footpaths**

Councillor Anderson commented that the journey with Mr Mehta had highlighted the difficulties Visually Impaired People (VIP) face when walking across pavements. Colin Izzard commented that the report of the two journeys were generally enlightening. He had noticed uneven pavements with 2 or 3 inch gaps at many points between Harrow and Wealdstone station and the civic centre, which could be improved.

Colin Izzard commented that even accessible bus stops can be challenging to use if there are obstructions on the pavements, for example in Northolt Road. Northolt Road also has many driveways, which makes things more difficult. For a bus stop to be accessible the height of the kerb is essential. The LIP funding can provide to adjust the height of the kerb, but if the rest of the pavement is sinking, this still creates difficulties for the accessibility of a particular bus stop. Metroline would highlight bus stops that needed remedial work to

the Council. Hanif Islam commented that when creating new bus stops, all aspects of accessibility are taken into account. For existing bus stops this is more difficult as the surroundings can create problems. Sometimes carriageways are near, there can be utility mains in the ground or private land can surround the stop. The Council is conscious to refuse home owners the ability to have a driveway if it creates conflicts with bus stops. The Council can hardly ever move a specific stop, as its location is determined by people needing to use the bus there.

Hanif Islam also commented on the use of A-board advertisements in the Council. If A-boards are placed on private land, it becomes difficult for the Council to influence where they're placed. Some A-boards are placed on public footpaths. Enforcement by the Council is never enough to solve this. Businesses also need to understand the needs of their customers, which include people with mobility difficulties or visual impairments.

Colin Izzard commented on the concept of 'shared space', another issues raised during the journey with Mr Mehta. There can be a lack of clarity in 'shared spaces' about where the expected pavement stops and the roads starts. Scott Lester commented that there is a detailed examination of an area spaces before a 'shared space' is created. St. Johns road near Clapham Junction has been a shared space for the past 20 years, where street furniture demarcates the area between the road and the pavement.

Tony Wood added that many bus stops are unnecessarily cluttered by bins. The bins were once installed so people could dispose of their paper tickets. As paper tickets are no longer used, the bins are either unnecessary or could be moved.

Parking

Gerry Devine commented on trip hazards on pavements. A lot of NHS resources are spent on dealing with the damages. Often these uneven pavements are created by heavy vehicles. It would be useful to implement a system of penalties via CCTV cameras. It could save the Council money as it would enable them to recuperate the costs of repairing roads. Hanif Islam commented that the Council does enforce against illegal parking by sending a Penalty Charge Notices (PCN), if it can identify the owners. This usually requires the license plate to be visible on camera. If there are no cameras, it is a cheaper alternative to place bollards along the pavements to prevent damage, such as for example in Wealdstone High Street. The Council does a routine cycle of inspections of the roads in the Borough which is the basis for a programme of repairs. If the Council is sued for damages, it is generally covered for insurance claims as long as the road has been inspected and repaired according to schedule. Fortunately, cases for damages don't arise very often.

One area of concern is Kenton Road, where there is no dedicated loading space. Businesses have complained to the Council that their only options for delivery of goods are to either park on the pavement or park at a bus stop. There will be a meeting between the businesses and the Council to see if a dedicated loading bay can be introduced in Kenton Road.

Colin commented that one frustration amongst bus drivers is the parking by security vans. It can be an endless chase to track down the owners and issue penalties. Public awareness about appropriate parking is therefore very important. Councillor Wright suggested encouraging residents to take photos of illegally parked vehicles and sending them to the Council. With the wide use of smart phones, it should become easier for the Council to obtain pictures as evidence. Tony Wood suggested using the Council's large network of Neighbourhood Champions to report on bad parking. The responsible officer could send a note about how and where to lodge complaints around parking.

- **Buses**

Tony Wood commented that the journey with Nicky Baker had identified that bus drivers often don't hear the special bell that indicates that a wheelchair user wants to use the ramp at the next stop. Paul Giles commented that the special bell definitely makes a different sound from the other stop buttons and bus drivers do distinguish between the two. Unfortunately, bus drivers had commented to him that the general public uses that special bell so often that it tends to no longer serves its purpose. Tony Wood commented that if drivers are aware a person in a wheelchair is on their bus that should help them recognise the special bell is used genuinely.

Colin Izzard mentioned that TfL has launched a big awareness project about the use of space on buses. The approach is to push the moral imperative for people to make space on the bus for passengers in a wheelchair. There is unfortunately a lot resistance amongst other passengers and many buses are full at any point in time.

Colin Izzard also commented that one difficult issue is enabling communication between the bus driver and passenger in a wheelchair. The driver has his/her Public Address (PA) system, but some passengers with disabilities object to having the attention of the whole bus diverted to them. The question was how much interaction was possible and desirable.

Councillor Wright asked whether buses have CCTV cameras installed. Colin Izzard answered that TfL requires every bus to have CCTV and the average double decker bus has at least 12 cameras. Similarly, buses aren't allowed out of the garage if the ramp is broken and there is a very strict time frame within which the ramp must be fixed.

Councillor Miles asked whether the new buses also have a button outside down the side of the bus to be used by passengers in wheelchairs. Colin Izzard answered that this is one of the design specifications of the buses. If the button is placed far away from the door, wheelchair users have to move around rather quickly to use the ramp. The bus companies do their best to make the buses a friendly environment for passengers with disabilities. Scott Lester commented on the vehicle type. TfL specifies the capacity of the bus, the ramps and whether there should be multiple doors. The choice of the specific type of bus and bus manufacturer is down to the bus companies. Colin commented that it was useful to know that based on a bad experience with a particular stop, perceptions about the difficulties of a specific stop travel widely among passengers.

Scott Lester commented that TfL had worked with Haringey Council to improve accessibility at Muswell Hill bus stop by adding an extra bus stop in the area as Muswell Hill is very steep. The new fund from the Mayor to improve bus stops can be used to install completely new stops. Scott Lester also commented on the capacity of bus routes. During peak times, one would expect about 60 passengers on a bus. To provide that one extra bus in the schedule costs hundreds of thousands of pounds over a year, especially for a potentially small number of passengers in that extra bus. Similar or even greater costs would accrue to change the vehicle type of buses.

Gerry Devine commented that, despite the accessibility of buses and the large number of accessible bus stops, there are still people who can't get to their local bus stop or can't use buses at all. Some people are either too frail or lack confidence. Scott Lester commented that Dial-a-Ride service is available for some people and that hospitals provide special transport to and from hospital appointments. Tim Bellenger commented that as the eligibility criteria for concessionary travel don't overlap, councils, the NHS and Dial-a-Ride services would do better to coordinate the different services to provide a single door-to-door service which would be easier to use. Gerry Devine answered that this was being looked at in Kensington and Chelsea assisted by their local community transport.

Hanif Islam mentioned that Harrow Council does run a volunteer based travel mentor scheme that develops people's ability and confidence in using public transport TfL provided funds the training of the volunteers and their travel. It depends on the individual how much assistance they require. Colin suggested liaising between the bus company and the Council and possibly use this scheme for training purposes for the bus companies, as there are often awareness issues. Hanif Islam offered to exchange information about the Council's mentoring scheme.

Tony Wood commented that on the coordination of transport following reorganisations in the NHS. Northwick Park Hospital now has a larger catchment area of patients. One of the priorities of the Northwick Park Hospital Transport Liaison Committee is to divert the route of the 395 bus to the hospital as many patients from Ealing use that route. Gerry Devine added that ideally the 395 route would also the hospital ring so patients get access to the rear of the hospital.

Hanif Islam added that Harrow community transport had asked for a specific stand in the town centre for their passengers. Gerry Devine added that he volunteers as a driver for community transport and many passengers request to be dropped off at the bus station, but there is no place to stop near by. The only alternatives are to break the law or stop a long way off.

- **Trains, underground and stations**

Tony Wood commented that Nicky Baker had indicated that she can't reach the buttons for the lift at Harrow and Wealdstone station as she can't get close enough to the buttons. There are metal barriers on the ground just in front of the buttons. Muhammad Hashmi would look into this.

Colin Izzard commented that the extra work done to provide lifts at Harrow and Wealdstone station had made a big difference to accessibility in the area.

Councillor Anderson wondered why staff at Harrow and Wealdstone station couldn't help passengers in wheelchairs on the slow trains. Muhammad Hashmi answered that passengers in wheelchair couldn't be helped on the Bakerloo line service, as passengers could not exit the Bakerloo trains further down the line. Health and safety concerns for customers and staff due to factors such as height, platform widths and ramp design are a crucial factor. There had been an existing agreement with staff and unions of London Overground about assisting passengers with ramps when London Underground Limited (LUL) had taken over the management of the station. In addition, there were not enough ramps on platforms 1 and 2 to be able to help people on the slow trains, and the location where the trains stop combined with existing architecture on the platforms also creates difficulties. Colin Izzard commented that especially in the run up to the Olympics, one would expect more ramps to be available. Muhammad Hashmi commented that such problems exist across the network. Wembley Central was an example of a station where lifts are installed, but there are difficulties around provision of ramps. Colin Izzard commented that unfortunately for many stations there was no suitable replacement via bus services. Tony Wood offered to send an email to the general manager of the Bakerloo Line and Gerry Devine offered to do the same with the general manager of London Overground. Tony Wood added that the complete journey was important so it would be good to know what was happening across the entire network.

Colin Izzard commented that accessibility at Stanmore station was a feat a human endurance for any person in a wheelchair. Tony Wood commented that funicular lifts could possibly be used at Stanmore to improve accessibility. Councillor Nickolay commented that only platform 3 was level with the train. If a person in a wheelchair arrives on platform 1 or 2, the method to notify staff is to ring a bell on the wall of the platform.

Colin Izzard commented that it was a positive development that so many stations on the Bakerloo line had improved lighting and new paintwork. This makes stations feel safer, which can be a great concern for vulnerable people who can feel scared to use dark and dingy locations. Scott Lester commented that those improvements had been part of £3bn investment in the entire underground network. It increases passenger reliability.

Tony Wood asked about the provision of toilets in stations as this issue is consistently raised by people via the Harrow Public Transport User Association. Many stations don't have toilets, many toilets close at 8PM and some bathrooms are permanently shut. Muhammad Hashmi commented that many toilets are closed at certain times to prevent vandalism. Passengers can always ask the staff for access. Tony Wood suggested putting a notice on the door to that effect. Gerry Devine added that TfL provides a map of the stations with bathrooms which can be downloaded from the TfL website. Scott commented that there is an App one can put on an Iphone called SatLav, which provides the same information. Muhammad Hashmi added that sometimes toilets have to be closed because the cost of keeping the toilet useable is too great. One example is the toilets at Wembley Park: the fast trains passing through the station make the bathrooms shake to such an extent that they are falling apart.

- **Travel information**

Councillor Anderson commented that one issue that was raised by residents was that travel information at bus stops was often only visible but not audible. There is no sound version of the bus countdown system, which displays the estimated arrival time of buses on a digital screen. Colin Izzard suggested linking the countdown system, people's phones and talking software. Hanif Islam recommended looking at smart phone apps.

