

# Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Agenda

**Date:** Monday 13 December 2021

**Time:** 6.30 pm

**Venue:** Virtual Meeting - Online

## Membership (Quorum 3)

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**Chair:** Councillor Kiran Ramchandani

**Labour Councillors:** Kairul Kareema Marikar  
Ajay Maru

**Conservative Councillors:** Nitesh Hirani  
Pritesh Patel

**Labour Reserve Members:**

1. Niraj Dattani
2. Dean Gilligan
3. David Perry

**Conservative Reserve Members:**

1. Ameet Jogia
2. Amir Moshenson

**Contact:** Mwim Chellah, Senior Democratic and Electoral Services Officer  
Tel: 07761 405966 E-mail: [mwimanji.chellah@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:mwimanji.chellah@harrow.gov.uk)

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# **Useful Information**

## **Meeting details**

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The recording will be made available on the Council website following the meeting.

**Agenda publication date: Friday 3 December 2021**

# 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 Sub-Committee;
- (b) all other Members present.

## 3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 10)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

## 4. Public Questions \*

To receive any public questions received in accordance with Committee Procedure Rule 17 (Part 4B of the Constitution).

Questions will be asked in the order in which they were received. There will be a time limit of 15 minutes for the asking and answering of public questions.

**[The deadline for receipt of public questions is 3.00 pm, 8 December 2021. Questions should be sent to [publicquestions@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:publicquestions@harrow.gov.uk)**

**No person may submit more than one question].**

## 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 and Other Committees/Panels

To receive any references from Council and/or other Committees or Panels.

## 7. Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2020/21 - Final Outturn (Pages 11 - 76)

## 8. Children and Families Services Complaints Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 77 - 108)

## 9. Adults Services Complaints Annual Report (social care only) 2020/21 (Pages 109 - 140)

## 10. Any Other Business

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

## **Agenda - Part II - NIL**

### **\* Data Protection Act Notice**

The Council will record the meeting and will place the recording on the Council's website.

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



# Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee

## Minutes

### 22 March 2021

**Present:**

**Chair:** Councillor Kiran  
Ramchandani

**Councillors:** Ghazanfar Ali Pritesh Patel  
Nitesh Hirani

**In attendance  
(Councillors):** Adam Swersky For Minute 68 and 69

**Absent:** Councillor Honey Jamie

**62. Attendance by Reserve Members**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were none.

**63. Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED:** To note that the Declarations of Interests published in advance of the meeting on the Council's website were taken as read.

**64. Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**65. Public Questions**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were received at the meeting.

**66. Petitions**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions were received.

**67. References from Council and Other Committees/Panels**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were none.

**Resolved Items**

**68. Responding to the Recommendations from the Universal Credit Commission**

Members received the Report on Responding to the Recommendations from the Universal Credit Commission that had been presented to Cabinet in November 2019.

The report set out the Council's response to the Member-led Commission on Universal Credit in Harrow. As this was a Member-led commission, there was a need for an Officer report to Cabinet to endorse the recommendations and the resulting action plan.

The Member-led commission was set up outside of the current Non-Executive arrangements of the Council. Thus, it had no constitutional basis – the report allowed a reporting route through to Cabinet in order to endorse the recommendations from the review and to sign up to the draft action plan.

The national roll-out of Universal Credit commenced in Harrow in 2017. The Commission was set up as a mechanism for driving practical and coordinated action for the benefit of Harrow residents. The Commission included the Councillors from both Political Groups in the Council.

Universal Credit remained of great concern to Housing Benefit. As of October 2019, 63% of the General Needs Council tenants who claimed Universal Credit were in rent arrears with an average debt of £562. For comparison 24% of the General Needs Council tenants on Housing Benefit were in arrears with an average debt of £257. Housing staff continued to spend a lot of time responding to the Department of Work and Pensions and also helping tenants, without any additional funding.

Rent arrears had a negative impact on the revenue generated for the Housing Revenue Account. Therefore, the budget that the Council had to spend on related services to the tenants and leaseholders across all Council housing was impacted.

The Chair invited questions from Members of the Sub-Committee on the report.

The following question was raised and discussed:

- 1) Referring to Annex 2 of the Report, was the timescale of March 2020 for the completion of recommendations going to met?

The Director of Strategy and Partnerships advised that each recommendation was being taken in turn, notwithstanding the current challenges around the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic in the country. This had impacted on some recommendations.

The broad-based digital inclusion programme “No One Left Offline” was particularly challenging, notably holding digital skills workshops which engaged residents on non-Universal Credit topics. It was important to understand how services could be digital by design and, therefore, fully accessible, rather than digital by default.

A cross Council working group had been set up to take this forward. This was initially agreed to outline all of the Council touchpoints for residents, for example through Libraries, Community Centres and Children’s Centres.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources added that the circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic had necessitated support to vulnerable residents and had exposed inequalities to digital access.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

## **69. Channel Migration Presentation**

Members received the presentation on Channel Migration. There had been an increase in self-service online (excluding web visits) transactions by residents of 60.2% to 85.6% in 2015/16 to between 85.6% and 95.7% in 2020/21.

The aim of the digital migration was to make it easier for residents to interact with the Council. Certain features of the system included: anonymised monitoring software; feedback forms; and an improved website.

Furthermore, the “MyHarrow account” was enhanced to provide greater access to sites such as, Electoral Services, Business Portal, Bookings, Progress checking, Alerts, Registration Services, Commercial Services, Revenues and Benefits.

Challenges had been identified in closing the digital divide among residents. These included deprivation, confidence and digital skills, age and language. These would be mitigated by a face-to-face or telephone service where appropriate, provision of “Digital Assistants”, Adult Learning courses, and the Roll out of 5G infrastructure. Initial discussions to retain and re-purpose the staff were underway, following the proposed closure of the Civic Centre, and some libraries.

The Chair invited questions from Members of the Sub-Committee on the report.

The following questions were raised and discussed:

- 1) Based on the feedback from residents, how many were interacting with the Council using online services?

It was advised that based on a project carried out three years ago, approximately 50% to 55% of the households in Harrow made contact with the Council in a calendar year. An estimated 600 000 separate logins would have been made to the MyHarrow account by the end of March 2021 along with 620,000 web forms being completed compared to 170,000 telephone calls and 70,000 emails. Calls were particularly high when Council Tax bills were mailed out although low in comparison to those making contact via the Council website.

- 2) How many staff would be re-purposed as a result of the digital migration?

It was advised that the positions of a total of 13 staff were at risk.

- 3) Was it possible to use a mobile phone to access the fly-tipping app?

It was advised that mobiles phones with android software could be used. The fly-tipping form on the website worked well on mobile devices and allowed photographs to be uploaded.

- 4) Which online services were frequently used by residents?

It was advised that Planning Services, Environmental Services, and Council Tax were the most popular. However, some services were seasonal, such as School Admissions.

- 5) How would the roll out of the 5G infrastructure affect services in the borough?

It was advised that with the right suppliers, the 5G network could increase access to a number of digitally-excluded residents through reducing the cost of an internet connection.

- 6) Given residents' hesitancy to download some Council applications on their mobile phones, how would they report some concerns, such as fly tipping?

It was advised that all Council applications were replicated on the website, and residents could still report such incidents, without revealing their location by marking the area on a map.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

## **70. Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2020/21 - As At Quarter 3 (31 December 2020)**

**RESOLVED:** That the report be deferred.

**71. Final Revenue Budget 2021/22 and final Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24**

**RESOLVED:** That the report be deferred.

**The video recording of this meeting can be found at the following link:**

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/virtualmeeting>.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 7.40 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Kiran Ramchandani  
Chair

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**REPORT FOR: CABINET**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	17 June 2021
<b>Subject:</b>	Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2020/21 – Final Outturn
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Dawn Calvert, Director of Finance and Assurance
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Natasha Proctor, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources.
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision subject to Call-in:</b>	Yes
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All wards
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Appendix 1 – Summary of 2020/21 Revenue Budget Forecast by Directorate Appendix 2 – Summary of Reserves Appendix 3 – Summary of Carry Forwards Appendix 4 – 2020/21 Savings Tracker Appendix 5 – Capital Programme 2020/21 Appendix 6 – Trading Company Update 2020/21

## Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the Council's final revenue and capital outturn position for 2020/21.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That Cabinet notes the revenue and capital outturn positions set out in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3.
2. That Cabinet approve the proposed amendments to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.33 to 3.44
3. That Cabinet note the Council's Trading Update as detailed in Appendix 6.

### **Reason: (For recommendations)**

To report the 2020/21 financial outturn position and to update Cabinet on trading company performance.

## Section 2 – Report

### 1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This is the final budget monitoring report for 2020/21.
- 1.2 The final outturn on the revenue budget for 2020/21, after the planned use of reserves which are largely applied to fund one-off projects and cross divisional adjustments including one-off income, is a balanced position after transfers to reserves.
- 1.3 The final spend on the total capital programme is £54.597m, 58% of the total Capital Programme budget. The final spend on the General Fund is £42.060m, (58% of budget). The variance of £30.204m is made up of proposed slippage of £20.684m and a residual variance of £9.520m.
- 1.4 The final spend on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme is £12.537m (56% of budget). The variance of £10.041m is made up of proposed slippage of £8.941m and a net underspend of £1.1m.

### 2.0 **REVENUE MONITORING**

- 2.1 The revenue outturn position is balanced following transfers to reserves. The summary of the outturn by each division is set out in Table 1 with a more detailed breakdown at Appendix 1:

**Table 1: Summary of Revenue Budget Monitoring – final outturn 2020/21**

Directorate	Revised Budget	Outturn	To/ (From) Reserves	Cross Divisional Adjustment	Carry Forwards	Revised Outturn	Variance to budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Resources</b>	<b>36,938</b>	<b>41,883</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>42,618</b>	<b>5,680</b>
<b>Community</b>							
Commissioning & Commercial Services	(4,431)	5,878	80	0	160	6,118	10,549
Environment & Culture	23,226	25,710	(184)	0	808	26,334	3,108
Directorate Management	195	245	(56)	0	0	189	(6)
Housing General Fund	4,557	4,445	707	(272)	165	5,044	487
Enterprise & Planning	1,291	(904)	1,967	0	324	1,387	96
Regeneration	0	8,234	0	0	0	8,234	8,234
<b>Total Community</b>	<b>24,838</b>	<b>43,608</b>	<b>2,514</b>	<b>(272)</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>47,306</b>	<b>22,468</b>
<b>People</b>							
Adults Services	66,783	65,304	86	0	0	65,390	(1,393)
Public Health	(1,814)	(2,359)	545	0	0	(1,814)	0
Children's Services	33,845	32,168	2,914	0	0	35,082	1,237
<b>Total People</b>	<b>98,814</b>	<b>95,113</b>	<b>3,546</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>98,659</b>	<b>(156)</b>
<b>Total Directorate Budget</b>	<b>160,591</b>	<b>180,604</b>	<b>6,550</b>	<b>(272)</b>	<b>1,702</b>	<b>188,583</b>	<b>27,992</b>
Covid-19 Grant Allocations		(22,188)				(22,188)	(22,188)
Covid-19 estimated income compensation		(6,207)				(6,207)	(6,207)
Corporate Items	4,904	4,566	0	0	0	4,566	(338)
Corporate Contingency	1,248	0	0	0	0	0	(1,248)
Technical and Corporate Adjustment	12,058	(1,224)	15,271	0	0	14,047	1,989
<b>Total Corporate</b>	<b>18,210</b>	<b>(25,053)</b>	<b>15,271</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(9,782)</b>	<b>(27,992)</b>
Uncontrollable Budget	(4,041)	(4,041)	0	0		(4,041)	0
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>174,760</b>	<b>151,510</b>	<b>21,821</b>	<b>(272)</b>	<b>1,702</b>	<b>174,760</b>	<b>0</b>

## RESOURCES

- 2.2 At the end of the financial year the Resources directorate is reporting a net overspend of £5.680m after taking into account a carry forward request of £245k. The £5.680m includes COVID-19 related costs and loss of income totalling £4.690m as well as an overspend on business as usual of £990k. This is after the draw down and contribution to reserves and cross divisional adjustments.
- 2.3 The business as usual net overspend reflects £1.017m spend which was planned to be funded from reserves, however this funding was not drawn down and the uncommitted remaining balance on this reserve will be added to the budget planning reserve to support future years budgets.
- 2.4 The remaining variances are set out as follows:

- **Business Support** net underspend of £36k due to staff supporting the Access Harrow duties funded from other sources.
- **Customer Services/Access Harrow** net overspend £398k. This reflects the additional costs of staffing to cover staff shielding and absence as well as unachieved savings in the planned change of communication channels (Revenues and Benefits).
- **ICT** net overspend £770k related to COVID-19 due to investment in remote working, additional licenses, telephones and teleconferencing
- **Management** net overspend £1.114m. This reflects additional spend of £304k on ICT, COVID-19 building safety measures and Flexible Futures. In addition, a further overspend of £810k relates to £783k transformation cost initially planned to be covered from reserve funding and the balance of £27k relates to various smaller variance.
- **Internal Audit and CAFT** net £62k underspend which relates to a vacancy which will be recruited to in 21/22.
- **Finance and Insurance** net overspend £2.152m of which £2.137m relates to COVID-19 related grants to Harrow Community Action, Harrow Community Transport and ICT – Connected Performance, food parcels delivery and increased mortuary fees.
- **Revenues and Benefits** net overspend £717k of which of which £240k relates to loss of summons income within the Collections & Housing Benefits Service due to central Government not allowing Local Authorities to instigate court actions during COVID-19 to pursue the debts for Council Tax & Business Rates. There were also additional costs in Benefits and Revenues Teams due to extra Capita support and overtime payments to staff to provide extra capacity and backfilling for those staff who worked on COVID-19 grant schemes and related self-isolation grants as well as additional resources to deal with additional 2.500 claims for Council Tax support from working age households due to the pandemic. Finally, £184k reflects an increased contribution to the Housing Benefit bad debt provision. Due to the uncertainty related to COVID-19 the provision was increased from 60% to 70% cover.
- **Procurement** net underspend £101k which reflects a vacancy within the procurement team pending recruitment.
- **HR** net overspend £242k due to increased employees related activities as a result of COVID-19 as well as costs related to Change Management and Workforce equalities projects which were planned to be funded from reserve funding.

- **Legal & Governance** net underspend £248k of which £211k overspend reflects loss of income from Land charges, Citizenship ceremonies and Register of Birth, Death and Marriages due to lockdown and movement restrictions. This is offset by £459k underspend across registration services where income exceeded the budgeted income target. This is due to a delay in transfer of land charges service to Land Registry in 2021/22. In addition, there is an underspend in Democratic services and Legal management due to a reduction in service activity, meetings, postage, printing and procurement of external legal support during COVID-19.
- **Strategy** net overspend of £233k of which the majority reflects additional costs related to COVID-19 across the division incurred on Community Resilience team, assistance with establishing the community hub, additional cost of communication, loss of advertising income within communication team and loss of income from schools within the SIMS team due to cancellation of the Key Stage tests this year.
- **Investment properties** net overspend £500k of which £100k relates to COVID-19 due to loss of income due to vacant space. The remaining £400k reflects an increased contribution to Investment property reserve to provide for the long-term impact of COVID-19 on the commercial rental market.

## COMMUNITY

2.5 The revenue outturn position for the Community directorate is an overspend of £22.468m, after taking into consideration of £1.457m carry forward requests. Of this £9.830m includes COVID-19 related costs as well as an overspend on business as usual of £12.639m.

**Table 2: Community Services Revenue Outturn 2020/21**

Division	Budget	Outturn	To/ (From) Reserves	Cross divisional adjmt	Carry Forwards	Revised Outturn	Variance to budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Commissioning & Commercial	(4,431)	5,878	80	0	160	6,118	10,549
Environment & Culture	23,226	25,710	(184)	0	808	26,334	3,108
Directorate Management	195	245	(56)	0	0	189	(6)
Housing General Fund	4,557	4,445	707	(272)	165	5,044	487
Enterprise & Planning	1,291	(904)	1,967	0	324	1,387	96
Regeneration	0	8,234	0	0	0	8,234	8,234
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>24,838</b>	<b>43,608</b>	<b>2,514</b>	<b>(272)</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>47,306</b>	<b>22,468</b>

### 2.6 Commissioning & Commercial Services

2.7 Commissioning and Commercial Services shows an overspend of £10.549m, attributable to the following:

- Parking Services - £5.657m. A significant loss of income was experienced across the service area as a direct result of COVID-19 restrictions reducing levels of traffic activity. This includes £3.857m in lost receipts from penalty charge notices (PCN) and £1.625m from Pay & Display parking income.
- Facilities Management - £1.905m. Cost pressures in building repairs and maintenance works resulted in an overspend of £508k. FM services to schools – including school cleaning – experienced an underachievement of income totalling £375k. Staffing expenditure overspent by £230k, due mainly to the use of interim staffing arrangements – with a further overspend of £173k on security costs at the depot. This has been partially offset by an underspend of (£120k) on utility costs and (£20k) on other miscellaneous expenditure. As part of 2021/22 budget process, a growth of £300k was provided in the MTFs to address the cost pressures in building repairs and maintenance. The completion of condition surveys recently will help inform and prioritise building repair works. In 2021/22, the service has also ceased to provide cleaning service to schools and this will address the historical deficit in the school cleaning account.
- The financial impact of COVID-19 resulted in a further spend of £511k on cleaning, fogging, and security. The cost of carrying out fire risk assessments led to a further overspend of £30k. In addition, rental income from the Depot underachieved by £82k, whilst reduced visitors and staff car park usage has resulted in a further loss of income of £133k.
- Divisional Director for Commissioning Services - £1.986m. The decision to discontinue several capital projects results in abortive costs totalling £1.201m. In addition, there is a net overspend of £24k on staffing related costs. The £681k MTFs target relating to commercial income from the Depot and £80k MTFs target relating to Vernon Lodge were not achieved, and these had been reversed as part of 2021/22 MTFs process.
- Business & Commercial - £465k. With fewer works being carried out due to lockdown restrictions, there is an underachievement of income totalling £403k. In addition, there is a staffing pressure of £63k.
- Corporate Estates - £234k. Given the impact of COVID-19 on local businesses within the borough, a rental payment holiday has been granted to eligible tenants, resulting in a loss of rent income.
- Contracts Management - £261k. There are overspends on staffing costs of £156k. In addition, the previous MTFs saving target of £40k in relation to contract procurement was not achieved, whilst the Public Mortuary service area overspent by £30k. These costs are partially offset by a forecast (£9k) underspend on consultant fees and other miscellaneous costs. A £43k overspend relating to Trading Standards SLA was planned to be funded from reserves.

- Catering - £205k. A net under-achievement of income following the closure of "The Retreat" and minimal activity from the Depot canteen. The income loss has been partially offset by reduced spend on agency staffing, catering supplies and equipment that would typically be required if the service was operating as BAU.
- Transport - £171k. A net overspend of £80k on staffing costs, including a £40k severance payment provided for the Head of Service. In addition, there is an overspend £60k on vehicle associated expenditure. The impact of COVID has reduced the level of income generating works carried out, resulting in an underachievement of £31k.
- Community Engagement £26k due to a net overspend on miscellaneous expenditure.
- There is a net underspend of (£361k) elsewhere across the division, due primarily to an overachievement of income within Network management.

## 2.8 Environment & Culture

2.9 Environment and Culture shows an overspend of £3.108m, attributable to the following:

- Leisure & Sports - £1.271m. The financial impact of COVID-19 placed significant cost pressures on the Council's leisure provider, Everyone Active (EA). A decision was made to provide financial support to EA, resulting in an overspend of £611k. In addition, the loss of income from reduced activities totalled £772k. This has been partially offset following the receipt of (£112k) in rental income from the NHS for their use of Council facilities as a vaccination centre.
- Public Protection - £782k. There was a net underspend of (£61k) of staffing costs. In addition, the service suffered a £515k loss of income from licensing and enforcement works. A lack of activity and applications as a result of social distancing and other lockdown restrictions across several areas, including Street Trading and Highways licences Furthermore, there was net spend of £276k as a result of using the Kingdom contractor to carry out COVID-related works. This expenditure is net of government grants received to help fund cost pressures. There was an overspend of £50k on PPE and other such items within the Health & Safety service.
- Waste Management - £568k. The service experienced a net underspend on staffing budgets of (£171k). A loss of Garden Waste subscription income totalling £102k due to the suspension of service for 6 weeks (resumed 11th May). A refund was made to customers for non-collection weeks. In addition, there was a further loss of income of £51k from textile and metal recycling works, and £106k in reduced disposal charges from trade

customers at the C.A site. There was a further overspend of £480k on the WLWA levy due to higher residual waste tonnage than budgeted for.

- Harrow Museum - £498k. The service suffered a net loss of income of £612K from across the Museum's fee generating services. An additional £36k was spent on staffing costs, with a further overspend of £49k on miscellaneous costs and service overheads. These overspends were partially offset by savings of (£71k) incurred following reduced spend on catering and supplies costs. The service was successful in securing the Arts Council Cultural Recovery Fund. This totalled (£245k) and partially offsets some of the above loss of income relating the impact of COVID-19.
- Clean & Green - (£271k). Additional income from grounds maintenance works carried out on various HRA sites was achieved (£174k). There was an underspend of (£88k) on vehicle and utility expenditure. Spend on staffing, including agency workers and overtime, was (£80k) less than budgeted for. There was, however, an underachievement of £94k in income from across the Parks and Opens Spaces fee generating services; this includes pitch bookings and income from advertising. Additional fencing works of £8k at cemeteries were also undertaken to ensure social distancing is achievable.
- Divisional Director for E&C - £190k. A net overspend on staffing costs, driven by expenditure on interim staffing arrangements.
- Harrow Music Services – (£136k). A net underspend on staffing salaries and service overheads of (£171k). The service was adversely affected by the pandemic, especially following the temporary closure of schools. As a result, there was an underachievement of income totalling £285k. There was a further £10k additional expenditure on the preparation of holding online lessons. With fewer face-to-face lessons being carried out, the service made savings of (£69k) on equipment and leasing spend, and (£24k) on staffing spend. The above cost pressures have been partially mitigated by additional grant funding from the Arts Council Culture Recovery Fund (£135k) and reduced expenditure on examination fees (£32k).
- Libraries - £103k. The service achieved a net underspend of (46k) on staffing costs. This is owing to several budgeted positions that remained vacant through most of the financial year. The impact of COVID-19 resulted in additional building cleaning and sanitising costs, totalling £86k, and a 63k loss of income from Library activities. These income streams include room hiring, charges levied against overdue payments, and other events and activities.
- Harrow Arts Centre - £103k. Due to a lack of events being held at the Arts Centre, there was a net underachievement of income totalling £413k (loss of income offset by savings made from reduced service-led expenditure). In addition, there was a £27k under recovery of recharge income following the

closure of Hatch End pool. The service area incurred increased cleaning costs as a result of weekly fogging requirements (for 6 months) £19k. The service has been successful in securing the Arts Council Cultural Recovery Fund; this totals (£356k) and partially offsets some of the above loss of income relating the impact of COVID-19.

## 2.10 Enterprise & Planning

2.11 Enterprise and Planning shows an overspend of £96k, attributable to the following:

- Economic Development & Research - £65k. The service overspent by £23k on staffing costs, due mainly to an honorarium arrangement. In addition, and to help manage the impact of COVID-19, a further £19k was spent on 3<sup>rd</sup> party and staffing costs to support business economic recovery. £23k of Tier 2 related expenditure will no longer be funded for corporately
- Planning & Building Control - £44k. A loss of income from Building Control statutory fees; this has been partially offset, however, by an overachievement in Planning income
- Planning Policy – (£13k). Underspends on staffing costs, including agency workers.

## 2.12 Regeneration

2.13 The final outturn on the Regeneration Programme revenue budget for 2020/21 is £8.234m. Of this £335k spend pressure is attributable to the financial impact of COVID-19. The outturn also includes a write-off of £7.153m for abortive costs of in respect of the pre-HSDP Regeneration Programme.

## 2.14 Housing General Fund

2.15 Housing Services is showing a balanced position after applying £0.961m from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) to meet the business as usual costs associated with the Homelessness Reduction Act. There is a further cross divisional adjustment of £272k associated with financing costs for the Property Acquisition Programme.

## PEOPLE SERVICES

2.16 The final outturn for the People Services directorate is a net underspend of £156k. This is made up of an underspend on business as usual of £1.897m and a COVID-19 related pressure of £1.741m.

### **Table 3: People's Services Revenue Outturn 2020/21**

Division	Revised Budget	Outturn	To/ (From) Reserves	Cross divisional adjmts	Carry Forwards	Revised Outturn	Variance to budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adults	66,783	65,304	86	0	0	65,390	(1,393)
Public Health	(1,814)	(2,359)	545	0	0	(1,814)	0
Children's Services	33,845	32,168	2,914	0	0	35,082	1,237
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,814</b>	<b>95,113</b>	<b>3,546</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>98,659</b>	<b>(156)</b>

2.17 The variations are explained in more detail as follows

### Adult Services

2.18 The final outturn for Adult Services is an underspend of £1.393m against the 2020/21 budget which includes Health Discharge funding of £1.358m. The cause of the underspend is highlighted as below

### 2.19 Strategic Management

2.20 An overspend of **£1.475m** is caused by the following:

- £0.713m: Costs associated with purchasing PPE, which was commissioned via the WLA and largely allocated to providers although some supplies will have been used within the Council.
- £0.604m: Payments made to support providers as agreed in the Leader's Decision Report of 6<sup>th</sup> May, which set out and approved the strategy of support to providers. This included a 5% Temporary Additional Payment made in May.
- £0.158m Cost of additional temporary staff in the service engaged above the agreed establishment to support social work practice during the pandemic.

### 2.21 Purchasing

2.22 A total net underspend of £0.920m which reflects the impact of COVID-19 on placements and services to meet citizens needs. Pressures totalling £2.272m are as follows:

- An overspend of £1.141m on the Learning Disability (LD) and non-Learning Disability care packages budget caused by variations to packages for existing citizens and an increase in the cost of new packages above budgeted assumptions of £0.909m, with the remaining £0.232m attributable to the partial achievement of MTFS savings.

- Pressure of £0.468m because of an increase in the bad debt provision requirement
- The budgeted brought forward Adult Social Care (ASC) grant from 2019/20 of £0.663m has not been drawn down as planned given the in year position. This contributed to the specific ASC reserve in 2021/22 (of £1.921m) which will provide support for any increased ongoing pressures in 2021/22

2.23 The pressures highlighted above are offset by underspends of £3.192m in the following areas in the Purchasing service:

- £1.781m due to an increased number of deaths above the budgeted assumptions
- £0.678m because of lower levels of expenditure in relation to Respite, Carers, Reablement and College Transport costs.
- £0.520m in the Children and Young Adults (CYAD) service due to care package commitments overstated in the social care system in relation to Domiciliary care, short breaks, and Direct Payments.
- £0.213m in relation to the BCF due to a combination of the Better Care Fund (BCF) uplift which delivered additional income, as well as underspends against the BCF staffing budget.

#### 2.24 **COVID-19 Discharge Funding**

2.25 An underspend of **£1.358m** representing the unbudgeted contribution from health in relation to the increased cost and volume associated with discharges during the covid period.

#### 2.26 **Mental Health**

2.27 Underspend of **£0.338m** - This is due to there being lower Central North West London (CNWL) Personal Budget and Placement package costs than budgeted for in 2020/21.

#### 2.28 **Other Adults**

2.29 Overspend of **£0.377m** largely represents additional temporary staff in the service engaged above the agreed establishment to support social work practice during the pandemic.

#### 2.30 **In-House services**

2.31 An underspend against budget of **£0.628m** due to the Neighbourhood Resources Centres (NRCs) having been closed throughout 2020/21, leading to savings in agency staff costs and utilities and transport costs. As a result of the transport

requirements, buses have been used flexibly across the People Services directorate with Children's Services using the buses during the year.

## **Public Health**

2.32 Public Health (PH) is reporting a balanced position after a contribution to the Public Health reserve of £0.545m. This will increase the PH reserve balance to £2.392m at the beginning of the 2021-22 financial year to provide additional capacity moving forward.

2.33 The funding for Lateral Flow Tests will be settled in full by the Department of Health and Social Care. Any variation will be funded by the PH reserve.

2.34 Underspends on Public Health relate to the following:

- Sexual health – An underspend of £0.330m, which reflect the agreed block payments based on 2018-19
- Health checks – An underspend of £40k, this reflects payments made to General Practitioners in line with guidance
- Wider Health Improvement – An underspend on the in-year projects of £0.145m offset by ongoing projects originally anticipated to be funded by the reserve of £0.210m resulting in a net pressure of £65k
- Staffing – an underspend of £0.140m– which relates to 3 new posts budgeted based on the Public Health grant increase.
- Grant holding code – An underspend of £0.106m in relation to the agenda for change funding.

