



Cabinet Agenda

Date: Thursday 26 October 2023
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: The Auditorium - Harrow Council Hub,
Kenmore Avenue, Harrow, HA3 8LU

Membership:

Chair: Councillor Paul Osborn (Leader of the Council) and
Portfolio Holder for Strategy

Portfolio Holders:	Portfolio:
Councillor Marilyn Ashton	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning & Regeneration
Councillor David Ashton	Finance & Human Resources
Councillor Stephen Greek	Performance, Communications & Customer Experience
Councillor Hitesh Karia	Children's Services
Councillor Jean Lammiman	Community & Culture
Councillor Mina Parmar	Housing
Councillor Anjana Patel	Highways, Infrastructure and Community Safety
Councillor Pritesh Patel	Adult Services & Public Health
Councillor Norman Stevenson	Business, Employment & Property

Non-Executive Members:	Role:
Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar	Non-Executive Cabinet Member
Councillor Kanti Rabadia	Non-Executive Cabinet Member
John Higgins	Non-Executive Voluntary Sector Representative Harrow Youth Parliament Representative

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

Contact: Andrew Seaman, Senior Democratic & Electoral Services Officer
Tel: 07928 512790 E-mail: andrew.seaman5@harrow.gov.uk

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Useful Information

Joining the Meeting virtually

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You will be admitted on a first-come-first basis and directed to seats.

Please:

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- (5) Advise Security on your arrival if you are a registered speaker.

Filming / recording

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Agenda publication date: Wednesday 18 October 2023

Public Notice

Agenda - Part I

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence (if any).

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from all Members present.

3. Petitions

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

4. Public Questions

To note any public questions received.

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, Monday 23 October 2023. Questions should be sent to publicquestions@harrow.gov.uk

No person may submit more than one question].

5. Councillor Questions

To receive any Councillor questions.

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

[The deadline for receipt of Councillor questions is 3.00 pm, Monday 23 October 2023.]

6. Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committees

6.(a) Reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 12 September 2023 - Customer Experience Scrutiny Review (Pages 7 - 30)

7. Key Decision Schedule November 2023 - January 2024 (Pages 31 - 38)

8. Progress on Scrutiny Projects (Pages 39 - 40)

For consideration

Place

- KEY 9. Harrow Town Centre Business Improvement District** (Pages 41 - 88)

Report of the Corporate Director of Place

- KEY 10. Re-procurement of the Repairs and Voids Contract, Electrical Services and Water Hygiene** (Pages 89 - 116)

Report of the Corporate Director of Place and Director Housing.

Resources and Commercial

- KEY 11. Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge - final report and response** (Pages 117 - 164)

Report of the Managing Director

- KEY 12. London Borough of Harrow Domestic Abuse Service** (Pages 165 - 196)

Report of the Managing Director

- 13. Strategic Performance Report** (To Follow)

Report of the Managing Director

- 14. Any Other Urgent Business**

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

- 15. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business for the reasons stated.

Agenda Item No	Title	Description of Exempt Information
16.	Re-procurement of the Repairs and Voids Contract, Electrical Services and Water Hygiene	Information under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
17.	London Borough of Harrow Domestic Abuse Service	Information under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Agenda - Part II

16. Re-procurement of the Repairs and Voids Contract, Electrical Services and Water Hygiene (Pages 197 - 880)

Appendices 1 - 3 to the Report of the Director of Place and Director of Housing.

17. London Borough of Harrow Domestic Abuse Service (Pages 881 - 1056)

Appendices 2 – 6 to the Report of the Managing Director

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.]

Deadline for questions	3.00 pm on Monday 23 October 2023
Publication of decisions	Friday 27 October 2023
Deadline for Call in	5.00 pm on Friday 03 November 2023
Decisions implemented if not Called in	Saturday 4 November 2023

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Cabinet – 26 October 2023

Reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 12 September 2023

59. Customer Experience Scrutiny Review

The Committee received the Customer Experience Scrutiny Review, and the Final Report.

The report provided the findings and conclusions from the Customer Experience Scrutiny Review Group. The Review was commissioned by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and took place between February 2023 and August 2023.

The Borough had made significant improvements to its Customer Service experience. In order to ascertain how the council could fulfil its corporate objective of “Putting Residents First” and with changes in the way the Council delivered services, it was necessary to develop a larger understanding of what residents required.