Hanif Islam also commented on the standard LCD screens at bus stops. The screen itself is a standard model but the data feed can be customised to the specific location of a stop. Hanif Islam asked whether the announcements on the bus about the arrival at stops would be audible outside the bus at the bus stop itself. Colin Izzard answered that the announcements on buses are coordinated so that the route number and final destination of the bus is announced at each stop, but that there is a lot of variance in the volume between different buses. There also needs to be an account of how comfortable it is for passengers in the bus if the announcements are meant to be audible outside the bus. Gerry Devine commented that work is being done at the main entrance to the hospital at Northwick Park to have a countdown screen of the local buses displayed so passengers don't have to wait outside.

- **Council policy**

Colin Izzard commented that it was to good to see in the report an outline of the Council's policies and where they are derived from. He also complimented the Council on its proactive stance regarding transport and accessibility and hoped it would maintain this approach. Hanif Islam commented that the LIP contained key bullet points and the Council had separate policies in place for each of the key items, which he offered to send round to anyone interested.

- **Coordination between Council and partner organisations (incl. funding)**

Colin Izzard commented that he valued that the Council continued to host the transport liaison meetings as he's aware it takes up officers' time and that some councils have actively disengaged from transport providers. Officer engagement with operators is needed to produce good transport policy. Councillor Nickolay complimented the good work done by Tony Wood as the chairman of Harrow Public Transport User's Association had certainly contributed to this as well as the good work done by officers. Hanif Islam commented on the good relationship between the Council and TfL.

4. Any other business and next steps

Gerry Devine invited everyone to attend a lunch organised by Harrow Community Transport on Tuesday 16th July regarding Accessible Transport. The lunch was organised as part of a consultation on the accessibility of Public Transport.

Councillor Anderson explained what the next steps for the review are. Notes of the meeting would be included in the evidence of the review. In the next two months the review group would complete their report, which would focus on recommendations to Harrow Council Cabinet. The report would be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in September and Harrow Council Cabinet meeting in October.

7. NOTES VISIT TO STANMORE STATION TUESDAY 4TH JUNE 2013

Present: Councillor John Nickolay and Councillor Stephen Wright

Members parked in the service road off London Road to the east of Stanmore Station to examine the so-called "step-free" access to and from the station.

Members walked down the slip road into the car park, finding it uneven and really rather too steep for anyone in a wheelchair wanting to enter or leave. The presence of a mini road hump at the exit from the car parking area also presented a hazard. Mounting the well inclined series of slopes from the car park level to the booking hall seemed to present no problem to the members, although people in manual wheelchairs have indicated the slope is too long and steep. From the booking hall with a special gate onto and from the platforms, it all appeared satisfactory.

Members walked onto the platforms where we could see for ourselves the varying levels for getting to and from the train and the platforms. Platform 3 had been constructed so that it was level with the floors of the trains for its entire length, but platforms 1 & 2 were up to four inches (10 centimetres) above the floor levels of the trains. Members asked a member of staff what would happen to someone in a wheelchair who did not arrive on platform 3. The member of staff explained that it would be necessary for someone to press a button and ask for a member of staff to provide a ramp. Since the button was on the wall of the platform a wheelchair user either needed someone in attendance or a helpful fellow passenger to press the button for them. Members felt this situation should be reviewed.

Having climbed the 40 or so steps providing direct access from the booking hall to the street level, members estimated that anyone wanting to reach the bus stops by way of the "step-free" route would be using a route of about a quarter of a mile (400m), assuming they had the stamina to manage the bumpy and rather steep slope from the car park to London Road.

Just as a matter of interest members asked a bus driver if one could get to the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital by bus. The bus driver informed members there was an occasional shuttle bus (which, according to the timetable, seemed to be at least no more frequent than every 45 minutes) but made no reference to the 615 which, despite a more circuitous route, did seem to be more frequent.

Members concluded that the "step-free" access at Stanmore Station was in reality only satisfactory for anyone going to and from a vehicle in the car park. To claim it enables people to get to and from the bus stops on either side of London Road is a gross exaggeration that only pays lip service to what is stated on the Underground maps.

Members did wonder if the Greenford Station funicular lift might serve a purpose at Stanmore.

8. ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT REVIEW

RESPONSES TO POINTS SEMINAR TfL CONSULTATION DELIVERY SURFACE PLANNING

Points raised including responses

1) Experiences of Public Transport

A) Positive comments

- H18 bus service is superb. **We'll let the operator know.**
- Bus lines serve as a lifeline for one participant
- All buses have disabled access.
- General public are helpful when they see a person using a white cane
- Metroline provides a good response to problems. **We'll let them know.**
- Accessibility of public transport is getting better. **Good for them to acknowledge this.**

B) Negative comments

Stations

- Harrow on the Hill station is not step-free

Trains and underground

- One participant in a wheelchair does not use the train, underground or overground at all.
- It can be stressful waiting for assistance at a train station and not knowing whether the assistance will be there on time.
- Train stations require people in wheelchairs to book for assistance 24 hours in advance. Even at stations where there is always enough staff.

Buses and bus stops

- Especially when a bus has been delayed, the bus tends to leave the bus stop very quickly. This makes it difficult to find a seat in time. **Drivers should give everyone time to hold on or get to a seat before moving off. Older and disabled bus users who monitor the service independently and under cover consistently report they are given time to hold on/get to a seat 90% of the time. We will continue to work with bus operators on the other 10% of drivers who don't.**
- The bus stop outside Harrow and Wealdstone station on Masons Avenue isn't accessible with a ramp. One participant has gotten stuck on a bus as the ramp broke while entering the bus at this particular stop. **We will examine this.**
- Bus stop in Wealdstone high street has been moved, but the digital display doesn't reflect this. **Again we will examine this.**
- The notice that this bus stop had been moved was only visible if you faced away from the road. **Thank you for letting us know. We will make sure that we take note of this in any similar situation in the future.**
- Notices about bus stops that have been moved, don't contain information about how long the disruption is scheduled to be. **I agree that the information needs to be more**

explicit where this is possible. Sometimes exact timescales are not always known and in those circumstances it is better to say nothing than to give a date which in the event is inaccurate.

- Buses don't always stop next to the kerb. Sometimes it genuinely isn't possible as the driver needs space to manoeuvre the bus in to the kerb and if something is blocking the path then it can be difficult. Again, our monitoring shows that drivers do pull up to the kerb around 95% of the time and we are continuously working with the bus companies to improve this. It remains a fundamental part of initial and ongoing training for bus drivers.
- To exit a bus while in a wheelchair, often one has to yell at the driver to get the ramp extended. There is dedicated 'blue' bell push in the wheelchair area which lets the driver know you need to exit the bus. It makes a distinctive sound and operates a light on the dashboard so the driver knows a wheelchair user needs to get off. You shouldn't have to yell, but we know sometimes situations aren't ideal. We will continue to incorporate this into driver training and information.
- Bus drivers often say kerbs aren't suitable for using the ramps. It would be useful to understand how often. Generally this shouldn't be the case and whilst we know some stops make it difficult for ramps to deploy successfully, drivers should try and if necessary they can move the bus to a different piece of the kerb. They have been trained to do this. Again, our monitoring shows that the vast majority of wheelchair users (98%) successfully board their first bus which suggests these incidents are rare.
- Often, kerbs at bus stops have bins and signs that don't leave enough space for the ramp to be used. 71% of London's 19,000 bus stops are what we call fully accessible, that is the kerb is at the right height, the approach is clear and there are no obstructions at the stop. This figure is set to rise to 95% by 2016. In Harrow, the figure currently is 84% of bus stops, so clutter should gradually reduce over the next couple of years.
- The bus stop across from the Waitrose in Harrow and Wealdstone had its shelter removed. Comment was added that this was done to put in a replacement, but due to technical problems the replacement shelter had been delayed. **We will come back to you on this.**

Pavements and street works

- The Rayners Lane estate has a lack of dropped kerbs. The dropped kerb near the H12 bus stop on one side of the road has even been removed.
- Road works in Wealdstone high street reduce accessibility.

Travel information

- The announcements on buses are often either visible or audible – not both. **Our survey's show that on 97% of all buses the signs & announcements worked properly.**
- Signs and announcements can be improved to reflect accurate travel information in multiple ways. **We are working on a range of improvements to pre-journey and real-time information, including a revamped website, on street information and training bus drivers to make good quality, timely public address announcements.**
- Announcement regarding cancelled trains are often only audible and don't show on the displays.
- Announcement concerning the gap at platforms need to be visible as well as audible.
- Displays should provide real time travel information.
- Making complaints can be difficult as there are many different companies and providers involved.
- When a complaint is made to TfL, there is no option to get feedback on the complaint.

Other

- Full access doesn't just relate to physical accessibility. *We fully understand this and are working with a broad range of user groups representing people with hidden impairments so we can better understand and meet their needs.*
- Using public transport can be intimidating. *We understand this and we offer a Travel mentoring service for people who need help in being more confident using the public transport network. Full details here: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/26330.aspx>*
- Travelling during rush hour is very difficult. *We understand this and we know this is a barrier to travel for many older/disabled transport users. Regrettably, crowding is an issue for us all and London's population is set to grow. What we can do to ease crowding as much as possible is to run a reliable service and both the Tube and bus networks are at their most reliable.*
- People with invisible disabilities don't get the same helpful response from the general public. *See above. We understand this but TfL cannot reasonably educate the public at large. What we can and are doing is to train our staff to understand the issues and behave in a polite and professional way.*
- One participant felt restricted to venues that were local.

2) Improvements

Stations

- Harrow on the Hill should be made step free.
- Maybe the lift shafts of the post office could be used to make Harrow on the Hill step-free
- Rayners Lane should be made step free
- Maybe the private sector could fund cable cars or lifts at stations.
- Currently, funicular lifts are being installed at Greenford station, which is a cheap method of providing step free access. They do require wide staircases. They could be used at more stations.

Trains and underground

- There should be more moveable ramps on trains and at stations.

Buses and bus stops

- Some bus seats are placed so high that it is difficult to use for short people. Can you confirm if this is at shelters or on buses please? *If on buses are there any particular seats and / or types of buses where this is a problem?*
- Often, people place their buggies in the space for wheelchairs. The existing policy is that people are requested to remove their buggy, but they are not required to. The new policy would be that wheelchair users are priority, but this still doesn't require people to remove their buggy. *Bus drivers and operators cannot insist people with buggies or other passengers move out of the space for wheelchair users. This has recently been 'tested' in the courts who determined the space is a 'designated' one not a 'dedicated' one. That said TfL has undertaken extensive research to help formulate a recent public campaign with posters on stops, buses and shelters asking "buggy users to please make space for wheelchair users". Any message more forceful than this runs the risk of alienating those people who willingly give the space who would be persuaded by the campaign. We believe the tone of the campaign is right and we will continue to train staff to ask those in the space to move for wheelchair users and use the correct boarding procedure to create priority access.*

- Make buses so that two wheelchair users could use the same bus at the same time. This could also solve some of the problems around wheelchair space in buses being used for buggies. **This would require the removal of seats, which will seriously impact other older/disabled bus users, especially those who would find it difficult to climb stairs or even a step. It is not a realistic solution unfortunately. Remember London's buses are often very frequent and in independent surveys, 98% of disabled passengers successfully board the first bus.**
- Many bus stops are cluttered with fixed bins, lamp posts and signs. They should be audited by bus drivers. **It's not practical for bus drivers to do this but stops are audited and "clutter" is removed wherever possible.**
- If a ramp on a bus fails during a journey, the bus should immediately be taken to a garage. **Our current procedure is that it should be repaired or replaced as soon as practical, very often at the end of that trip or the next one. We believe this is a reasonable timescale which impacts the fewest passengers. Bus operators are not paid for trips where they operate with a faulty ramp, so they have every incentive to sort the problem out as quickly as possible.**

Pavements and street works

- Kerbside works in the borough are on a three year programme – this needs to be quicker.
- The pavement between the town centre and Morrisons underneath the main road is placed in a circle, is uneven and very textured. It is incredibly difficult to use in a wheelchair, with a rollator or with a buggy.