## **Children's Services**

2.35 The final outturn for the directorate is a net overspend of £1.237m made up of overspends totalling £1.741m related to COVID-19 pressures mainly due to placement sufficiency and additional frontline staffing capacity, offset by an underspend of £504k in relation to SEN Transport.

2.36 It should be noted that excluding COVID-19 pressures the ongoing headline pressure across the directorate is £1.144m with mitigating management actions of £649k and other underspends of £495k which will not be available in future years.

### **2.37 Children's Placements & Accommodation overspend £1.696m**

2.38 There are a number of young people in high cost placements who are vulnerable and for whom the current placement meets their complex needs and safety. The majority of the pressures relate to COVID-19

2.39 This means that some young people are unable to move in a timely manner where it is safe to do so. In addition to this there is a sufficiency issue in the availability of

placements particularly in relation to foster carers. This means young people may have to be accommodated in more expensive residential placements in order to meet safeguarding needs but where these could ordinarily be met in an alternative form of accommodation.

#### **2.40 Frontline Teams Staffing & Other Costs overspend £544k**

2.41 In order to manage caseloads agency staff are required to cover vacant Social Work posts, including sickness and maternity cover. There are around 18%-20% of frontline posts which are covered by agency. In addition, in response to COVID-19, additional capacity has been required in order to manage demand for statutory services and operate a 7 day service.

#### **2.42 Capital Programme & Schools Private Finance Initiative overspend £439k**

2.43 The majority of this is as a result of a contribution to the PFI sinking fund to ensure the PFI contract is affordable in future years.

#### **2.44 Legal costs and other client related spend overspend £154k**

2.45 Mainly pressures in relation to translation services, Legal disbursement costs in relation to care proceedings and expenditure to support families with children subject to a Child Protection or Children in Need plan, to help children remain at home where it is safe to do so.

#### **2.46 Management Actions and one-off income underspend £649k**

2.47 One-off grant income and centrally held budgets used to mitigate in-year pressures.

#### **2.48 SEN Transport underspend £504k**

2.49 Whilst the majority of special schools and specialist provision remained open during lockdown the number of children attending school was significantly reduced. This reduced the requirement for using the taxi framework for smaller minibuses and taxi journeys, which are only paid for when used, thus reducing the overall spend.

#### **2.50 Various other service underspends £443k**

2.51 These mainly relate to vacant posts which COVID-19 delayed recruitment, lower non-staffing costs and a reduction in interagency adoption fees.

#### **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

2.52 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced grant of which the majority is used to fund individual school budgets in maintained schools, academies and free schools in Harrow. It also funds Early Years nursery free entitlement places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds in maintained council nursery classes and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nurseries as well as provision for pupils with High Needs

including those with Education Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) in special schools and special provision and mainstream schools in Harrow and out of borough. The DSG is split into blocks: schools block, early years block and high needs block.

2.53 There is a net underspend on the overall DSG of £1.037m. There are small underspends on the central block and schools block totalling £258k. The largest underspend is on the Early Years Block due to COVID-19 as settings were not open during large parts of the year and when they did re-open, participation was significantly reduced. It is anticipated that this will reduce the funding available in 2021-22 since the January 2021 recorded fewer pupils than in previous years. Therefore, this underspend will be earmarked to support Early Years in 2021-22.

2.54 The final outturn on the High Needs Block is an overspend of £0.786m in 2020/21 which added to the deficit of £2.944m brought forward from 2019-20 takes the total deficit at the end of March 2021 to £3.73m. Despite underspends on the other blocks this will not be netted off the HNB pressure as Schools Forum does not support this approach. Any deficits an authority may have on its DSG account is expected to be carried forward and does not require to be covered by the authority's general reserves.

2.55 A Deficit Management Plan has been drafted and discussed with Schools Forum. Despite the significant proposals and measures planned over the next ten years, this will not mitigate the deficit. This is due to the following contributory factors:

- historical underfunding
- current budgets being based on historical budgets rather than historical spend
- extension of age range to include 0-5 and post 19
- current and projected formulaic funding which does not keep pace with demand
- significant historical and projected growth in number of EHCPs
- continued growth in complexity of pupils' needs
- limitations about creating cost effective provision in borough due to capacity and site limitations

## **CORPORATE AND TECHNICAL**

2.56 The final outturn for the corporate and technical budget is reporting an overall underspend on business as usual of £403k as detailed below. **Corporate Items**

2.57 The final outturn is a net underspend of £338k mainly in relation to pension augmentation costs.

### **Central Contingency**

2.58 The central contingency of £1.248m was not required and therefore there is an underspend against this budget.

## Technical and Corporate Adjustments

2.59 The final outturn on the technical and corporate adjustments is an overspend of £1.989m as follows:

- (£8.162m) underspend in capital financing costs and interest charges as a result of slippage in the Capital Programme.
- (£2.453m) additional grant and other income
- £3.805m overspend as a result of not drawing down the Budget Planning and Business Risk Reserves originally budgeted and planned for draw down in 2020/21.
- £8.799m additional contribution to reserves as set out in the reserves section of this report.

## 2.60 COVID-19 Grants & Income

2.61 The Council received tranches of emergency funding, Controlling Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) grant and compensation for loss of income from MHCLG. In addition there are a number of other grants/income sources which are directly related to COVID-19. These were all spent on activities for which they have been provided/applied for. These are set out at Table 4 which includes the MHCLG tranche funding for completeness.

2.62 Items marked with an asterisk \* are those included in the overall forecast in Table 1 at the start of this report and have been used to fund expenditure and loss of income as a result of COVID-19.

**Table 4 – COVID-19 grants and external income**

<b>GRANT /FUNDING STREAM</b>	<b>Value</b>
Emergency Funding (tranches 1 to 4)	£17,627,760
Controlling Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) (Oct 2020 to March 2021)	£4,560,533
Compensation for loss of sales, fees & charges	£6,206,884
Track and Trace	£1,020,000
DEFRA - Food & Welfare	£218,260
DWP Covid Winter Grant Scheme	£588,956
Section 31 Grant - admin burdens	£145,311
Community Champions Fund	£495,000
Clinically Extremeley Vulnerable (tranches 1 and 2)	£320,762
Infection Control (tranches 1 to 2)	£3,437,967

ASC Rapid Testing	£431,905
Social Care Workforce Capacity Grant	£484,914
LA Enforcement & Compliance Grant	£112,853
Reopening High Street Safely Fund	£221,203
Cultural Recovery Fund (Arts Council)	£735,772
Emergency Active Travel Funding (DfT)	£100,000
London Streetspace Programme (TfL)	£683,000
Next Steps Accommodation Grant	£150,000
Welcome Back Fund (Support the High Street)	£221,203
Lateral Flow Testing (estimate)	£840,000
Test & Trace Support Grant	£184,450
Business Grants New Burdens	£752,606
Emergency Response Fund (Arts Council)	£20,405
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£39,559,744</b>
<b>GRANTS TO BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS</b>	
Council Tax Hardship Grant re Council Tax Support	£1,391,506
Grants to Small Businesses	£42,216,000
2nd Funding amount Statutory Business	£7,081,500
Discretionary Business Grants	
LRSO Open discretionary Oct to 2 December	£289,318
Additional restrictions grant - 1st tranche	£5,023,200
LRSO Closed grants Nov 2020 to Dec 2020 1st tranche	£3,648,708
LRSO Closed & one off lockdown grants to 15-02-21 2nd tranche	£16,417,062
LRSO Closed grants 19/12-14/01/21 tranche 2	£2,269,721
LRSO Pub Claw Back	-£64,000
Additional restrictions grant - ARG top up Feb 2021 2nd tranche	£2,231,067
<b>Sub Total Business &amp; Residents Grants</b>	<b>£80,504,082</b>
Self Isolation £500 awards Grant:	
Programme Funding - standard applications 1	£94,000
Programme Funding - standard applications 2	£37,000
Programme Funding - standard applications 3	£72,000
Programme Funding - discretionary applications	£56,463
Programme Funding - Discretionary applications top up Feb 21	£41,537
Programme Funding - Discretionary applications top up March 21	£21,000
Admin Funding	£137,206
<b>Sub Total Self Isolation Grants</b>	<b>£459,206</b>
NNDR Rate relief for 20/21	£8,757,127
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>£129,280,159</b>

## RESERVES

2.63 Attached at Appendix 2 is a schedule of all the reserves held by the Council including the movements to and from reserves included in the final outturn for 2020/21. A summary the main reserves and movements is shown in Table 5 followed by narrative of the key movements set out below.

**Table 5 – Summary of Reserves 2020/21**

Reserve	Bal Bfwd 1/4/20	Additions	Draw Downs	Realignment	Bal Cfwd 1/4/21
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Business Pool Reserve	(£1,800)	(£767)	£1,800	£0	(£767)
Carry Forward Reserves	(£3,223)	(£571)	£0	£1,753	(£2,041)
CIL Harrow	(£7,788)	(£2,038)	£3,095	£0	(£6,730)
HRA Reserves	(£783)	£0	£0	£0	(£783)
NEW - Accomodation Strategy Reserve	£0	(£725)	£0	£0	(£725)
NEW - Adults Social Care Reserve	£0	£0	£0	(£1,969)	(£1,969)
NEW - Capital Feasibilities Reserve	£0	(£500)	£0	£0	(£500)
NEW - Collection Fund Reserve	£0	(£8,925)	£0	£0	(£8,925)
NEW - EDI Reserve	£0	(£250)	£0	£0	(£250)
NEW - LLW Reserve	£0	(£250)	£0	£0	(£250)
NEW - PAP Sinking Fund	£0	(£190)	£0	£0	(£190)
Other Earmarked Reserve	(£5,450)	(£157)	£312	£0	(£5,295)
Public Health Reserve	(£1,847)	(£545)	£20	£0	(£2,372)
Revenue Grant Reserve	(£4,796)	(£2,393)	(£517)	£216	(£7,490)
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>(£25,687)</b>	<b>(£17,312)</b>	<b>£4,710</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£38,288)</b>
Budget Planning Reserve	(£2,629)	(£7,387)	£0	(£6,673)	(£16,689)
Business Risk Reserve	(£7,526)	£0	£366	£1,810	(£5,350)
Children's Social Care Reserve	(£2,286)	£0	£0	£952	(£1,334)
Commercialisation Reserve	(£1,265)	£0	£0	£1,265	£0
MTFS Implementation Reserve	(£1,775)	£0	£0	£1,426	(£350)
Transformation Reserve	(£3,221)	£0	£0	£1,221	(£2,000)
<b>Total Non Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>(£18,702)</b>	<b>(£7,387)</b>	<b>£366</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£25,722)</b>
<b>General Fund Reserves</b>	<b>(£10,000)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>(£10,000)</b>

## 2.64 Earmarked Reserves

- Business Rates Pool Reserve** – the balance brought forward relates to funding from the 2019/20 business pool reserve which was committed to the 2020/21 budget. The in-year addition relates to the 2020/21 business pool reserve which may be subject to adjustment and cannot be utilized until the pool accounts have been determined by the City of London.
- Carry Forward Reserve** – the balance brought forward relates to revenue budgets carried forward from 2019/20 for use in 2020/21. The balance carried forward relates to revenue budgets carried forward from 2020/21 for use in 2021/22.
- CIL Harrow** – the Community Infrastructure Levy is a planning charge introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for LAs in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area. An addition to the reserve has been made in 2020/21 totaling £2.038m. There are also drawdowns totaling £3.095m which have been used to support the capital programme.

- **HRA Reserves** – these reserves will be used to support Housing IT transformation, regeneration, support to eligible residents for financially sustainable independent living and housing repairs
- **Public Health Reserve** – this reserve relates to unspent government grant paid in relation to the delivery of public health responsibilities.
- **Revenue Grant Reserve** – this reserve holds revenue grants to be used for specific purposes or which may be subject to claw back if conditions of the grant are not met.
- **Other earmarked reserves** – including PFI sinking funds, legal services reserves and other small reserves set out in more detail at Appendix 2.

2.65 In addition to the other Earmarked Reserves above, 6 new reserves have been established in 2020/21 with balances committed in 2021/22 as follows:

- **Accommodation Strategy** – this reserve has been established to support the council's accommodation strategy as reported to Cabinet in May 2021
- **Adults Social Care** – this funding has been realigned from the revenue grants reserve and carry forward reserves and is earmarked to future social care pressures in Adults Services
- **Capital Feasibilities Reserve** – this has been established to support services to undertake feasibility studies for capital projects.
- **Collection Fund Reserve** – in 2020/21 the LA received funding in advance to support the cash flow in relation to the collection fund. This reserve will be used to support the estimated Collection Fund deficit of £8.867m as reported to Cabinet in December 2020.
- **EDI Reserve** – this reserve has been established to support the council's commitment to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion agenda.
- **LLW Reserve** – this reserve has been established to support contractual increases as a result of the council's commitment to pay the London Living Wage to external contractors
- **PAP Sinking Fund** – this reserve has been established to support capital and revenue expenditure on the Property Acquisition Programme (acquired through the General Fund) used for temporary accommodation for the homeless

## 2.66 Non-Earmarked Reserves

- **Budget Planning Reserve** – this reserve was established to support the 2020/21 budget with £2.969m allocated to balance the 2020/21 budget.

However, this was not required to be drawn down. In addition a further £7.387m was added to the reserve in 2020/21 of which £2m was planned underspend as set out in the February 2020 Cabinet budget report and the balance identified to support the on-going impacts of COVID-19 on services, in particular, pent up demand in Adults and Children's Social care. In addition, a number of other non-earmarked reserves have been realigned into the Budget Planning Reserve with more details set out below. Although this reserve is classed as non-earmarked, this reserve will be required to support the MTFS.

- **Business Risk Reserve** – this reserve was established to cover potential shortfalls/risk of achieving sufficient savings to cover future year budget gaps. The balance carried forward to 2021/22 of £5.350m is committed to investment in frontline priorities (£2m over the next two years) and the remainder is required, as planned, to balance the 2021/22 budget.
- **Children's Social Care Reserve** – this was established to support pressures in children's social care. The balance carried forward to 2021/22 is required to balance the 2021/22 budget.
- **Commercialisation Reserve** – this reserve was established to support commercialisation activities. It has been realigned into the Budget Planning Reserve to support the MTFS.
- **MTFS Implementation Reserve** – this reserve was established to facilitate the achievement of MTFS savings. The majority of this reserve has been realigned into the Budget Planning Reserve to support future years budget gaps. The balance carried forward to 2021/22 will be required to support the reserve's original use.
- **Transformation Reserve** – this reserve was established to support organisational transformation costs. A balance of £2m is required to be carried forward to 2021/22 to support existing transformation commitments. The remainder has been realigned into the Budget Planning Reserve to support future years budget gaps.

## 2.67 General Fund Reserves

- General Fund Reserves remain at £10m.

## CARRY FORWARDS

2.68 Attached at Appendix 3 is a schedule of the revenue budget carry forwards included in the final outturn for 2020/21.

## MTFS IMPLEMENTATION TRACKER

2.69 The 2020/21 budget includes approved MTFs savings of £3.203m.

2.70 Appendix 4 shows a list of the individual red, amber, green and purple rated savings in the MTFs. The definition used to classify savings ratings in this report are detailed in table 6 below:

**Table 6: Savings Definition**

<b>Green</b> – Low or no risk to delivery of savings	Clear delivery plans in place Project running to timescale
<b>Amber</b> – Medium/some risk to delivery	Potential for slippage but project will be delivered as originally intended but not within timescale, so saving will not be fully realised
<b>Red</b> – High risk to delivering forecast savings	Project may have started but will deliver <b>no</b> savings in the current financial year Project cannot be delivered but underspends found elsewhere to mitigate savings.
<b>Purple</b>	Future years' savings

2.71 Table 7 below shows the summarised position for each directorate for 2020/21:

**Table 7: Savings Tracker 2020/21 – Directorate Summary**

	Resources	People Services	Community	Corporate	Total	%
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b>Red</b>	0	0	(783)	(400)	(1,183)	37%
<b>Amber</b>	(175)	(410)	0	0	(585)	18%
<b>Green</b>	(693)	0	(292)	(450)	(1,435)	45%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(868)</b>	<b>(410)</b>	<b>(1,075)</b>	<b>(850)</b>	<b>(3,203)</b>	<b>100%</b>

2.72 At the final outturn, 45% of the 2020/21 savings are rated green, 18% are rated as amber, whilst 37% are rated as red.

2.73 The red savings of £1.183m relate to three savings in the Community Directorate and one saving held Corporately as follows:

- £681k relates to the non-achievement of income from the expansion of the Central Depot caused by a delay in the completion of the Depot.
- £80k relates to the non-achievement of income from the redevelopment of Vernon Lodge. However this saving is offset by savings in capital financing costs as a result of the capital not being spent.

- £22k relates to removal of base budget for 4 positions for which resolution is now delayed until after March 2021 due to COVID-19
- £400k relates to the non-achievement of SEN transport savings which have not been achieved. The saving is being offset against savings in the Capital Financing budget.

## **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

2.74 The HRA in-year deficit, before transfers to reserves is £321k compared to an original budgeted position of £808k. This underspend of £487k along with an increase position on opening balances of £330k (£7.5m less £7.2m), totalling £818k, have been used to increase the Transformation and Regeneration reserves by £250 and £568k respectively.

2.75 These additions along with the budgeted transfer to the repairs and maintenance reserve of £114k total £932k which will support future pressures and risks associated with these activities whilst maintaining the 2020/21 budgeted HRA General Reserve position of £6.273m.

2.76 The net favourable in-year position of £487k is due to a reduction in operating costs for staffing, increased income due to delays in properties being demolished on Grange Farm and pressure on repairs and maintenance as a result of increased litigation and employee costs.

2.77 The figures reflect pressures and funding of £261k for COVID-19 that were identified in the HRA in 2020/21.

2.78 The HRA MTFs and Business Plan will be updated for the outturn position and assumptions reviewed as appropriate.

2.79 Table 8 below summarises the position on HRA revenue account.

**Table 8: update on Housing Revenue Account**

	<b>Outturn 2019-20 pre audit</b>	<b>Budget 2020/21</b>	<b>Outturn – Draft 2020/21</b>	<b>Variance</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Reserves b/fwd	-7,474	-7,195	-7,526	-331
In year position deficit/ -Surplus	-144	808	321	-487
Transfers to reserves	92	114	932	818
Balance c/fwd	7,526	-6,273	-6,273	0

## **UPDATE ON COMMERCIAL PROPERTY INVESTMENTS**

2.80 From 2015 to 2019 the Council acquired seven investment properties at a cost of £48.2m. The portfolio consists of warehouses and other commercial and residential properties across the UK, as well as an office block in Harrow.

2.81 At acquisition, the net yield was estimated at 2.31% (gross yield 7.3%) for all but the office block Kings House (net yield 0.9% and gross yield 5.9%) which was also purchased as a land acquisition for potential regeneration. The return from investment properties was included in the MTFs.

2.82 The projected return from all but Kings House is currently on target despite COVID-19. There is vacant space in Kings House – part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor has been vacant since acquisition and the remainder of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor became vacant in December 2020. This results in loss of rental receipts and the additional cost such as business rates and service charges which falls back to the council.

2.83 The annual estimated impact of vacant space at Kings House in 2021/22 is a loss of rental income of £395k.

2.84 If this pressure materialises the council can call on the investment property reserve to mitigate this.

### 3.0 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

3.1 The revised capital budget for 2020/21 is £94.842m as set out at Table 9:

**Table 9: Capital Programme 2020/21**

Directorate	TOTAL REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 20/21	Outturn	Variance	Slippage	Over/ (underspend)	LBH	External/HRA	Underspend due to write offs
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>RESOURCES TOTAL</b>	<b>14,981</b>	<b>10,044</b>	<b>-4,937</b>	<b>-4,930</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>COMMUNITY</b>								
Commissioning and Environment & Culture	34,804	26,063	-8,741	-8,098	-643	-48	0	-595
Housing	9,535	6,500	-3,035	-1,356	-1,679	-1,679	0	0
Enterprise and Planning	2,297	1,219	-1,078	-1,050	-28	0	-28	0
Regeneration	5,636	-3,411	-9,047	-1,893	-7,154	0	0	-7,154
<b>COMMUNITY TOTAL</b>	<b>52,272</b>	<b>30,371</b>	<b>-21,901</b>	<b>-12,397</b>	<b>-9,504</b>	<b>-1,727</b>	<b>-28</b>	<b>-7,749</b>
<b>PEOPLE</b>								
Adults	330	281	-49	-41	-8	-8	0	0
Public Health	78	69	-9	-9	0	0	0	0
Children	4,603	1,295	-3,308	-3,307	-1	0	-1	0
<b>PEOPLE TOTAL</b>	<b>5,011</b>	<b>1,645</b>	<b>-3,366</b>	<b>-3,357</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>72,264</b>	<b>42,060</b>	<b>-30,204</b>	<b>-20,684</b>	<b>-9,520</b>	<b>-1,742</b>	<b>-29</b>	<b>-7,749</b>
<b>TOTAL HRA</b>	<b>22,578</b>	<b>12,537</b>	<b>-10,041</b>	<b>-8,941</b>	<b>-1,100</b>	<b>-500</b>	<b>-600</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND &amp; HRA</b>	<b>94,842</b>	<b>54,597</b>	<b>-40,245</b>	<b>-29,625</b>	<b>-10,620</b>	<b>-2,242</b>	<b>-629</b>	<b>-7,749</b>

- 3.2 The final spend is £54.597m, 58% of the total Capital Programme budget. The final spend on the General Fund is £42.060m, (58% of budget). The variance of £30.204m is made up of proposed slippage of £20.684m and a net underspend of £9.520m. The final spend on the Housing Revenue Account is £12.537m (56% of the budget). The variance on the HRA of £10.041m is made of up proposed slippage of £8.941m and an underspend of £1.1m.
- 3.3 At Cabinet in December 2020 slippage of £185.187m was reported and this has now been taken out of the figures in Table 9.
- 3.4 Table 9 sets shows a General Fund variance of £30.204m of which £20.684m will be slipped to 2021/22 and the remaining variance of £9.520m is an underspend. Of this underspend:
- £7.749m is as a result of a write off to revenue for abortive capital schemes.
  - £29k relates to externally funded schemes.
  - £1.742m is an underspend on schemes funded by borrowing. However, £810k of this relates to an underspend on the Property Acquisition scheme in the Housing General Fund which was put into the budget on a cost neutral basis and therefore this £810k saving in borrowing costs will not result in savings in the General Fund. The net saving in borrowing costs is therefore £932k.
- 3.5 Paragraph 3.6 below explains the delay on the implementation of the new ERP system (Programme Dynamics) which has been delayed until August 2021. There was a report to cabinet in April 2021 which set out the reasons for the delay and the associated cost of £850k, and also approved a virement into the Resources Capital Programme for £850k that would be funded from any underspends on the 2020/21 Capital Programme.
- 3.6 Therefore, of the £932k underspend in capital, £850k will be vired into the Resources Capital Programme as approved by cabinet in April 2021 and the remaining £82k will be retained in the Council wide Contingency budget held in Resources.

## **RESOURCES**

- 3.7 At the final outturn £10.043m (67% of budget) has been spent. Of the £4.937m variance, £4.930m of funding will be carried forward to 2021-22 to complete ongoing projects. The slippage mainly relates to the following projects:

- Ongoing refresh and enhancement of ICT (£2.201m). The refresh and enhancement work is ongoing and based on the latest implementation timeline, the project is scheduled to be completed in 2021/22
- Devolved Applications refresh (£837k). Due to delays caused by COVID-19, project delivery is delayed and will be completed by Q3 in 2021/22. There are no revenue implications as a result of the delay.
- Enterprise Resource Planning System (£1.590m). The Dynamics project has been delayed from an April 2021 implementation to August 2021 implementation mainly as a result of COVID-19 and this was reported to Cabinet in April 2021. The delay has resulted in increased implementation costs and therefore a need to increase the capital budget by £850k. This £850k is funded from the underspends in other capital budgets in 2020/21 and a virement from the IT capital programme in 2020/21 and therefore there is no implication on the revenue budget.
- ABAVUS and Waste Collector systems (£241k). Due to COVID-19 related restrictions this project is expected to be delivered by July 2021. There is no revenue implication from this delay.
- LAA Performance Reward Grant (£59k). This project is externally funded and budget is used according to demand.

## COMMUNITY

3.8 The final outturn for the Community Directorate is total spend of £30.371m (58% of budget). Of the variance to budget of £21.901m, a total of £12.397m of funding will be slipped to 2021/22 to complete ongoing projects. The underspend of £9.504m results from write offs of abortive costs to revenue account (£7.749m) and project underspends (£1.755m).

### 3.9 Environment

3.10 The services spent £22.354m against a budget of £29.780m. £6.783m of funding is requested to be carried forward to 2021/22 and relates mainly to the following projects.

- Depot redevelopment (£4.068m). The redevelopment work is ongoing and based on the latest construction completion timeline, the project is scheduled to be completed in 2021/22. There was a MTFS target of £681k in 2020/21 associated with this project. This was not achieved and was reversed as part of the 2021/22 MTFS process.
- Headstone Manor Park for People project (£158k), Flood Alleviation project (£470k) and Flood Defence (£50k). These projects are externally funded.

The delay in completing the projects was due to the pandemic and winter weather which makes it unsuitable for site works.

- Vehicle procurement (£425k). The budget was set aside for the replacement of mechanical sweepers, which was delayed as options were explored to encourage the move to greener fleet.
- Playground improvement (£46k). Resurfacing works to playgrounds were delayed due to the pandemic.
- Waste bins (£76k). Bin orders were placed but the delivery was delayed due to long lead in time from the manufacturers.
- Parks Infrastructure (£149k). Funding was allocated to works at various parks during the year. The works were put on hold due to lockdown restrictions, but they are now being undertaken and will be completed in 2021/22.
- High Priority Planned Maintenance and Corporate Accommodation (£731k). Works in some buildings were delayed due to site visits not being able to take place under lockdown restrictions. The service has commissioned condition survey recently to inform the planned maintenance works in future. The carry forward budget will supplement 2021/22 capital programme to deliver the programme of works.
- Bannister café (£306k) and Harrow Weald café (£69k). The pandemic had slowed down the works, but they are now resumed and will be completed in 2021/22. The redeveloped buildings are expected to generate a rent income which has been assumed in the existing MTFs with a saving of £36k profiled in 2021/22.
- Rayners Lane toilet block (£170k). The project is no longer going ahead as approval was obtained for the disposal of this asset at Cabinet March 2021. The funding is proposed to be repurposed to top up the Leisure and Libraries Infrastructure Fund in 2021/22 as additional projects have since been identified since the approval of the Capital Programme.
- CA site infrastructure (£14k). The budget is set aside for the construction of a canopy to protect the dry recyclables bay in 2021/22, once the planning application is approved.
- CCTV cameras (£45k). The installation of CCTV will be undertaken following the completion of consultation process.

3.11 Unless stated otherwise, the slippage has no implications on the revenue budget.

### 3.12 Culture

3.13 The services spent £3.709m against a budget of £5.024m. £1.314m of funding is requested to be carried forward to 2021/22 and relates mainly to the following projects.

- Bannister Sports Centre (£228k). The delay in completing the 3G Artificial Grass Pitch Works was due to timetabling of works with the grass pitch works and remedial works required to the pitch surface. Pitch works are a planning condition requirement relating to the redevelopment of Harrow View West.
- Harrow Weald pavilion (£50k). There was a delay in completing the electrical works due to the need to install a new meter.
- Leisure and Libraries Infrastructure (£163k). Various improvement works at libraries and Hatch End pool are ongoing. The lead in time required to order materials and contractor staff resource issues had delayed the completion of these projects.
- Harrow Arts Centre (£870k). This project is externally funded. The works are ongoing, and the construction of new build will commence following planning approval. The project is scheduled to complete in 2021/22.

3.14 Unless stated otherwise, the slippage has no implications on the revenue budget

### 3.15 Enterprise and Planning

3.16 The services spent £1.219m against a budget of £2.297m. £1.050m funding is requested to be carried forward to 2021/22 and relates mainly to the following projects.

- Lyon Road project (£330k): This is a multiple year project, with the construction phase near completion. The budget will be used to pay for outstanding works in 2021/22.
- Planning IT replacement (£490k). There was a delay in the procurement exercise, which has now been concluded. The project will move to implementation stage with completion anticipated in 2021/22.
- Harrow High Street Fund (£136k). This project is CIL funded. The delay in completion was due to changes made to the High street programme during the year, the delay in cycle routes delivery, and a late start of the consultation programme on the local centres. The budget is part of a multiyear allocation and so the budget carry forward can be used to continue scheme delivery in 2021/22.

- Neighbourhood CIL projects (£84k). The delivery of approved projects in various wards in 2020/21 will continue in 2021/22.
- Kenton Learning Centre refurbishment (£10k). The project is externally funded. The final element of the work was yet to be completed by the contractor.