Given the closure of the Civic Centre, a key function of the customer experience, there had been extensive research and discussion into how Harrow residents engaged with the borough in the future.

The Committee undertook site visits to Greenhill Library and Gayton Road – the Council’s new front-doors, after the closure of the Civic Centre. Services included Customer Services and Emergency Services (Homelessness, Adults/Children Safeguarding).

In the discussion that ensued, Members raised questions and the following issues:

- How was the Council going to engage with communities, which were not previously reached? There was need to reach out to additional communities, and engage with them. Therefore recommendation 4.4 in the Final Report would require altering to reflect that.
- How were digital services being tailored to ensure that it was accessible to all residents, particularly those who were not “tech

savvy”? There were a number of positive aspects in the Final Report, and it was acknowledged that accessing digital services was an ongoing endeavour. This was envisaged to improve over time, particularly for vulnerable groups.

- What was being done to ensure that Council employees who were “rude” to residents received appropriate training to improve their attitudes? It was imperative that more training be provided to ensure that vulnerable residents, particularly the disabled, were treated with dignity and sensitivity. Council employees in customer-facing roles would benefit from such training.
- Members requested that recommendation 4.5 in the Final Report could add an “escalation process”; and
- The Chair and the Vice-Chair communicated their thanks to the officers and Members who participated in the challenge panels and noted the collaborative manner in which the review was done.

Officers would ensure that the Recommendations in the Final Report were amended to reflect the Committee’s comments.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report of the Customer Experience Scrutiny Review be noted;
- 2) subject to the inclusion of the amendments outlined above, the recommendations included in the Final Report be agreed;
- 3) the Review’s recommendations, as amended, be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

For Consideration

Background Documents:

Customer Experience Scrutiny Review Cover Report

Customer Experience Scrutiny Review – Final Report

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 12 September 2023

Contact Officer:

Mwim Chellah, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 07761 405 966

Mwimanji.Chellah@harrow.gov.uk

**Report for: Overview and Scrutiny
Committee and Scrutiny
Sub-Committees**

Date of Meeting:	12 th September 2023
Subject:	Customer Experience Scrutiny Review
Responsible Officer:	Shumaila Dar – Interim Assistant Director for Strategy & Partnerships
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Resources Leads - Cllr Samir Sumaria and Cllr Rekha Shah
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Customer Experience Scrutiny Review – Final Report

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides the findings and conclusions from the Customer Experience scrutiny review group. The review was commissioned by O&S and took place between February 2023 – August 2023.

O&S are recommended to:

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

Section 2 – Report

The attached report presents the findings of the Customer Experience Review Report established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The review took place between February 2023 – August 2023.

The Borough has made significant improvements to its Customer Service experience. In order to ascertain how the council can fulfil its corporate objective of “Putting Residents First” and with changes in the way the council delivers services, it was necessary to develop a larger understanding of what residents require and the best way to deliver this as a council. This review was required to further discover how to improve council services. Given the closure of the civic centre, a key function of the customer experience, there has been extensive research and discussion into how Harrow residents engage with the borough in the future.

Members were clear from the outset that to improve the customer experience, the customer journey across all channels and products must be understood. A focus on identifying and understanding the customer journey – the end-to-end experience that customers have with the council – was a priority.

Members undertook site visits to Greenhill Library and Gayton Road – the councils new front-doors post the closure of the Civic Centre. Services included Customer Services and Emergency Services (Homelessness, Adults/Children Safeguarding)

Members also reviewed existing data available such as:

- Residents Survey 2023
- Customer Experience Staff Survey 2023
- Greenhill Library Satisfaction Survey 2023
- Greenhill Library/Gayton Road footfall
- Webform Satisfaction Survey
- Access Harrow Call Volume
- Email Volume by Department

The members also carried out a Challenge Panel which was designed as a way for the scrutiny group to discuss key findings from the Customer Experience review and to make recommendations for the further development of the policy.

As included in Section 4 of the report, the review group has made 5 recommendations which are detailed at the end of the report.

1. Using one site (Gayton Road) for the council service front-door instead of two (Greenhill Library and Gayton Road)
2. Improved signage to both Greenhill Library and Gayton Road sites
3. A more accessible front-door service
4. Better communication and engagement with the Council
5. A refined complaint process.

Ward Councillors' comments

Not applicable as report relates to all wards.