Travel information

- Comments and complaints to London buses can be improved as there are so many different bus companies. It is unclear where to complain.
- Travel information should be accurate, real time and always both visible and audible.
- In stations, there is often a lack of sign posts to the 'disabled access area', e.g. the elevators.

Other

- Bus companies require wheelchair users to back into the pad in the space for wheelchairs due to health and safety requirements. However, other adults can decide themselves whether they want to sit, stand, hold on to any handles or not. Wheelchair users aren't allowed to assess those risks themselves. **This is a legal requirement which TfL cannot change.**
- When in a wheelchair in public transport while it's crowded, it can feel like you're being overrun. **We understand this. Please see note above on crowding generally.**
- Dial-a-Ride offers a great service. However it is difficult to book as the phone lines are generally overwhelmed with calls between 9am and noon.
- The Taxicard scheme is easy to use in Harrow. When farther out of the borough, taxis can be more difficult to arrange. You can get charged for long waits of the taxi.
- There should be a holistic approach to accessibility, for instance with bus stops are accessible and where dropped kerbs are placed. We do try and achieve this where we can/. **Please see the document "Your Accessible Transport Network" which attempts to approach accessibility and an integrated way.**
<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/transportaccessibility/1167.aspx>

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date:	17 th September 2013
Subject:	Scrutiny Lead Member Report
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health and Social Care• Environment and Enterprise
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Reports from the Scrutiny Lead Members

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

The report accompanies the reports from the Scrutiny Lead Members.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to consider the reports from the Scrutiny Lead Members and agree the actions proposed therein.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

This report outlines details of the work of the Scrutiny Lead Members.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report

Performance Issues

There are no performance issues associated with this report.

Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact associated with this report

Risk Management Implications

There are no risks associated with this report.

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

This report outlines the activities of the scrutiny lead councillors; it makes no proposals to change service delivery.

Corporate Priorities

The Scrutiny Lead Members' responsibilities cover all areas of the council's activity.

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

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY LEADS BRIEFING – 27TH JUNE 2013

Attendees

Councillor Ben Wealthy, Lead for Health and Social Care

Councillor Janet Mote, Lead for Health and Social Care

Councillor Vina Mithani, Chair of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Paul Najsarek, Corporate Director Community Health and Wellbeing

Bernie Flaherty, Director Adult Social Services

Felicity Page, Senior Professional Scrutiny

Developments in Adults Services - directorate update

Performance and finance

- NHS Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commenced in April 2013 with a £20m budget overspend. In May, following a number of savings and support from NHS England, this decreased to a £10m overspend. The CCG will present a plan to NHS England in July on how future savings can be made. It is however anticipated in the remaining saving that £1.8m of costs could shift to the Local Authority via Continuing Care cases.
- Pressures on A&E at Northwick Park were discussed. Members were advised that there are a range of 'out of hours' services available in Harrow which are currently not as well known by residents as we would like. The Integrated Care Pilot, plans to assist in escalating this communication and hopefully reduce unnecessary admissions to hospital.

Corporate Scorecard – Quarter 4 2012/13

There are several indicators linked to the performance of health and social care presented on the *Supporting and protecting people who are most in need* corporate scorecard. Leads were advised that:

- On Personal Budgets, the national target was originally 100% however later on in the year the target decreased to 70%. Harrow's performance around personal budgets exceeded this and is rated within the top ten across the country.
- The Council perform consistently well on the Carers with Services indicator. However, acknowledgement was made that more work could be done around identifying younger carers. Members acknowledged this was a problem area for every Council but nonetheless agreed this was an important area to monitor.
- % of adults with learning disabilities and mental health in paid employment continue to be high – Harrow is the top performing borough in London.

Key areas of activity

- Mental Health Partners CNWL– working closely on a review of the whole service. This is expected to complete in 3 months time.
- Residential day services – Implementing cabinet decision
- Safeguarding – external audits are underway and other areas of preparation are being done ready for the review in November.

- My Community E-Purse – Hope to have full roll out of this exciting social care portal that supports users to have the desire to have control over their PB's in September

Policy horizon scanning - relevant policy issues/implications at national and local level

- Health and social care integration – an ambitious pioneer programme is underway for 8 boroughs in NW London to submit a pioneer bid for a new integration model for 2014/15. – agreed by the HWBB
- The Care Bill merges 40 laws into 1 Bill. Issues covered include; a person's rights to a personal budget, changes to care eligibility; wellbeing and prevention; information and advice being critical; person being involved with outcomes, adult safeguarding becoming a statutory function. Key provisions of the bill include:
 - Every person with eligible needs has the right to receive a personal budget
 - Carer's right to receive support for eligible needs
 - Portability between local authorities
 - National eligibility criteria
 - The 'Dilnot' £72k care cap
 - A new focus on people's wellbeing (i.e. new duty re: information and advice)
 - The person to be involved in outcomes focused assessment
 - Deferred payments
 - Market shaping responsibility

Members discussed this and agreed that whilst the outcome brings with it a mixed reaction it doesn't remove the issue that social care is under funded. The target to implement these changes has been set by Government for 2015 and is anticipated to affect several thousand Harrow residents.

ENVIRONMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY LEADS BRIEFING – 29TH JULY 2013

Present: Councillor O'Dell, Councillor Wright
Caroline Bruce, Philip Hamberger, Simone van Elk

Review of actions last meeting

- Schedule for disposals was discussed with members at the meeting.
- Information on the Xcite scheme had featured in the written members' briefing of June
- Members were informed about the distribution of the Smartwater property marking kits prior to the meeting. Currently approximately 38% of Harrow's households have had a Smartwater kit installed against a target of 50%.
- The final version of the service plan was distributed at the meeting.

Towards Excellence Programme (the new name for PRISM) - update

The Towards Excellence Programme replaces and expands PRISM. The three projects under PRISM were Restructure, New ways of working and Technology. The Towards Excellence Programme also includes the projects of Service review and Operational improvement. The vision for the programme is Great leadership, Confident staff and Services we can be proud of. The re-launch of the programme includes separate meetings with each team in the directorate and the entire programme is scheduled to be completed in March 2014.

Finance monitoring report

The Finance monitoring report was briefly discussed. Members were also informed about the trial of 20 minutes free parking in Rayners Lane. The trial will gauge how people's behaviour is affected by the changes in parking rules and the impacts on parking revenue. The trial will start in September and be reported on to Cabinet in October.

Service plan – final version

The service plans identify how the directorate will implement the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. Decisions about these priorities are made when the corporate plan is decided on. The performance management team is currently working on changes to the corporate and directorate scorecards.

The service plan would often be used in conjunction with budget setting as part of an integrated planning process, but the budget setting for the next council year (2014-15) will only be a light touch review because the Medium Term Financial Strategy has previously set out the budget for 2013-14 and 2014-15.

Matters for corporate director to raise

The regeneration strategy will set out a long term vision for the council to support regeneration in the borough and as such may be an interesting topic for scrutiny to review.

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**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	17 th September 2013
Subject:	Scrutiny Work Programme Update
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	All
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides Members with an update on the projects currently underway as part of the scrutiny work programme

Recommendations:

Councillors are asked to:

- I. Note the progress on the individual projects
- II. Note the timetable for completion of projects
- III. Agree proposals for identifying any further projects for inclusion in the work programme

Section 2 – Report

A number of detailed scrutiny review projects are currently underway. This report provides members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee with an update on each of these projects.

2.1 Current Projects

The projects as set out below are currently underway or are about to commence:

Standing Scrutiny Review of the Budget

It had originally been proposed that this project would review the following areas over the coming months:

- Response to the Business Rate Retention scheme will be considered during 2013
- Fees and charges will be considered during 2013
- Following discussions at the Scrutiny Leadership Group, the budget review also intends to consider the cost of transition from child to adult disability services

However, the membership of the project has now significantly changed and as such a further meeting will be needed to confirm the focus of the project for the remainder of this administration.

Regular reports are submitted to both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, where necessary, Cabinet. A final report, summarising the work of the standing review during the course of this administration will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in January 2014

Customer Care

The report from this project has now been drafted and is subject to consultation with review group members. Project work has included visits to other boroughs, experience of front line customer services and focus groups with staff. The final report and recommendations are likely to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny in October 2013.

Accessible Transport

This project has investigated the impact of poor accessibility to public transport on the life experiences of residents. It has gathered information of the experiences of residents through a seminar, public consultation and journeys through the borough alongside residents with disabilities. The issues identified have now been discussed with council officers and TfL. The final report and recommendations are included elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

NW London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) – Shaping a Healthier Future

The JHOSC met on 3rd September 2013 and Members will considered how to monitor the implementation of Shaping A Healthier Future proposals. The meeting agreed that there will be components of the Shaping a Healthier Future programme upon which individual boroughs will which to make individual comments and representations via there own scrutiny functions. However, it was also agreed that there are a number of cross borough issues upon which the JHOSC offers an important opportunity for collective discussions and sharing of information/concerns between boroughs. It was therefore agreed that the JHOSC will continue to meet with an agreed, specific work programme. The next meeting has been scheduled for 3rd December.

NHS Health Checks

This is a joint review between Harrow and Barnet which will look at the role of the Council's Public Health team having effective arrangements in place for NHS Health Checks. This project is in the initial scoping stages.

Mental Health

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee are committed to looking at mental health services in more detail and are currently considering how best to take this work forward.

2.2 Future Projects

Given the Local Government elections in May 2014 and the implementation of the period of purdah on council activities, the Scrutiny Leadership Group has agreed that all projects will be completed and presented to Cabinet for decision early in 2014. At this time, it is anticipated that the work programme between now and the end of the year will therefore comprise:

- Standing Review of the Budget
- Child's Journey Through Care
- NHS Health Checks
- Potential ongoing work with the JHOSC

Should the Scrutiny Leadership Group identify any further projects it wishes to undertake within this timeframe, these will be assessed against the criteria below and also the likelihood of their being completed within the agreed timeframe.

- Cross party engagement achievable among scrutiny Members
- Capacity to influence (add value to decision making)
- Scope to improve financial/service performance
- Community relevance (potential to impact whole borough - demographically or geographically)
- Addresses future policy requirements
- Party political neutrality – especially important. in run up to next election
- Resource from the scrutiny team to support the project

Financial Implications

There are none associated with this report.

Performance Issues

There are none associated with this report.

Environmental Impact

There is none associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are none associated with this report.

Equalities implications

An equalities impact assessment has not been undertaken in relation to this report as it makes no proposals with regard to service change

Corporate Priorities

All

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@harow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	17 September 2013
Subject:	Youth Justice Plan 2013 - 14
Responsible Officer:	Melissa Caslake, Divisional Director, Targeted Services
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Christine Bednell , Children and Families Policy Lead Councillor Victoria Silver, Children and Families Performance Lead
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Draft Youth Justice Plan 2013 - 14

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report presents the draft Youth Justice Plan for 2013/14, a statutory plan, which once agreed will be submitted to the Youth Justice Board as part of the conditions attached to the grant received from the Ministry of Justice.