3.17 Unless stated otherwise, the slippage has no implications on the revenue budget.

### 3.18 Housing General Fund

3.19 The final spend is £6.5m against a budget of £9.535m. Of this £1.356m is requested to be carried forward to 2021/22 and £1.679m is an underspend against the programme, as detailed below:

- DFGs £1.018m – of this, £398k relates to mandatory grant adaptations which were delayed due to access to properties not being able to take place due to lockdown restrictions but are now being undertaken and will be completed in 2021/22. The remaining £850k is unspent as a result of the pandemic where works on site were stopped and no visits were able to take place
- Property Acquisition Programme £1.768m – of this, £958k is proposed to be carried forward into 2021/22 for the completion of the acquisition of the remaining 3 properties within the programme, which will conclude in 2021/22. The remaining £810k is unspent as a result of the pandemic where lockdown restrictions prevented further properties from being sourced.
- Empty Properties Programme £19k – unspent as a result of lockdown restrictions preventing further properties being sourced.

3.20 There are no implications on the revenue budgets as a result of the above slippage.

### 3.21 Regeneration

3.22 The final regeneration programme spend is £3.742m against a budget of £5.636m. Of this, £1.894m is requested to be slipped into 2021/22.

3.23 There are no further revenue implications as a result of this slippage that are listed below:

- Haslam House £0.626m – the construction phase of work is ongoing and based on the latest construction completion timeline, the project is scheduled to be completed in 2021/22.

- Waxwell Lane £1.267m – disruptions to the supply chain because of COVID-19 has resulted in delays to the scheme with completion now anticipated in 2021/22.
- Gayton Road – there is a small slippage of £1k that will be carried forward to next year's budget allocation to facilitate the relocation of Citizens Advice Bureau to Gayton Road.

## **PEOPLE SERVICES**

3.20 The final outturn for the People Services capital programme is spend of £1.645m of a total budget of £5.011m which is 33% of the approved capital budget.

### **3.21 Adult Services**

3.22 The service spent £0.268m against a budget of £0.688m, with a variance of £0.420m of which £0.411m relates to slippage, with £9k attributable to net underspends.

3.23 The Slippage relates to the following:

- Assistive Technology £0.270m slippage because of delays in the implementation and review of the Assistive Technology pilot.
- In House residential services £0.141m slippage - £0.125m of this relates to a delay to capital works at Millman's Day centre as a result of NRCs being closed in 2020/21, and therefore works against which this was assigned to have not been completed. The remainder relates to the Wiseworks Ridgeway project which will be completed in 2021/22.
- The net underspend of £9k relates to the Vaughan Party wall budget which has been completed and underspent against the budget allocated.

3.24 The expectation was that Assistive Technology would keep ongoing care packages low/minimised. The implication therefore of the delay is increased ongoing care costs (although there were no MTFs savings pending the outcome of the pilot). As a result of COVID-19 there is likely to be a review of next steps as the pandemic will inevitably impact approaches moving forward and may have opened new avenues to be explored.

### **3.25 Public Health**

3.26 The service received funding from the Healthy Pupils Capital Fund ring fenced grant of £0.174m in 2018/19, of which £0.165m has been spent to date, with £9k slipping into 2021/22.

### **3.27 Children's Services**

3.28 The revised capital programme totals £4.603m of which £417k is spent and the remainder will be slipped to 2021-22 as COVID-19 has limited the amount of works that can be carried out in schools.

3.29 There are no revenue implications as a result of this slippage.

### **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

3.30 HRA spent £12.537m (55.5%) against a budget of £22.578m, including Homes-4-Harrow, generating an underspend of £10.041m. Of this, £8.940m will be slipped to 2021/22 leaving an underspend of £1.100m.

3.31 This underspend relates to the Next Steps Accommodation Programme funding secured via the GLA of £1.1m (£600k grant, £500k borrowing) to acquire 5x studio flats on the open market in Harrow. The allocation was only confirmed in Autumn 2020 and by then property prices had increased and the service were unable to source suitable vacant studio flats at an affordable price. After discussion with the GLA it was agreed to hand back the grant allocation and submit a bid in 2021/22 to acquire vacant 1 bed properties which are more widely available. As a result, there will be a saving in the associated financing costs of the additional borrowing which will now not be required.

3.32 The main items of slippage of £8.940m are detailed below:

- Homes-4-Harrow £7.129m – comprises Grange Farm £5.627m which has a contractor appointed and is undertaking works to enable demolition prior to construction of the new homes. A further £1.502m relates to BCHfL which, combined with Grange Farm, will contribute towards the overall programme approved by Council 11 February 2021 to deliver some six hundred and sixty new homes across the borough
- The remaining £1.811m comprises £1.759m including some compliance and health & safety works for existing Council houses identified earlier in 2020/21 for delivery in 2021/22 and £0.052m earmarked for the mandatory Housing IT system replacement

3.33 Unless otherwise stated, there are no further revenue implications as a result of the above slippage.

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22**

3.33 The following amendments include realignment of capital programmes as well as additions required to the Capital Programme which are all funded by grant and therefore no additional capital financing costs will be incurred.

### **Additions to the Capital Programme**

#### **3.34 Schools Condition Allocation - £2,800,444**

3.35 The Department for Education allocates funding each year to help maintain and improve the condition of school buildings and grounds. The SCA provides LAs with funding for maintained school buildings.

3.36 The grant allocation for 2021-22 was announced on 28 April 2021. It is proposed to add this to the capital programme to continue to fund the annual cycle of proactive and reactive maintenance in LA maintained schools.

#### **3.37 The Lyon Road Project - £34,509**

3.38 The Lyon Road Project is an existing scheme in the capital programme, with a budget allocation of £1.072m which is met from external funding from the GLA Good Growth Fund (£485k), S106 contribution (£512k) and NCIL (£75k) respectively. The project is underway and will create a new multi-functional public space (Greenhill Place) and five food kiosks in the town centre. Additional S106 funding has subsequently been allocated to the project to improve public realm including surfacing and place equipment. It is therefore proposed that the additional S106 funding of £34,509 is added to the capital programme.

#### **3.39 Carbon Offset Fund - £500,000**

3.40 The Carbon Offset Fund comprises payments collected by the Council by way of planning obligations contained in Section 106 Agreements. These payments are made by developers who are unable to meet in full, via on site mitigations, the required carbon reductions that are set out current London Plan for new development. They represent a sum in lieu of on-site mitigations that can instead be utilised by the local planning authority to achieve the necessary carbon reductions elsewhere in the borough.

3.41 The council has received a number of payments into the fund over the last two years as developments have progressed and these now total in excess of £500,000. These funds must be spent by the local authority on carbon emission reduction initiatives within Harrow. The council is currently developing suitable proposals, to include energy efficiency initiatives to schools and other council owned public buildings. In order to enable these projects to progress it is necessary to add £500,000 from the Fund into the capital programme for 2021/22, as recommended by this report. Prior to releasing any monies formal business cases will be developed for approval by the appropriate senior officer, in order to confirm compliance with the Fund criteria.

## Capital Programme Realignments 2021/22

### 3.42 Ongoing ICT Refresh and Enhancements £2,609,000

3.43 In December 2020 Cabinet approved new capital funding and along with the realigned existing programme it will be spent on refreshment and enhancement of ICT systems in Harrow. There is no clear line between devolved applications and ongoing refreshment of ICT in delivery of the new schemes proposed over the next four years.

3.44 Therefore, Cabinet is asked to agree the amalgamation of the ICT capital budget and transfer approved unallocated capital budget into one programme for Ongoing ICT Refresh and Enhancement as laid out in the table below:

Project Definition	CODE	Budget	Movement
		£000	£000
Devolved Applications refresh	C20-219E99	539	-539
Digital Improvements Programme	C21-104E99	750	-750
Devolved Applications refresh	C21-219E99	1,320	-1,320
Ongoing ICT Refresh and Enhancements	C21-205E99		+2,609
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,609</b>	<b>0</b>

## 4.0 COUNCIL TRADING STRUCTURE UPDATE 2021/21

4.1 The Council's Trading Structure update is attached at Appendix 6 and summarises the financial position and provides a general update on the activities of all the Council's trading entities.

## 5.0 REPORTING FOR THE 2020/21 FINANCIAL YEAR

5.1 This is the final revenue and capital budget monitoring report for 2020/21

### 6.0 **Implications of the Recommendation**

Implications of recommendation are set out in the body of this report.

### 7.0 **Performance Issues**

Good financial monitoring is essential to ensuring that there are adequate and appropriately directed resources to support delivery and achievement of Council priorities and targets as set out in the Corporate Plan. In addition, adherence to the Prudential Framework ensures capital expenditure plans remain affordable in the longer term and that capital resources are maximized.

The final revenue outturn for 2020/21 is a balanced budget

For the 2020/21 savings built into the MTFS total £3.203m. The overall position is that 45% of the savings are RAG rated as Green (Clear delivery plans in place and project running to timescale), 19% amber (Potential for slippage, project will be delivered as originally intended but not within timescale, so saving will not be fully realised) and 36% red (Project may have started but will deliver no savings in the current financial year).

The final capital programme spend was 58% of the total budget.

**8.0 Environmental Implications**

There is no direct environmental impact.

**9.0 Risk Management Implications**

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **Yes**

Separate risk register in place? **No**

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below. **Yes**

The following key risks should be taken onto account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
Additions to the capital programme that may incur additional borrowing costs to the council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funded by additional grants and contributions thus no additional capital financing costs will be incurred</li> </ul>	Green
Overspends in specific directorates potentially impact on deliverability of budget in 2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overspends related to COVID-19 related activities or losses of income were compensated by external funding. The 2021/22 budget has also accounted for assumptions on COVID-19 external funding as well as additional legacy costs and continued losses of income. The remaining overspends on Business As Usual activities have been mitigated by allocating growth in the MTFS to the impacted areas as reported to Cabinet in February 2021.</li> </ul>	Green
Percentage of red rated savings at outturn (37%) represent a risk to the achievement of the MTFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In 2020/21 these have been mitigated through finding alternative savings or through general underspends across the council which has enabled the council to achieve a balanced budget. In terms of future MTFS a number of the 2020/21 have been reversed in 2021/22 and the remainder will continue to be monitored through the savings tracker</li> </ul>	Green

## 10.0 Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implication arising from this report

## 11.0 Legal Implications

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that without prejudice to section 111, every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs". Section 28 of the Local government Act 2003 imposes a statutory duty on a billing or major precepting authority to monitor, during the financial year, its income and expenditure against budget calculations.

Additions to the Capital Programme are dealt with in B48 of the Financial Regulations, the additions above are within the thresholds allowed for Cabinet.

## 12.0 Financial Implications

Financial matters are integral to this report.

## 13.0 Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

13.1 Decision makers should have due regard to the public sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome. The equalities impact will be revisited on each of the proposals as they are developed. Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. It is important that Cabinet has regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material such as consultation responses. The statutory grounds of the public sector equality duty are found at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows:

13.2 A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

13.2 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;

- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Tackle prejudice, and
- Promote understanding.

13.3 Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race,
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership

13.4 Equality assessments were undertaken for the budget proposals agreed by Council listed as part of the MTFs process and an overall equality assessment was undertaken on the MTFs. There is only recommendation in this report for decision "That Cabinet approve the proposed amendments to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraphs 3.33 to 3.41" it is not considered that this will have a detrimental equalities impact.

It is not considered that this report will have any further equality implications.

#### 14.0 Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

##### **Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow**

This report deals with the Revenue monitoring which is key to delivering the Council's new priorities:

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for communities

- Making a difference for local business's
- Making a difference for families

## **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

### **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

**Statutory Officer: Dawn Calvert**

Signed by the Chief Financial Officer

**Date: 4 June 2021**

**Statutory Officer: Jessica Farmer**

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

**Date: 8 June 2021**

**Chief Officer: Charlie Stewart**

Signed off by the Corporate Director

**Date: 4 June 2021**

**Head of Procurement: Nimesh Mehta**

Signed by the Head of Procurement

**Date: 4 June 2021**

**Head of Internal Audit: Susan Dixon**

Signed by the Head of Internal Audit

**Date: 7 June 2021**

## **Mandatory Checks**

*Ward Councillors notified: NO as it impacts on all Wards*

*EqIA carried out: NO*

## **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact: Sharon Daniels, Head of Strategic and Technical Finance (Deputy S151), Telephone 020 8424 1332, Sharon Daniels@harrow.gov.uk**

### **Background Papers:**

- **MTFS 2020/21 to 2022/23**  
<https://www2.harrow.gov.uk/documents/s164395/Appendix%202%20-%20MTFS%202020-21%20to%202022-23.pdf>
- **2020/21 Budget Report**  
<https://www2.harrow.gov.uk/documents/s164391/Revenue%20Budget%20Report%20202021.pdf>

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

**NO**

## Summary of 2020/21 Revenue Budget

## Appendix 1

	Revised Budget	Outturn	Contribution / Drawdown From reserves	Cross Divisional Adjustments Including one-off Income	Carry Forward Requests	Revised Outturn	Variance to budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Resources</b>							
Business Support	3,367	3,331	0	0	0	3,331	(36)
Customer Services/Acess Harrow	3,671	4,069	0	0	0	4,069	398
ICT	7,265	8,151	(116)	0	0	8,035	770
Director of Resources	727	1,841	0	0	0	1,841	1,114
Internal Audit & CAFT	625	563	0	0	0	563	(62)
Finance & Insurance	3,140	5,292	0	0	0	5,292	2,152
Revenues, Parking & Benefits	13,090	13,807	0	0	0	13,807	717
Procurement	774	673	0	0	0	673	(101)
HRD	1,157	1,399	0	0	0	1,399	242
Legal & Governance	3,071	2,749	51	0	23	2,823	(248)
Strategy	2,802	2,893	(80)	0	222	3,035	233
Investment Income	(2,750)	(2,885)	635	0	0	(2,250)	500
<b>Total Controllable Budget</b>	<b>36,938</b>	<b>41,883</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>42,618</b>	<b>5,680</b>
Uncontrollable Budget	(18,697)	(18,697)		0	0	(18,697)	0
<b>Community</b>							
<b>Controllable Budget</b>							
Commissioning & Commerical Services	(4,431)	5,878	80	0	160	6,118	10,549
Environment & Culture	23,226	25,710	(184)	0	808	26,334	3,108
Directorate Management	195	245	(56)	0	0	189	(6)
Housing General Fund	4,557	4,445	707	(272)	165	5,044	487
Enterprise & Planning	1,291	(904)	1,967	0	324	1,387	96
Regeneration	0	8,234	0	0	0	8,234	8,234
<b>Total Controllable Budget</b>	<b>24,838</b>	<b>43,608</b>	<b>2,514</b>	<b>(272)</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>47,306</b>	<b>22,468</b>
Uncontrollable Budget	24,849	24,849				24,849	0
<b>People</b>							
<b>Controllable Budget</b>							
Adults Services	66,783	65,304	86	0	0	65,390	(1,393)
Public Health	(1,814)	(2,359)	545	0	0	(1,814)	0
Children's Services	33,845	32,168	2,914	0	0	35,082	1,237
<b>Total Controllable Budget</b>	<b>98,814</b>	<b>95,113</b>	<b>3,546</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>98,659</b>	<b>(156)</b>
Uncontrollable Budget	16,205	16,205	0	0	0	16,205	0
<b>Total Directorate Budgets</b>	<b>182,948</b>	<b>202,961</b>	<b>6,550</b>	<b>(272)</b>	<b>1,702</b>	<b>210,940</b>	<b>27,992</b>
Corporate Items	4,904	4,566	0	0	0	4,566	(338)
Covid Grants		(22,188)				(22,188)	(22,188)
Anticipated Compensation loss of income		(6,207)				(6,207)	(6,207)
Corporate Contingency	1,248	0		0	0	0	(1,248)
Technical and Corporate Adjustment	12,058	(1,224)	15,271	0	0	14,047	1,989
<b>Total Controllable Budget</b>	<b>18,210</b>	<b>(25,053)</b>	<b>15,271</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(9,782)</b>	<b>(27,992)</b>
Uncontrollable Budget	(26,398)	(26,398)		0	0	(26,398)	0
<b>Total Corporate Budget</b>	<b>(8,188)</b>	<b>(51,451)</b>	<b>15,271</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(36,180)</b>	<b>(27,992)</b>
<b>Total Budget Requirement</b>	<b>174,760</b>	<b>151,510</b>	<b>21,821</b>	<b>(272)</b>	<b>1,702</b>	<b>174,760</b>	<b>0</b>

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## Reserves 2020-21 Final Outturn

## Appendix 2

Description	Balance Brough Forward 1/4/2020	Addition to Reserves 2020-21	Directorates Draw Down From Reserves	Corporate Reserves Movements	Balance Carry Forward 31/03/2021	Reserves Committed to future MTFS	Total Reserves	Realignment	Final Reserves
CIL Harrow	-7,787,893	-2,037,782	3,095,233		-6,730,442		-6,730,442		-6,730,442
Revenue Grant Reserve	-4,795,864	-2,262,059	-516,972	-131,000	-7,705,895		-7,705,895	216,170	-7,489,725
Compensatory Added Year Reserve	-322,782			80,000	-242,782		-242,782		-242,782
Business Pool Reserve	-1,800,000			1,032,830	-767,170		-767,170		-767,170
PFI Schools Sinking Fund	-2,371,579				-2,371,579		-2,371,579		-2,371,579
Public Health Reserve	-1,847,250	-545,190	20,000		-2,372,440		-2,372,440		-2,372,440
PFI NRC Sinking Fund	-1,665,557	-86,395			-1,751,952		-1,751,952		-1,751,952
Legal Services Contingency	-1,054,339		105,000		-949,339		-949,339		-949,339
Legal Expansion Reserve	-418,639				-418,639		-418,639		-418,639
HRA Transformation Reserve	-421,551				-421,551		-421,551		-421,551
Carryforward Reserve	-3,223,305	-2,041,394		1,470,000	-3,794,699		-3,794,699	1,753,305	-2,041,394
Collection Fund Reserve				-8,924,753	-8,924,753		-8,924,753		-8,924,753
Equalities Diversity & Inclusion Reserve				-250,000	-250,000		-250,000		-250,000
London Living Wage Reserve				-250,000	-250,000		-250,000		-250,000
Capital Feasibilities Reserve				-500,000	-500,000		-500,000		-500,000
Accomodation Strategy Reserve				-725,000	-725,000		-725,000		-725,000
Adults Social Care Reserve					0		0	-1,969,475	-1,969,475
IT Reserve	-250,000		116,000		-134,000		-134,000		-134,000
Borough Election	-242,747	-156,000			-398,747		-398,747		-398,747
Harvist Reserve Harrow Share	-36,135		20,246		-15,889		-15,889		-15,889
Proceeds Of Crime Reserve	-63,000				-63,000		-63,000		-63,000
Proceeds Of Crime Reserve Planning	-326,550				-326,550		-326,550		-326,550
Headstone Manor Reserve	-287,750				-287,750		-287,750		-287,750
CIL Mayor	-223,560		70,658		-152,902		-152,902		-152,902
Libraries Reserve	-150,000				-150,000		-150,000		-150,000
Vehicle Fund	-774,478	-146,000			-920,478		-920,478		-920,478
Investment Property Reserve	-206,875	-635,000			-841,875		-841,875		-841,875
DSG Overspend	2,944,000	786,218			3,730,218		3,730,218		3,730,218
PAP Sinking Fund -NEW		-190,000			-190,000		-190,000		-190,000
HRA Hardship Fund	-172,513				-172,513		-172,513		-172,513

Description	Balance Brough Forward 1/4/2020	Addition to Reserves 2020-21	Directorates Draw Down From Reserves	Corporate Reserves Movements	Balance Carry Forward 31/03/2021	Reserves Committed to future MTFS	Total Reserves	Realignment	Final Reserves
HRA Regeneration Reserve	-25,000				-25,000		-25,000		-25,000
HRA Repair Reserve	-163,756				-163,756		-163,756		-163,756
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>-25,687,123</b>	<b>-7,313,601</b>	<b>2,910,165</b>	<b>-8,197,923</b>	<b>-38,288,483</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-38,288,483</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-38,288,483</b>
									0
Business Risk Reserve	-7,526,000		366,054		-7,159,946		-7,159,946	1,809,946	-5,350,000
Budget Planning Reserve	-2,628,689	-651,950		-6,734,786	-10,015,425		-10,015,425	-6,673,336	-16,688,761
Children's Social Care Reserve	-2,286,000				-2,286,000		-2,286,000	952,000	-1,334,000
Capacity Build/ Transformation Reserve	-3,221,091		0		-3,221,091		-3,221,091	1,221,091	-2,000,000
MTFS Implementation Reserve	-1,775,209				-1,775,209		-1,775,209	1,425,526	-349,683
Commercialisation Reserve	-1,264,773				-1,264,773		-1,264,773	1,264,773	0
<b>Total Non-Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>-18,701,762</b>	<b>-651,950</b>	<b>366,054</b>	<b>-6,734,786</b>	<b>-25,722,444</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-25,722,444</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-25,722,444</b>
					0				0
<b>Total non General Fund Reserves</b>	<b>-44,388,885</b>	<b>-7,965,551</b>	<b>3,276,219</b>	<b>-14,932,709</b>	<b>-64,010,926</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-64,010,926</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-64,010,926</b>
									0
<b>General Fund Reserves</b>	<b>-10,000,000</b>				<b>-10,000,000</b>		<b>-10,000,000</b>		<b>-10,000,000</b>

Environment & Enterprise Directorate  
Revenue Carry Forward Requests 2013-14

		Amount					
Revenue Carry Forward Request 2020-21							Appendix 3
		Council Funding	Ring Fenced Grant Funding	Non Ring Fenced Grant Funding	Total Carry Forward		
Division	Description	£	£	£	£	Reason for Carry Forward & Consequences of not carrying forward.	Budget manager
<b>Carry Forward Request 2020-21</b>							
Enterprise	West London Alliance - Strategic Investment Pot - Enabling Fund Digital		£81,937		<b>£81,937</b>	The WLA Strategic Investment Pot - Using Public Assets to Unlock Digital Infrastructure project "Enabling Fund" will be used to support the delivery of digital infrastructure in the borough. Cabinet approved the draft Digital Infrastructure Strategy for consultation with external stakeholders in Feb 2021. This funding will be used to provide additional specialist consultancy advice, or specialist Legal input where required.	David Sklair
Enterprise	West London Alliance - Strategic Investment Pot - Businesses & Skills funding		£101,348		<b>£101,348</b>	The works have been committed and will continue into 2021/12, to provide support to residents on skills and apprenticeship and to support entrepreneurs and micro businesses.	Victoria Issacs
Enterprise	DWP - Harrow Brokerage Programme		£24,510		<b>£24,510</b>	To continue to deliver works in 2021/22. Unable to deliver contract if not carried forward	Victoria Issacs
Environmental Services	West London Waste Authority - Food Waste project funding		£500,000		<b>£500,000</b>	Following the approval of business case by WLWA, A £0.5m is allocated to Harrow to deliver a food waste pilot project for flats above shops / commercial premises. The money was provided in late March 2021. The project is to be delivered in 2021-22.	Rebecca Johnson
Culture	Sport England - National Leisure Recovery Fund		£307,382		<b>£307,382</b>	Harrow was awarded a total NLRP of £523,642 (£464,475 originally plus £59,167 top up) to support our leisure provider Everyone Active. Under the T&Cs, 30% of the funding can be used to fund lockdown costs in 2020/21. This is equivalent to £157,092.60, and has been paid to EA. The top up grant is yet to be received, therefore the amount c/fwd is £307,382 (£464,475 - £157,092.60).	Tim Bryan
Culture	London Youth Games Grant - Nike Development		£805		<b>£805</b>	Due to Covid-19 there has been a delay in completing the delivery of the handball competition as part of the London Youth Games. London Youth Games has provided a letter confirming approval to carry forward the remaining grant to the next financial year.	Tim Bryan
Environmental Services	Department for Transport - Emergency Active Travel Fund		£10,191		<b>£10,191</b>	Unspent fund is set aside for the removal of streetspace schemes	David Eaglesham
Environmental Services	Redundancies associated with Phase 3 of the divisional restructure	£150,000			<b>£150,000</b>	Phase 3 restructure is delayed and will now take place in 2021/22. Some job losses are anticipated in accordance with the overall restructure proposal. £150k is estimated based on an average payment of £30k for 5 posts.	Michael Butler

		Council Funding	Ring Fenced Grant Funding	Non Ring Fenced Grant Funding	Total Carry Forward		
Division	Description	£	£	£	£	Reason for Carry Forward & Consequences of not carrying forward.	Budget manager
	<b>Carry Forward Request 2020-21</b>						
Planning	Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU) grant (former Department of Energy and Climate Change)		£48,000		<b>£48,000</b>	Work on potential heat network serving the main Council regeneration sites was put on hold as part of the broader review of the Regeneration programme. Consequently the work proposed to be undertaken using this grant was not progressed in 2019/20 nor 2020/21. Heat network considerations form part of the newly appointed Harrow Strategic Development Partner, so grant likely to be spent in 2021/22. Grant condition requires it to be spent on heat network investigations.	David Hughes
Enterprise	JCP DWP grant - Raising Ambition Harrow, to support unemployed into work		£68,231		<b>£68,231</b>	Funding is exclusively for purpose, must be repaid if not used in accordance with contract. If the fund is not carried forward then the project will not be delivered and money will be clawed back. Reputational risk.	Victoria Issacs
52 Housing	NHS - Out of Hospital discharge Grant		£1,535		<b>£1,535</b>	To be used to in 2021/22 to continue to pay for initial emergency accommodation placements from hospital as instructed by leuan ap Rees, West London Homelessness Coordinator. If we do not carry £1,535 forward we will not be able to fund these placements	Paul Allen
Housing	Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Grant		£163,208		<b>£163,208</b>	Carry forward to be used as part of 2021/22 funding as instructed by MHCLG. If we do not carry this forward our agreed 2021 Grant will be automatically reduced by £165,708	Paul Allen
Strategy	Community premises grant		<b>£73,102</b>		<b>£73,102</b>	ringfenced grant to be used to improve community premises in Harrow	Alex Dewsnap
Strategy	MOPAC grant funding		£149,375		<b>£149,375</b>	ringfenced grant funding	Rahel Gapp
Legal and Governance	Grand funding /governance		£23,000		<b>£23,000</b>	Government grant funding relating to elections with no time limit within members and elections section	Elaine McEachron
Corporate	Year end SERCOP adjustments	£338,769			<b>£338,769</b>	Year end accounting adjustments required by SERCOP	Dawn Calvert
	<b>Total 2020-21</b>	<b>£488,769</b>	<b>£1,552,625</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£2,041,394</b>		

2020-21 Savings Update								
Item No	Unique Reference No.	Headline Description re: saving / reduction	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total	Rag Rating	Comment - (Comment relates to 2020/21 savings only)
	(1)	(3)	(10)	(11)		(12)		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
<b>Resources Directorate</b>								
1	RES 2	Access Harrow /Contact Cente - delete one post in the Adults team	(35)			(35)	Green	Savings achieved, post deleted prior to 2020/21.
2	RES 3	Revenues - delete 0.5 FTE which covers the Capita contract resilience	(25)			(25)	Green	Savings already removed from Revenues budget - achieved
3	RES 4	Benefits - delete two posts over two years	(33)	(33)		(66)	Green	£33k already removed from budget and on target to deliver the other £33k in 21/22
4	RES 5	Delete one FTE across finance function	(30)			(30)	Green	Savings already achieved , deletion of a vacant post.
5	RES 2019-20 S1-4	Reduction in Customer Channels (A) - closing telephony & email channels across Council Tax, Housing Benefits, Planning & Building Control and only accepting on-line applications following the release of new on-line services by April 2019.	(135)			(135)	Green	Savings already achieved , deletion of a vacant post.
6	RES 2019-20 S1-5	Reduction in Customer Channels (B) - closing telephony & email channels across Council Tax, Housing Benefits, Planning, Building Control, Education, Parking & Switchboard and only accepting on-line applications following the release of new on-line services by April 2019/20.	(175)	(175)		(350)	Amber	Savings at risk, first year implementation in Revenues and Benefits sections should have started from 1st October 2020, however the preparatory work (digital services and consultation) are not complete as staff are not allowed in the office due to COVID situation. Progress
7	RES 2019-20 S1-6	Review of Business Support for Children's Services - Lean review of Children's' Services and associated business support.	(20)			(20)	Green	Savings achieved, post deleted prior to 2020/21.