Financial Implications

There are no financial issues associated with this report.

Performance Issues

There are no performance issues associated with this report.

Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact associated with this report

Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken for this report as it summarises the activities of scrutiny and does not propose any changes to service delivery.

Council Priorities

Putting Residents First

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report

Mandatory Checks

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

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mira Chauhan, mira.chauhan@harrow.gov.uk, 07926 074088

Background Papers: None

September 2023

Customer Experience

Customer Experience Scrutiny Review – Final Report

Members of the review group

Cllr Samir Sumaria – Chair (Conservative)

Cllr Rekha Shah (Labour)

Cllr Amir Moshenson (Conservative)

Cllr Graham Henson (Labour)

Cllr Chetna Halai (Conservative)

Cllr Yogesh Teli (Conservative)

Cllr Stephen Hickman (Labour)

Cllr Nicola Blackman (Conservative)

Cllr Matthew Goodwin-Freeman (Conservative)



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1 Background

At the Cabinet meeting on 24th May 2022, Cabinet agreed that one their key priority was to put residents first and treat both residents and businesses as valued customers. In practice this means ensuring that any interaction is a positive one with the Council being approachable, accessible, responsive, and informative through the best use of technology. The Council provides hundreds of different services to residents and businesses with tens of millions of interactions taking place each year and they therefore ‘*experience*’ customer service through many different routes.

1.1 Purpose of the review

- i. To investigate how we might use all the Council’s policies and strategies to help improve the customer experience through monitoring the progress of the customer experience action plan agreed at Cabinet and considering future customer needs, modern customer service delivery models and technology and the best outcomes for the Borough.



- ii. To ascertain how the council can fulfil its corporate objective of “Putting Residents First.” With the closure of the civic centre and changes in the way the council delivers services, it was necessary to develop a larger understanding of what residents require and the best way to deliver this as a council.

1.2 Objectives of the review

- To monitor the progress on more intuitive digital access for residents e.g., refined search options on webpage
- To better understand digital exclusion and those affected by it
- Review how services are delivered (*such as the front door to Adult Social care and Council Tax*) and key customer journeys (*such as subscribing to Garden Waste, reporting bin issues and ordering a parking permit*)
- To ensure an improvement in the council's complaints process and interaction with elected members
- To ensure an improvement in the customer journey using the webpage and phone lines

1.3 Scope of the review¹

- Provide alternative channels where required – support people to self-serve or provide an alternative means of contact for more complex issues.
- Reduce the need for contact – get things right first time and be proactive when there is a problem.
- Services are the best that they can be – ensure that services are built around the customer and identifying where the key problems are.

2 Methodology and Approach

Members were clear from the outset that to improve the customer experience, the customer journey across all channels and products must be understood. A focus on identifying and understanding the customer journey – the end-to-end experience that customers have with the council – was a priority.

Members therefore undertook site visits to Greenhill Library and Gayton Road – the councils new front-doors post the closure of the Civic Centre. This was to ensure that enquiries could be followed from initial point of contact (Customer Services) to other Departments. During a

¹ See full scope of the Customer Experience Scrutiny Review agreed in March 2023 in Appendix 1

site visit, Members would observe and participate in following a customer enquiry from beginning to end and see systems in action.

Site visits took place at the following departments:

- Customer Services (Greenhill Library)
- Emergency Services including Homelessness, Adults/Children Safeguarding (Gayton Road)

Members also reviewed existing data available such as:

- Residents Survey 2023
- Customer Experience Staff Survey 2023
- Greenhill Library Satisfaction Survey 2023
- Greenhill Library/Gayton Road footfall
- Webform Satisfaction Survey
- Access Harrow Call Volume
- Email Volume by Department

The members also carried out a Challenge Panel which was designed as a way for the scrutiny group to discuss key findings from the Customer Experience review and to make recommendations for the further development of the policy.

The session was attended by Jonathan Milbourn (Head of Customer Services and Business Support), Ben Jones (Head of Digital Services), Vinal Chauhan (Business Support Manager) and Cllr Stephen Greek (Portfolio Holder).

Councillors on the scrutiny review who attended the session were Cllr Samir Sumaria (Chair), Cllr Rekha Shah (Co-chair), Cllr Amir Moshenson, Cllr Yogesh Teli, Cllr Stephen Hickman, Cllr Graham Henson.