Recommendations:

That the Committee's comments in relation to the draft Youth Justice Plan be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) has responsibility for reducing the risk of young people offending and re-offending and to provide counsel and rehabilitation to those who do offend.

A requirement of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) Grant conditions is for the local authority to produce an annual Youth Justice Plan. The plan provides an overview of activity over the past year together with details of future strategic planning for 2013/14 and how the YOT will meet key deliverables.

The YOT Management Board has provided rigorous challenge to ensure difficulties identified were responded to and overcome in an effective and timely way. A new management team has provided the leadership needed to bring about change, address performance concerns and develop a motivated and skilled workforce whose primary aim is to reduce offending and engage children and young people in a meaningful way to address the complexities in their lives that lead to their offending behaviour. Stronger partnerships with the Police, Probation, Health, Early Intervention Service, Children in need and those working with looked after children have all provided the framework for managing offending in a systemic way.

The successful work of the Early Intervention Service through the Triage has seen targeted interventions result in reductions in re-offending. Out of a total of 57 entrants meeting the criteria 56 engaged fully. This has resulted in a 98.2% rate of no re-offending. The analysis of case loads in the YOT has highlighted case managers are increasingly managing the most prolific and entrenched offending behaviour that requires a higher level of intervention and supervision, so manageable caseloads are critical to successful delivery and positive outcomes. This complexity is also reflected in the rise in custody rates.

The plan in place for 2013/14 will involve young people coming into contact with the YOT benefiting from good quality assessments that take into account previous offending behaviour and vulnerabilities, accurate and focussed risk assessments, good planning through the use of well thought out interventions and an emphasis on engagement with children, young people and their parents/carers to achieve sustainable change.

Financial Implications

No changes anticipated. The work identified in this plan will be funded from existing budgets and approved grants.

Performance Issues

There has been a significant cultural change in the management and service delivery in the YOT. This has included the development and implementation of a rigorous quality assurance framework aimed at tracking and raising performance against key YJB indicators:

- Reduction in the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system
- Reduction in re-offending
- Reduction in the use of custody
- Protecting the public
- Protecting the child and young person
- Ensuring that the sentence is served

The development of the performance scorecard evidences a clear journey of improvement including standards being raised in the quality of assessments and interventions in response to entrenched and high risk offending behaviour. In total during 2012 – 13 a total of 198 children and young people were on interventions in the YOT with those displaying high risk behaviour being on multiple interventions and being known to other social care teams due to complex and entrenched social vulnerabilities.

There has been a drive to recruit the right staff that are both experienced and committed. Concerted efforts have been made to improve management oversight and accountability with a focus on timeliness of assessments with greater engagement with children and young people. A comprehensive staff training programme has lead significant improvements in the quality of assessments.

The forthcoming year will focus on embedding high standards of practice, developing creative bail packages and reducing rates of re-offending through greater participation and engagement.

Environmental Impact

None

Risk Management Implications

The risk to the local authority of a reduction in resources will impact significantly on the pace of change and future successes.

Equalities implications

An Equalities impact Assessment will be undertaken on the draft Youth Justice Plan prior to its submission to Cabinet.

Corporate Priorities

- 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.

Section 3 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Parmjit Chahal, Service Manager, Youth Offending and Children in Need Teams Ext. 6470

HARROW YOUTH OFFENDING PARTNERSHIP

YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2013-14

HARROW YOUTH OFFENDING PARTNERSHIP YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2013-14

Our Vision

Harrow YOS (Youth Offending Service) aims to be an efficient, high performing and cost effective service that helps to protect the public, prevent crime and antisocial behaviour committed by young people with the overarching aim being to improve the life chances of children and young people.

We are a multi-disciplinary team that works collaboratively with a range of partners. We work with young people aged 10 - 17 at a number of key stages: from being at risk of involvement in crime or antisocial behaviour to arrest, post custody and all stages in between.

Contents

1. Overview
2. Structures and Governance
3. Partnership arrangements
4. Resourcing and value for money
5. Risks to Future delivery
6. Performance
7. Key Challenges and Achievements
8. Priorities for 2013 – 2014
9. Appendices
 - Appendix 1 – Strategic and Operational Links
 - Appendix 2 – Harrow YOT Management Board Terms of Reference
 - Appendix 3 – Youth Justice Acronyms

1. Overview

HARROW YOUTH OFFENDING PARTNERSHIP YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2013 – 14

Multi-Agency Youth Offending Teams (YOT) were set up in 2000 following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act (S38) with the intention of reducing the risk of young people offending and re-offending, and to provide counsel and rehabilitation to those who do offend. The act stipulates the composition of the YOT and defines statutory partners with the local authority as the Police, Probation and Health. The Youth Justice Board expects the YOT to perform against three indicators and monitors direction of travel on each:

- **Reduction in the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System**
- **Reduction in re-offending**
- **Reduction in the use of custody**

There is a requirement that each local authority produces an annual Youth Justice Plan.

The prevention of offending and re-offending and anti-social behaviour by children and young people is a priority for all partners in Harrow, we believe this is best achieved through collaborative working. The Harrow Youth Offending Team is therefore part of Children's Services which enables the focus on the 'child's journey' and effective partnership working with safeguarding and looked after children teams. The YOT is therefore represented throughout children's services strategic and operational groups (appendix 1) and influences strategic planning for children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending.

The governance of the YOT is through line management accountability to the Corporate Director of Children's Services and therefore Harrow's Chief Executive, and the Harrow YOT Management Board, which is accountable to the Safer Harrow Partnership Group.

The strategic aims for the YOT are:

- Effective delivery of youth justice services.
- Positive outcomes for children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending through effective partnership arrangements between the YOT statutory partners and other stakeholders.
- Efficient deployment of resources to deliver effective youth justice services to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people.

The key priorities for 2012/13 included:

- Management oversight
- Quality of assessments
- Development of the Risk Management Panel
- Workforce planning

The creation of the YOT Improvement Board in January 2012 provided the framework for the implementation of the improvement plan that responded to the concerns highlighted in the YOT Inspection report November 2011. The local authority through the YOT Management Board embarked on a programme of change including:

- Structural Review of the YOT leading to increased capacity created through the appointment of an additional senior practitioner and case manager
- A rigorous quality assurance framework aimed at identifying and responding to gaps
- Reduced case loads to enable raised standards of practice, greater engagement and participation
- Targeted training and development plan aimed at improving standards of practice.
- A service manager responsible for the YOT and Children in Need aimed at developing improved partnership working between the YOT and other social care teams.

In April 2013 the Improvement Board was disbanded and the scrutiny of the YOT was taken over by the YOT Management Board.

During 2012/13 the YOT has undergone significant change including the recruitment of a permanent service and team manager together with the recruitment of additional staff to achieve improvements in performance delivery, reduction in offending and improved outcomes.

Key challenges in the last year have included:

- Creating a stable, experienced and motivated workforce
- Raising the timeliness and quality of assessments including improved risk assessments
- Equipping staff with the skills to deliver high quality assessments through targeted training
- Increased management capacity leading to improvements in management oversight
- Manageable caseloads in response to the management of complex and prolific young offenders needing a higher level of intervention
- Shifting historical cultural issues which significantly impacted performance

Harrow invested in a programme of improvement for the YOT which consisted of training, auditing and support for staff. In addition the Chief Executive and Director also invested in a consultant to work through some of the historical cultural issues which significantly impacted performance. This had a positive outcome and the YOT are left with a committed group of professionals who are willing to work in a performance culture and strive to deliver changes required to improve service delivery to young people and their families.

There are strong links with housing through the continued appointment of a resettlement officer to tackle the cycle between offending and homelessness. At the end of quarter 4 2012/13 there were a total of 33 young people with interventions ending, 32 (97%) of which were classed as being in suitable accommodation. Having a dedicated resettlement worker allows the YOT to focus on providing a seamless transition between those leaving custody and entering the community element of their order. The role consists of an element of support and a familiar face to the young person whilst in custody including monthly visits to the custodial facility. This has also included support post release including young people being met on release and being supported to return to the community.

A full-time substance misuse worker has provided the necessary expertise in assessing young people where there is an identified need or suspected use of illicit substances. The overall aim is to tackle the link between drug misuse and offending and poor health. All young people are screened and those requiring an assessment are assessed within 5 working days. Out of 110 interventions started during 12/13, 72 received a substance misuse intervention.

The Triage brings the expertise of Children's Services to the custody suite working to reduce serious youth crime. The aims of the Triage have included:

- Early identification of risk
- Swift and effective interventions at the earliest opportunity
- Diverting young people committing low gravity offences away from the Criminal Justice System into effective interventions
- Collaborative decision making at time of arrest.

The intervention process in the Triage involves victims and ensures that the young person considers the full implications of their actions and makes some form of reparation. Triage interventions will last for a period of either three or six months depending on the gravity of each offence. The types of Triage interventions include:

- Restorative Justice
- Weekly one to one sessions
- Specialist assessment and referrals to: mental health, substance misuse and safeguarding
- Group mediation sessions
- Education guidance

Rates of Young Offenders in Education Training and Employment (ETE) at the end of their intervention have dropped slightly from 67.7% in 2011-12 to 65.6% in 2012-13. This figure is based on local Q4 returns for 2012/13 and falls short of Harrow's target of 75%. However, the national average is 65% and London is 66.8%. At the end of Q4 2012/13, an analysis into the ETE status of all currently open cases was undertaken. The results compare differently to the indicator above, which only includes cases closed in the period rather than currently open cases. The analysis showed that for those of statutory school age (10-16), 77.8% were engaged in ETE for 25+ hours, with only 8.3% not involved in ETE at all. For those of non-statutory school age (17-18), 71.4% were involved in ETE for 16+ hours, with 22.9% not involved in ETE at all. This is an area that will continue to receive a high level of scrutiny to improve the current position. Out of 44 young people open to YOT aged 10-16, 8 had a Statement of Special Educational Needs. (18.2%). The YOT education worker ensures case managers are aware and receive statements, as well as working alongside schools to ensure needs are supported and plans to manage any statements are shared and reflected across YOT intervention plans.

Since April 2013 the YOT has received 6 Youth Conditional Cautions. All MG3 (police notifications) screenings involve the Triage, YOT and Police to ensure informed decisions are made as to whether the Young person should receive a caution or conditional caution. Compliance with National Standards is now being monitored through performance reports.

There are a total of 27 out of 99 cases that are open to Social Care (27.2%), 11 of which are LAC, and 16 of which are CIN. 5 of the 27 are subject to CP plans. There is a children looked after youth offending reduction strategy aimed at effective partnership working between the YOT and children looked after teams to reduce and prevent CLA offending behaviour. All looked after children who become involved with the criminal justice system are reviewed at the monthly risk management panel. Targeted interventions are led by the YOT and CLA staff working together including undertaking joint visits. The YOT team manager attends monthly CLA management meetings.

All staff have been trained in Restorative Justice Conference facilitation skills, and two staff members are trained to deliver the training to other professionals. This will increase the use of restorative justice (RJ), in particular within care homes where criminal damage offences often can lead to further court appearances for young people that result in conviction.

During 2012-13 we had a total of 198 individuals on interventions with the YOT, some had multiple interventions within the year. 24 (12.1%) were female and 174 (87.9%) were male. The Harrow Vulnerable Young People Panel discusses in particular females in the Youth Justice System who are at risk of Sexual Exploitation, Gangs and the YOT are looking to develop specific interventions for young females in the Youth Justice System.