2020-21 Savings Update								
Item No	Unique Reference No.	Headline Description re: saving / reduction	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total	Rag Rating	Comment - (Comment relates to 2020/21 savings only)
	(1)	(3)	(10)	(11)		(12)		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
8	RES 2019-20 S1-13	Additional Legal Hours 'Growth of £530k was added to the budget for 2019/20 in connection with additional usage within Harrow of legal services. Only 50% of this growth is required in 2019/20 and the remaining 50% can be fully removed in 2020/21.	(265)			(265)	Green	Savings achieved
9	RES	<b>Investment Income :</b> Income from investing in commercial properties		(1,726)		(1,726)	Purple	
29	COR 04	Income from £100m Investment Property Purchase	(150)	(1,175)	(1,175)	(2,500)	Green	Savings achieved for 2020/21. The savings on the shedule are net figures. For 2020/21 gross saving is £450k while the capital financing cost is £300k. For 2021/22 and 22/23 the gross savings are £3.525m in each year while the capital financing cost is £2.350m in each year.
		<b>Resources total</b>	<b>(868)</b>	<b>(3,109)</b>	<b>(1,175)</b>	<b>(5,152)</b>		
<b>People Directorate</b>								

2020-21 Savings Update								
Item No	Unique Reference No.	Headline Description re: saving / reduction	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total	Rag Rating	Comment - (Comment relates to 2020/21 savings only)
	(1)	(3)	(10)	(11)		(12)		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
10	PC_01	<p><b>Reduction in expenditure in relation to children's placements, accommodation and client related spend.</b></p> <p>Targeted early intervention and support to prevent young people from coming into care or stepping young people down from care where it is safe to do so. Targeted actions continue to reduce the average cost of service provision through negotiation with providers and continued maximisation of capacity available within block contracts services and council properties.</p>	(410)	(410)		(820)	Amber	Monitoring of achievement is required during the year as savings are at risk due to fluctuations in demand
<b>Children and Young People Total</b>			<b>(410)</b>	<b>(410)</b>		<b>(820)</b>		
<b>Community Directorate</b>								
11	COM_20.21_S01	<p>Substitute funding for 2 existing job brokers with external grant in 2020/21. External funding has been secured as part of Strategic Investment Pot (SIP) over 2 years. Part of this grant is earmarked for funding staffing costs. The proposed funding substitution means the delivery of the programme will have to be incorporated into the work of existing staff. If no further funding is secured beyond 2020/21, one post will be deleted and the other one retained.</p>	(90)	45		(45)	Green	Saving achieved.

2020-21 Savings Update								
Item No	Unique Reference No.	Headline Description re: saving / reduction	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total	Rag Rating	Comment - (Comment relates to 2020/21 savings only)
	(1)	(3)	(10)	(11)		(12)		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
13	COM_20.21_S02	Automatic Public Convenience (APC) 'The removal of the APC situated at Pinner Road in previous year results in a saving on hire and maintenance costs.	(25)			(25)	Green	Saving achieved. The lease of the APC has been terminated.
14	COM_20.21_S03	Removal of base budget from October 2020 for 4 positions that are currently 67% grant funded - either securing further external funding to 100% fund these posts or deleting the posts. These 4 FTC positions are created as part of the successful bid to HLF for the Headstone Manor refurbishment project. HLF funding will end in Sept 2020, thereby the future of these posts will be dependent on the availability of further external funding.	(22)	(22)		(44)	Red	The removal of base budget from October 2020 for 4 positions that are currently 67% grant funded is expected to be delayed until 31 March 2021. This is a direct result of the onset of the pandemic; it is expected, however, that this saving will be achieved in full in 2021/22.
15	COM_20.21_S04	Achieving full cost recovery from Travellers site-'The council has a duty to provide suitable accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers and use Watling farm site for this purpose.Saving proposal is to seek a cost neutral outcome for the council to be achieved by increased charges to the current licensees and/or agreement for the cost of repairs and maintenance to be passed over to the occupiers.		(14)		(14)	Purple	Awaiting plan from Head of Resident Services

2020-21 Savings Update								
Item No	Unique Reference No.	Headline Description re: saving / reduction	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total	Rag Rating	Comment - (Comment relates to 2020/21 savings only)
	(1)	(3)	(10)	(11)		(12)		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
16	COM_20.21_S05	Reduction in EACH contract and Sheltered housing support from April 2020- Each contract to be transferred to floating support scheme and reduction in sheltered housing support proposed to finance through enhanced housing management service charge which is HB eligible/ or reduce scope of the service provided.		(68)		(68)	Purple	[1] EACH contract £30k transfer to Floating Support - expected to be achieved through FHSG [2] Sheltered Hsg Support - expected to achieve through reduction in scope service and enhanced management charge which is eligible for Housing Benefit - Domestic Abuse services contract with Hestia (to which Housing contributes GF budget for refuge and floating support) extended. Project team in place for procurement exercise - currently seeking feedback from internal colleagues on current services.
17	COM_20.21_S06	Removal of GF funded base budget for 1 position from April 2020 - As part of the Housing Services management re organisation the vacant post of Head of Service for Business Development & Transformation has been deleted.	(18)			(18)	Green	Savings achieved.
18	COM_20.21_S07	Building Control - Additional income from commercialisation of the service		(20)		(20)	Purple	Future year saving, however the health pandemic is likely to adversely impact on the number of building control applications as a slow economic recovery is anticipated.
19	COM	Income from expansion of Central Depot	(681)			(681)	Red	The target was originally added to the MTFs to reflect the funding for the capital financing costs of the depot redevelopment project. The timeline for completing the project has been delayed. This target is now included in the wider financial and commercial review, which is being worked through to identify mitigations.

2020-21 Savings Update								
Item No	Unique Reference No.	Headline Description re: saving / reduction	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total	Rag Rating	Comment - (Comment relates to 2020/21 savings only)
	(1)	(3)	(10)	(11)		(12)		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
20	CC_2	<p>Library Strategy Phase 2 - delivery of network of libraries and library regeneration</p> <p>The original saving relates to the relocation of Gayton Library and Wealdstone Library. The new town centre library that replaces Gayton Library will be built by the developer as part of the redevelopment of 51 College Road. The latest timescale suggests that the new library will become operational no later than March 2020. Therefore the saving relating to Gayton Library (£159k) needs to be re-profiled to 2020/21 at the earliest.</p>	(159)			(159)	Green	<p>Gayton Library will be replaced by the new town centre library. The fit out of the new library was originally scheduled to be completed by the end of April 2020 with the new library due to open in mid-May 2020. This is now further delayed due to the health pandemic. However, an agreement has been reached with the landlord of Gayton Library for an extension to the lease until the 31st August 2020 on a rent free basis, therefore the MTFs saving can be achieved in full.</p>

2020-21 Savings Update								
Item No	Unique Reference No.	Headline Description re: saving / reduction	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total	Rag Rating	Comment - (Comment relates to 2020/21 savings only)
	(1)	(3)	(10)	(11)		(12)		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
22	COM_19.20 S01	<p>Review of Libraries Service</p> <p>Review of operational arrangements to consider minimum staffing level and/or opening hours of libraries in the next 6-9 months through the work with the cross party working group. The estimated financial saving will be available once the proposal is developed. To deliver a service model in line with the new vision for Libraries which is to be developed by the cross party working group. Externalisation of the service will also be considered, to identify a suitable provider to deliver the service for the Council. It should be noted that, the libraries budget was insufficient to pay for Carillion's cost in the past due to the unbudgeted contract indexation. It remains the case for the in-house service provision, with an estimated budget pressure of circa £150k in 18/19 (to be met from one-off libraries reserve). There is a growth budget in the existing MTFS, originally intended for contract indexation (£175k in 19/20 and £25k in 20/21). This will be needed to fund the in-house service to meet the current operating arrangements.</p>	(50)			(50)	Green	Changes to opening hours and staffing reorganisation already completed during 2019/20. This saving in 2020/21 represents the full year effect of the reduction in staffing costs.

2020-21 Savings Update								
Item No	Unique Reference No.	Headline Description re: saving / reduction	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total	Rag Rating	Comment - (Comment relates to 2020/21 savings only)
	(1)	(3)	(10)	(11)		(12)		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
23	COM_19.20 S02	Increase in Planning fees Income NB: this is predicated on diverting further CIL monies to fund Harrow Local Plan Review instead of using planning income as originally planned.	50			50	Green	This figure shown in 2020/21 reflects a reduction of MTFS target from £100k in 2019/20 to £50k in 2020/21. Albeit not a saving target, it should be noted that the health pandemic resulted in an adverse impact on the number of planning applications in the early part of the financial year. This may be compensated by the income from Planning Performance Agreements and will be closely monitored.
24	COM_19.20 S04	Redevelopment of the Vernon Lodge Homelessness Hostel and the Atkins House Site The maximisation of the assets to increase the homelessness provision at Vernon Lodge while providing capacity to generate additional income at both Vernon Lodge and Atkins House, following Cabinet approval of the redevelopment work in July 18. Gross savings.	(80)	(643)		(723)	Red	Rent income from Atkins House following the completion of refurbishment work will ensure that the 2019/20 MTFS target of £130k is achieved in full in 2020/21. The MTFS targets of £80k and £643k in 2020/21 and 2021/22 respectively relate to the assumed rental income from the redevelopment of Vernon Lodge.  The originally planned scheme at Vernon Lodge is no longer progressed. A revised business case for the project is currently being reviewed, along with the inclusion of the Probation Centre as part of a wider proposal to provide homeless accommodation, to assess the financial viability of the scheme. Therefore the 2020/21 saving is not achievable, however there is a corresponding saving on capital financing cost as the capital budget is not spent. The Capital financing cost assumed in 2020/21 is £190k

2020-21 Savings Update								
Item No	Unique Reference No.	Headline Description re: saving / reduction	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total	Rag Rating	Comment - (Comment relates to 2020/21 savings only)
	(1)	(3)	(10)	(11)		(12)		
			£000	£000	£000	£000		
26		Additional Financing Income : Banister (25k) Harrow Weald Toilet (£11k) Probation Centre (£275k) Drones (unmanned aerials) (£92k)		(403)		(403)	Purple	Future year saving, which reflects the capital financing cost of various capital projects. Some capital projects have been delayed or are being reassessed, therefore the MTFS target will have to be reviewed as part of 2021/22 refresh.
		<b>Community Total</b>	<b>(1,075)</b>	<b>(1,125)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2,200)</b>		
<b>Corporate</b>								
28	COR 03	SEN Transport efficiency from Transformation	(400)	(400)		(800)	Red	The saving in 2020/21 is not forecast to be achieved. This saving is being offset against underspends in the Capital financing budget.
31	COR 06	Transformation Target - additional £1m over and above SEN Transport target per annum		(1,000)	(1,000)	(2,000)	Purple	Future year savings
27	COR 02	Gayton Road - income from 53 PRS units	(450)	(144)	(47)	(641)	Green	Savings achieved
		<b>Corporate Total</b>	<b>(850)</b>	<b>(1,544)</b>	<b>(1,047)</b>	<b>(3,441)</b>		
		<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>(3,203)</b>	<b>(6,188)</b>	<b>(2,222)</b>	<b>(11,613)</b>		

<b>Green - Low or no risk to delivery of savings</b>	
<b>Amber - Medium/some risk to delivery</b>	
<b>Red - High risk to delivering forecast savings</b>	
<b>Purple</b>	

Clear delivery plans in place
Project running to timescale
Potential for slippage but project will be delivered as originally intended but not within timescale, so saving will not be fully realised.
Project may have started but will deliver <b>no</b> savings in the current financial year
Project cannot be delivered but underspends found elsewhere to mitigate savings.
Future year's savings

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Appendix 5 – Capital Programme 2020/21

Project Definition	Original Programme	Realignment 20/21 budget in 19/20	19/20 Carry Forwards	Changes in Q1-Q4	2020/21 Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance	Slippage to 2021/22	(Over/underspend)	LBH	External/HR A	Write offs to revenue therefore creating a credit on capital	Reason for variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of transition and transformation of ICT service	0	0	159	(85)	74	73	(1)	0	(1)	(1)			Budget no longer required – scheme complete
ICT Infrastructure & Corporate Applications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
IT Corporate System Refresh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
ICT Re-Commissioning	0	0	1,044	0	1,044	1,037	(6)	0	(6)	(6)			Budget no longer required – scheme complete
Ongoing refresh & enhancement of ICT	3,000	0	4,448	(1,765)	5,682	3,480	(2,202)	(2,201)	(1)	(1)			Funds required for various projects completion in 2021/22 which straddle two financial years, the main projects are as follows : Data centre, move to new new office hub, systems migration to cloud, wifi across the council buildings.
Devolved Applications refresh	1,700	0	927	(1,192)	1,436	598	(838)	(838)	0	0			Due to delays caused by COVID, projects delivery is delayed, the project will not be completed until Q3 next financial year.
SAP: Financial Leger/Systems Control Imp	0	0	56	(56)	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Waste Collector	0	0	25	0	25	0	(25)	(25)	0	0			Scheme to continue in 2021/22
ABAVUS	0	0	513	0	513	297	(216)	(216)	0	0			<b>Due to covid-related delays, this project is expected to continue until July 2021. We have been unable to work with frontline staff due to Covid restrictions.</b>
LAA Performance Reward Grant	0	0	59	0	59	0	(59)	(59)	0	0			Grant funded scheme to continue in 2021/22
Other Schemes (Council wide)	0	0	2,204	(2,204)	0	0	0	0	0	0			
IER Grant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
FM Minor Work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Property Investment	0	0	94,407	(94,407)	0	0	0	0	0	0			
HR Shared Service	0	0	65	(65)	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Enterprise Resource Planning System	1,500	0	2,362	2,245	6,107	4,517	(1,590)	(1,590)	0	0			The Dynamics project will complete in July 2021
Legal Case Management System	0	0	0	41	41	41	0	0	0	0			
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>106,268</b>	<b>(97,487)</b>	<b>14,981</b>	<b>10,044</b>	<b>(4,938)</b>	<b>(4,930)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Commissioning and Environment &amp; Culture</b>													
Car Parks Infrastructure	15	0	4	0	19	17	(1)	(1)	0	0			Required for completion of work
City Farm/Pinner Park Farm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Corporate Accommodation Maintenance	0	0	174	(117)	57	53	(5)	(4)	(1)	(1)			See note below for High Priority Planned Maintenance
High Priority Plan Maintenance Corporate Property	855	0	248	117	1,220	485	(736)	(727)	(9)	(9)			High Priority Planned Maintenance (£731k). Works in some buildings were delayed due to site visits not being able to take place under lockdown restrictions. The service has commissioned condition survey recently to inform the planned maintenance works in future. The carry forward budget will supplement 2021/22 capital programme to deliver the programme of works.

Project Definition	Original Programme	Realignment 20/21 budget in 19/20	19/20 Carry Forwards	Changes in Q1-Q4	2020/21 Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance	Slippage to 2021/22	(Over/underspend)	LBH	External/HR A	Write offs to revenue therefore creating a credit on capital	Reason for variance
Highway Drainage Improvements & Flood Defence Infrastructure	500	0	0	0	500	450	(50)	(50)	0	0			Flood Defence (£50k). Required for completion of work. The delay in completing the projects was due to the pandemic and winter weather which makes it unsuitable for site works.
Highway Improvement Programme	5,000	0	0	37	5,037	5,037	0	0	0	0			
Parking Management Programme	300	0	0	0	300	294	(6)	0	(6)	(6)			Small underspend in various parking schemes.
Neighbourhood Investment Scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Waste and Recycling	150	0	7	0	157	143	(14)	(14)	(1)	(1)			CA site infrastructure (£14k). The budget is set aside for the construction of a canopy to protect the dry recyclables bay in 2021/22, once the planning application is approved.
Section 106 Schemes for Highways	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Street Lighting Improvement Programme	1,000	0	0	0	1,000	1,000	(0)	0	(0)	(0)			
TfL Principal Road Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
TfL Transport Capital	1,291	0	0	(761)	530	530	(0)	0	(0)		(0)		
Trade Waste	100	0	138	0	238	163	(76)	(76)	0	0			Waste bins (£76k). Bin orders were placed but the delivery was delayed due to long lead in time from the manufacturers.
Town Centre Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Harrow Green Grid	150	0	67	0	217	217	(0)	0	(0)	(0)			
CCTV cameras and equipment at the depot	50	0	0	0	50	5	(45)	(50)	5	5			Required for completion of work. CCTV installation delayed due to consultation.
CCTV Infrastructure	0	0	1,265	(1,246)	18	18	0	0	(0)	(0)			
Parks Infrastructure	675	0	276	0	951	767	(184)	(149)	(35)	(35)			Parks Infrastructure (£149k). Funding was allocated to works at various parks during the year. The works were put on hold due to lockdown restrictions, but they are now being undertaken and will be completed in 2021/22.
Parks Litter Bins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Green Gym	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Parks Playground Improvement	250	0	123	0	373	327	(46)	(46)	0	0			Playground improvement (£46k). Resurfacing works to playgrounds were delayed due to the pandemic.
Street Litter Bins	0	0	29	0	29	29	(0)	0	(0)	(0)			
Harrow Weald Toilet Block	0	0	149	0	149	80	(69)	(69)	0	0			The pandemic had slowed down the works, but they are now resumed and will be completed in 2021/22. The redeveloped buildings are expected to generate a rent income which has been assumed in the existing MTFS with a saving of £36k profiled in 2021/22.
Redevelopment of Rayners Lane Toilet Block	0	0	71	0	71	(99)	(170)	(170)	0	0			Rayners Lane toilet block (£170k). The project is no longer going ahead as approval was obtained for the disposal of this asset at Cabinet March 2021. The funding is proposed to be repurposed to top up the Leisure and Libraries Infrastructure Fund in 2021/22 as additional projects have since been identified since the approval of the Capital Programme.

Project Definition	Original Programme	Realignment 20/21 budget in 19/20	19/20 Carry Forwards	Changes in Q1-Q4	2020/21 Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance	Slippage to 2021/22	(Over/underspend)	LBH	External/HR A	Write offs to revenue therefore creating a credit on capital	Reason for variance
Redevelopment of Vernon Lodge & Atkins House	1,324	0	7,858	(9,177)	5	(591)	(596)	0	(596)	0		(596)	The project is no longer going ahead as the revised business case indicated that it is not financially viable. Costs incurred in previous years are abortive, and therefore written off to revenue account, hence creating a credit sum in the capital account in 2020/21.
Vehicle Procurement	0	0	7,659	(7,234)	425	0	(425)	(425)	0	0			Vehicle procurement (£425k). The budget was set aside for the replacement of mechanical sweepers, which was delayed as options were explored to encourage the move to greener fleet.
Depot Redevelopment	5,650	0	8,921	0	14,571	10,503	(4,069)	(4,069)	0	0			Depot redevelopment (£4.068m). The redevelopment work is ongoing and based on the latest construction completion timeline, the project is scheduled to be completed in 2021/22. There was a MTFS target of £681k in 2020/21 associated with this project. This was not achieved and was reversed as part of the 2021/22 MTFS process.
Headstone Manor - Park for People Project	0	0	897	0	897	739	(158)	(158)	0	0			Headstone Manor Park for People project (£158k). The project is externally funded. The delay in completing the projects was due to the pandemic and winter weather which makes it unsuitable for site works.
Probation Centre	3,000	0	2,000	(5,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Wealdstone Major Transport Infrastructure	2,700	0	0	(1,700)	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0			
Headstone Manor Flood Alleviation Scheme	1,218	0	0	400	1,618	1,148	(470)	(470)	0	0			Flood Alleviation project (£470k). The project is externally funded. The delay in completing the projects was due to the pandemic and winter weather which makes it unsuitable for site works.
NIS - Kenton West	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Bannisters Former Civil Defence Building	0	0	348	0	348	41	(306)	(306)	0	0			The pandemic had slowed down the works, but they are now resumed and will be completed in 2021/22. The redeveloped buildings are expected to generate a rent income which has been assumed in the existing MTFS with a saving of £36k profiled in 2021/22.
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles	0	0	400	(400)	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Sec 106 Banister Sport Pitch	0	0	1,159	0	1,159	880	(279)	(279)	0	0			Bannister Sports Centre (£228k). The delay in completing the 3G Artificial Grass Pitch Works was due to timetabling of works with the grass pitch works and remedial works required to the pitch surface. Pitch works are a planning condition requirement relating to the redevelopment of Harrow View West.  Harrow Weald pavilion (£50k). There was a delay in completing the electrical works due to the need to install a new meter.
Harrow Arts Centre	1,021	0	1,110	0	2,131	1,295	(836)	(836)	0	0			Harrow Arts Centre (£870k). This project is externally funded. The works are ongoing, and the construction of new build will commence following planning approval. The project is scheduled to complete in 2021/22.
Headstone Manor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			

Project Definition	Original Programme	Realignment 20/21 budget in 19/20	19/20 Carry Forwards	Changes in Q1-Q4	2020/21 Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance	Slippage to 2021/22	(Over/underspend)	LBH	External/HR A	Write offs to revenue therefore creating a credit on capital	Reason for variance
HAC/Museum - ICT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Central Library Refit/Refurb	0	0	1,009	53	1,062	1,062	0	0	0	0			
Refurbishment of 3 Libraries	150	0	150	(300)	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Libraries and Leisure Capital Infrastructure	150	0	232	(53)	329	165	(165)	(163)	(1)	(1)			Leisure and Libraries Infrastructure (£163k). Various improvement works at libraries and Hatch End pool are ongoing. The lead in time required to order materials and contractor staff resource issues had delayed the completion of these projects.
Harrow Arts Centre Capital Infrastructure	300	0	0	0	300	266	(34)	(34)	0	0			See note above for Harrow Art Centre
Harrow Museum Capital Infrastructure	104	0	0	(60)	44	41	(3)	(3)	0	0			Required for completion of work
<b>Total Commissioning and Environment &amp; Culture</b>	<b>25,953</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34,291</b>	<b>(25,440)</b>	<b>34,804</b>	<b>26,063</b>	<b>(8,741)</b>	<b>(8,098)</b>	<b>(643)</b>	<b>(47)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(596)</b>	
<b>Housing</b>													
Disabled Facilities Grants	2,030	(75)	14	337	2,306	1,058	(1,248)	(398)	(850)	(850)			DFGs (£398k)-Mandatory grant adaptations were delayed due to access to properties not being able to take place due to lockdown restrictions but are now being undertaken and will be completed in 2021/22. As a result of lockdown restrictions , £850k of the budget was underspent in 2020/21.
Empty Property Grant	450	0	0	(330)	120	101	(19)	0	(19)	(19)			Budget not required-scheme complete.
Improvement grant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Housing Property Purchase - 100 Homes	0	0	24	3	27	27	(0)	0	(0)	(0)			
Housing Property Purchase - 50 Homes	0	0	7,387	(305)	7,082	5,314	(1,767)	(958)	(809)	(809)			Property Acquisition Programme (£958k) This is for the completion of the acquisition and works to the remaining 3 properties of the programme, which will conclude in 2021/22. The remaining £809k is unspent as a result of the pandemic where lockdown restrictions prevented further properties from being sourced.
<b>Total Housing</b>	<b>2,480</b>	<b>(75)</b>	<b>7,425</b>	<b>(295)</b>	<b>9,535</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>(3,035)</b>	<b>(1,356)</b>	<b>(1,679)</b>	<b>(1,679)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Enterprise and Planning</b>													
New Planning IT system	0	0	875	0	875	385	(490)	(490)	0	0			Planning IT replacement (£490k). There was a delay in the procurement exercise, which has now been concluded. The project will move to implementation stage with completion anticipated in 2021/22.
Harrow High Street Fund	1,000	0	737	(1,387)	350	201	(148)	(136)	(13)		(13)		Harrow High Street Fund (£136k). This project is CIL funded. The delay in completion was due to changes made to the High street programme during the year, the delay in cycle routes delivery, and a late start of the consultation programme on the local centres. The budget is part of a multiyear allocation and so the budget carry forward can be used to continue scheme delivery in 2021/22.
Neighbourhood CIL Schemes	0	0	157	0	157	59	(99)	(84)	(15)		(15)		Neighbourhood CIL projects (£84k). The delivery of approved projects in various wards in 2020/21 will continue in 2021/22.



Project Definition	Original Programme	Realignment 20/21 budget in 19/20	19/20 Carry Forwards	Changes in Q1-Q4	2020/21 Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance	Slippage to 2021/22	(Over/underspend)	LBH	External/HR A	Write offs to revenue therefore creating a credit on capital	Reason for variance
Integrated Health Model	0	0	85	(85)	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Assistive Technology	500	0	0	(245)	255	230	(25)	(25)	(0)	(0)			Assistive Technology slippage due to delays in the implementation and review of the Assistive Technology pilot.
In-House Residential	125	0	55	(105)	75	52	(23)	(16)	(7)	(7)			Slippage relates to the Wiseworks Ridgeway project which will be completed in 2021/22.
<b>Total Adults</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>(435)</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>(49)</b>	<b>(41)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
Healthy Pupil Capital Fund	0		78	0	78	69	(9)	(9)	0	0			Healthy Pupils Capital Fund ring fenced grant
<b>Total Public Health</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Children</b>													
School Amalgamation	0	10	544	176	730	76	(654)	(654)	0	0	0	0	Amalgamation works delayed due to Covid-19
Bulge Classes	0	0	552	(552)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Schools Capital Maintenance	0	0	1,939	1,325	3,264	1,014	(2,250)	(2,245)	(5)	0	(5)		Capital maintenance works delayed due to Covid-19
Devolved Formula Non VA Schools	0	0	53	0	53	0	(53)	(53)	0	0	0	0	Ringfenced grants for schools
Secondary Expansions	0	0	13,233	(13,233)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
SEN Provision	621	0	5,965	(6,512)	75	10	(65)	(69)	4	0	4		Ringfenced grants for school expansion to support projects in 2021/22
Schools Expansion Programme - Phase 2	0	0	1,266	(1,148)	118	95	(23)	(23)	0	0	0	0	Ringfenced grants for school expansion to support projects in 2021/22
Schools Expansion Programme - Phase 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Ringfenced grants for school expansion to support projects in 2021/22
Hatch End MUGA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Childrens IT Development	0	0	264	0	264	42	(222)	(222)	0	0			Funding slipped to support projects in 2021/22
Day respite Provision	400	0	0	(400)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Childrens Services Buildings Programme Works	100		0	0	100	58	(42)	(42)	0	0			Children's Centres works delayed due to Covid-19
<b>Total Children</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23,817</b>	<b>(20,344)</b>	<b>4,603</b>	<b>1,295</b>	<b>(3,309)</b>	<b>(3,307)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>TOTAL PEOPLE</b>	<b>1,746</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24,034</b>	<b>(20,779)</b>	<b>5,011</b>	<b>1,645</b>	<b>(3,366)</b>	<b>(3,357)</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>42,773</b>	<b>(125)</b>	<b>200,384</b>	<b>(170,769)</b>	<b>72,263</b>	<b>42,059</b>	<b>(30,204)</b>	<b>(20,684)</b>	<b>(9,520)</b>	<b>(1,741)</b>	<b>(28)</b>	<b>(7,750)</b>	
Housing Programme	5,725	(621)	5,213	(4,713)	5,604	3,793	(1,811)	(1,811)	0	0			Relates to slippage of £1.759m for compliance & safety works for existing council houses identified in 2020/21 to be completed in 2021/22 and £0.052m earmarked for the mandatory housing IT system replacement.
NSAP-Next Steps Accommodation Programme	0	0	0	1,100	1,100	0	(1,100)	0	(1,100)	(500)	(600)		Next Steps Accommodation Programme funding secured via the GLA of £1.1m to acquire 5 x studio flats on the open market in Harrow. The allocation was only confirmed in Autumn 2020 and by then property prices had increased and the service were unable to source suitable vacant studio flats at an affordable price. After discussion with the GLA, it was agreed to hand back the grant allocation and submit a bid in 21/22 to acquire vacant 1 bed properties which are more widely available.

Project Definition	Original Programme	Realignment 20/21 budget in 19/20	19/20 Carry Forwards	Changes in Q1-Q4	2020/21 Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance	Slippage to 2021/22	(Over/underspend)	LBH	External/HRA	Write offs to revenue therefore creating a credit on capital	Reason for variance
Grange Farm Phase 1 & Phase 2	12,553	(240)	3,523	(5,651)	10,185	4,558	(5,628)	(5,628)	0	0			The pandemic slowed down the scheme works but these have now resumed and will continue in 2021/22 to enable demolition prior to construction of new homes.
Affordable Housing	5,252		315	(2,207)	3,360	2,938	(423)	(423)	0	0			relates to BCHFL which, combined with Grange Farm, will contribute towards the overall programme approved by Council 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2021 to deliver some six hundred and sixty new homes across the Borough
Affordable Housing - Infill Phase 2	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Gayton Road	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Other Schemes	12,768	275	6,294	(17,008)	2,329	1,249	(1,079)	(1,079)	0	0			relates to BCHFL which, combined with Grange Farm, will contribute towards the overall programme approved by Council 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2021 to deliver some six hundred and sixty new homes across the Borough
<b>TOTAL HRA</b>	<b>36,298</b>	<b>(586)</b>	<b>15,345</b>	<b>(28,479)</b>	<b>22,578</b>	<b>12,537</b>	<b>(10,041)</b>	<b>(8,941)</b>	<b>(1,100)</b>	<b>(500)</b>	<b>(600)</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total General Fund and HRA</b>	<b>79,071</b>	<b>(711)</b>	<b>215,729</b>	<b>(199,248)</b>	<b>94,841</b>	<b>54,596</b>	<b>(40,245)</b>	<b>(29,625)</b>	<b>(10,620)</b>	<b>(2,241)</b>	<b>(628)</b>	<b>(7,750)</b>	

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## **Appendix 6 – Council Trading Company Update 2020/21, Quarter 4**

### **Introduction**

1. As at Quarter 4 2020/21, the Council’s trading structure consists of four separate legal entities set out in table 1 below and presented as a flow chart at the end of this report along with detailed financial results.