Corporate Policy Officers who attended the session were Mira Chauhan, Anthony Ilesanmi, Sudheesh Bhasi and Nahreen Matlib.

3. Customer Experience

3.1 Challenge Panel

The challenge panel was designed as a way for the scrutiny group to discuss key findings from the Customer Experience review and to make recommendations for the further development of the policy.

The objectives of this scrutiny challenge panel were to:

- Examine the efficiency of customer services through various channels.
- Further develop understanding of complaint management and its contribution to improvement of service delivery
- Make recommendations for the further development of the policy.

The Challenge Session was structured as follows:

- Welcome and Introduction by Chair (Cllr Samir Sumaria, Scrutiny Lead - Resources)
- Presentation on findings from Customer Experience Review (Mira Chauhan – Policy Officer)
- Questions and Discussion

Key Discussion Points:

For further improvement of the complaints management, it was highlighted that the council needed to:

- Find better ways of following ongoing and multi-faceted problems.
- Determine when to escalate residents' concerns.
- Ensure officers make regular contact to update residents and offer reassurance that the matter is progressing.

Suggested improvements included:

- Improved liaison with residents for all complaints (minimum contact of phone call/email). There should be a response from the council when something has changed in their case, resolved or if a certain number of days have passed and the case is still open, a response should still be sent to the customer to inform them their query is not lost, and we are still working on resolving it. Regular communication needs to be introduced from the time the council receives the query to when it has been resolved.
- Resolving simple matters ahead of target
- Measures for scoping multi-faceted issues and managing expectations.
- Measures for coordinating complex and multi-faceted issues.

3.2 Site Visits

The council aims to put the customer at the heart of everything it does. It strives to ensure that all sections of the community accessing the councils' services will experience consistently excellent customer service. The council receives contact from customers in a variety of ways for all services. Table 1 below shows the overall numbers of contacts for each method for 2021-2022 and 2022 – 2023.

Table 1

	2021 -2022	2022 – 2023	Comment
Visitors to our Offices	30,069	19,878	34 % decrease
Number of Calls received	905,250	801,492	11% decrease
Emails	78,192	73,342	6% decrease
MyHarrow Account	640,197	743,626	16% increase
Webforms	709,935	741,700	4% increase

Table 1 shows the proportion of people visiting our offices has reduced significantly (- 34%) and more customers are using MyHarrow account and webforms.

Customer Service Staff:

The first point of contact for most council services will be with a customer services officer. These officers deal with all aspects of the councils' services including:

- Providing a central call centre (Access Harrow) which deals with enquires for all services and providing a switchboard facility for services outside of Customer Services
- Manning the reception at Greenhill Library and Gayton Road
-

3.3 Greenhill Library Site Visit

Site visits to, and resident feedback on, customer services has highlighted that the first point of contact for members of the public is very professional and helpful. Staff are friendly and engaged and go out of their way to ensure enquires are handled efficiently as possible. This is highlighted below in Table 2 which shows the face-to-face satisfaction survey completed by customers who have come to Greenhill Library – with over 70% of customers having a positive experience.



Table 2

SATISFACTION	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	% Positive
Overall Satisfaction	55%	18%	5%	12%	11%	73%
Satisfied with the time taken	57%	22%	5%	7%	9%	79%
Clear how it was explained	62%	21%	5%	2%	10%	83%
Satisfied with resolution	52%	22%	10%	6%	10%	74%

It was apparent, however, that the current system does not always enable Customer Service staff to know if an issue or complaint has already been dealt with or which member of staff it has been passed to. During the site visit to Greenhill Library, members observed first-hand the difficulties with linking to other back offices. Links to the back office are poor and in most cases the Customer Service staff were only able to send an email to the relevant department with the contact details of the customer requesting for a call back. In these cases, there is no way of knowing whether this query was dealt with or not and for those departments that do not have a shared mailbox, it is difficult to determine who the nominated contact is in order to escalate queries. These aforementioned issues can cause a duplication of work and cause confusion around how an issue is being taken forward.