During 2012 / 13, the YOT embarked on an intensive training and development plan aimed at equipping frontline staff and managers with the knowledge, skills and expertise required to raise the quality of assessments and management oversight through regular and robust quality assurance. The training also included Assessment, Planning, Intervention and Supervision skills and a two-day training course 'Psychological Intervention' Skills that consisted of understanding the importance of delivery of interventions and engagement of young people. All case managers are now equipped to use the structural assessment tool. There have been clear signs of improvements in the quality of assessments. The use of the YJB quality assurance (QA) tool has also provided managers with the framework to consistently QA assessments. There has been good progress made in this area that now needs to be imbedded. Management oversight has been a consistent theme in recent inspections of YOTs and continues to be an area needing significant attention. The recent training and

additional management support will ensure there is 'good' management oversight of all casework. The focus will now be on effective evidence based interventions which achieve the desired outcomes. A review of all available interventions will take place to ensure appropriate interventions are available to target a core group of young people who continue to re-offend, as well as closer work with the Early Intervention Service to assist in the early identification of those at risk of offending. This will also consider sharing interventions across neighboring boroughs such as Barnet, whilst ensuring bespoke programmes of support are available to meet the needs of individual boroughs.

The structure of the YOT is also currently under review, as the objective is to ensure that there is an increased number of case managers and a fit for purpose structure which is integral to the smooth delivery of the aims of the youth justice plan. This will also re-align the service to ensure there is capacity to deal with key changes in recent legislation, including the transfer of the remand budget to Local Authority.

1. Structures and Governance

Outcome: Effective delivery of youth justice services.

The Borough Commander and Chief Executive jointly chair Safer Harrow, the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. This partnership takes a strategic approach to Crime and Disorder issues within Harrow. Membership of Safer Harrow consists of the following statutory partners:

- Probation Service
- Police
- Courts
- Local Authority Children's Services
- Community Safety / Crime Reduction
- Health

The YOT Management Board oversees the work of the Youth Offending Team. A comprehensive terms of reference provides the framework to ensure good governance arrangements. The Divisional Director chairs the YOT Management Board with lead responsibility for quality assurance to ensure robust challenge and scrutiny. The Management Board is responsible for the production and delivery of the Youth Justice Plan.

The YOT Management Board meets bi-monthly and is chaired by the Divisional Director within Children's Services. All statutory partners are represented at a senior level, including specialist services such as victim support and parenting. The YOT management group includes overseeing the development and implementation of the Youth Justice Plan; considering resource and workload issues; finance and performance data reporting; approving policies and protocols; the group also incorporates public protection and safeguarding issues which are addressed at each meeting.

The positioning of the YOT, with governance and accountability through Safer Harrow and line management within Children's Services enables the YOT to meet its dual strategic functions relating to both justice and welfare. The chair of the YOT Management Board also sits on Harrows safeguarding Board which provides a clear link between the issues which may crossover between the two. The chair of the board has reviewed the work of the YOT and the board continues to provide appropriate challenge and scrutiny.

2. Partnership Arrangements

Outcome: Positive outcomes for children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending through effective partnership arrangements between the YOT statutory partners and other stakeholders.

The YOT partnership ensures that the YOT is strongly linked to other planning frameworks. As stated earlier the YOT management Board reports to Safer Harrow and feeds into the development of a strategic approach to Crime and Disorder.

In achieving the Commissioner's vision of Total Policing with efficiency savings, the Metropolitan Police is examining all areas of business to look at how things can be done better, smarter and deliver real crime reduction. As part of this vision, Harrow Borough is examining its youth engagement strategy for both enforcement and intervention work. We recognise the complexity of youth crime and the multi faceted reasons why young people commit crime and that often there are complicated and complex social, family, education and health issues which all play a significant part. In addition, Harrow Borough recognises the emerging existence of a gangs culture among some of its youth and the correlation between gang culture and levels of violence, although numbers and membership of gangs is less prevalent than many London boroughs. We aim to continue to have low levels of gang activity and where it is identified to problem solve in a multi agency way to identify those at most risk, engage and divert away from crime. The gangs strategy is being developed as part of our Families First programme and will include working closely with the YOT.

Core to the Harrow Police strategy is joint working with Harrow's YOT. This relationship is crucial in our joint efforts to reduce crime. Resource levels have remained consistent with a good commitment from the Police and this year we have 1.5 FTE police officers working in the YOT which represents a 0.5 increase in capacity.

There are systems in place to ensure good communication with the courts through attendance at the Court User Group and the North West London Youth Panel Meetings. The chair of the Youth Court Panel attendance at the YOT Board has been most helpful in ensuring a solution-focused approach to raising standards.

The Triage and prevention operations such as Preventing Violent Extremism and mentoring sit outside of the YOT within the Early Intervention Service. The approach has continued to be successful in reducing first time entrants and in particular the very low re-offending rate of young people subject to Triage. The YOT and EIS are closely linked with shared education and careers staff, prioritizing of young offenders in the Families First strategy as well as being co-located. There is a dedicated representative at Early Intervention Panel from the YOT.

There are strong links with Probation that involves a full-time YOT probation officer for specialized work such as taking lead on MAPPA, transitions from YOT to Probation, and being a key role in the Integrated Offender Management scheme. This post focuses on young offenders aged 18 to 21 and having a dedicated post is a new development within Probation.

A range of commissioned agencies accessible to the YOT, will provide constructive, positive activities for young people.

One of the key agencies worked within Harrow is the Early Intervention Service. Due to the close working partnership the YOT are able to access a range of programmes and interventions whilst young people are subject to a court order, but also able to refer on as part of a long term exit strategy of continued support where needed. The YOT have accessed continued support for young people via the mentoring service, V talent inspired programme, as well as the National Citizenship programme. All have assisted in successful outcomes for young people who were known to the youth justice system, including securing employment, education and further training through the skills developed by accessing these services. The partnership work across EIS and YOT ensures there is a whole family approach as oppose to a primary child focus approach. This also ensures early detection for those at risk of offending ensuring that provision can be put in place where needed prior to entering the youth justice system.

The YOT ran Summer Arts College for three weeks. An art based programme, where 9 young people within YOT received a Bronze Arts awards. The college took place at Cedars Youth and Community Centre and young people were also introduced to activities that are run by the centre, with a view that they would have continued engagement in activities on offer. Figures show that in the year since the launch of the centre, which is operated by Watford FC's Community Sports and Education Trust, overall crime was down 25% compared to the previous year. Anti-social behaviour dropped by 37.5% and there was a reduction in street litter of 33.6% per cent in the surrounding area. To provide an appropriate learning environment will assist in long term engagement in centres as such as well as providing constructive engagement.

YOT have recently reviewed its parenting provision, and agreed a change in service delivery. Parenting provision is now provided by the early intervention service. There are three strands to this provision, the first being a consultation process and assessment for those at Pre-Sentence Report stage where a statutory parenting provision is being considered. An assessment will take place by an EIS parenting worker ideally prior to the PSR going to court and a package of support will be offered through group work. The second strand will offer bespoke 1-2-1 provision for those who are unable to cope / manage in a group setting, the third element of support will consist of training and information for YOT staff. This will enable YOT Workers to better engage with young offenders and their parents,

ultimately reducing breaches and increasing compliance by addressing common barriers to compliance such as parental collusion and developing shared goals.

3. Resourcing and Value for Money

Outcome: Efficient deployment of resources to deliver effective youth justice services to prevent offending and reoffending.

In previous years Harrow's Youth Offending Team has been resourced by contributions from statutory partners, the Youth Justice Board and some additional grant funding.

In previous years, statutory partners have also been contributing through deployment or secondment of key personnel. At present there is no expectation that statutory agencies will reduce the secondment of staff into the YOT, and we are grateful to them for continuing to prioritize this work.

In addition to these seconded staff, the YOT has been able to call upon the expertise of a range of skilled professionals, most of who are directly employed by the Local Authority. Other key skills are commissioned from the voluntary sector as recommended by the Youth Justice Board. The third sector agency currently commissioned to provide services directly to the YOT includes the substance misuse provision. A review of all commissioned services led to some changes in order to improve service delivery and has included all parenting assessments being provided through the local authority in-house parenting provision with the added strength of having a flexible and bespoke service.

In 2012-13 Harrow had an offence rate of 9.9 per 1,000 population (where population is based on 10-17 age group), compared with 15.2 in 2011/12 and 16.9 in 2010/11. Harrow's 2012-13 figure is lower than the YOT family average of 12.1 and the national average of 17.8.

Table 1 Financial Resource

Funding Stream	Type	2012-13 Cash	2012-13 in kind	2012-13 Total	2012-13 % of total YOT budget	2013-14 cash	2013-14 in kind	2013-14 total	2013-14 % of total YOT budget total	% Change/ Increase/ Decrease
Youth Justice Board	Total grant (All previous ring fenced grants now combined in Youth Justice Grant)	307,282		307,282	23%	280,241		280,241	22.06%	-8.80%
Probation	Statutory support		50,000	50,000	3.80%		50,000	50,000	3.70%	0%
Police	Statutory support	22,000	44,231	66,231	4.90%		66,231	66,231	4%	0%
Health	Statutory support	10,000	0	10,000	0.80%					-0.80%
	CAHMS		10,000	10,000	0.80%		10,000	10,000	0.75%	0%
	Unitas	4,000		4,000	0.30%				0.30%	-0.30%
Drug Action Team(MOPAC)	Grant		20,000	20,000	1.50%					
						38,894		38,894	2.92%	
Local Authority	Main Budget	483,538		474,012	35.86%	495,731		504,658	37.94%	6.07%

Local Authority	Support Services cost	380,115	380,115	28.60%	380,115	380,115	28.57%	0.02%
Total		1,206,935	124,231	100%	1,194,981	1,330,139	100%	-4%

Table 2 - Human Resources (as at 15th July 2013)

Post Title	No of posts	No filled	Source/Employer	Hours	Ethnicity	Gender
YOT Service Manager	1	1	Local Authority	FTE	A	F
YOT Team Manager	1	1	Local Authority	FTE	A	F
YOT Senior Practitioner	1	2	Local Authority Locum	FTE	A B	M F
Case worker	3	2	Local Authority	FTE	W	F
		1 Vacant		FTE	B	F
		2 additional	Locum X 2	FTE	A B	M M
Probation officer	1	1	Probation	FTE	W	M
ISS Co-coordinator	1	1	Locum	FTE	B	M
Referral panel coordinator	1	1	Local Authority	FTE	W	F
Parenting	1	1	Commissioned – Early Intervention Service – LA	FTE	A	F
Reparation worker	1	1	Local Authority	1	W	M
	0.5 post	Vacant		0.5		
Housing worker	1	1	Local Authority	0.6	W	M
Police officer	2	2	Police	FTE	A	F
				FTE	A	M
Substance misuse worker	1	1	Voluntary Sector – commissioned	P/T	W	F
Performance officer	1	1	Local Authority	FTE	W	F

Admin support	2	2	Local Authority	1 0.5 0.5	W B A	F F F
TOTAL	18	21				

In addition to paid employees, the YOT has over 30 volunteers and sessional staff. We currently have 5 volunteers undertaking referral order work and will be seeking to increase our pool of volunteers this year as a priority. These individuals make a substantial contribution to the work of the YOT through a range of activities including:

- Supervision of young people on ISS orders during evenings and at weekends
- Membership of community panels for referral orders
- Appropriate adult work in police stations and elsewhere
- Mothers Against Gangs

4. Risks to future delivery

Outcome: The YOT has the capacity and capability to deliver effective youth justice services

Resources

There was a further reduction in the YJB grant while in the year moving forward the Local authority has put in place additional funding to ensure service improvements. Continued pressure placed on the wider funding streams from central government mean that this will need to be kept under review.