**Table 1: Harrow Council Trading Structure**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Legal Structure</b>	<b>Date Started Trading</b>
Concilium Group Limited (Holding Company)	UK Limited Company	November 2015
Concilium Business Services Limited	UK Limited Company	November 2015
Sancroft Community Care Limited	UK Limited Company	January 2018
Concilium Assets LLP	Limited Liability Partnership	January 2019

2. These entities have been set up to provide a financial or other benefit to the Council whilst enabling it to undertake specific commercial activities. Harrow Council either directly or indirectly holds a 100% controlling interest in each of them.

### **Background**

3. Concilium Group Ltd. is a wholly owned commercial subsidiary of the Council, set up with the dual purpose of consolidating the financials of its subsidiaries and to act as the minority partner in a Council controlled Limited Liability Partnership (Concilium Assets LLP).
4. Concilium Business Services Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Concilium Group Ltd. Until February 2019 its principal source of revenue came from the property management of 100 homes, managed on behalf of Harrow Council. Its activities are now kept to a minimum.
5. Sancroft Community Care Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Concilium Group Ltd. It was set up to take over the operation of the now 62 bed residential care home for the elderly. 45 of these beds are block contracted with the London Borough of Harrow for five years.
6. Concilium Assets LLP (The LLP) is a Limited Liability Partnership owned 95% by Harrow and 5% by Concilium Group Ltd, set up to enable direct private rental sector (PRS) property investment activities. 53 PRS units on Gayton Road were transferred to the LLP in July 2019 on a 10 year lease for rent to the private market.

### **Financial Implications**

7. The accounting year end for all of these entities is the 31<sup>st</sup> March in line with the council’s year end. This report references detail for financial years ended 2020 and 2021 along with a summary for financial years ended 2022 and 2023.

8. Financial accounts have been prepared for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 for Sancroft Community Care Limited and Concilium Assets LLP. Audits of these accounts have been completed. Group accounts have been prepared for Concilium Group Limited and Concilium Business Services Limited. These accounts are currently being audited. For reporting purposes, Concilium Group Limited is classified as a dormant entity. The published financial position for the companies for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 is summarised in Table 4.
9. The detailed annual forecast position to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 for the council's trading structure has been summarised in Table 5. These figures have not yet been subject to audit.
10. The annual forecast position for the council's trading structure has been summarised in Table 6. The table covers financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 in line with the respective business plans.

### **Concilium Business Services Ltd**

11. Concilium Business Services Ltd has undergone a strategic change of direction and the details were presented as part of the part two savings tracker to Cabinet in July 2019. As a result, the company is now only responsible for the legal ownership of 2 homes. The company retains 5% of the income collected from these tenants, distributing the remaining 95% back to the Council.
12. The entity is now trading as a principal as opposed to an agent, thus retaining legal ownership of these properties and neither charging a management fee nor undertaking any property management/agency activities.
13. The future financial position in Table 6 assumes that Concilium Business Services Limited shall remain active with minimal activities which may be subject to change in the coming years as there is a view to winding down the company.

### **Sancroft Community Care Ltd**

14. The audited financial information for Sancroft Community Care Ltd for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 is summarised in Table 4 at the end of this report. A financial summary of Sancroft's performance against its business plan (budget) for 2020/21 is presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Sancroft Forecast Annual Position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

<i>Negative/(Positive)</i>	Full year Forecast	Annual Budget	Forecast Budget Variance
Total Income	(2,359,038)	(2,419,349)	60,311
Total Expenditure	2,290,791	2,363,116	(72,325)
<b>(Net Profit)/Loss</b>	<b>(68,247)</b>	<b>(56,233)</b>	<b>(12,014)</b>

15. The full business plan (refreshed) for Sancroft Community Care Ltd was presented as Appendix 8 (exempt) to the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019 Cabinet report and approved along with the detailed quarterly performance against budget for Q1 2019/20 as Appendix 7 (exempt).
16. The forecast remains volatile due to the impact of Covid-19 and the continued uncertainty for the remainder of the year.

### Concilium Assets LLP

17. Concilium Assets LLP has had its first year of trading extended for commercial reasons and its prior year shortened. Dormant accounts were therefore filed for the 9 months ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 and for accounting purposes the LLP has been trading since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 and has prepared audited accounts to the 15 months ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.
18. The final business plan including financial model for Concilium Assets LLP was included as Appendix 9 (exempt) to the 12<sup>th</sup> September Cabinet report and approved by Cabinet. The figures reported in Table 6 are a reflection of the final approved business plan.
19. Performance against the LLP's business plan this year is reported below in Table 3. Results for the quarter are in line with the annual budget.

**Table 3: LLP Forecast Annual Position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

<i>Negative/(Positive)</i>	Full year Forecast	Annual Budget (B-Plan)	Forecast Budget Variance
Total Income	(1,080,945)	(1,072,113)	(8,832)
Total Expenditure*	1,054,317	605,303	449,014
<b>(Net Profit)/Loss</b>	<b>(26,628)</b>	<b>(466,810)</b>	<b>440,182</b>

\* See paragraphs 20 - 22 below

20. The Council charges the LLP 33% of its turnover (the lease rent) which is accounted for as an expense in the accounts of the LLP. This expense was not included in the business plan which accounts for the forecast budget variance. The lease rent is a direct benefit to the Council and is included in the MTFS.
21. The LLP accounts for 2019/20 include a technical adjustment spreading lease rent payments to the Council over the full term of the lease rather than accounting for them on a cash basis. The value of this adjustment for 2019/20 is £199,687 resulting in a loss in the audited company accounts for 2019/20 of £74,755. The £199,687 adjustment will be offset by rental income received in future years.
22. Any remaining profit is distributed back to the council as a dividend. The position for the LLP including these distributions is published in the business plan and included in the council's MTFS. The amount paid to the Council in respect of lease rent and dividend for 2021/21 was £451k.

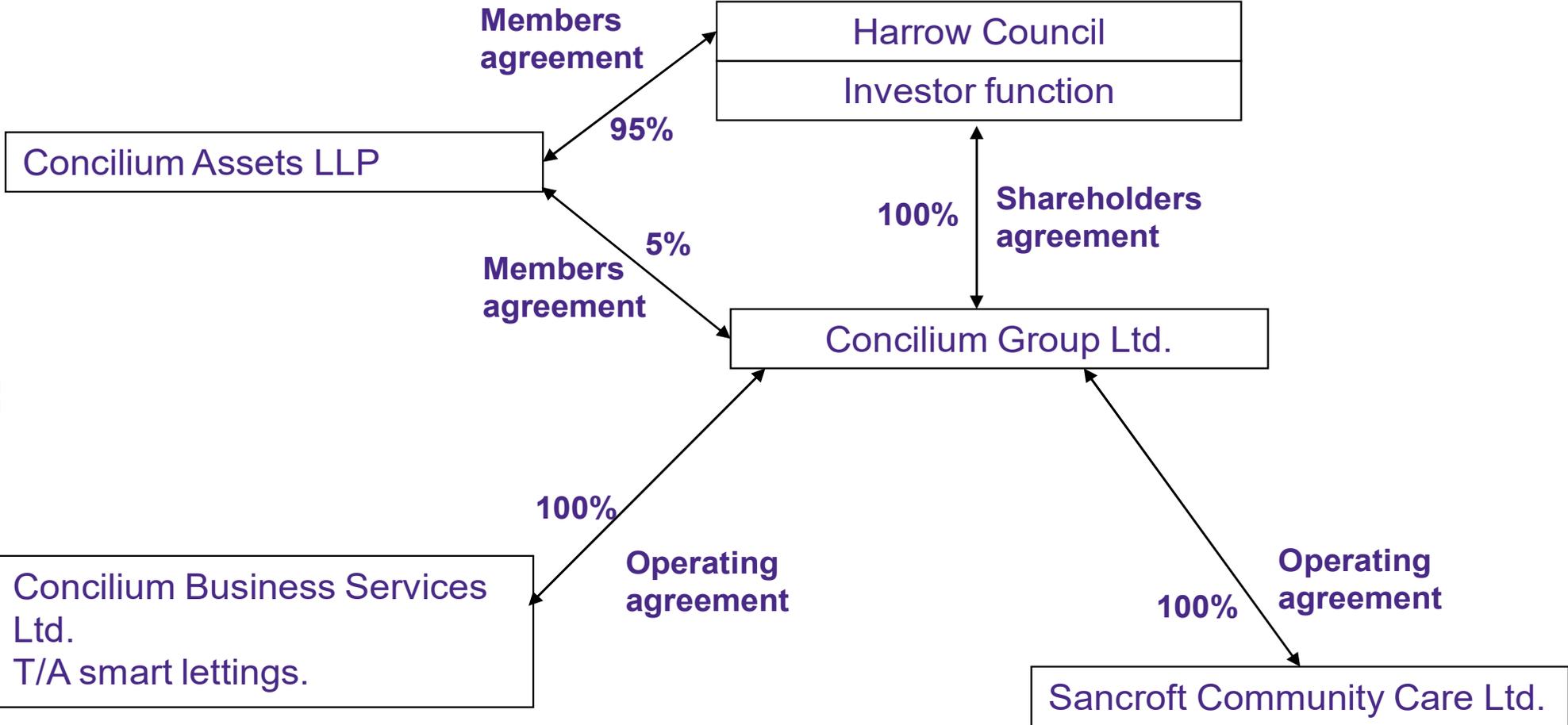
## Funding Arrangements

23. Concilium Assets LLP was granted a start-up loan of £175,000 which was fully drawn down in 2019. An additional short term loan facility to the LLP of up to £250k was approved by Cabinet in July 2019 of which only £100k was drawn down. These loans were repaid in full before March 2020, ahead of business plan projections.

# Harrow Council Commercial Structure



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**Table 4: Trading Structure Full Year Position to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

£ Negative/( £ Positive)	Concilium Business Services Ltd	Concilium Group Ltd	Sancroft Community Care Ltd	Concilium Assets LLP	Aggregate Position
Income	(141,063)	0	(2,373,783)	(679,440)	(3,194,286)
Direct and Administrative Expenditure	145,262	10,463	2,309,648	754,195	3,219,568
(Net Profit)/Loss	4,199	10,463	(64,135)	74,755*	25,282
Retained Earnings c/f	(26,997)	10,463	2,356	74,755	60,577

\* Refer to paragraph 21.

**Table 5: Trading Structure Full Year Forecast to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 - unaudited**

£ Negative/( £ Positive)	Concilium Business Services Ltd	Concilium Group Ltd	Sancroft Community Care Ltd	Concilium Assets LLP	Aggregate Position
Income	(68,557)	0	(2,359,038)	(1,080,945)	(3,508,540)
Direct and Administrative Expenditure	73,500	2,500	2,290,791	1,054,317*	3,421,108
(Net Profit)/Loss	4,943	2,500	(68,247)	(26,628)	(87,432)
Retained Earnings c/f	(22,054)	12,963	(106,986)	48,127	(67,950)

\* This figure includes the Council's 33% share of rental income which is treated as an expense in the accounts of the LLP. Refer to paragraph 20.

**Table 6: Trading Structure Full Year Forecast for MTFS**

£ Negative/( £ Positive)	Concilium Business Services Ltd	Concilium Group Ltd	Sancroft Community Care Ltd	Concilium Assets LLP *	Aggregate Position
Retained Earnings b/f	(26,997)	10,463	2,356	74,755	60,577
(Net Profit)/Loss - 2020/21	4,943	2,500	(68,247)	(26,628)	(87,432)
(Net Profit)/Loss - 2021/22	5,500	2,500	(45,964)	(23,414)	(61,378)
(Net Profit)/Loss - 2022/23	6,500	2,500	(29,062)	11,849	(8,213)
Retained Earnings c/f	(10,054)	17,963	(140,917)	36,562	(96,446)

\* These figures include the Council's 33% share of rental income which is treated as an expense in the accounts of the LLP. Refer to paragraph 20.

**REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE &  
FINANCE SUB-  
COMMITTEE**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
<b>Subject:</b>	Children and Families Services Complaints Annual Report 2020/21
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Paul Hewitt, Corporate Director People Services
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Cllr Christine Robson
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Appendix – Annual Report for Children and Families Services Complaints for period 2020/21

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report sets out the Children and Families Services Complaints Annual Report for 2020/21.

**Recommendations:**

None. For Information purposes only.

## Section 2 – Report

### Financial Implications

There are no specific budget issues associated with this report. All payments are agreed by Service Managers and are funded within existing budgets.

### Performance Issues

There are no specific performance issues associated with this report.

### Environmental Impact

N/A

### Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

### Equalities implications

N/A

### Corporate Priorities

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

- Build a Better Harrow
- Be More Business-like and Business Friendly
- **Protect the Most Vulnerable and Support Families**

## Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

The Corporate Director determined the report did not require Financial or Legal clearance.

## Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

**Contact:** Usman Zia, Complaints Manager, Adults & Children's Complaints,  
[usman.zia@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:usman.zia@harrow.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:** None

## Annual Complaints Report for Children and Families Services 2020/21

<u>Section</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	Executive Summary
2	Summary of Activity
3	Complaints Service contribution to the local authority COVID-19 response
3	Outcomes for key actions in 2020/21 and Priorities for 21/22
4	Stage 1 Complaints
5	Stage 2 Complaints
6	Stage 3 Complaints
7	Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints
8	Escalation comparison over time
9	Remedy payments
10	Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution
11	Joint NHS and social care complaints
12	Learning Lessons/Practice Improvements
13	Compliments
14	Equalities Information
15	The Complaints Process explained

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Executive Summary</b></p> <p>This year's report follows the first national lockdown following the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on how public services were provided and how organisations have had to adapt to ensure we are able to look after our most vulnerable and support families.</p> <p>The priority of the directorate and the local authority at this difficult time was to ensure essential services continued to be delivered and as such resources were prioritised to deliver this. The Complaints Service contributed to this priority as will be explained in the COVID-19 section below in the report.</p> <p>Despite the above, there were higher contacts (177) actioned by the Complaints Service in 20/21 than in 19/20 (156).</p>
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There were some **177** “transactions<sup>1</sup>” within the complaints process during the year, i.e. representations, formal complaints, members enquiries and referrals to the Local Government Ombudsman. Given the nature of some of the work undertaken, such as child protection and looked after children, it is positive that numbers of complaints are so minimal. During 2020/21:

- *Of the 4016 children open to Children’s Social Care in the year 53% were male and 46% were female and 1% were unborn/not known. The cohort’s ethnic breakdown is predominantly BME with a quarter being white ethnicity. On the last day of the year (31<sup>st</sup> March) a total of 1720 children were receiving a service from Social Care with the rest having ceased throughout the year.*
- *A total of 2605 referrals were received in 2020/21 by Children’s Social Care with the most common referral source being Police and Schools both accounting for 59% of referrals received. The service completed 2569 assessments.*
- *A total of 1280 child protection investigations were initiated in the period with 424 leading to an initial child protection conference.*
- *There were 657 Child Protection Plans (CPP) active at some point during 2020/21, 384 new plans were started & 361 ceased during the year, at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 296 children were being supported and monitored through a Child Protection Plan*
- *A total of 295 Children were Looked After (CLA) at some point during 2020/21, during the year, 117 children became newly looked after and 118 stopped being looked after, at 31<sup>st</sup> March Harrow had 182 looked after children.*
- *At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 Harrow had 76 approved fostering households offering 124 placements*
- *During 2020-21 about 3,304 families accessed the Cedars and Hillview Early Support hubs and 160 young people accessed the Wealdstone Early Support hub*

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<sup>1</sup> The total of representations, Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3, member enquiries & LG Ombudsman referrals within Children and Families Services.

	<p>Children’s Social Care Teams<sup>2</sup> continued to attract the most contacts (63%). This reflects the nature of the statutory social work undertaken by these services, where difficult decisions regarding children and their families sometimes leads to necessary actions which can be unpopular with some families.</p> <p>This report contains both positive messages and indications of areas needing more work through a challenging time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of note is the high level of representations (100) which were potential statutory complaints but were resolved/actioned informally. This made up the vast majority of our contacts and were not all negative in nature upon receipt (some were service or information requests). This is significant in showing that the Council is able to listen to concerns expressed and practically work to internally resolve them. Whilst this is positive in terms of the citizen’s experience because it focuses on resolving the issue rather than taking a citizen through formal “stages”, it also endorses that early resolution is more cost effective for the Council by avoiding escalation with associated costs of any investigations. It provides a problem-solving focus rather than process focus.</li> <li>• The number of Stage 1 complaints significantly fell but representations/informal requests increased. There was also a notable increase in MP/Councillor contacts that may also reflect the decrease in stage 1 complaints and shows that citizens turned to members through COVID to communicate their concerns.</li> <li>• The relative escalation rate of complaints between formal Stage 1 and Stage 2 has remained relatively low at 40%. It should be noted that the amount of formal Stage 1 responses is initially very low (10) and only four cases went to formal Stage 2. This reflects the successful efforts made by officers to understand and address concerns when they arise as complaints and representations.</li> <li>• Better quality resolution work has meant that fewer representations moved on to a Stage 1 complaint. There were far more representations (97 at initial contact plus three midway through process) than Stage 1 complaints (10) in 2020/21. This meant many cases were informally resolved ensuring an effective resolution for our citizens</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Summary of Activity</b>

<sup>2</sup> These include our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), First Response Team, Child in Need Service and our Corporate Parenting Service.

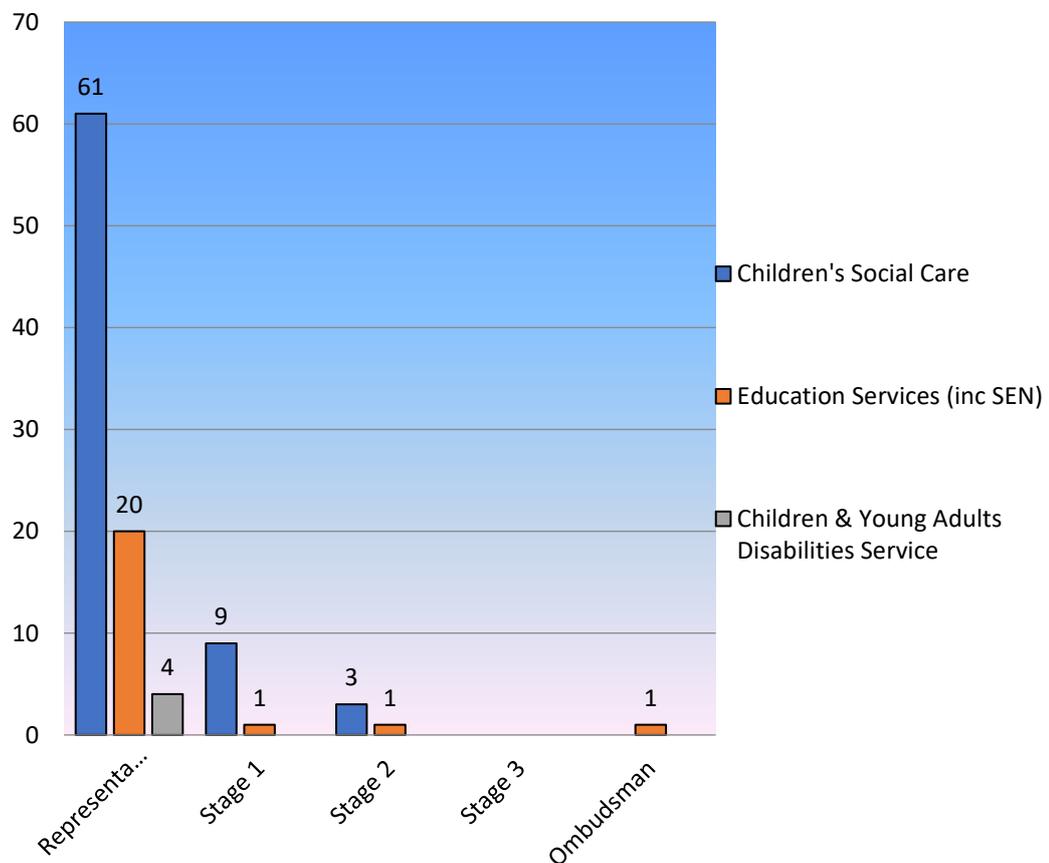
**2.1 Overall Complaint Activity:**

Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, the Council received:

- 100 representations i.e. potential statutory complaints that did not lead to a formal complaint investigation.
- The council processed 10 Stage 1 complaint investigations.
- 4 Stage 2 complaint investigations.
- No (zero) Stage 3 complaint received (no panel hearings);
- One Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) complaints.

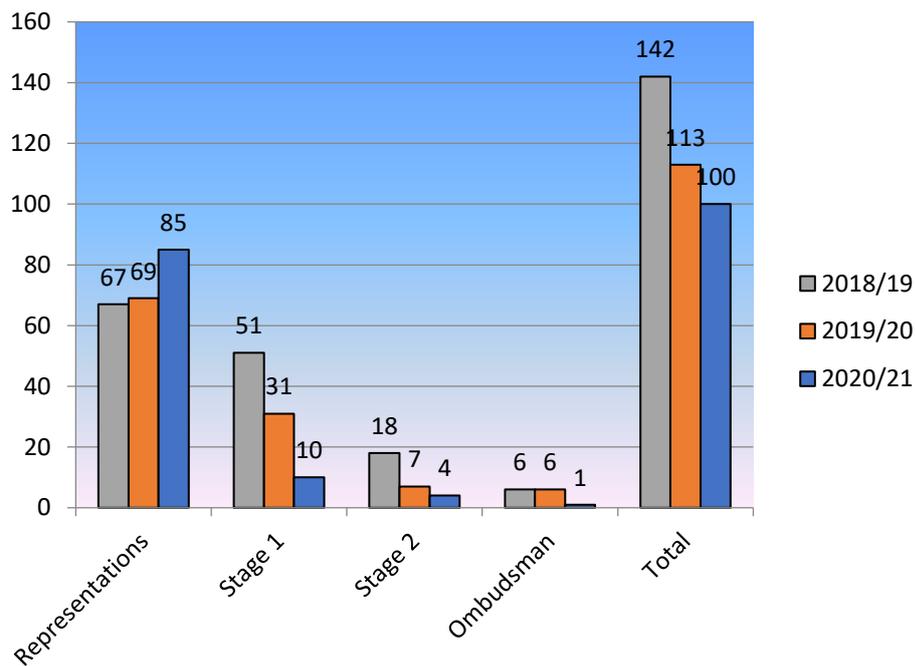
Additionally, there were 62 MP and Councillor enquiries managed by the Complaints Service. In comparison, 43 enquiries were received last year. This increase has likely come with the trend noted across Adult Social Care also more reliance on members for raising concerns throughout COVID.

**Table 1: Number of Complaints by Service area: April 20 to March 21**



Number of Complaint Transactions by Service area: April 2020 - March 2021							
Service Area	Representations	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Ombudsman	Total	
Children's Social Care	61	9	3	0	0	73	
Education Services (inc SEN and Admissions)	20	1	1	0	1	23	
CYAD	4	0	0	0	0	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	
<p><b>Key message:</b> Overall the picture suggests a continuation of high quality investigative and governance standards. Please note 15 representations were for other services areas outside of Peoples Directorate. However, as these came to us, the Complaints Service worked on these cases to ensure these were reviewed and actioned to ensure the citizens request was taken forward.</p> <p><b>Analysis:</b> During 2020/21 there was a decrease in the number of formal Stage 1 complaints received (a reduction of from 31 to 10 in comparison to the previous year). This is partially due to further shifting our focus following COVID-19 on ensuring services receive concerns and are supported internally by the Complaints Service in resolving this. This may be due to further efforts made to resolve issues informally. This is supported by the fact that representations and MP/Councillor enquiries have gone up while formal complaints have gone down.</p> <p>In line with the above, there was an increase in representations (100 in comparison to 69 last year) which shows an increased willingness to provide solutions via informal means which are usually faster and more direct. The focus on informal resolutions is to make the relevant service aware of the concern and if necessary, support them in resolving this rather than focusing on formulation of a response letter.</p> <p>As with previous years, the majority of received transactions (both representations and formal complaints) are via Children's Social Care (63%).</p> <p>There were four Stage 2 complaint investigations. This represents an escalation rate of 40% of all Stage 1 complaints and a very low approx. 4% escalation of all initial transactions. No (zero) complaints progressed to a Stage 3 panel hearing. There was only one formal LGO investigation.</p>							

**Table 2: Comparison of Complaints over the last 3 years**



	Representations	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Ombudsman	Total
2020/21	85(85%)	10(10%)	4(4%)	0(0%)	1(1%)	100
2019/20	69(61%)	31(28%)	7(6%)	0(0%)	6(5%)	113
2018/19	67(47%)	51(36%)	18(13%)	0(0%)	6(4%)	142

**Analysis:** There was a decrease in the number of total ‘transactions’ in 2020/21 (100) compared to 2019/20 (113). The decrease in numbers was primarily within children’s social care teams where a large number of complaints at times are not about decisions or outcomes as it would be across other areas of the council, but about the involvement of the social care within the lives of families and the difficult adjustments that some families can feel. Simply the involvement alone of Children’s Services in a family can lead to the raising of a complaint or concern.

COVID-19 for Children’s Services also meant having to adjust ways of working in an already very sensitive realm and these adjustments with families who were dealing with COVID-19 and lockdown pressures could have led to a need to reach out to be heard or have anxiety based queries answered.

The overall decrease is likely due to the discussed work with teams and staff to try and resolve such matters before they become complaints or representations and is a positive indication that social care staff as a whole can be empowered to resolve problems and issues. Empathy would play a large part in the ability to resolve difficult conversations and COVID-19 created challenges for those of all walks of life which meant care staff could likely relate to the reasoning behind pandemic issues being raised and being able to resolve them informally.

Escalations beyond Stage 1 have remained low in line with previous years and have dropped in line with the drop in initial Stage 1 complaints.

We do not believe that once an issue is raised as a complaint or potential complaint that it should be passed around departments and reaches the Complaints Service to manage through a set stage-based process. Front line services should be encouraged to try and resolve issues, requests and concerns at the earliest point as this can help restore trust that may have potentially been lost by involved citizens. The Complaints Service has made it clear we are here to support the services in resolving potential complaints and this approach ensures we have a directorate approach rather than Complaints Service approach as our end goal.