Table 3

GREENHILL LIBRARY	TOTAL
Council Tax/Benefit Enquiries	988
Citizenship/Registrars	50
Housing/Homeless	306
Residents/Visitors Permit/PCN	94
Payment Enquiry	22
Documents	438
Other	590
TOTAL	2488

This was particularly apparent when the queries were regarding Council Tax / Benefits which make up nearly 50% of all queries received at Greenhill Library (see Table 3). Members also witnessed that customers were coming to Greenhill Library with their Council Tax bills or letters regarding their benefits and required clarification or further explanation as to what was required from them. Unfortunately, as this is a specialist area, Customer Service staff were unable to assist customers with their queries directly and instead had to forward on the queries via email to back-office staff. Thus, resulting in the customer leaving Greenhill Library with their query unresolved.



In conjunction, members felt the space at Greenhill Library was not appropriate for private discussions with customers when dealing with confidential matters. With one desk and two computers at Greenhill Library, members felt that more than supported self-service was needed and that some residents will want and need a listening ear and more face-to-face interaction. Additionally, it was highlighted that the town centre presence is good, but security and privacy measures need to be looked at as members believed, in the current layout, you can feel very 'observed'.

Members highlighted the importance of introducing the below:

1. A dedicated officer on-site to deal with Council Tax/Benefits enquiries as they have the required knowledge to resolve any queries first-hand. This would ensure customers leave Greenhill Library with their query resolved whilst reducing the need for customers to return or to escalate the issue in case of a non-response.
2. A more appropriate space for Customer Service staff to deal with customer queries. It was noted that the area is very small and there is no sufficient/private space for discussions with customers and that when a queue does build up, there is no appropriate waiting area (only 2 chairs) and that the queue then blocks the staircase to the 1st floor of the library.

3.4 Gayton Road Site Visit

Gayton Road is the emergency front door for Housing and Social Services. During the site visits, members felt that the space at Gayton Road was more appropriate compared to Greenhill Library. Gayton Road has a waiting area for customers, appropriate desk space for three Customer Service Officers on-site, private, and confidential booths for discussions with customers, a security presence, and a back-office for officers to work from. However, members felt the building was not being used to its full potential. There was adequate space to deliver a reception service and yet the building was empty on the many occasions that it was visited. Members raised the question around whether Gayton Road would be a more appropriate venue to host the boroughs front-door service.

In addition, members raised the issue that there was inadequate signage to Gayton Road, and it was more difficult to find if you did not know the area very well. In addition to this, members witnessed customers having trouble with knowing which front-door site to visit for their particular query which caused a lot of back and forth as customers were sent from Greenhill Library to Gayton Road or vice versa. Members highlighted the potential issues and frustrations this can cause customers especially those with vulnerabilities.

Members highlighted the importance of introducing the below:

1. Improved signage in the town centre to direct customers to the correct building for their query. At present, there are no signs in the town centre directing customers to Greenhill Library or Gayton road. With both sites being newly built in the borough, it is imperative that better signage is introduced within Harrow Town Centre.
2. A review of the services offered at both Greenhill Library and Gayton Road and whether both sites are necessary and whether there is potential for one location to act as a front-door for customers.

3.5 Residents Survey

Between 30th January to 11th March 2023 a resident's survey was conducted using a stratified random sample of Harrow Residents. The aim was to understand resident's priorities and concerns. The survey gives a general overview of how residents perceive the council and its services and is a fundamental part of the customer service review due to the nature of the customer interaction:

Key Results:

- The residents survey of 2023 conducted by partners MEL Research showed that satisfaction with the council over time is increasingly positive with a figure of 60% in March of 2023
- Six in ten (60%) are satisfied with how Harrow Council runs things, compared to 23% who are dissatisfied. In July 2017, 49% were satisfied.
- The most commonly provided suggestions related to the maintenance / repairs of public facilities such as roads, potholes and tree trimming (17%), followed by cleaning streets (13%). 9% would like better communication.
- The most common method by which residents receive information about the Council's services is the Harrow Council website, although this is more commonly used by residents aged 25 to 44, and less used among those aged 65+. Leaflets/letters through the door, Harrow People magazine and MyHarrow email newsletter are the next most commonly cited methods.