Capacity

Young people committing crime

Overall youth crime has shown a significant decrease in 2012 -13 compared to previous years. This is reflected in the numbers of offences taking place, the numbers of individuals committing crime and the numbers of youth disposals granted.

Total offences have fallen to 240 in 2012-13. Between 2010-11 and 2011-12 there was a 10.0% decrease from 410 to 369. Between 2011-12 and 2012-13 there was a further decrease of 35.0% from 369 to 240.

The total number of young people who have been found guilty of a crime has fallen overall in the last 3 years. In 2010/11 this was 162 individuals, rising to 174 in 2011/12, which represents a small increase of 7.4%. In 2012/13, this figure fell to 111, a significant decrease of 36.2%.

Total disposals granted in the year show a 38% decrease from 265 in 2011/12 to 165 in 2012/13.

First Time Entrants

During the last 3 years there has been a decrease in the number of first time entrants to the criminal justice system in Harrow, reflecting national trends. In total Harrow had 330 first time entrants during 2012 this is down from 527 in 2011 and 730 in 2010. The comparable rate is number of first time entrants per 100,000 population. Harrow's rate has decreased dramatically over the past 3 years from 730 in 2010 to 330 in 2012. The decrease in Harrow's first time entrants is reflective of what is happening nationally, although Harrow's figure of 330 comes in lower than the national average (585) and the YOT family average (440). Between 2011 and 2012 Harrow has seen a total decrease of 37.4%, compared to 25.7% nationally and 20.0% for the YOT family.

We are proud of the success of the early intervention work in the borough and a very effective Triage at point of arrest. This scheme applies to all young people arrested for the first time for a non-violent offence, and leads to a 3-month intervention programme under bail. Successful completion of the programme leads to the bail being concluded as no further action. In addition the introduction of cautions / youth conditional cautions has led to more robust intervention from YOT / Triage, which allows YOT / Triage to effectively engage young people in meaningful programmes structured to their needs.

In April 2012 - March 2013 the youth crime prevention triage team received 70 referrals. 57 agreed triage and of those 56 engaged and 1 disengaged. 2 refused intervention and 9 did not meet the criteria for Triage. From 56 worked with there was a success rate of 98.2% in rate of no re-offending in this period, 1 young person re-offended during this period.

Re-offending

The YJB official re-offending statistics operate on a time lag with the latest available reporting period for Jul 10 – Jun 11 (young people who received a court/pre-court disposal or who were released from custody in the period and subsequently re-offended within a 12 month period).

The latest available figure for re-offending was 41.6% (99 re-offenders out of 238 offenders) compared to the previous year's figure of 30.9% (94 re-offenders out of 304 offenders) reflecting a 10.7% increase. Harrow's current re-offending figure of 41.6% is higher than the National figure of 36.0% and the YOT family figure of 35.8%.

The total number of offences committed by re-offenders was 272, which represents an average of 1.14 offences per offender in the cohort. Harrow's average offences have increased from 0.90 in the previous year and are currently higher than the National figure of 1.04 and the YOT family figure of 0.97. Reducing re-offending is a key priority for 2013-14.

Custodial sentences

The actual number of young people in custody remains unchanged in the last 3 years with 17 in 2012-13, 16 in 2011-12 and 17 in 2010-11. However, given that total disposals have fallen, there has been an overall percentage increase in the number of young people sentenced to custody, with 6.1% in 2010/11, 6.0% in 2011/12 and 10.3% in 12/13. The current rate per 100,000 is 0.70 for Harrow, this is higher than both the National average of 0.55 and the YOT family average of 0.52.

Harrow YOT has considered those young people who end up in custody due to persistent non-compliance. We have implemented breach compliance panels for all young people at the second missed appointment. This is chaired by a manager, and parents / carers / guardians are invited. The Panel discusses barriers to engagement and holds a meaningful conversation with the young person to establish the reasons for non-compliance. This earlier intervention should reduce numbers ending up in custody through non-compliance. In addition more creative packages are being considered, an example of which is splitting of tag times throughout the day to ensure courts are offered a more robust package that manages risk to the community.

Active interventions

The table below shows the number of active interventions and number of young people having YOT interventions (some young people will be subject to more than one intervention within a period). The table excludes any parenting orders or interventions open for Pre Sentence Reports only.

	Caseload - Active interventions and number of young people by quarter								% change between Q4 2011/12 and Q4 2012/12
	2011/12 Q1	2011/12 Q2	2011/12 Q3	2011/12 Q4	2012/13 Q1	2012/13 Q2	2012/13 Q3	2012/13 Q4	
Number of interventions in period	180	178	196	188	180	173	145	138	-26.6%
Number of individuals worked with in period	148	140	148	155	149	138	116	113	-27.1%

Figures have decreased month by month from Q1 2012/13 onwards with 138 individuals in Q1, 138 in Q2, 116 in Q3 and 113 in Q4. In Q4 2012/13 there were 113 individuals being worked with, compared to 155 in the same quarter for the previous year. This represents a 27.1% decrease in the caseload.

The sharp decrease in the size of the caseload is to be expected given the falls in offences (35%), Disposals (38%), numbers of young people committing crime (36.2%), and first time entrants (37.4%). The figures may have been affected between Q2 and Q3 by data cleaning at the end of December 2012. There is also the possibility that the reduction in the use of final warning programs has partly contributed to the drop in figures. It is also important to highlight the young people remaining in the YOT are complex, assessed as having higher risk and vulnerability including mental health and substance misuse difficulties, and more likely to be in breach of an order therefore taking up more intensive case management time.

Management

A new management team is in place consisting of one service manager who also oversees Children In need Team, one team manager and one senior practitioner. An additional senior practitioner post has also been created to support and implement service delivery improvements, including the level of management oversight, which continues to be a priority area.

Partners

The members of the Harrow Youth Justice partnership have all experienced reductions in resources in recent years. Recent feedback from our local court has been positive about Harrow's court presentation and reports and this year it is a priority to consolidate this improvement.

The impact of being in a court based further away means staff spend more time traveling which means time away from face to face contact. The YOT staff are continuing to build relationships with neighbouring YOTs that has provided the opportunity to revisit existing practice and policies and build and improve on court processes.

Changes to Harrow Demography

The ethnicity profile of Harrow's school pupils reflects the general diversity changes within Harrow's population. Indian and White British pupils continue to be the largest ethnic groups in Harrow's schools as at January 2013. However, there has been a significant decrease in White British pupils from 28% in 2006 to 15.9% in 2013, and an increase in pupils from other Asian backgrounds from 13.1% in 2006 to 20.8%, followed by an increase in the other White backgrounds group from 4.2% in 2006 to 9.3% in 2013.

Less than half the children at Harrow schools speak English as a first language (40.8%) as at January 2013. However English along with Gujarati, Tamil and Somali continue to be the main languages spoken. In line with the changing ethnic groups Middle Eastern and Eastern European languages (particularly Romanian) are increasing yearly. It has an impact on the number of additional resources needed for young people in the youth justice system, in particular interpreting services.

5. Performance 2011-12

YOT performance is measured via a set of outcome indicators that are reported to the Youth Justice Board. The most recent comparative data is shown in the table below:

Indicators*	Harrow	London	YOT comparison group	England
First time offenders rate per 100,000 of 10-17 population				
Jan 12 - Dec 12 (latest available data)	330	585	440	537
Jan 11 - Dec 11	527	787	787	712
<i>Percentage change from Baseline</i>	-37.3%	-25.7%	-20.0%	-24.5%
Use of custody rate per 1,000 of 10 -17 population				
Apr 12 - Mar 13 (latest period)	0.70	0.92	0.52	0.55
Apr 11 - Mar 12	0.66	1.61	0.85	0.82
<i>Change from Baseline</i>	0.04	-0.68	-0.33	-0.27
Reoffending rates after 12 months				
Frequency rate - Jul 10 - Jun 11 cohort (latest available data)	1.14	1.10	0.97	1.04
Frequency rate - Jul 09 - Jun 10 cohort	0.90	0.98	0.81	0.96
<i>Percentage change from Baseline</i>	0.24	0.13	0.16	0.08
Binary rate - Jul 10 - Jun 11 cohort (latest available data)	41.6%	40.4%	35.8%	36.0%
Binary rate - Jul 09 - Jun 10 cohort	30.9%	36.6%	32.0%	34.1%
<i>Percentage change from Baseline</i>	10.7%	3.7%	3.8%	1.9%

*note that due to validation and checking against police records some data becomes available significantly in arrears

Harrow's YOT continues to have comparatively good results on these indicators but faces challenges to reduce reoffending which has both increased in recent years. Although our percentage rate for custody has gone up, absolute numbers have remained the same, which reflects the decrease in first time entrants. However it is clear that we are not having the same impact on reducing use of custody as we are

on reducing first time entrants and this is therefore a priority for the year. As detailed above, an improvement plan is in place to address the performance issues identified in the Core Case inspection, with a focus on the quality and timeliness of work.

In April 2012 - March 2013 the youth crime prevention triage team received 70 referrals. 57 agreed triage and of those 56 engaged and 1 disengaged. 2 refused intervention and 9 did not meet the criteria for Triage. From 56 worked with there was a success rate of 98.2% in rate of no re-offending in this period, 1 young person re-offended during this period.

Regular performance monitoring is embedded within the YOT. Performance support and regular monthly and weekly reports have been put in place to ensure timeliness and compliance of key processes in line with national standards. A monthly scorecard has been developed to incorporate local and national indicators and is overseen by the YOT management board.

Weekly performance reports are also being generated to assist management and staff to plan for dates effectively and to assist staff in their own management of caseloads. In addition quality assurance is being completed via the YJB quality assurance tool that tracks improvements made with quality of reports. This is supported by the Assessment, Planning, Intervention and Supervision training which all staff have attended, that assists staff in completing assessments in a structured format ensuring the assessment is thorough and concise. The team has already seen improvements in this area, where some assessments have gone from adequate to good. Whilst there is further work to be undertaken the direction of travel is positive.

6. Key Challenges and Achievements

Key achievements in the last year have included:

- First Time Entrants decreased by 37.3%
- Reduction in overall offences (down by 35.0%) and numbers of young people committing offences (down by 36.2%)
- Improved management oversight
- Robust policies and procedures
- Increase in timeliness and quality of assessments
- Increased compliance with current national standards
- Increase in skilled workforce equipped to deliver robust intervention packages tailored to young people's risks and needs
- A motivated workforce.
- More evidence based interventions

7. Key Priorities for 2013 / 2014

In setting our key priorities for 2013/14 we have taken into account research that indicates that those young people who do offend do not grow out of crime as readily as was once believed. The success of the early intervention work undertaken through the Triage means that the YOT is working closely with a cohort of young offenders who are amongst the most 'prolific' and 'high risk' offenders requiring more intense and costly interventions.