This is also beneficial for both citizens and staff as it allows additional guidance and potential for resolution by involving the Complaints Service at the first possible instance which is often more efficient than the formal process. Front line staff appear also to have greater awareness of the complaints service due to the collaborative work the complaints service encourages with all levels of staff

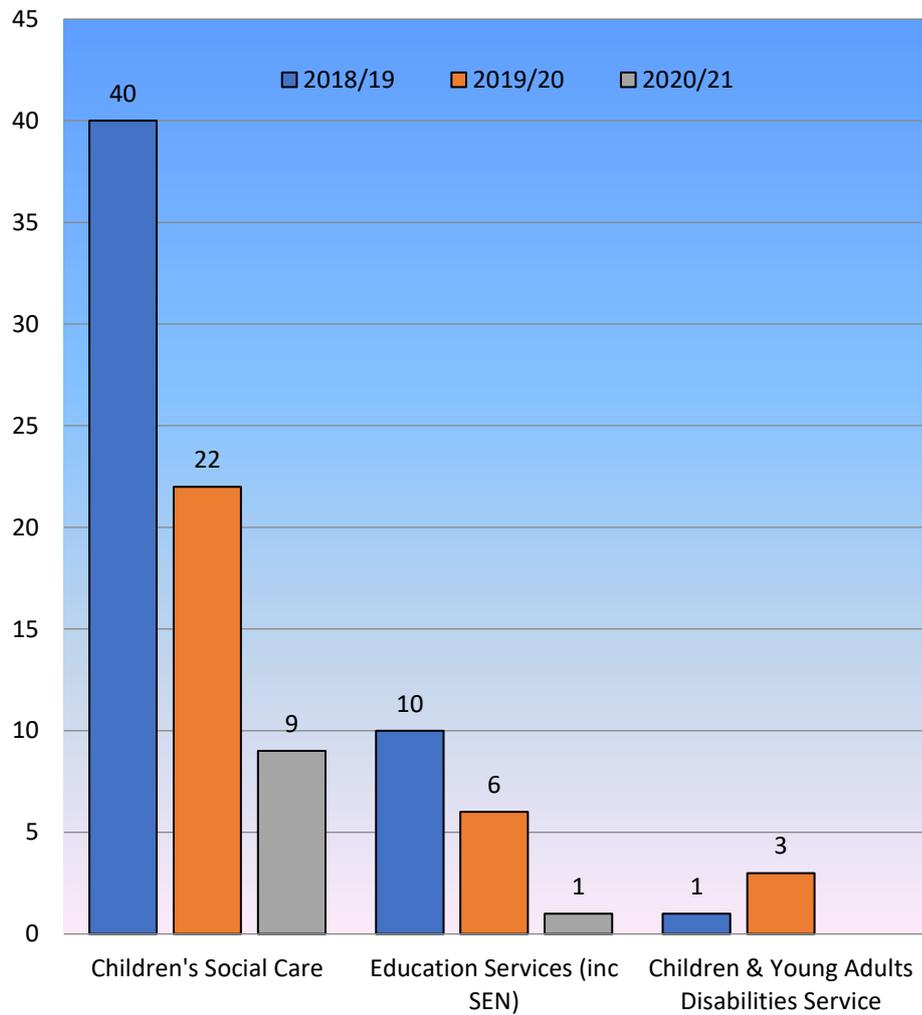
3	<b>Complaints Service contribution to the local authority COVID-19 response</b>
	<p>The impact of COVID-19 both in the UK and globally meant an unprecedented level of response both at a local and national level to prevent the spread of the disease and to adapt how we work to ensure essential services could be delivered to those with care needs. This meant staff and services across the local authority acting on strategies to act as one council to support the above aim.</p> <p>As such, the Complaints Service worked to help deliver the following in response to COVID-19 in 20/21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assisting in co-ordinating the distribution of emergency PPE to frontline care services and care providers throughout the borough. This entailed reviewing daily PPE usage figures from care providers on a seven day a week basis approximately between the months of March to July/August 2020 (until PPE supply stabilised in the market). This meant we were pre-emptively ensuring PPE supply did not run low enough that core services could not be delivered. Following this period, we assisted in communicating with providers to ensure awareness of the government PPE portal for health and care services.</li> <li>- Assisting with the co-ordination of Central Government returns to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to ensure qualification COVID-19 funding for care services and providers within Harrow.</li> <li>- Assisting with the co-ordination of data and multi-agency work in contributing to the national winter care plan initiative in 2020 to ensure COVID-19 contingency planning over winter.</li> <li>- Ensuring care provider concerns were addressed and providing communication updates to care providers within Harrow so that they could more effectively and safely deliver care to our citizens.</li> <li>- Assisting with the communications with respect to COVID-19 grant funding for care providers across the borough to ensure they received all eligible help from DHSC to ensure they are best placed to provide care to Harrow citizens.</li> </ul>

4	Outcomes of key actions for 2019/20 and focus for 2021/22
	<p>Unfortunately, we were unable to reach the local target of 85%. The overall timeline score for formal responses this year was 67%. This was due in part to the formal response numbers being low and in running a limited service for a number of months and ensuring some of the key assistance above was provided as this impacted the immediate health and safety of the staff and citizens within the borough. The full Complaints Team were also not equipped with remote IT to enable full capacity for several months of the pandemic as remote IT was rightly prioritised for key workers first.</p> <p>The offer of core training has been placed on hold throughout COVID-19 to ensure COVID-19 priorities could be addressed where possible. Some training has taken place in 21/22 thus far but we anticipate a full training schedule is provided in 22/23 across the directorate. The aim of this would be to further upskill directorate services to address families concerns and requests effectively and to a standard of good communication.</p> <p>We have ensured we have adapted our services were possible to COVID-19 impact but ensuring a further focus on resolution-based work rather than process-based work which is evidenced by the numbers.</p> <p>The website has been further updated and been using Microsoft Teams with staff and citizens to ensure we are still able to hold resolution meetings and allow fluid communication.</p> <p>Our focus for 2021/22 is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve Stage 1 complaint response to work towards the local authority target of 85%</li> <li>• To continue the core offer of training for front line staff and managers as well as schools on complaint handling. Where this is not possible ensuring these services are able to consult with the Complaints Service with difficult cases</li> <li>• To review the impact of COVID-19 with respect to social care complaints and use lessons learned to adapt and improve our service going forward</li> <li>• To continue to review and update complaints literature and communications as necessary.</li> <li>• To continue the effort to work towards resolution and problem-solving work as opposed to process based work.</li> </ul>

**5 Stage 1 Complaints:**

**5.1 Stage 1 Complaints Overall Activity**

**Table 3**



**Stage 1 Complaints Received**

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Education & Commissioning	10	6	1
Children's Social Care	40	22	9
CYAD	1	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>10</b>

**Key message:** Almost inevitably Children's Social Care attracts a higher level of complaints. The data below will evidence the majority of complaints are from parents/family members. As the "nature of complaints" section will demonstrate below, many complaints arise from parents having a negative view of social care intervention as this will often involve some assessment of their parenting or difficult discussions around family relationships. Family life can be seen as private and sacred and any unrequested intervention due to

overriding safeguarding concerns can be seen as a difficult barrier to cross in working with Children's Services staff.

In 2020/21, there was a drop in Education complaints. This is likely because COVID-19 changed the school dynamic over lockdowns with priority being placed on adaptation and delivery of education in unforeseen circumstances. The service has also made increased efforts to address concerns directly and informally.

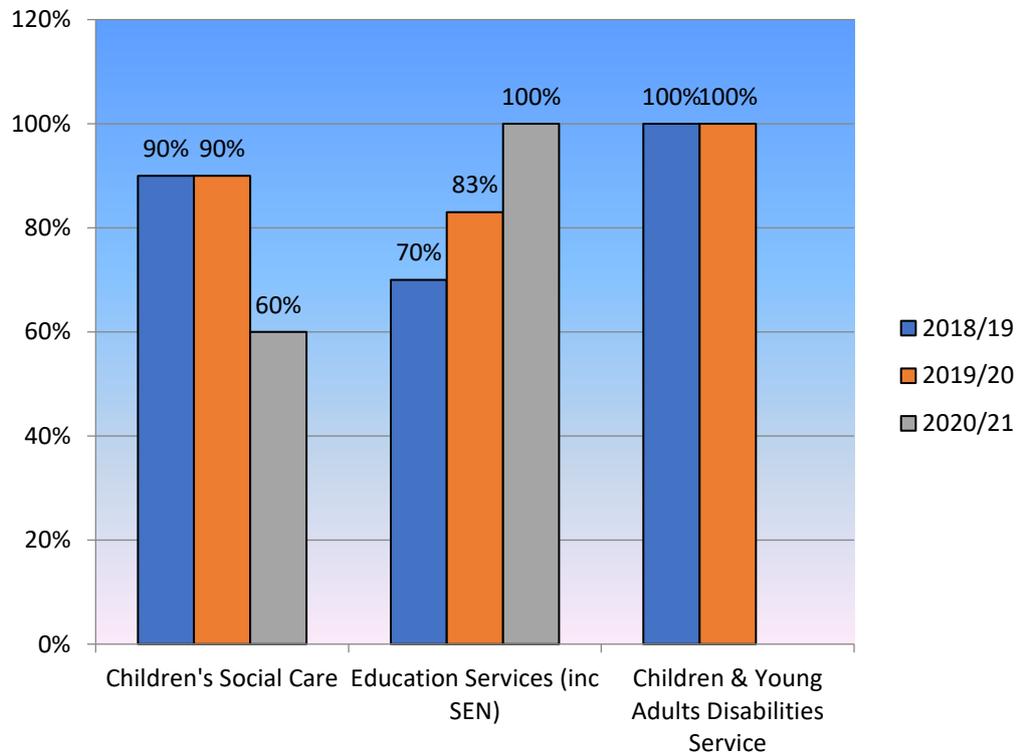
Children's Social Care is child focused and based on statutory duties which can be at odds with the initial expectation of Children's Services involvement from parents. However, Children's Social Care formal complaints has seen a significant decrease since last year likely due to additional work around informally resolving complaints by Children's Services.

There were 63 MP and Councillor enquiries managed by the Complaints team with respect to Children's Services, which is an increase from 43 in the previous year. As discussed, the same trend was noticed in Adults with families reaching out to members as COVID-19 meant a large focus on the government response to the pandemic.

MP and Councillor enquiries varied greatly in nature and it is not possible to determine if they would have led to a formal complaint. While it is not unusual to receive many education based queries via members (particularly around admissions), many of the queries raised were in respect to queries and concerns about the wider issues of COVID-19 and schools where more often the direction came from the Department of Education rather than the local authority.

**5.2 Stage 1 Response Times**

**Table 4**



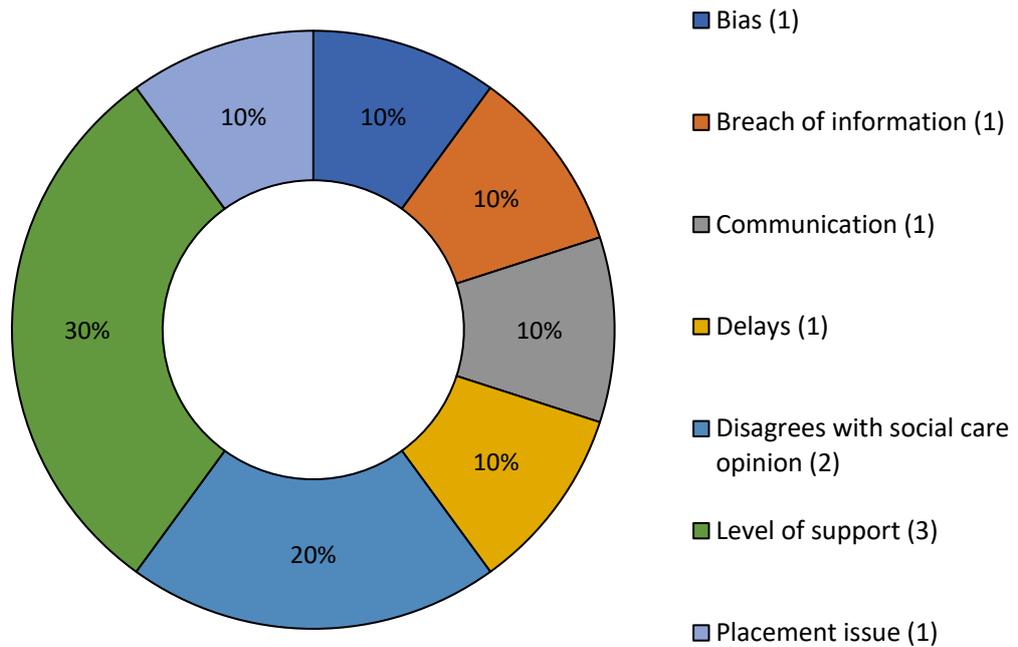
An explanation for the above is primarily covered in section 4 and the primary reason is COVID-19 pressures and priorities in addition to staff availability. This has been a challenge throughout the pandemic where a balance has always had to be struck between conclusion of formal processes and progressing representations. Formal responses require service and manager availability, approval/sign off and overall adherence to the requirements of formal procedures. These elements do take time and the Complaints Service has prioritised internal service awareness, support and actioning/responding to all representations where possible to seek agile and flexible solutions to problems and concerns raised as well as COVID-19 support work.

Nonetheless, the Complaints Service recognises that those who go through the formal process should receive their responses in a timely manner wherever possible. Where responses are provided outside of timelines, we do contact complainants and apologise and explain where possible.

**5.3 Stage 1: Nature of Complaints**

**Table 5**

**Nature of Stage 1 Complaints**



**Complaints Examples**

**Bias (toward other parent)**

Children’s Services are often in a position where they must work with parents who are in a difficult or even acrimonious relationship – as such one parent may perceive bias from Children’s Services towards the other. In cases of domestic violence, this will often result in cases of counter accusations and allegations.

The role of the investigation will be to sensitively relay the correct remit of Children’s Service remit and clarify the basis of any concerns being addressed.

An example of this type of complaint is:

*CS thinking I am the abuser when I the abused*

**Breach of Confidentiality**

An individual may be unhappy how certain information or correspondence may have been shared or recorded by Children's Services.

An example of this type of complaint is:

*Information about another case sent in error*

**Communication**

Families can often have expectations for when they are meant to receive a call back or correspondence which if not met, can lead to a complaint.

An example of this type of complaint is:

*Unhappy with how family member was spoken to*

**Delay**

Often cases within children's services are complex and involve the input and work of multiple agencies which means even with statutory timescales for some matters, that case actions and progress can take some time. At times, a citizen may feel that matters are taking too long, and the complaint will often see if the involved timescales were necessary or reasonable.

An example of this type of complaint is:

*There has been a delay progressing EHCP tuition with the school*

**Disagrees with social care view**

Social workers are typically allocated to children and as such their priority will be the safeguarding and best interests of any involved children where there are concerns about the risk of harm. This may mean difficult subjects need to be explored and the social work staff will ultimately have to communicate their professional opinion. This may not be always be received well by parents and involved family as may challenge behaviour and circumstances due to the observed impact it has on the child.

An example of this type of complaint is:

*Was not happy that social workers considered previous safeguarding concern*

### **Level of support**

These complaints normally are from the perspective that the local authority is not doing either enough or not doing specifically what the family would like as support and are specifically requesting

An example of this type of complaint is:

*Wanted further transport support with the care of a child from their family*

### **Placement Issue**

Children's Services may need to arrange for a family/parent to stay at a placement along with any children. The family may feel any issues of the placement need to be resolved by Children's Services.

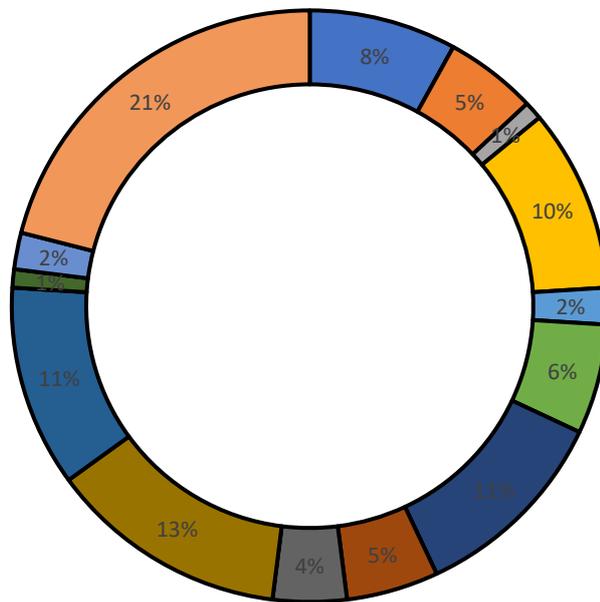
An example of this type of complaint is:

*Did not feel the placement did enough to support and safeguard the family there*

**Analysis:** Due to the low number of formal complaints, meaningful analysis is not possible. There were a number of varied reasons the above cases went a formal Stage 1 investigation and no overwhelming single type of complaint

**However, to ensure we are able to meaningfully understand the underpinning reasons for why concerns or requests are raised to the attention of our service, we have analysed the nature of the representations made which provides a much larger pool of contacts.**

## Nature of Representations – Table 7



- Admissions (8)
- Bias (5)
- Breach of information (1)
- Communication (10)
- Delays (2)
- Disagrees with social care opinion (6)
- Information Request (11)
- Legal or policy decision (5)
- Level of intervention (4)
- Level of support (13)
- Obects to assessment (11)
- Placement issue (1)
- Raising concerns (2)
- Service request (21)

### Complaint Categories that were not discussed above

#### Admissions

This is where a family may have issues or concerns with the admissions process for Harrow Schools.

#### Information Request

A family or parent may not be complaining but may still need clarification for how a social care process may work. (This is different to a statutory information request such as a Subject Access Request under GDPR which has its own procedure)

**Legal or policy decision**

A family or individual may disagree with the decision-making process based on statute or within our policy and procedures. An example of this may be feeling they should be assessed under a specific section of the Children Act or receive financial support from a statutory direction.

**Level of intervention**

This category contains complaints where the parent or involved family feel the level of involvement of social care is not justified and often want the case to be closed or stepped down as an outcome.

Some families feel continually upset or aggrieved that there is social work intervention in their life and for a few complainants, complaints allows them an avenue to raise their objections to the process outside of the social care teams they are dealing with regularly.

**Objects to assessment**

As previously discussed, social work staff will have to record views about sensitive and challenging subjects. These will need to be recorded for assessments and reports and often a conversation that may have occurred in a home visit or telephone call may be perceived very differently when seen on an official form sometime later with those same views in writing.

**Raising concerns**

On very rare occasions, individuals may write in the complaints service directly with what they perceive to be concerns/a referral with respect to a child or those who have care of said child. These are often anonymous and are passed on to our MASH service where appropriate for consideration.

**Service Request**

This may not necessarily be a negative request, but may simply be asking a service for assistance or further support and may have requested this directly via the Council's web form or involves a mix of services (e.g., housing/transport etc)

**Representation Analysis** – As discussed above, these representations that were resolved informally took on many requests and services concerns from families and parents. Only one of these representations was directly from a young person and they were requesting transport assistance.

This shows that parents/guardians may often reach externally of the direct service to try and progress their concerns or requests whereas young people are likely to raise matters directly with their service and allocated staff.

<b>5.4</b>	<b>Stage 1: Complaints Outcomes</b>												
	<b>Table 8</b>												
		<b>Not Upheld</b>			<b>Partially Upheld</b>			<b>Upheld</b>			<b>Total</b>		
		<b>20/21</b>	<b>19/20</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>19/20</b>	<b>19/19</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>19/20</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>19/20</b>	<b>18/19</b>
	Education & Commissioning	0	5	9	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	7	10
	Children's Social Care	7	19	33	2	4	13	0	0	1	9	23	47
	CYAD	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	1
	Total	7	26	43	3	6	14	0	1	1	10*	33	58
	Total of overall Stage 1 outcomes, by percentage	70%	78%	74%	30%	18%	25%	0%	4%	1%			
	<p><b>Analysis:</b> Managers and staff within service areas and the Complaints Service have worked towards a more balanced and open approach to complaints, where concerns from service users are recognised and receive appropriate responses. This includes the need to listen to complainants and adopt a less defensive approach when reflecting on practices and making</p> <p>Children's Social Care has seven non-uphold complaints out of a total of ten complaints. This fits the ongoing trend that as a consequence of statutory duty of Children's Social Care to investigate safeguarding concerns and/or to provide support to children as identified as being in need, this can lead to some parents feeling that they have been negatively judged or that their interests or personal requests are not being prioritised.</p> <p>As a result, complaints are raised to dispute the statutory involvement/level of services or with respect to the level of support they require – not over the actual quality of the work which the non-uphold rate evidences.</p> <p>For the complaints where the overall outcome is non-uphold, the Complaints Service ensures these responses are helpful in explaining the rationale and reasoning behind the key issues so that families can find these responses of value and help regardless of the outcome</p> <p>It also echo's our service intent that when an actual service issue or problem is raised, that it is resolved by the service where possible for a more direct and effective solution, potentially leaving formal complaints more for where the difference in views cannot be reconciled.</p>												

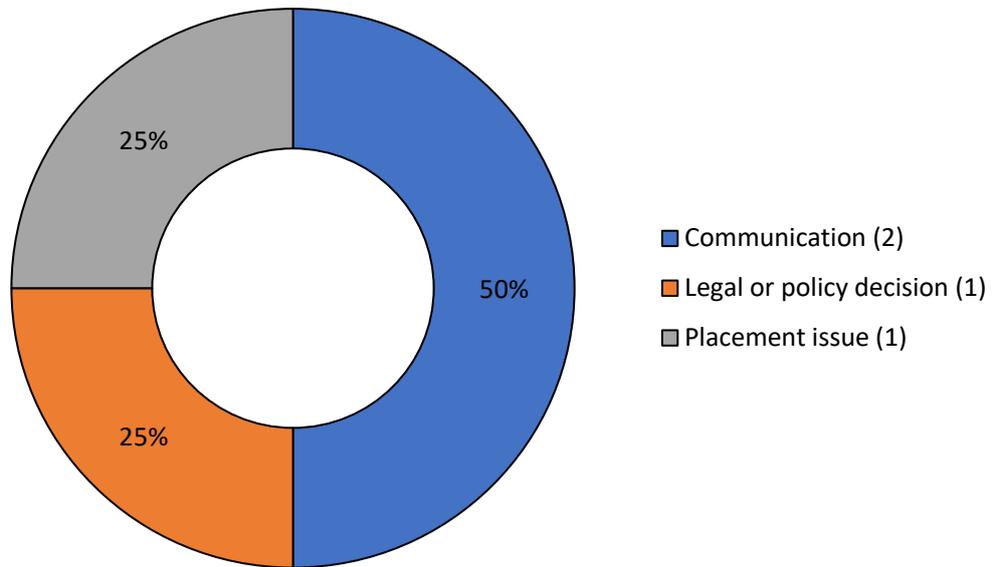
<b>6</b>	<b>Stage 2 Complaints</b>			
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Percentage of Complaints escalating to Stage 2 (2020/21)</b>			
	<b>Table 9</b>			
	Service	Stage 1	Stage 2	% escalation
	Education & Commissioning	1	1	100%
	Children's Social Care	9	3	33%
	CYAD	0	0	0%
	Total	10	4	44%
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Escalations to stage 2 trend over time</b>			
	<b>Table 10</b>			
	Service	Escalations to Stage 2		
		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Education & Commissioning	30%	16%	100%
	Children's Social Care	32%	27%	33%
	CYAD	0%	0%	0%
	Total	31%	21%	44%
	<p>Some 44% of Stage 1 complaints went on to be considered at Stage 2. This is a higher percentage than previous year of 21% as the above shows. This is due to the low numbers which skews the percentages particularly with the single Education complaint going through both stages. The key figure is that 4 complaints were a Stage 2 investigation out of approximately 177 transactions.</p> <p>Ultimately, individuals are clearly informed of their right to go to Stage 2 and are not dissuaded from exercising this. Stage 2 is taken as an opportunity to again fairly investigate the issues raised and provide a considered line of reasoning to any outcomes reached.</p> <p>The majority (3) of the 4 Stage 2 complaints were for Children's Social Care, which reflects the difficult statutory social work discussed above undertaken by the service.</p> <p>Some families also raised similar issues through different individuals within the family and at different times. This means multiple complaints and escalations can be raised within the same family unit. All reasonable efforts are taken by the complaints service to ensure even where this occurs that valid complaints are reasonably addressed.</p>			

<b>6.3 Stage 2 Outcomes 2019/20</b>			
<b>Table 11</b>			
Service	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
Education & Commissioning	1	0	0
Children's Social Care	1	1	1
CYAD	0	0	0
Total [Grand Total = 4]	2	1	1
<p>During 2020/21, two Stage 2 complaints were not upheld, one was partially upheld and one complaint (from a young person) was upheld.</p> <p>The summarised reasons for the uphold was:</p> <p>There was fault in placing a young person under section 17 as opposed to a former relevant child. This was acknowledged and remedied to the satisfaction of the young person.</p> <p>With the partial uphold, no fault was found in service delivery but a letter that was meant to be sent to the individual was not dispatched due to an oversight and this prevented a swift resolution from being proposed.</p>			
<b>6.4 Stage 2 Response Times of known outcomes</b>			
<b>Table 12</b>			
Service	Within Timescale 2020/21 (2019/20)	Over Timescale 2020/21 (2019/20)	
Education & Commissioning	1(0)	0(1)	
Children's Social Care	2(6)	1(0)	
CYAD	0(0)	0(0)	
Total	3(6)	1(1)	
<p>At Stage 2, there is more emphasis on thoroughness than speed. Nevertheless, the majority of Stage 2 complaints (75%) were completed within timescale.</p>			

## 6.5 Stage 2: Nature of Complaints

Table 13

Nature of Stage 2 Complaints 2020/2021



**Analysis:** Any Stage 1 outcomes that may have not changed a local authority decision that the individual was unhappy with would have likely been referred to Stage 2 to provide the individual with another opportunity for that decision or explanation to change.

With some complaints involving finance or financial support, as sometimes the requested outcome was significant, it is understandable that individuals would choose another opportunity for the potential to receive a sum of funds/value of support. This is evidence here in the legal/policy decision complaint. The Stage 1 was upheld, and a remedy was proposed. However, it was the extent/amount of the remedy which is why it continued to Stage 2.

The remaining complaints were ones where the Stage 1 reasoning was not accepted, and this can happen if a complaint is not all upheld. There were no fundamental differences found in the Stage 2 consideration.

<b>7</b>	<b>Stage 3 Complaints:</b>				
	There were no requests for a Stage 3 review in 2020/21.				
<b>8</b>	<b>Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints</b>				
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Complaints made to the LGO</b> <b>Table 14</b>				
	Service	No finding against Council	Partial finding	Total	
	Education and Commissioning	0	1	1	
	Children's Social Care	0	0	0	
	<p>The Council had one LGO investigation. The LGO had ceased/limited their casework services for several months at the start of the pandemic in March/April 2020. This means this year may have had less than usual numbers from the LGO.</p> <p>Two other referrals were received by the LGO, but they did not proceed with these as it did not meet their criteria for a valid complaint/investigation.</p> <p>The LGO outcome of this case was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Felt that there was an unreasonable delay with arranging therapies sessions for a child. At the time there were limited options, but the local authority had already agreed in advance to make up for any previous missed sessions.</li> <li>- The local authority should have provided transport</li> </ul> <p>The local authority accepted and implemented any recommendations made (detailed in the remedies section)</p>				
<b>9</b>	<b>Escalation comparison over time:</b> <b>Table 15</b>				
		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	LGO
	2020/21	10	4	0	1
	2019/20	31	7	0	6
	2018/19	51	18	0	6
	<b>Analysis:</b> The escalation between stages and LGO stage over the past three years has remained low overall keeping in mind the overall level of transactions and further focus towards informal resolutions.				