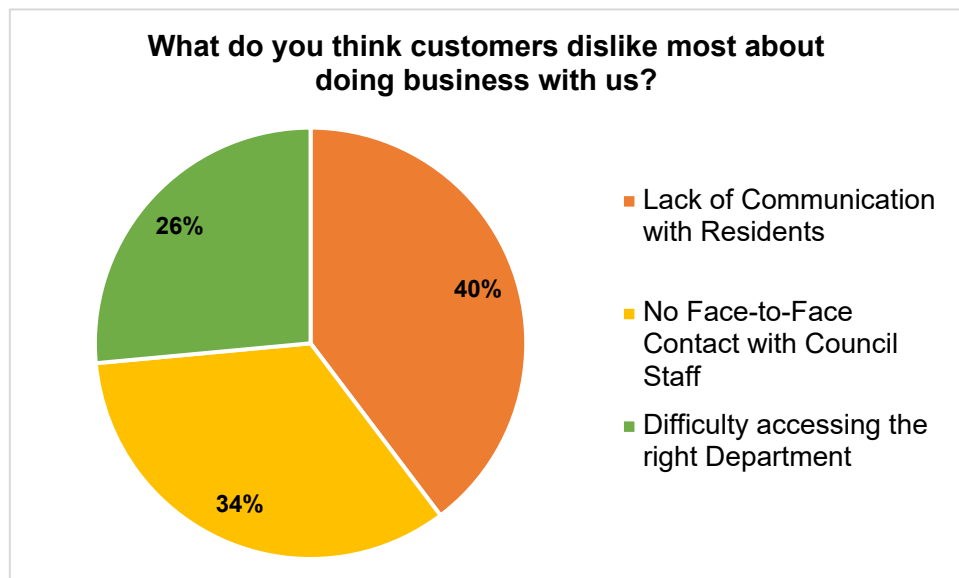
The Councillors highlighted that the Council team have won a number of awards for their migration of services to online, with other councils coming to Harrow to learn what works well. The Customer Services team are delivering an award-winning service through online channels with most transactions with residents now taking place electronically.

Overall, the results of the resident’s survey indicate a strong level of customer satisfaction across the borough. However, it is important to note that this survey was conducted before the formal closing of the civic centre, this margin of error should be considered when looking at overall satisfaction and communication rates in the borough.

3.6 Staff Satisfaction Survey

A staff satisfaction survey was circulated to 131 members of staff within Customer Services and Business Support area of the council. These members of staff are all customer facing. Staff were asked what they think customers disliked most about doing business with the council, and similar to the response received in the resident’s survey, staff believed it was a lack of communication (see table 4). Staff also highlighted that residents require more face-to-face contact with the council.

Table 4



Members highlighted the following:

- With both the residents survey and staff survey highlighting the issue of ‘communication’, there needs to be a further assessment into the councils’ current methods of engagement with the residents of Harrow and potentially alternative methods of outreach. An example could be introducing a ‘conversation café’ mobile front door to reach communities that do not easily engage.



4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Participants of the challenge panel agreed with the necessity and importance of effective and efficient customer services to ensure customer satisfaction and accessibility. Front facing customer services was a main discussion point that was discussed at length and formed a large part of the customer experience conversation. Digital exclusion was also discussed for residents that struggle with internet access or usage and how the council can alleviate this using an array of accessibility measures. Despite the discussion on face-to-face services, there is still a strong sentiment amongst members to continue to invest in the borough's digital services.

4.1 Using one site for council services instead of two.

Members of the session questioned the use of two sites and if it is viable for council services to be amalgamated into one central site for all borough functions. This recommendation comes as a cost saving measure which ideally can be used to support council services further. Amalgamating all services to one site also helps with accessibility for residents, by having a central site for residents, this alleviates issues of finding the right location or knowing the right site to go to for your query. However, it is necessary to ascertain the short- and long-term consequences for this recommendation and if there is a positive effect for residents given this measure.

Also, it is recommended that at the central site there is a dedicated officer on-site to deal with Council Tax/Benefits enquiries as they have the required knowledge to resolve any queries first-hand. This would ensure customers leave Greenhill Library with their query resolved whilst reducing the need for customers to return or to escalate the issue in case of a non-response.

4.2 Improved signage to sites

An alternative to amalgamating the site may be a simple decision to improve signage in the local area so that residents can properly differentiate between the locations. This will attempt to improve the accessibility of the area and help residents make better informed decisions about the sites they are visiting to avoid disappointment. Additionally, to better signpost to Gayton Road across the website and electronic communication with residents.

4.3 Accessibility

Although Greenhill Library's central location is great. In addition to front door, the introduction of a moving support service at different libraries i.e., different libraries in different parts of the

borough on different days which could provide an alternative face-to-face service for residents who may be digitally excluded and have accessibility issues.