In developing our plan we have taken into consideration key risk factors associated with youth crime:

- **Opportunity for crime**
- **Low parental supervision**
- **Poor educational attainment**
- **Persistent truancy**
- **Peer pressure and associating with other offenders**
- **Substance misuse**
- **Lack of victim empathy**
- **Gang involvement**

The location of the Harrow YOT within Children's Services creates an effective framework in which to address the factors identified above enabling collaborative and systemic partnership working between the YOT and other teams working with the same young people (schools, children in need and looked after children). The plan aims to address the youth justice board key requirements:

- **Confronting young offenders with the consequences of their offending, for themselves and their family, their victims and the community and helping them to develop a sense of personal responsibility.**
- **Intervention that tackles the particular factors (personal, family, social, educational or health) that put the young person at risk of offending and which strengthens "protective factors".**
- **Punishment proportionate to the seriousness and persistence of offending.**
- **Encouraging reparation to victims by young offenders.**
- **Reinforcing the responsibilities of parents.**

Particular attention will be paid to reviewing the Youth Offending Team services to achieve a highly skilled and needs led service including greater use of restorative justice and an emphasis on achieving meaningful engagement with young people.

Amongst our priorities is to ensure staff are supported, managed effectively and developed. This includes regular supervision that offers robust management oversight and identifies training and development needs as well as completing Appraisals; regular team meetings that will assist in the team working together to drive up standards of improvement and be accountable as a team. In addition to this opportunities are created for staff to be reflective in their practice and be open to challenges and share good practice by way of group supervision and peer support.

Summary of our priorities for 2013/14:

- **Reduce re-offending rates**
- **Reduce use of custody for Harrow young people**
- **Improve quality of assessments**
- **Increase level and quality of management oversight**
- **Build an excellent workforce**
- **Increase young offenders in education, training and employment**
- **Develop wider range of effective interventions; share resources with other LA**

PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
Reduce re-offending rates	<p>To develop the bike project further.</p> <p>To identify appropriate victims via victim liaison officer</p> <p>Review of Reparation interventions to enable improved service delivery and an outcome focused approach.</p> <p>To identify suitable projects outside of core education hours</p> <p>To make links with local community projects to assist in facilitating meaningful reparation projects linked to offences committed</p> <p>To identify direct victims at the earliest</p>	<p>Reparation officer and Senior practitioner</p> <p>Team Manager and Senior Practitioner</p>	<p>Working agreement with local police to deliver action by October 31st 2013.</p> <p>September 30th 2013</p>	<p>Increased reparation and victim awareness for young people subject to court orders.</p> <p>Meaningful reparation will reduce the risk of re-offending through increased understanding of victim impact.</p>

	<p>opportunity and offer restorative solutions.</p> <p>To identify and analyse offending behaviour patterns across Harrow young people</p> <p>To develop needs led groupwork and 1-1 sessions with young people which target offending patterns / trends within the borough</p> <p>Ensure that any appropriate referrals are identified by case managers and/or line supervisors as part of monthly supervision – This may include the siblings of any current cases known to the YOT.</p> <p>EIS meetings to be attended by YOT Team Manager or Senior Practitioner.</p> <p>YOT to continue to attend YJB Gangs forum</p>	<p>Team Manager</p> <p>Team Manager</p> <p>Senior Practitioner</p> <p>Senior Practitioner</p> <p>Team Manager</p>	<p>September 30th 2013</p> <p>November 30th 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Understand trends in the borough which will lead to identification of gaps in service provision.</p> <p>Targeted provision to address offending patterns amongst young people of Harrow.</p> <p>The early identification of siblings at risk of offending to reduce the number of First Time entrants</p> <p>Full assessment of any non-convicted behaviours to assist in identifying triggers and patterns of offending</p> <p>Prevent an increase in the number of gangs in Harrow</p>
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	YOT to feed into wider Harrow gangs strategy	Team Manager		
Reduce use of custody	<p>To increase confidence in court service delivery by way of court training for all staff, feedback forms for Magistrates re: reports and presentation of court reports</p> <p>Introduction of Breach Compliance panels for all young people at point of 2nd warning to understand what if any are the barriers to compliance.</p> <p>To ensure creative and innovative bail packages are put forward including increased use of</p>	<p>Senior Practitioner</p> <p>Team Manager</p> <p>Team Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Effective partnership approach which works to ensure balance of public protection and welfare of children in the criminal justice system.</p> <p>To reduce the number of young people in custody due to breach.</p> <p>To reduce the number of young people in custody on remand.</p>

<p>Improve quality of assessments</p>	<p>exclusion zones, varied to have the split during assessment times. completed in "APIS" (Assessment, Planning, Execution) during people supervision) to be a all of the ten and and Surveillance Assessment Ability via Fine-YJB and if suitable to ensure a scheduled timetable of activities is sent with Report do you think' forms. YOT staff to attend Access to Resources for on a range of Orders from Referral Orders to ISS</p>	<p>Team Manager Team Manager Team Manager Team Manager Team Manager Senior Practitioner</p>	<p>Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing November 2013</p>	<p>All staff will have an individual training needs analysis and plan to achieve better quality assessments of young people in custody by offering planned alternative to an overall Good / Outstanding average across the team Improve young person partnership ensure all community package led balance of public protection and welfare of children in the criminal justice system.</p>
<p>Increase level and quality of management oversight</p>	<p>Managers to receive reports reports of in violence by initiative. (MAG)</p>	<p>Team Manager Senior Practitioner</p>	<p>Ongoing Ongoing</p>	<p>Improving through in and leading to supportive family relationships and reduction in antisocial behaviour.</p>

	<p>Continued reporting on a monthly basis to YOT management Board on performance including management oversight</p> <p>Bi Monthly auditing of supervision files to ensure performance issues and oversight is appropriately addressed and documented.</p> <p>Management oversight/instruction following case allocation to include direction for case managers to complete a home visit as part of initial assessment</p> <p>Every young person to be visited on a minimum of a monthly basis at home.</p> <p>Staff observations to be completed with all staff across the service. This will include observations of:</p>	<p>Team Manager / Drug Action Team Analyst</p> <p>Team Manager</p> <p>Team Manager</p> <p>Team Manager</p> <p>Team Manager , Senior Practitioner</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>To commence in August 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2 observations to be completed monthly</p>	<p>management oversight leading to better quality work.</p> <p>Increased management oversight leading to early identification of training / performance needs within staff team.</p> <p>Additional risk and safeguarding concerns identified in regards to siblings in the home.</p> <p>Case managers to have a holistic approach in their work moving from a primary child focused approach to a whole family approach</p> <p>Professional and consistent standards being delivered to all those who access the service.</p>
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	<p>Assessment meetings Intervention sessions Home visits Panel Meetings</p>			
<p>Build an excellent workforce</p>	<p>To recruit and train volunteers of Harrow as panel members for referral orders</p> <p>Expected professional standards to be outlined in supervisor, leads and team meetings</p> <p>To ensure clear targets and action plans are set for those not performing to expected standard.</p> <p>To create “champions in specific area’s such as risk, welfare, group work, service user input.</p> <p>Trained facilitators in YOT to deliver RJ to all staff across Children’s services and to</p>	<p>Team Manager</p> <p>Team Manager</p> <p>Team Manager</p> <p>Team Manager</p> <p>Senior Practitioner</p>	<p>October 31st 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2013</p> <p>November 2013</p>	<p>To have panel members who are reflective of Harrow’s diverse community which will increase participation and engagement of orders.</p> <p>To have a highly professional team committed to achieving outstanding outcomes for children and young people whilst ensuring greater accountability and challenge is customary.</p> <p>Meaningful engagement with young person and increased understanding of victim impact</p>

	<p>volunteers</p> <p>To incorporate RJ conference where applicable as part of referral order contracts.</p> <p>Group supervision to be lead by CAMHS Practitioner to provide oversight of case discussions using psychological interventions training/CBT principles</p>	<p>Senior Practitioner</p> <p>Senior Practitioner</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Reflective and insightful practitioners with shared knowledge of cases</p>
<p>Increase young offenders in education, training and employment</p>	<p>To continue to monitor cohort of young people who are NEET to identify trends / patterns and difficulties in accessing education provision</p> <p>To increase use of education requirement as part of sentencing proposal where appropriate.</p> <p>To ensure there are SLA's between all schools and colleges and YOT to ensure clear lines of communication for young people who</p>	<p>Team Manager</p> <p>Senior Practitioner</p> <p>Senior Practitioner / Service Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Increased number of EET young people</p>

	<p>are at risk of losing education placement due to possible conviction</p> <p>To ensure YOT meet the health, education and housing needs of young people in the youth Justice System.</p>	<p>Team Manager</p>	<p>August 30th 2013</p>	<p>Improved health and resettlement provision for young people</p>
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Appendix 1

Strategic and Operational links

- **Targeted Senior Management:** The Harrow YOT is located within Targeted Children’s services. The service manager for the YOT also has responsibility for the children in need teams. The Service Manager for the YOT attends the strategic management meetings for Targeted Services and is able to influence the direction of strategic planning for children and young people who offend. This has also lead to closer links being forged with education.
- **Safer Harrow Board:** the Borough Commander chairs Safer Harrow. There is representation from key partners on the board including the service manager for Community Safety. The service manager for the YOT attends Safer Harrow to provide regular updates and to participate in decision making regarding youth offending in the borough.
- **The Access to Resource Panel (ARP)** is chaired by the Divisional Director, Targeted Services and is the decision making forum and resource allocation for ‘high risk’ and ‘vulnerable’ children and young people. The attendance and contribution of the YOT

team manager when children and young people known to the YOT are discussed takes into account offending behaviour, risk assessments and vulnerability together with compliance with court orders.

- **Children Looked after Team (CLA) Management Meeting:** The YOT team manager attends on a monthly basis to enable a coordinated approach to planning and effective risk management in regards to children known to the YOT and the Children Looked After teams.
- **Children in Need Team (CIN) Management Meeting:** The YOT and Child In Need report to the same service manager. This has lead to good partnership working between the two teams and a joined up approach when dealing with young people known to both teams. The YOT team manager attends the CIN Management Meeting on a monthly basis.
- **The Courts:** The Chair of the Youth Court Panel sits on the Harrow YOT Management Board and the YOT Team Manager attends the Youth Court Panel Meetings and the Court User Group. The purpose being to develop closer links with the courts and have greater influence on Courts regarding sentencing.
- **MAPPA:** The purpose of MAPPA is the exchange of information and intelligence and an agreed course of action in order to manage the risk posed by serious violent and sexual offenders. Harrow YOT refer cases to MAPPA and have recently revised their protocol with probation which looks at who has overarching responsibility of MAPPA referrals whilst ensuring a seamless process of management of such cases without duplication. To ensure referrals are appropriate MAPPA lead from Harrow Probation services sits on the Risk and Vulnerability Management Panels for the YOT and can assist in ensuring cases are screened appropriately.
- **Risk & Vulnerability Management Panel:** The chair of the risk panel is rotated between senior officers of police, probation and YOT / CIN service Manager. The purpose of which is to discuss high risk and high vulnerability cases which are reviewed by senior managers. YOT case worker and social worker (where applicable) attend to present case to senior managers. A risk management plan and a vulnerability management plan are discussed and agreed with senior representatives from partner agencies.
- **Gangs Forum:** Harrow YOT has formed close links with other London YOTS in a wider gangs strategy. This has included representation at forums held in Feltham YOI, as well as other YOTs. In addition Harrow YOT refers mothers to actively seek support from initiatives in the borough such as Mothers Against Gangs. This is done jointly with YOT police officer and can be continued support for the parent post court order.
- **Interactions with Triage:** In order to manage the new out of court disposals, Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions, Harrow YOT hold two meetings a week consisting of police, Triage and YOT. Here the most appropriate course of out of court disposal is decided in a multi agency setting. Prior to the meeting information is collated from both the YOT system and the triage system which allows for a more detailed insight into the young person and their family.