<b>10</b>	<b>Remedy Payments:</b>
	<p>A “remedy payment” is made in line with the LGO guidance on Remedy Payments. Two remedy payments were made as a result of complaints investigations in 2020/21.</p> <p>These were via:</p> <p>A Stage 2 complaint where a backdated payment of £5600 was made to reflect the overall package of financial assistance that would have been provided if the child was deemed looked after and to acknowledge any distress etc in line with LGO guidance.</p> <p>The above LGO investigation recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing missed therapy sessions. The LGO acknowledged that the Council had remedied this.</li> <li>- £500.00 for time and trouble as well as reimbursement of milage for transport.</li> </ul> <p>The council carried out these remedies as directed by the LGO which the LGO were satisfied with.</p>
<b>11</b>	<b>Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution:</b>
	<p>During 2020/21 the Complaints Service facilitated the following as examples of mediation/ADR and to assist with reaching a resolution and preventing further formal escalation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairing a mediation meeting with a school and parents to try and find a productive way forward to prevent a child potentially missing education and to help repair the relationship between the school and parents</li> <li>• Chairing a resolution meeting with a parent, his advocate and Children’s Services management. The father felt he was heard and did not make a further complaint (he in fact later raised a compliment about the same service he complained about following the meeting)</li> <li>• Providing the corporate parenting service with strategic support to resolve an outstanding matter with the Adoption Support Fund to try and secure further support for a family</li> <li>• Meeting with a parent, grandparent, and key Children’s Services staff to try and clarify the basis of Children’s Services involvement and actions taken.</li> </ul>

12	<b>Joint NHS and social care complaints</b>
	During 2020/21 there were no joint NHS and social care complaints.
13	<b>Learning Lessons/Practice Improvements</b>
	<p>Examples of lessons learnt/practice improvements include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The auditing and recording of social work in a Children’s Services case was reviewed in a complaint and found to be below the expected standard. This was raised to senior level and training was developed by our service to feedback on this.</li> <li>• Staff were reminded to be wary of information that may not qualify as personal information, but in conjunction with other knowledge could cause disclosure concerns such as the revealing of which school or GP service a child may use to one parent.</li> <li>• Ensuring language used with respect to a young person was more sensitive and even when challenges need to be made, that the correct language and tone be used for this to not make the young person feel unnecessarily negative about the conversation.</li> <li>• When we speak to other local authorities to establish their remit and the service they provide, to ensure this is chased up and fully clarified so the involved family or individual does not feel like they do not know which council is responsible for support</li> <li>• When an individual believes there is local authority involvement following a court order for support, that this be clarified as to manage the individual’s expectations of the local authority in this process</li> </ul>

14	<b>Compliments</b>
	<p>The majority of service users that compliment staff and the Council provide their feedback through verbal communication in care meetings or by phone.</p> <p>However, both professionals as well as families who use our services do write in to let us know their positive feedback and experiences. The below is correspondence received in 2020/21 and in total the below is as many compliments as Stage 1 and 2 investigations combined, showing an excellent ratio of positive feedback to accompany received complaint numbers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>M has been very diligent and agile when it comes to supporting the family and evidencing concerns and this has made what might have been a very complex case far more manageable.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Just to say that all my families I am currently working with use interpreters and I have been requesting a number of sessions, sometimes last minute as required and the BSS team have been incredible – just wanted to pass on my thanks to you all and also to the complaints and compliments team so they are aware of how helpful you are all being. Thanks guys! :)</i></li> <li>3. <i>Counsel for the LA commended C for her well written statement and mother’s Counsel said that the work of the LA has been ‘outstanding’ in this case. A good outcome that I am delighted to share with you!</i></li> <li>4. <i>"C has done above and beyond. Provided money, transport and called every day. I would have been lost without C"</i></li> <li>5. <i>I wanted to thank you for all your help during our appeal process. You've answered all our questions and you've always gone out of your way to help us contact the right department. our appeal has been successful. Thank you again.</i></li> <li>6. <i>I know I had said this before but I wanted to add a big thank you again for the constant support I have had during this difficult time, it has been a big reassurance to have Harrows team at the end of a phone call or email, I have always had a very quick response to any query I have had even though I know they have been incredibly busy, the recognition on today’s notice board is very much deserved.</i></li> <li>7. <i>Just wanted to share this compliment by C, lawyer who attended a contentious advocates meeting in which we proposed R to do the parenting assessment and all other parties argued that it should be completed by someone with expertise in work with the identified</i></li> </ol>

*community. Whilst writing, I just wanted to share that during the meeting the solicitor for the child was very complimentary of your work and on another case relating to an assessment you have carried out.*

*8. Thank you for forwarding a response in relation to my complaint. I would like to say thank you to J for her acknowledgement of the issues that I raised. Since my complaint was written I have had reassurances from Social Worker who has also informed me that she has uploaded the documents that I forwarded, to my sons file. T has also spoken to me regarding some of my other concerns and has explained what had happened to rectify some of them. I now have peace of mind and I finally feel heard. I would finally like to thank A for listening to myself, my husband and R as we did not get this with the first Chair. I would not like to progress onto the stage two complaint Please accept this email as confirmation of my satisfaction on how the complaint has been handled.*

*9. I hope all's well with you. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for forwarding my letter to the appropriate person, I am so sure that it was resolved because of your direct involvement and for that I will be always be grateful to you.*

*10. And fab work on this case S – great multiagency working that has allowed a child to remain at home with her mother. Your notes and check ins with me allowed me to complete my assessment in your absence and focus on nuance.*

*11. Dear school admissions team*

*I'm a parent with two children, one child goes to school while another is seeking admission under the sibling criteria. I called this morning with a general query about sibling admissions.*

*Ms. M was so professional, courteous and helpful, I have to send this note of appreciation for her service. She promptly answered my query but as I had to share with her the changing circumstances, issues with the school and risk to sibling admission in the same school, she patiently listened to me throughout the conversation. She has guided me to the steps to be taken to alleviate the concerns and showed such genuineness in addressing my concerns with my children's education. She told me about how it actually is in the UK and gave step by step instructions on my options.*

*This note of appreciation is not just for providing the instructions but is especially for the fact that she was genuinely interested in trying her best and resolving my concerns. She was professional, patient, knowledgeable and courteous. She has wished that all works out and also gave me her direct number to contact her for more queries.*

*I hope this note is able to do justice to the service provided by her and to convey how she has exceeded my expectations.*

*I am very grateful and request you to kindly take note of this so professional service provided by Ms. M.*

*12. I would just like to let you know about the guidance and kindness I received from R on the phone, who helped me understand where my son was in the waiting list for our preferred school. R spoke to me with calmness and compassion as she could tell I was worried and I'm so impressed by her service and wisdom. I would like to give my thanks and feedback on how helpful R has been, please can this message go to her manager. Thank you R for doing a great job*

*13. Hallo S, I want to appreciate the way you presented your lesson today and especially identifying with every child*

*14. I wanted to bring to your attention - a particular employee: F. She has been my son's social worker for many years now.*

*She is an exceptional human being with genuine compassion, love and care for what she does and I feel extremely lucky to have her. I just wanted her to be recognised at your level for her hard work and contribution.*

*Were it not for her commitment and dedication - my son, would not be where he is today*

## 15. The Complaints Process explained:

This report provides information about complaints made during the twelve months between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 under the complaints and representations procedures established through the Representations Procedure (Children) Regulations 2006, and the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

All timescales contained within this report are in working days. Text in quotation marks indicate direct quotations from the 2006 Regulations or Guidance unless otherwise specified.

### 15.1 What is a Complaint?

“An expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which requires a response.”

However,

“The Children Act 1989 defines the representations procedure as being for ‘representations (including complaints)’.”

Therefore, both representations and complaints should be managed under the complaint's procedure (unlike for Adult social services, where only complaints need be captured).

### 15.2 Who can make a Complaint?

The child or young person receiving or eligible to receive services from the Council or their representative e.g. parent, relative, advocate, special guardian, foster carer, etc:

“The local authority has the discretion to decide whether or not the representative is suitable to act in this capacity or has sufficient interest in the child's welfare.”

### 15.3 What the complaints team do:

- Letter-vetting
- Liaising with services to try resolve the issue informally
- Mediation
- Training
- Raising awareness / staff surgeries
- Learning facilitation and agreed actions monitoring
- Deliver a unique complaints support SLA to schools
- Advocacy commissioning and support

### 15.4 Stages of the Complaints Procedure

The complaints procedure potentially has three stages:

**Stage 1:** This is the most important stage of the complaint's procedure. The Service teams and external contractors providing services on our behalf are expected to resolve as many complaints as possible at this initial point.

The Council's complaints procedure requires complaints at stage 1 to be responded to within ten working days (with an automatic extension to a further ten days where necessary).

**Stage 2:** This stage is implemented where the complainant is dissatisfied with the findings of stage 1. Stage 2 is an investigation conducted by an independent external Investigating Officer for all statutory complaints and an internal senior manager for corporate complaints. A senior manager adjudicates on the findings.

Under the Regulations, the aim is for stage 2 complaints falling within the social services statutory complaints procedures to be dealt within 25 days, although this can be extended to 65 days if complex.

**Stage 3:** The third stage of the complaints process is the Review Panel under the statutory procedure. Under the corporate complaints process, there is no Stage 3. This panels remit is not to reinvestigate the complaint.

Where complainants wish to proceed with complaints about statutory Children's Services functions, the Council is required to establish a complaints Review Panel. The panel makes recommendations to the Corporate Director who then makes a decision on the complaint and any action to be taken. Complaints Review Panels are made up of three independent panellists. There are various timescales relating to stage 3 complaints. These include:

- setting up the Panel within 30 working days;
- producing the Panel's report within a further 5 working days; and
- producing the local authority's response within 15 working days.

## **Local Government Ombudsman**

The Ombudsman is an independent body empowered to investigate where a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint.

The person making the complaint retains the right to approach the Local Government Ombudsman at any time. However, the Ombudsman's policy is to allow the local authority to consider the complaint and will refer the complaint back to the Council unless exceptional criteria are met.

*Note: Previous years had some limited gender and race data at the end of the report based on complainants. However, as the data set was so small, this data could not reasonably provide any meaningful interpretation and the importance of equality and diversity is such that only meaningful consideration should be applied.*

*The Complaints Service will consult with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Service on an ongoing basis when any relevant queries or concerns are raised to ensure this is always considered as a priority.*

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**REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE AND  
FINANCE SUB-  
COMMITTEE**

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**Date of Meeting:** 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021

**Subject:** Adults Services Complaints Annual Report (social care only) 2020/21

**Responsible Officer:** Paul Hewitt, Corporate Director  
People Services

**Lead Member:** Councillor Simon Brown

**Exempt:** No

**Enclosures:** None

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report sets out the Adults Services Complaints Annual report (social care only) 2020/21.

**Recommendations:** None. For Information purposes only.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Financial Implications**

There are no specific budget issues associated with this report. All compensation payments are agreed by Service Managers and are funded within existing budgets.

### **Performance Issues**

There are no specific performance issues associated with this report.

### **Environmental Impact**

N/A

### **Risk Management Implications**

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

### **Equalities implications**

N/A

### **Corporate Priorities**

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

- Build a Better Harrow
- Be More Business-like and Business Friendly
- **Protect the Most Vulnerable and Support Families**

## **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

The Corporate Director determined the report did not require Financial or Legal clearance.

## **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Report author: Usman Zia, Complaints Manager, Peoples Services, usman.zia@harrow.gov.uk

**Background Papers:** None

### **Annual Complaints Report for Adults Social Care Services 2020/21**

<u>Paragraph</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	Executive Summary
2	Summary of Activity
3	Complaints Service COVID-19 Response
4	Outcomes for key targets in 2020/21
5	Focus for 2021/22
6	Stage 1 Complaints
7	Stage 2 Complaints
8	Ombudsman Complaints & Enquiries
9	Escalation comparisons over time
10	Remedy payments
11	Mediation
12	Joint and social care complaints
13	Learning Lessons/Practice Improvements
14	Compliments
15	The complaints process explained

# **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This year's report follows the first national lockdown following the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on how public services were provided and how organisations have had to adapt to ensure we are able to look after our most vulnerable and support families.

The priority of the directorate and the local authority at this difficult time was to ensure essential services continued to be delivered and as such resources were prioritised to ensure this. The Complaints Service contributed to this priority as will be explained in the COVID-19 section below in the report.

Despite the above, there were slightly higher contacts (207) actioned by the Complaints Service in 20/21 than in 19/20 (200).

These **207** "transactions<sup>1</sup>" were made up of representations, formal complaints, member enquiries and referrals from the LGO. Given the nature of some of the work undertaken in ensuring care for very vulnerable individuals, it is positive that the numbers of complaints are so minimal. Thousands of service episodes are provided each year as is detailed below:

During 2020/21, the number of clients that received Long Term services was 4,238; whilst 407 clients received Short Term Reablement service and 2,337 clients received either Short Term (other) or on-going Low Level services. Please note that some service users may have been in receipt of two or more services during the year (i.e. a service user received Reablement which ended and then received Long Term services).

During 2020/21 Adults Social Care Services:

- *Received 7,985 requests for social care support from potential service users.*
- *Provided information and advice (including referrals to other organisations that could assist) to 755 clients.*
- *Ensured a total of 407 clients received home based short term Reablement services*
- *An additional 2,337 clients received other forms of short term support in response to their request, this included support like mental health counselling.*
- *A total of 4,238 clients received some form of long term support, which includes personal budgets, direct payments, residential and nursing care during the year. 2,991 of those clients were actively in receipt of such services on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.*
- *Assisted 539 carers during the year. This included 135 instances of information and advice, 324 direct payments to the carer and 81 temporary support packages delivered to the cared-for person (e.g. to give the carer a break from their caring responsibilities*

This report contains both positive messages and indications of areas needing more work through a challenging time.

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<sup>1</sup> The total of representations, Stage 1, Stage 2, member enquires and LG Ombudsman referrals.

- Of particular note is the high level of representations (101) which are received as potential complaints but are attempted to be resolved informally. This made up most of our contacts and was not all negative in nature (some were service or information requests). This is significant in showing that the Council can listen to concerns expressed and practically work to internally resolve them. Whilst this is positive in terms of the citizen's experience because it focuses on resolving the issue rather than taking a citizen through formal "stages", it also endorses that early resolution is more cost effective for the Council by avoiding escalation with associated costs of any investigations. It provides a problem-solving focus rather than process focus.
- The number of Stage 1 complaints significantly fell but representations/informal requests increased. There was also a notable increase in MP/Councillor contacts that may also reflect the decrease in stage 1 complaints and shows that citizens turned to members through COVID to communicate their concerns.
- The relative escalation rate of complaints between formal Stage 1 and Stage 2 has remained relatively low at 25%. It should be noted that the amount of formal Stage 1 responses is initially very low (6) and only 2 cases went to formal Stage 2. This reflects the successful efforts made by officers to understand and address concerns when they arise as complaints and representations.
- Better quality resolution work has meant that fewer representations moved on to a Stage 1 complaint. There were far more representations (101 at initial contact plus 3 midway through process) than Stage 1 complaints (6) in 2020/21. This meant many cases were informally resolved ensuring an effective resolution for our citizens.

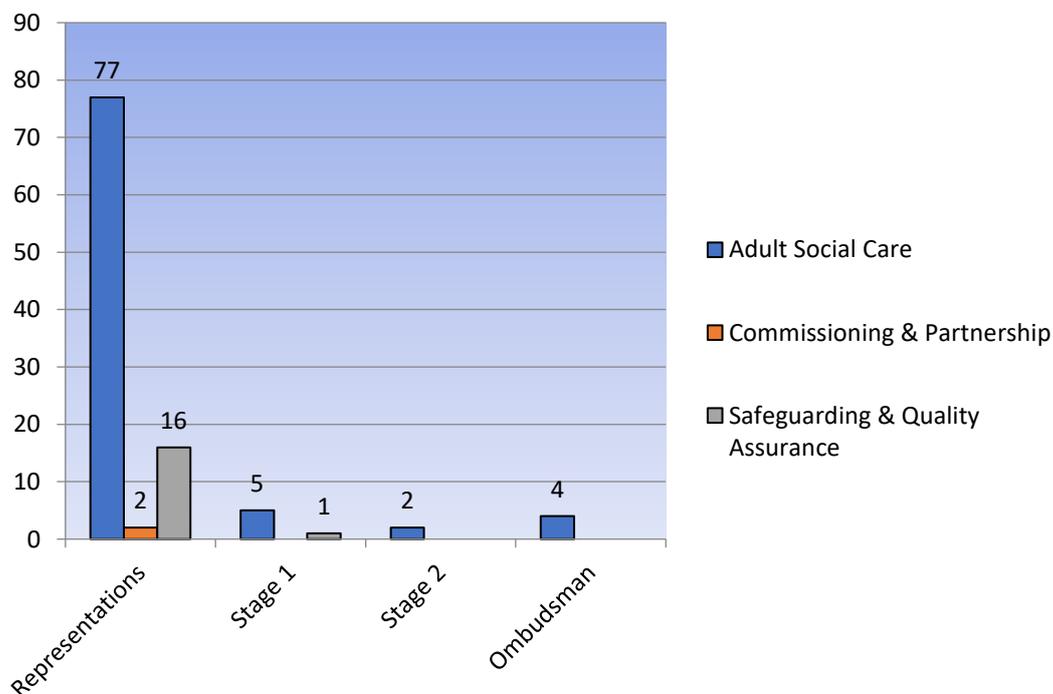
## 2. Summary of Activity

Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 there was the following activity: -

- The Complaints Service dealt with 101 representations i.e. potential complaints that did not lead to a formal complaint investigation.
- The Council processed 6 Stage 1 complaints.
- Four complaints progressed to the second stage.
- The Ombudsman made decisions on four formal cases during this period

Additionally, there were 91 MP and Councillor enquiries managed by the Complaints Team (in comparison to 70 from the year before and 52 the year before that).

**Chart 1: Number of Complaints by Service area: April 2020 to March 2021**



## Number of Complaint Transactions by Service area: April 2020 - March 2021

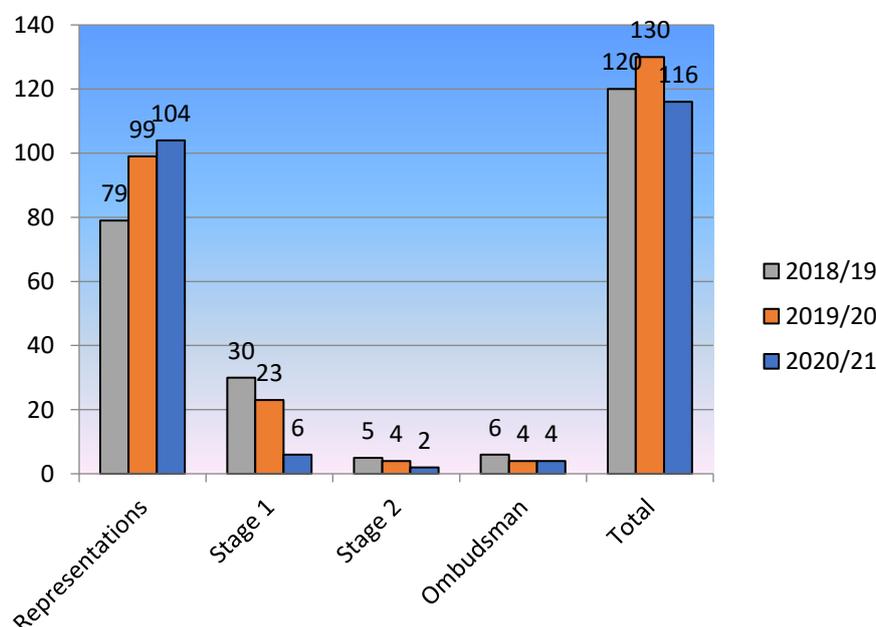
Service Area	Representations	Stage 1	Stage 2	Ombudsman	Total
Adult Social Care	77	5	2	4	88
Commissioning & Partnerships	2	0	0	0	2
Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	16	1	0	0	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>107</b>

**Key message:** Overall the picture suggests a continuation of high quality investigative and governance standards. Please note 9 representations were for other service areas outside of Peoples Directorate. However, the Complaints Service worked on these cases to ensure these were reviewed and actioned to ensure the citizens request was taken forward.

**Analysis:** This year there has been a significant decrease in the number of Stage 1 complaints, down by seven compared to 2018/19. This partially due to further shifting our focus following COVID-19 on ensuring services receive concerns and are supported internally by the Complaints Service in resolving this. This may be due to further efforts made to resolve issues informally. This is supported by the fact that representations and MP/Councillor enquiries have gone up while formal complaints have gone down.

There were just two formal Stage 2 complaints; this represents an escalation rate of only 3% of all initial contacts (representations and complaints).

### 2.1 Comparison of complaints over the last 3 years



	Representations	Stage 1	Stage 2	Ombudsman	Total
<b>2020/21</b>	104 (89%)	6 (18%)	2 (3%)	4 (3%)	116
<b>2019/20</b>	99 (76%)	23 (18%)	4 (3%)	4 (3%)	130
<b>2018/19</b>	79 (60%)	30 (33%)	5 (5%)	6 (2%)	120

**Key message:** Overall the picture suggests a continuation of ensuring issues can be referred and resolved without requiring the stage process.

**Analysis:** There was a slight decrease in the number of total complaints or 'transactions' in 2020/21 (116), compared to 2019/20 (130). However, this does not consider the increase in member queries which year on year places 2020/21 as the year with slightly higher transactions. Nevertheless, there was a larger number of representations which is a result of continual encouragement from the Complaints Service for managers and front line staff to approach the Complaints Service at the outset of an issue that has potential to become a formal complaint.

We do not believe that once an issue is raised as complaint or potential complaint that it should be passed around departments and reaches the Complaints Service to manage through a set stage-based process. Front line services should be encouraged to try and resolve issues, requests, and concerns at the earliest point as this can help restore trust that may have potentially been lost by involved citizens. The Complaints Service has made it clear we are here to support the services in resolving potential complaints and this approach ensures we have a directorate approach rather than Complaints Service approach as our end goal.

This is also beneficial for both citizens and staff as it allows additional guidance and potential for resolution by involving the Complaints Service at the first possible instance which is often more efficient than the formal process. Front line staff appear also to have greater awareness of the complaints service due to the collaborative work the complaints service encourages with all levels of staff.

### **3: Complaints Service contribution to the local authority COVID-19 response**

The impact of COVID-19 both in the UK and globally meant an unprecedented level of response both at a local and national level to prevent the spread of the disease and to adapt how we work to ensure essential services could be delivered. This meant staff and services across the local authority acting on strategies to act as one council to support the above aim.

As such, the Complaints Service worked to help deliver the following in response to COVID-19 in 20/21:

- Assisting in co-ordinating the distribution of emergency PPE to frontline care services and care providers throughout the borough. This entailed reviewing daily PPE usage figures from care providers on a seven day a week basis approximately between the months of March to July/August 2020 (until PPE supply stabilised in the market). This meant we were pre-emptively ensuring PPE supply did not run low enough that core services could not be delivered. Following this period, we assisted in communicating with providers to ensure awareness of the government PPE portal for health and care services.
- Assisting with the co-ordination of Central Government returns to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to ensure qualification COVID-19 funding for care services and providers within Harrow.
- Assisting with the co-ordination of data and multi-agency work in contributing to the national winter care plan initiative in 2020 to ensure COVID-19 contingency planning over winter.
- Ensuring care provider concerns were addressed and providing communication updates to care providers within Harrow so that they could more effectively and safely deliver care to our citizens.
- Assisting with the communications with respect to COVID-19 grant funding for care providers across the borough to ensure they received all eligible help from DHSC to ensure they are best placed to provide care to Harrow citizens.

### **4. Outcomes for key targets in 2020/21**

In the previous annual report, the following were identified as key focus areas:

- To ensure that on time Stage 1 complaint response rates continue to exceed the local target of 85%
- To continue the core offer of training for front line staff and managers as well as schools on complaint handling
- To review the impact of COVID-19 with respect to social care complaints
- To continue to review and update complaints literature and communications as necessary.

Unfortunately, we were unable to reach the local target of 85%. The overall timeline score for formal responses this year was 75%. This was due in part to the formal response numbers being low and in running a limited service for a number of months and ensuring some of the key assistance above was provided as this impacted the immediate health and safety of the staff and citizens within the borough. The full Complaints Team were also not equipped with remote IT to enable full capacity for several months of the pandemic as remote IT was rightly prioritised for key workers first.

The offer of core training has been placed on hold throughout COVID-19 to ensure COVID-19 priorities could be addressed where possible. Some training has taken place in 21/22 thus far but we anticipate a full training schedule is provided in 22/23 across the directorate. The aim of this would be to further upskill directorate services to address citizens concerns and requests effectively and to a standard of good communication.

We have ensured we have adapted our services where possible to COVID-19 impact but ensuring a further focus on resolution-based work rather than process-based work which is evidenced by the numbers.

The website has been further updated and been using Microsoft Teams with staff and citizens to ensure we are still able to hold resolution meetings and allow fluid communication.

## **5. Focus for 2021/22:**

- To improve Stage 1 complaint response rates to work towards the local target of 85%
- To continue the core offer of training for front line staff and managers. Where this is not possible ensuring these services are able to consult with the Complaints Service with difficult cases
- To continue to review the impact of COVID-19 with respect to social care complaints and use lessons learned to adapt and improve our service going forward
- To continue to review and update complaints literature and communications as necessary
- To continue the effort to work towards resolution and problem-solving work as opposed to process based work.

## **6. Stage 1 Complaints**

### **6.1 Overall Activity**

	<b>Commissioning &amp; Partnership</b>	<b>Adult Social Care</b>	<b>Safeguarding , &amp; Quality Assurance</b>	<b>Total</b>
2020/21	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
2019/20	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>
2018/19	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>

#### **Analysis:**

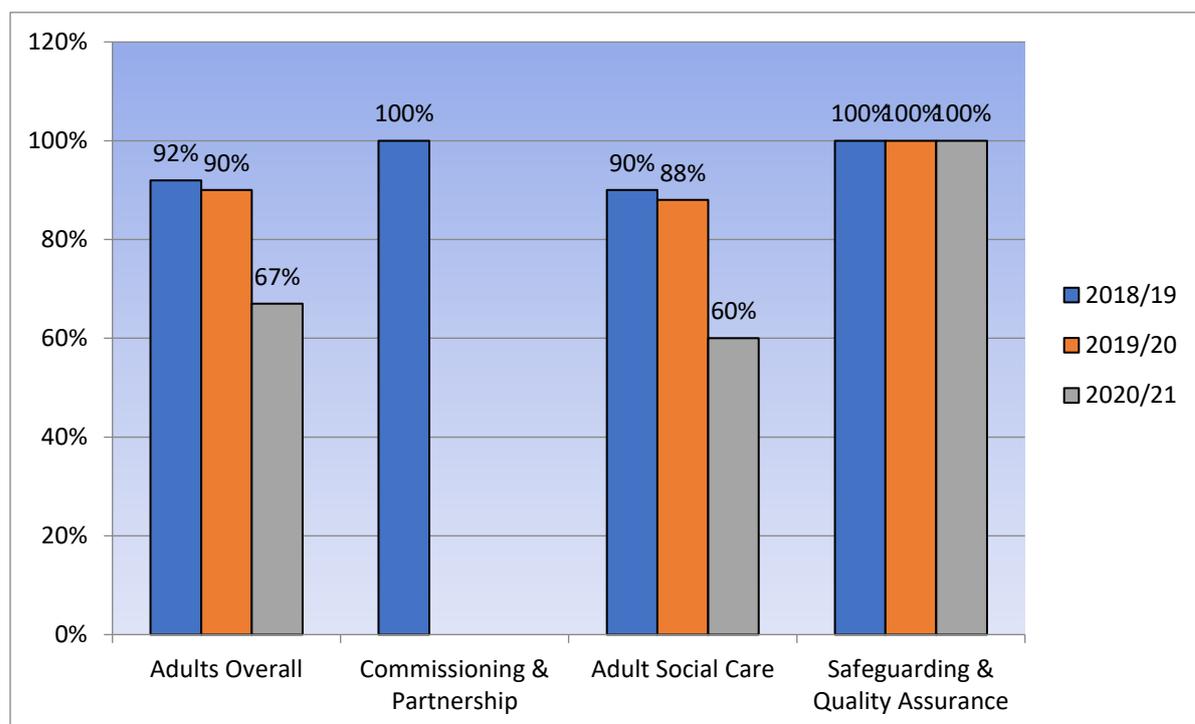
The number of Stage 1 complaints have continued to stay relatively low over the past three years. The reasons for this include:

- Better quality resolution work has meant that fewer representations moved on to Stage 1 complaints. There were significantly more representations (101) than formal Stage 1 complaints (6) in 2020/21.
- Support and consultation availability for front line staff to offer choice and control has resulted in a positive culture change throughout Adult Services, leading to higher levels of satisfaction leading to fewer complaints that escalate through the formal stages.

Adult Social Care, which manages all referrals for statutory services under the Care Act and contains the majority of the social work teams within Adults by the nature of the work will always receive the most complaints. Family members are very conscious and sensitive both to the level of care a loved one receives as well as the financial implications of Adult Social Care which is means tested.

COVID-19 also introduced several additional pressures around the care of our citizens. One example is due to lockdown, shielding and self-isolation initiatives family members may not have been able to see or provide care to their loved ones. This in turn likely raised the number of requests and concerns to ensure Adult Social Care was able to support rather than formal complaints about the service where an individual is concerned about receiving a formal stage based response rather than ensuring the delivery of a service or general support.

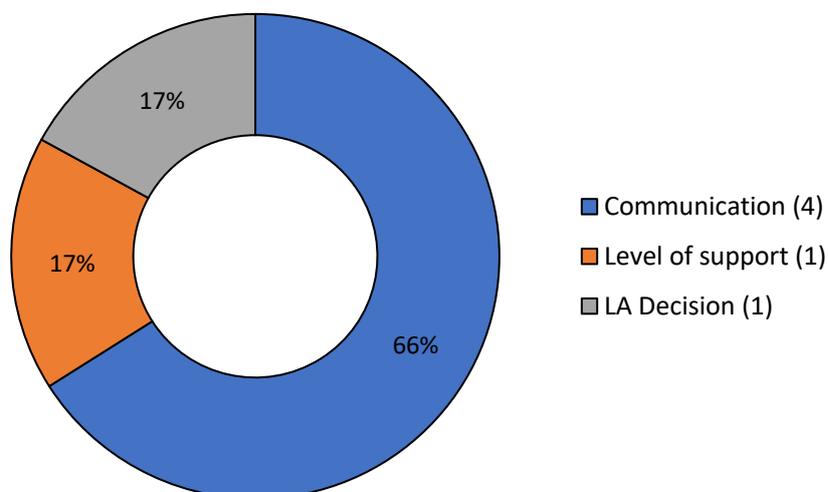
## 6.2 Stage 1 response times



**Analysis:** An explanation for the above is primarily covered in section 4 and the primary reason is COVID-19 pressures and priorities in addition to staff availability. This has been a challenge throughout the pandemic where a balance has always had to be struck between conclusion of formal processes and progressing representations. Formal responses require service and manager availability, approval/sign off and overall adherence to the requirements of formal procedures. These elements do take time and the Complaints Service has prioritised internal service awareness, support and actioning/responding to all representations where possible to seek agile and flexible solutions to problems and concerns raised as well as COVID-19 support work.

Nonetheless, the Complaints Service recognises that those who go through the formal process should receive their responses in a timely manner wherever possible. Where responses are provided outside of timelines, we do contact complainants and apologise and explain where possible.

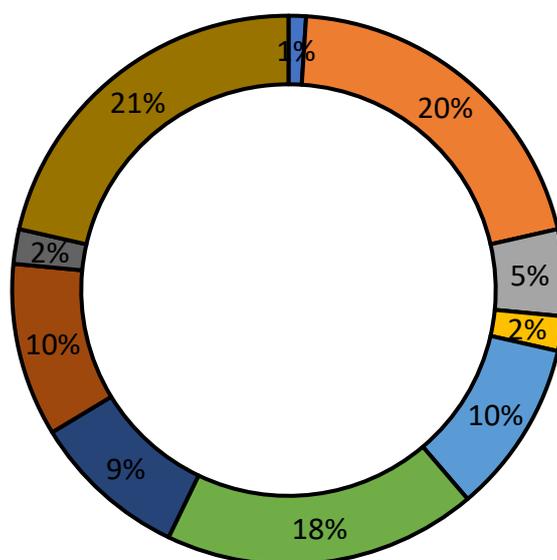
### 6.3 Nature of complaints – Stage 1



**Analysis:** Due to the low number of formal complaints, meaningful analysis is not possible. Communications are a key issue that mean despite all best efforts, a complaint may still escalate to a formal process. This is usually because of a breakdown or missing link in communications between the different internal social care teams that serve very different functions (e.g. care management and brokerage) or even with multi agency involvement such as with health.

**However, to ensure we are able to meaningfully understand the underpinning reasons for why concerns or requests are raised to the attention of our service, we have analysed the nature of the representations made which provides a much larger pool of contacts.**

## 6.4 Nature of representations



- Bias (1)
- Communication (20)
- Delays (6)
- Disagrees with service view (2)
- Financial Dispute (11)
- Information Request (18)
- LA/legal decision (9)
- Level of support (11)
- Placement/care provider issue (2)
- Service Request (21)

Examples of complaints by category:	2020/21 examples
Bias	In a safeguarding investigation where family members have an internal dispute, feeling that the safeguarding service were biased towards a side of the family
Communication	<p>Didn't like how they were spoken about by social care staff in an email</p> <p>Did not feel financial information was explained clearly enough</p>
Delays	Unhappy with timeline for adaptations process

<p>Disagrees with service view</p>	<p>Delay in payments being made</p> <p>Unhappy that safeguarding service did not substantiate the allegations they had raised</p>
<p>Financial Dispute</p>	<p>Receiving invoices for payment against estate after six-month probate period</p> <p>Disputing care charges as being higher than care received</p>
<p>Information Request</p>	<p>Requesting copies of care invoices</p> <p>Clarifying grant of probate responsibilities</p>
<p>LA/legal decision</p>	<p>Not transferring care to other local authority/Ordinary Residence</p> <p>Account has been frozen/restricted</p>
<p>Level of support</p>	<p>Wants different types of meals delivered</p> <p>Wants an increased packaged of care</p>
<p>Placement/care provider issue</p>	<p>Missing items from placement</p> <p>Unhappy with care provider</p>
<p>Service Request</p>	<p>Help with funeral arrangements and property dispersal</p> <p>Request for OT assessment</p> <p>Proving food parcels and COVID support</p>

**Analysis:** The complaint categories that held the greatest numbers tended to reflect:

- *the information and procedural complexities of the assessing and charging of social care and how this may require significant management of expectations and journey signposting*
- *facing the financial implications of means tested care*
- *disagreement with the level of support that social care determines meets Care Act needs.*

These are understandable points to raise through the formal complaints' procedure. Every citizen goes through life with at least some exposure to the National Health Service and this experience can catch many families off guard when they first interact with social care when care needs arise in addition to health needs.

Family preferences are important but this a balance every family may come across when the financial implications of preference and top up/contributions etc. are realised.

COVID-19 also introduced additional expectations from families and individuals with respect to delivering care and support to those who were shielding or vulnerable and this appeared to raise anxiety within some families.

In addition, there were high numbers in several categories of representations which are not necessarily negative or potential complaints in nature. These were information requests and service requests where the individual was seeking support, services, or guidance.

The Complaints Service continually feedback trends and lessons learned from complaints to Heads of Service and managers to ensure the impact of the above can be lessened. Given how many families interact with Adult Social Care services it is positive that so few of these interactions result in formal complaints despite the above.

## 6.5 Complaints outcomes

Service	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Total
Adult Social Care	3	1	1	5
Commissioning & Partnership	0	0	0	0
Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	1	0	0	1
<b>2020/21</b>	<b>4 (66%)</b>	<b>1 (17%)</b>	<b>1 (17%)</b>	<b>6</b>
2019/20	16 (70%)	5 (21%)	2 (9%)	23
2018/19	18 (60%)	7 (23%)	5 (17%)	30

**Key message:** Managers and staff within service areas and the complaints team have worked towards a more balanced and open approach to complaints, where concerns from citizens are recognised and receive appropriate responses. This includes the need to listen to complainants and adopt a less defensive approach when reflecting on practices and making decisions on the outcomes of each complaint.

Approximately a third of the Stage 1 complaints had some element upheld showing a willingness to improve services and provide suitable remedies and solutions for people who have rightfully raised a concern and had it suitably addressed. As upheld cases usually would have an action or learning point to follow the complaint, an update or meeting would take place with the relevant Head of Service or Director to ensure these were progressed.

For the complaints where the overall outcome is non-upheld, the Complaints Service ensures these responses are helpful in explaining the rationale and reasoning behind the key issues so that citizens can find these responses of value and help regardless of the outcome.

When outcomes are communicated with respect to informal complaints/representations, we also ensure responsibility is taken with respect to anything that may not have gone as expected or to the expected standard and assurances are provided about what is being done to resolve the issues as well as learning for the future were appropriate.

## **7. Stage 2 complaints**

### **7.1 Stage 2 complaint numbers and escalation rates**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>% escalating to formal complaints</b>
<b>2020/21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33%</b>
2019/20	23	4	17%
2018/19	30	5	17%

**Analysis:** There were two Stage 2 complaints in 20/21, compared to four for last year. The escalation rate remains very low and while percentage wise it is higher at 33%, the actual number shows a low escalation rate the Stage 2 formal process.

Factors for this low escalation include the efforts made by the Complaints Service, Managers and Social Work Team in working to directly resolve concerns via interventions such as arranging call-backs, communication direct from the service, arranging meetings and discussing strategies to allow an active resolution rather than having these actions occur through the end process of arranging a formal letter. These resolution meetings have been helpful to resolve issues and have continued post COVID-19 via MS Teams or over the telephone to ensure health and safety.

### **7.2 Stage 2 Complaints and outcomes**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2020/21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
2019/20	3	1	0	4
2018/19	4	1	0	5

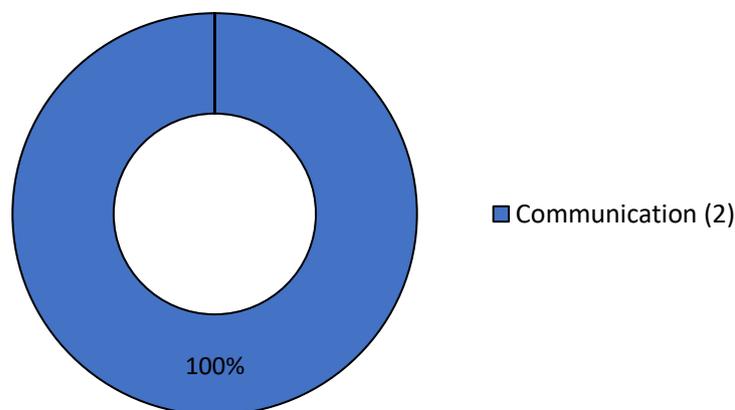
The complaint outcomes are discussed in 7.4 Nature of Complaints

### **7.3 Stage 2 Response Times**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Within time</b>	<b>Over timescale</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2020/21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
2019/20	3	1	4
2018/19	5	0	5

One Stage 2 complaint response was delayed due the pressures discussed earlier in this report. Apologies were provided.

## 7.4 Nature of complaints



**Analysis:** One of the two complaints at Stage 2 was partially upheld. A summary of these complaints are:

- Unhappy that a member of staff spoken to on the phone did not resolve a debt recovery query
- Family was unhappy with the level and responsiveness of involved social worker

The first complaint found that the member of staff had given appropriate advice as this individual did not work in debt recovery.

In such circumstances where care costs can be high and their care can impact every aspect of everyday life (such as in a placement), it is understandable that family members may wish to explore every available avenue to lessen the impact of these – hence why Stage 2 can be requested in cases where there was no fault found in the original Stage 1 determination.

The second was partially upheld as while a significant effort was made to assist the family, the clarity in the communications could have been better.

Please note that there is no Stage 3 complaint stage under Adults.

**Context:** The removal of review panels makes it more likely complaints will escalate to the Ombudsman, meaning it becomes even more imperative that errors are identified at an early stage and robust remedial action is taken.

## **9. Ombudsman complaints and enquiries**

<b>Service</b>	<b>No finding against Council</b>	<b>Finding against Council</b>	<b>Total</b>
Adult Social Care	1	3	4
Commissioning and Partnership	0	0	0
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	0	0	0

**Analysis:** There were four complaints concluded with the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) during 2020/21. Two of these complaints were initially raised in 2019/20. However, they were only able to be concluded beyond March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020. The primary reason for this was due to COVID-19 the LGO was not operating/accepting complaints approx. between the period of March to June 2020.

Due to this, two of these complaints had an initial decision by the LGO in 19/20 and these were discussed in last year's report but were only able to be concluded in 20/21.

The LGO had partial findings against the Council and/or partner agencies, these were:

- With respect to the local authority, CCG and the involved care home there were findings with respect to delays in providing equipment as well as confusion over funding.
- Journey through social care and relevant pathway not being clear and well explained.
- Unreasonable delays in sending out invoices for care costs as well as how the financial situation was communicated

With the fourth complaint which was in reference to requesting repairs within the bathroom of a property, the LGO found no fault from the Council as the complainant was informed of their rights under a landlord/Housing Association and were signposted accordingly.

## **10. Escalation Comparisons via LGO findings over time**

<b>Service</b>	<b>No finding against Council</b>	<b>Finding against Council</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	1	3	4
<b>2019-20</b>	0	4	4
<b>2018-19</b>	3	2	5

**Analysis:** The rate of escalation between Stage 1 and Stage 2 has remained in single figures in recent years and the number of LGO complaints concluded within the year has remained low also. For context, 2020-21 figures from the LGO show that they received 11,830 complaints and enquiries and of these, 4 were received by the council as detailed investigations within Adult Social Care.

## **11. Remedy Payments**

A payment would usually be termed as a “remedy payment” when it is made in line with the LGO guidance on Remedy Payments.

In line with this, of the four complaints considered by the Ombudsmen, the local authority was asked to arrange the following remedy payments in line with LGO guidance in 2020/21. These were:

- £200 for the impact of delays in providing equipment
- £100 to acknowledge any trouble and distress experienced
- £200 for time and trouble (has already been proposed by the council at Stage 2 and LGO agreed with this proposal)
- £100 for time and trouble

The Complaints Service often refers to the LGO guidance on Remedy Payments to keep in mind what is fair as a resolution to try and resolve matters. This is why in one of these cases the LGO agreed with our findings. The goal with any complaint or request received within the service is to try and find a fair resolution and this aim is kept in mind from start to end whether or it may refer to something like an apology, an action within a service or in very rare cases, a remedy payment.

## **12. Mediation**

At times, the Complaints Service will facilitate mediation meetings between parties to resolve more complex situations where a direct remedy is best found by the Complaints Service actively mediating and facilitating mediation and resolution.

In previous years, these were held at the Civic in most cases. Due to COVID-19 and ensuring we have robust remote technology; we are now able to use Microsoft Teams to continue the trend of offering and chairing resolution meetings. These allow face to face conversations and nuances on both sides and can be acknowledged to allow a more productive and human interaction to take place. It is positive news that we can now do this and present a more convenient option to citizens whereas previously they would have had to make time to attend a physical appointment.

Some examples of these are:

- *Arranging calls and meetings for a concerned family member with respect to ensuring a streamlined level of communication from involved social care, health and education colleagues. The relevant Assistant Director at the time attended these meetings with the Complaints Service to ensure understanding of the issues raised and assurance that communication would be improved via a named worker at the council co-ordinating communications*
- *Assisting an individual with concerns they had with respect to their property and access to it as well as their benefits applications. The Complaints Service arranged calls with this individual and the relevant services to progress these matters*
- *Working with CNWL to try and implement strategies and communication with the advocate of an individual to resolve their outstanding Care Act queries and support requests*
- *Mediating conversations between a citizen and our billing services to resolve the matter of a historic outstanding debt of several years. The Complaints Service sought the information required from relevant services and fed back to the individual to clarify exact what these charges were for. The debt was paid as a result of these actions and the individual was satisfied with the mediation and intervention from the service.*

## **13. Joint NHS and Social Care Complaints**

There were two joint NHS and Social Care complaints in this year. In both these cases, health led on the responses and as such our service provided a response to ensure the social care perspective could be represented in their communications. A summary of these complaints:

- Unhappy that father did not receive CCG funding
- Unhappy with assessed contributions via financial assessment and care from health

## **14. Learning Lessons/Practice Improvements**

- Staff were reminded that when discussing their professional's views with each other over email, that respectful and sensitive language is always used as otherwise this can break down trust between citizens and care staff.
- Senior staff alerted that staff may need further upskills and assurance on explaining their professional views with confidence even when challenged on difficult issues. This is because if challenging conversations are not addressed fully at the earliest point, the expectations of families may not be correctly managed, and communication may be stifled as a result.
- This may have been furthered by COVID-19 where difficult decisions had to be made to limit/close certain in person services and concerns around these would be directed at front line staff. One of the training modules planned to be offered to Adults Social Care teams is key skills and strategies on how to have difficult conversations and as such we should see improvements in this area.
- The communication of financial contribution and charging of care remains a persistent area of learning. This is one that is a long-term project where continual feedback is provided to senior management on how to change our communication journey and level of detail with respect to managing expectations around social care means testing and charging.
- Following from this, care based work on ensuring an individual's day to day care needs are met often doesn't mesh hand in hand with the colder nature of financial calculations, payments and invoicing and the we are aiming to try and bridge this gap with annual reviews of our finance communications and ensuring expectations are managed throughout the care journey.

## **15. Compliments**

The majority of service users, external agencies, and organisations that compliment staff and the Council provide their feedback through verbal communication in care meetings or by phone.

However, both professionals as well as families who use our services do write in to let us know their positive feedback and experiences. The below is correspondence received in 2020/21 and in total the below evidences how the community felt about the work carried out by Adult Social Care throughout COVID-19

1. *Hello C,*

*It has been a while since I last needed to contact you. We have found you to always be supportive and empathetic towards my dads needs.*

*Pls acknowledge when you receive this email C as I would also like to say a special thank you to you. We came back to you on many occasions and you were patient, sympathetic and quick to sort out any issues. As a family we are grateful to you also.*

2. *To whom it may concern,*

*I just want to say thank you to A for being so amazing once again. She has been there for me ever since I lost my sight back in 2013 when I was 18, helping me get back on my feet. And now she has helped me secure funding through charitable grants so that I can purchase technology that is able to help me partially see again.*

*If it wasn't for A, helping me out by applying to the charities and writing up a personal statement and sending off the applications, I would not have managed to raise the necessary funds to buy this life-saving equipment.*

*Thank you so much again A*

*I really appreciate it.*

3. *On behalf of all service users, families and staff, I would like to say a big thank you for all the support you are providing to all of us at this very difficult time, they are immensely appreciated.*

4. *I spoke with L on the Covid19 Helpline (I was calling from the National Safeguarding Helpline) and I just wanted to say how incredibly efficient and helpful she was. Thank you :-)*

5. *Hello to the kindest, caring, understanding, helpful, stress relieving, calming 'strangers'(LOL), I think I have ever spoken to. The suggestions and information you gave me over the phone when you called yesterday was invaluable. and...WE HAVE FOOD. I think most guys would say that 'food' shopping 'is one of their 'most hated things to do and probably close to house work and washing up.*

So thank you so very much.  
No mistakes, nothing missed. To me, it was like a 'high level Military Stealth operation.'  
Mission Drive to Address. Collect shopping list. Drive to supermarket to collect items. Pay for them. Drive to item 'drop-off'. Exchange items for money and go go go! 😊 lol..  
Thank you both so very much I know that you are not even living nearby to me and what you did made a big difference

6. *Good morning, I know the placement had by then passed over to the palliative care team, but I won't forget your efforts up to that point. I want to thank you sincerely for your support and all of the hard work you put in to help my mother and me as I struggled to find appropriate care solutions for her. as I have often told you: you live up to your name*
7. *Hi J I just wanted to let you know that the recliner was delivered to D and it is absolutely the perfect size and D loves the chair and is so comfortable in it. It has made a huge difference to how her posture is in the chair. Thank you so much for all that you have done to organise this we are so grateful.*
8. *I just wanted you to know that the boiler has now been installed and working well and so we do not need the heaters anymore. We would like to say a big thank you for the fast way in which you reacted to our situation, it is reassuring to know that we can rely upon you when we have to.*
9. *Thank you for calling this afternoon on behalf of C to see how we are doing as a family and G in particular. As I mentioned just now, it has been a stressful period and G's anxiety is much higher because of all the changes. However we have felt supported by his school and by his Behaviour Consultant to manage his anxiety and I have been very impressed by the fact that we have had periodic phone calls from CYADS to see how we are doing and if we need help in some way. I think your department is doing a fabulous job at reaching out to families like ours during what is a stressful time for everyone. It is also really heartening to see how much you work as a team, so that you helped out by calling me today even though it is not your usual role. ;-)* Thank you. *Please would you pass this email on to your Head of Service,, who I have met at parent events; and I could see he took engagement with parents seriously. I think it's important for a service to know when it is getting things right. :-)*
10. *I just would like to say a big thank you to Y and P for their ongoing support throughout this pandemic. They have been exceptional in supporting the home through this pandemic day by day.*

11. *During this lockdown period, I have been contacting service users from Dementia HUB on a regular basis to ensure continuity of service. This entails finding out their preference in music, researching their favourite songs and singing it back to them through the video link. On some occasions, I have composed my own songs relating to their interests and performing it. I have had such positive feedback from the clients and their carers. They are grateful that we still keep in touch with them during this enforced isolation and bringing smile to their faces. With their positive feedback, it gives me further enthusiasm to continually explore ways to provide a service that could be personal to them.*
  
12. *I am writing to thank you for the delivery of a goodie bag of sweets and crisps to us carers in Harrow. It was a nice surprise and helped to cheer us up. Fortunately we were at home when it was delivered, so the courier explained what it was. My friend was not so lucky. She was out when it came, so the courier left it hanging on her door handle. As there was no note or card to say who it was for or from, she assumed it was meant for the children next door, and so she gave it to her neighbours*
  
13. *Well organised and just the right amount of activities for service users*
  
14. *Pleasure to be part of the club, fun to play games, we are very thankful for the support and for still being in touch with us during lockdown*
  
15. *A is very passionate about her work, she is a good listener to what you ask of her. She is dedicated to her job and does it with a passion.*
  
16. *We are very thankful for how you have transformed her Tuesday afternoons – thank you ever so much, she really enjoys her time.*
  
17. *You have called us practically every day even when you were under the weather. Thank you so much.*
  
18. *We are very happy about the activities at the dementia hub*
  
19. *A I would describe you as an angel. Totally dedicated to the work, you go many steps beyond your call of duty. You give so much inspiration and motivation to dementia patients. Bless you*
  
20. *I felt compelled to write to you and share with you our thanks and gratitude for the support, guidance and faultless care we received under*

*the management of J. Sadly my Father; was taken ill and due to COVID-19 we had to engage 111. I am a cancer patient and am shielding as well as living some 3.5 hours drive away from my Father. J contacted me by phone and her relentless efficiency, dedication and heart felt care for my Fathers care and liberty has been nothing other than first class. J organised all immediate required care and started the process to seek a ground floor accommodation as he currently lives on a second floor with 30 steep stairs and no lift. Subsequently, last week my Father was re-admitted to hospital and his care now falls under the NHS, however, I wanted you to know the positive difference J provided to myself and Father and enabled us to deal with the situation in a manner which was made much easier by her dedication and quality of understanding. I shall always proudly 'clap' for J and the caring management she provided. Lastly, I would like to thank you and your extended team for all you do for the citizens of your local communities, your service and care is often unseen, however, you are the true foundation of what being human should be all about. Thank you and please, please continue because the world needs you all.*

*21. We are thankful and grateful to you to provide us with good and healthy food supply*

*22. We can only thank and congratulate you, you have a superb member of staff in M.*

*My involvement with M who was dealing with my parents, only started on the 21st July. Despite me being extremely cautious, as her call had come 'out of the blue' she was extremely polite, professional and quickly won my confidence. The subject matter was extremely urgent as it became clear that my parents were no longer able to look after themselves and that imminent action was planned. M had taken time to understand my parents and the closeness of their relationship and it was clear that she wanted to explore all alternatives before action was enforced.*

*It appears that our, my wife and my, desire for my parents to move in to our house had not been communicated by my parents, or brother. I had been led to believe that this had been documented in the medical records, but it was clear that if so this also had not been communicated to the team involved. M became aware of my existence and acted on this discovering an alternative option was available. Over the next three days we had several telephone calls when it was very clear that M was fighting hard for the alternative plan to be allowed to be put into place.*

*Without doubt action was required to be taken, but I am certain that the action that was planned would have ended very badly. Both my parents would have been deeply distressed to have been separated from each other and the quality of their lives destroyed, probably resulting in the death of one or both of them within relatively short time scales.*

*With hindsight it is easy to see just what M's bravery in standing up and fighting until all alternatives had been fully explored has achieved. My parents are different people. They now live with us and with shared care, they are both sleeping well, eating well and already looking far fitter than when we collected them. We believe that as they are no longer under stress they have responded well and my mother is exhibiting far fewer symptoms of dementia than we had previously seen. Whilst her dementia is still there, she has long periods where she is fully aware of and involved with those around her. None of this would have been possible without M's involvement in this case and her determination to explore all options.*

*In short you have a great member of staff on your team, who in this instance has probably saved two lives. Lives that are now being lived out with a quality that M believed was possible despite the views of others, including others in my family.*

*I have spoken to M several times since we returned and she has continued to be very supportive of both us and my parents. In a very short space of time it feels that M has become a friend, which is perhaps one of the biggest compliments we can give, particularly as this has been a very challenging time for all and we can't thank her enough.*

*As I started this note - thank you, you have a superb member of staff working for you.*

*23. I would like to thank social services in Harrow council. They helped make our life better. Specially thanks to social worker L who handle my case very nicely. She understand my situation without explain every time. For her help we overcome from this situation. Thanks*

*24. We would like to confirm that we have been working together with S and M and that we have good working relationship, they show professionalism and patience with the current difficulties we are experiencing , I believe they understand the complex and challenging nature of the problems my brother and I are enduring in protecting our fathers placement and well being .*

*25. Amazing service, very professional , great information provide. very kind and considerate to the needs of an elderly person.*

*26. I just wanted to say thank you for working with me and ensuring D now has the care and support she needs for her current care needs. I wish you all the best for the future and who knows our paths may cross again.*

*27. Just a note to say how pleased I have been with the support V has given to us in relation to the care of my mother. She really is excellent and worthy of your service. She always deals with issues promptly and*

*efficiently and takes the time to ensure things are done properly. A real credit to your service! Please pass on my compliments.*

*28. A has been extremely helpful and professional in dealing with F's care and wellbeing, I am so impressed with not only her fantastic people skills, she has quickly dealt with some most urgent problems, always keeping me informed as what has been put in place. F has been very isolated this past year, not just the Covid, it seems she had no mental health support in place, it has been quickly dealt with by A, along with her care plan being looked at. I have been so impressed with the background work A is doing to put F's care and mental health in place. I live in M, so I haven't been able to visit since last February, and greatly appreciate all the help A and your department are giving My Sister.*

*29. Thank you for your time, effort and additional help for my mother. I know you have served outside your assigned responsibilities and I am grateful for that. Be assured I will continue to discuss, assess and continue to monitor my mother's needs with her and family and friends, who are able to visit in person. And it was nice putting a face to a name and her face on phone! 😊. Thanks*

*30. I have been meaning to write to compliment Harrow on the provision of carers to assist me temporarily in showering/dressing in Nov 2019 following my knee operation (and also two years prior to that on the other knee). In all dealings with every one of your personnel, they were extremely professional and courteous. This also extended to the carers who came in to assist me. A belated thank you.*

*31. I am pleased to inform you that Mrs K is starting to feel much better. She really appreciates the support provided with AQF agency and how quickly this was set up. I have explained that without your input I would not have known that some agencies could support families who had the virus so it was very much a team effort!*

*32. I would like to thank Harrow Council social care worker S for all the efforts she put to help me with JS. JS came back home from TS Home Care and currently I'm looking after her. She is my friend. S was in touch on the daily basis asking how J is doing how I'm doing, she gave me instructions if J or I will need help. She is super helpful and I know I can be in touch with her any time. I'm so happy that so is the social worker involved in J's case as I could not ask for a better person to help. I wish more people like S could work as a social worker. She is really friendly, caring and involved in elderly people's life. Thank you again.*

*33. Dear Sirs, please ignore my email below. It was my mistake and I will be making the payment for my mother. I would like to convey my*

*appreciation of your staff member Mr H's patience and courtesy when I spoke to him about this matter. Kind regards*

*34. I just wanted to Thank You for all your help and support regarding my dad.*

*I also like to let you know dad is going to be discharged from hospital this afternoon. He was due to be home yesterday but from what i understand the hospital were rushing into sending him home. In the process they missed out on arranging District Nurse visit. Now everything (i.e. D/N, cares, equipments) is in place for dad when he comes home. Once again i really appreciate your help, specially in the current situation you went out of your way to suport me.*

*35. I specifically want to thank you Q, and all in brokerage for making our partnership a positive one. I would also like to inform you, that your exceptional work ethic and support has not gone unnoticed. I have really appreciated the time you took to listen and to give sound advice where needed, which made all the challenges of working with families coupled with the pandemic during 2020 endureable. Although there were times when things got a bit hairy with some difficult service users, mainly family, we stuck it out and continued to offer care and support at the highest standard according to needs and in line with the expectation of Harrow Adult Social Care Services.*

*36. I would just like to say a big thank you to all the people involved in the vaccination programme on Saturday 16th J at Byron Hall. My 93 year old mother had her jab there, along with one of her carers. The staff were all so nice, we look forward to the second visit in March*

*37. I had the pleasure of speaking with a Lady called F, I would like her supervisors to be made aware on how professional, kind, considerate she was in dealing with me whilst arranging care for my Mother. We also spoke about getting care arranged for my dad, but this was not possible due to him being in hospital. F asked questions in a very kind manor and was able to get the best care package for my mother whilst trying to give my mother her independence. I am extremely grateful for on her phone calls which kept me up to date and how professional she was. It was actually a pleasure speaking to her in getting this sensitive issue dealt with. Please pass this to her line manager and please make this lady aware on how she made my decision more bearable.*

*38. Dear F, Following your review of R's needs this morning, I would like you to know that I do appreciate the time you took to go through his file. I learned more from you this morning than I have in my 53 years as a full time carer. Thank you.*

## **16. The Complaints Process explained**

All timescales contained within this report are in working days.

### **16.1 What is a Complaint?**

An expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet about the actions, decisions or apparent failings of a local authority's adult's social services provision which requires a response.

### **16.2 Who can make a Complaint?**

(a) a person who receives or has received services from the Council; or  
(b) a person who is affected, or likely to be affected, by the action, omission or decision of the Council.

### **16.3 Stages of the Complaints Procedure**

From April 2009, regulations removed the traditional 3 Stage complaints procedure for statutory complaints, replacing it with a duty to provide a senior manager sign-off to every complaint response. The Council is expected to negotiate with the complainant how their complaint should be managed, including agreeing a timescale. If a verbal issue can be resolved by the end of the next working day, the regulations state this does not need to be recorded as a complaint.

Many complainants prefer a defined process and prefer to rely on the Council to identify a process to manage their complaint. To assist such complainants the Council produced a model procedure which complainants can use if they prefer. It is also used where complainants cannot be contacted to discuss how they want their complaint managed. Complainants are always advised in writing of their right to agree a different process if they prefer.

The stages of the Model procedure:

1) Stage 1 investigation

Timescale: 15 working days. 20 working days for complex

2) Mediation (optional)

3) Stage 2 investigation

Timescale: 20 working days. 65 working days if complex e.g. requiring independent investigation.

It is important to emphasise that these stages are very fluid, so it is not uncommon to go immediately now to mediation or independent investigation.

Local Government Ombudsman

The Ombudsman is an independent body empowered to investigate where a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint.

The person making the complaint retains the right to approach the Local Government Ombudsman at any time. However, the Ombudsman's policy is to allow the local authority to consider the complaint and will refer the complaint back to the Council unless exceptional criteria are met.

#### **15.4 What the complaints team do**

- Letter-vetting
- Liaising with services to try resolve the issue informally
- Mediation
- Training
- Surgeries/raising awareness
- Learning identification and agreed actions monitoring
- Advocacy identification
- Chasing complaint responses

*Note: Previous years had some limited gender and race data at the end of the report based on complainants. However, as the data set was so small, this data could not reasonably provide any meaningful interpretation and the importance of equality and diversity is such that only meaningful consideration should be applied.*

*The Complaints Service will consult with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Service on an ongoing basis when any relevant queries or concerns are raised to ensure this is always considered as a priority.*