APPENDIX 2
HARROW YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM
MANAGEMENT BOARD

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

The Youth Offending Team Management Board provides the governance arrangements for the YOT and provides the terms of reference upon which the parties agree to abide. The YOT Management Board is responsible for ensuring that the principle aim of preventing offending by children and young people is promoted and that the work of the Youth Offending Team is focused on achieving targets set by the Youth Justice Board and that the Youth Offending Team works to National Standards that are aimed at achieving better outcomes for children and young people who come to the attention of the youth justice system.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 37 and 39(1)) placed a duty on local authorities and key partners (police, probation and health) to cooperate to establish a multi-agency youth offending team. Other key legislation relevant to this partnership agreement includes The Children Act 1989, in particular Schedule 2, paragraph 7, to: Discourage children and young people within their area from

committing offences; take reasonable steps designed to reduce the need to bring criminal proceedings against children and young people in their area; Avoid the need for children within their area to be placed in secure accommodation.

There are many different local arrangements that achieve appropriate governance and oversight of youth justice services, but evidence suggests that it is most likely where there is a clearly identifiable governance body/board with responsibility for local oversight and leadership of youth justice services which bridges the criminal justice system, community safety and children's services sectors to ensure an integrated approach to youth crime prevention, offending and re-offending.

To be effective, experience indicates that this board needs to be assigned a range of functions and have members of appropriate seniority to allow it to:

- Set the strategic direction of relevant services;
- Steer delivery;
- Provide and commit sufficient resource including secondments from statutory partners; and
- Oversee performance of the whole youth justice system locally.

This board is likely to be most effective where it is seen as the lead governance body for the local youth justice system and not simply as youth offending team (YOT) management board. It therefore has oversight of performance against the key outcome indicators, no matter how they are delivered locally:

- To reduce re-offending;
- To reduce first time entrants into the youth justice system; and
- To reduce the use of custody

An effective board has the following characteristics:

- All named statutory services are represented with other key delivery agencies and stakeholders represented or able to make representation;
- It meets at least quarterly with a continuity of board membership and regular attendance;
- Individual members are inducted into the role, are able act as local 'champions' for youth justice and have lead responsibility for key areas of activity;
- The views of service users, victims of crime and the wider community are actively sought and considered;
- The YOT manager/head of service is able to act at a strategic level across the local authority and partner agencies; and

2. The Role and Responsibilities of the Youth Offending Service Management Board

- 2.1. The primary duty to ensure a YOT, and appropriate youth justice services, are in place rests with the local authority.
- 2.2. The YOS Management Board is directly responsible for:
- 2.3. Determine how the youth offending team(s) is to be composed and funded, how it is to operate and what functions it is to carry out;
- 2.4. Determine how appropriate youth justice services are to be provided and funded;
- 2.5. Oversee the formulation each year of a draft youth justice plan;
- 2.6. Oversee the appointment or designation of a youth offending team manager; and
- 2.7. Agree measurable objectives linked to key performance indicators as part of the youth justice plan
- 2.8. Delivering the principle aim of reducing offending and re-offending
- 2.9. Ensures the delivery of the Youth Justice Plan
- 2.10. Ensuring the YOT's infrastructure needs is addressed.
- 2.11. The Management Board will at each Board Meeting scrutinize
- 2.12. The performance of the YOT against YJB national indicators
- 2.13. Using YOT management information to inform strategic planning and decisions aimed at preventing youth crime.
- 2.14. Ensuring the Youth Offending Service is adequately resourced, with equitable contributions from partner agencies including the use of pooled funds.
- 2.15. Ensure the YOT financial position is reviewed at each Board meeting,
- 2.16. Ensuring the YOT staff receives appropriate training and development opportunities to address any competence deficits.
- 2.17. Ensuring the children and young people with whom the YOT works have access to appropriate mainstream services.
- 2.18. Ensuring the provision of strategic links to cross cutting targets and objectives and overall local authority improvements.
- 2.19. Ensuring the dissemination of information to respective partnership organizations relating to key YOS messages, developments and multi-agency working arrangements.
- 2.20. Agreeing arrangements for reporting on the performance and resourcing needs of the YOT to local authority members, and other relevant bodies.
- 2.21. The board to be provided with the regular reports on CSSPI (Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents) and High Risk cases and advise on partnership focused protective factors to manage risk.
- 2.22. Ensuring that the principle aim of preventing offending by children and young people is properly reflected in the work of the other related strategic partnerships and strategies e.g. The Children and Young People's Plan.
- 2.23. Ensuring that actions taken by each agency, which may positively or adversely affect the YOS in executing its primary aim are brought to the attention of the Board.
- 2.24. Ensuring that the YOS has appropriate access to mainstream children's services to meet the needs of children who offend, including those in custody.
- 2.25. The local authority will provide the administrative support for the Management Board. This will include financial, legal and health and safety advice and arrangements for the procurement of goods and services.
- 2.26. The youth offending service is ideally placed to coordinate activities in relation to youth crime prevention. The YOS aims to support key responsibilities of the local authority and partners including:
 - Community safety
 - Substance misuse reduction

- Raising educational achievement
- Improving mental health
- Better outcomes for looked after children and corporate parenting
- Preventative services for children at risk

3. Key objectives for the Management Board

- 3.1. Examine and question performance data supplied by the YOS
- 3.2. Using YOS performance data to establish any areas of underperformance and to address these using a problem solving approach
- 3.3. Monitoring of CSPPI and recommendations of Critical Learning Reviews and further Local Management Reports (where appropriate).
- 3.4. Examination of the YOS case studies highlighting good practice and conversely areas that require development.

4. Key Performance Indicators:

- Reduce the number of first time entrants to the CJS
- Reduce re-offending
- Reduce the number of young people receiving a conviction in court sentenced to custody
- Increase the number of young people engaged in suitable education, training or employment (ETE).

5. Links to other groups

It is recognized that the YOT is both a criminal justice agency and a children and young people's service. Consequently the Board is accountable to the Safer Harrow Partnership Board for issues related to the management of youth crime and to the LB Harrow Children's Safeguarding Board.

6. Review

The Board will review its terms of reference and membership on an annual basis.

7. Memberships

The YOT management board should comprise of senior representatives of the local authority chief executive and of chief officers from the statutory partners including: education, police, probation, housing and health. It is essential members of this group have sufficient seniority and authority to be able to commit resources to the YOS or wider youth crime prevention agenda and problem solve without having to refer back to their chief officer, though they will need to account properly to their own agency for their decisions.

Name	Role and organisation	Contact Details
Melissa Caslake	Divisional Director, Targeted Services Division, Children Services (Chair)	Melissa.Caslake@harrow.gov.uk
Parmjit Chahal	YOT Service Manager,	Parmjit.Chahal@harrow.gov.uk
Aman Sekhon-Gill	Team Manager, YOT	Aman.Sekhon-Gill@harrow.gov.uk
David Harrington	Quality Assurance and Improvement Service Manager	David.Harrington@harrow.gov.uk
Claire Smart	Harrow BCU Commander (Metropolitan Police)	Claire.E.Smart@met.police.uk
Catherine Knight	Associate Clinical Director of Harrow CAMHS	catherine.knights@nhs.net
Mike Howes	Assistance Director, Community Safety	Mike.Howes@harrow.gov.uk
Mike Herlihy	Legal Team Manager, Harrow Youth Court	hamlin.herlihy@talktalk.net
Farzana Aldridge	Harrow School Improvement Partnership Manager (for education & learning)	Farzana.Aldridge@harrow.gov.uk
Carol Flowers	PCT, Head of commissioning for children and families	carole.flowers@nhs.net
Marcia Whyte	Probation Service	Marcia.Whyte@london.probation.gsi.gov.uk
Sarah Brimelow	Youth Justice Board	Sarah.brimelow@yjb.gov.uk

Ifeona Williams	Victim Support	ifeona.Williams@vslondon.org
Dan Burke	Voluntary Sector	dburke@ignitetrust.org.uk

In addition to the core membership, the Board will invite other partners who can make a significant contribution to the prevention and reduction of youth crime to attend meetings for specific issues as appropriate. This will include:

- Youth Justice Board
- Justices' Clerks for Young People
- Chief Housing Officers
- Connexions
- Director Learning and Skills Council
- FE Colleges
- Prison Service
- DAAT

8. Chairing Arrangements

- 8.1. Meetings of the Management Board will be chaired by the Divisional Director for Children's Service ('The Chair').
- 8.2. A Vice Chair will be appointed on an annual basis by resolution of the Management Board.
- 8.3. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall chair a meeting of the Management Board.

9. Attendance

Each Board member will ensure that where they are unable to attend that a senior representative of the agency attends in their place.

10. Schedule and Management of Meetings

- 10.1. The YOT Management Board will meet monthly at the LB Harrow Civic Centre. These meetings may be supplemented by special meetings that may be called by the Chair for an appropriate reason or at the request of three members in writing.
- 10.2. The Chair and the Service Manager of the Youth Offending Team will determine the content of the agenda. However, any member or adviser may request by ten (10) working days before a meeting any item they wish to have on the agenda.
- 10.3. No decision shall be taken at a meeting of the Management Board unless a quorum is present.
- 10.4. A quorum is where there are three or more members (Example: Children Services, Chief Superintendent Harrow Police, Probation, Primary care trust)

Signed for and on behalf of:

The LB Harrow
Date: 28.07.13

.....

Authorised Signatory

Harrow Metropolitan Police
Date: 28.07.13

.....

Authorised Signatory

LB Harrow Probation Service
Date: 28.07.13

.....

Authorised Signatory

LB Harrow Primary Care Trust
Date: 28.07.13

.....

Authorised Signatory

Schedule of YOT Improvement Board Meetings: 2013

28th June	Committee room 1 & 2
19 th July	Committee room 1 & 2
8th August	Committee room 1 & 2
20th September	Committee room 1 & 2
18th October	Committee room 1 & 2
22nd November	Committee room 1 & 2

APPENDIX 3

YOUTH JUSTICE ACRONYMS

ABC	Acceptable behaviour Contracts	FIF	Families in Focus
ASBAG	Antisocial behaviour action group	ISS	Intensive supervision and surveillance programme
ASBO	Antisocial behaviour order	LAC	Looked after child (ren)
ASSET	The YOS assessment tool	MAPPA	Multi-agency public protection arrangements
BCU	Borough command unit	ONSET	An early prevention assessment tool
BIP	Behaviour improvement plan	PAYP	Positive activities for young people
BTP	British Transport Police	PSR	Pre-sentence report

CAF	Common assessment framework			
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services			
CIN	Child (ren) in Need	YOIS	Youth offender information system	
CJU	Criminal justice unit	PSR	Pre-sentence report	
CPS	Criminal prosecution service	YOIS	Youth offender information system	
CBS	Cognitive behavioral skills	ONSET	An early prevention assessment tool	
DBS	Disclosure Barring Service			
CSF	Children, Schools & Families			
DAT	Drug action team			
YOI	Young offenders institution			

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