4.4 Better communication and engagement to the council

Ensure communication about the new front door sites are robust. The website still carries old information on procedures as well as outdated information on departments and relevant officers to contact.

Additionally, to introduce 'Conversation café' style programmes and other outreach events that target communities who are hard-to-reach.

4.5 Refined complaints process

Improved liaison with residents for all complaints (minimum contact of phone call/email). There should be a response from the council when something has changed in their case, resolved or if a certain number of days have passed and the case is still open. A response should be sent to the customer to inform them their query is not lost, and that we are still working on resolving it. Regular communication needs to be introduced from the time the council receives the query to when it has been resolved.

Appendix 1 – Customer Experience Scope as agreed in March 2023



	SUBJECT	SCRUTINY REVIEW ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
	COMMITTEE	Overview & Scrutiny
	CHALLENGE PANEL MEMBERS	Cllr Sumaria – Chair (Conservative) Cllr Shah (Labour) Cllr Moshenson (Conservative) Cllr Henson (Labour) Cllr Halai (Conservative) Cllr Teli (Conservative) Cllr Hickman (Labour) Cllr Blackman (Conservative) Cllr Goodwin-Freeman (Conservative)
	AIMS/ OBJECTIVES/ OUTCOMES	Aim The purpose of the review is to investigate how we might use all of the Council’s policies and strategies to help improve the customer experience through monitoring the progress of the customer experience action plan agreed at Cabinet and considering future customer needs, modern customer service delivery models and technology and the best outcomes for the Borough. Objectives: To monitor the progress on more intuitive digital access for residents e.g., refined search options on webpage



		<p>To better understand digital exclusion and those affected by it</p> <p>Review how services are delivered as a whole (<i>such as the front door to Adult Social care and Council Tax</i>) and key customer journeys (<i>such as subscribing to Garden Waste, reporting bin issues and ordering a parking permit</i>)</p> <p>To ensure an improvement in the council's complaints process and interaction with elected members</p> <p>To ensure an improvement in the customer journey using the webpage and phone lines</p>
	MEASURES OF SUCCESS OF REVIEW	Better customer experience, as measured by resident satisfaction, fewer failure demand contacts, increased ratings for services
	SCOPE	<p>The following areas will be in scope of the review:</p> <p>Provide alternative channels where required – support people to self-serve or provide an alternative means of contact for more complex issues</p> <p>Reduce the need for contact – get things right first time and be proactive when there is a problem.</p> <p>Services are the best that they can be – ensure that services are built around the customer and identifying where the key problems are</p>
	SERVICE PRIORITIES	<p>Choose from the following:</p> <p>A council that puts residents first</p> <p>A borough that is clean and safe</p> <p>A place where those in need are supported</p>
	SPONSOR	Shumaila Dar



	ACCOUNTABLE MANAGER	Rachel Gapp
	SUPPORT OFFICER	Jonathan Milbourn
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	Mira Chauhan - Policy Team.
	EXTERNAL INPUT	N/A
	METHODOLOGY	<p>Desktop Research (system driven vs resident data)</p> <p>Residents Survey – telephone consultation</p> <p>Challenge Panel with Customer Service and Business Support owners</p> <p>Online Consultation via social media</p> <p>Resident Consultation</p> <p>Partner Consultation</p> <p>NB: The Challenge Panel can use outcomes from Peer Review which is due to take place</p>
	EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS	The Challenge Panels will consider, during the course of its work, how equality implications have been considered in current policy and practice and consider the possible implications of any changes it recommends. In undertaking the Challenge Panels, members and officers will consider their practices and how it can ensure all relevant stakeholders in the borough to have their voices heard.



	ASSUMPTIONS/ CONSTRAINTS	N/A
	TIMESCALE	<p>9th February 2023 – O&S meeting and sign-off</p> <p>February – First scrutiny review group meeting</p> <p>February – Officers prepare Desk Research</p> <p>March – Online Consultation</p> <p>March/April – Challenge Panels</p> <p>April – Officers to prepare final draft Scrutiny Report</p> <p>May – Report to be sent to members for comments</p> <p>May – Final report to be send to members</p> <p>Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>May – Legal clearance of Scrutiny Report</p> <p>May - Final Scrutiny Report submitted to O&S</p> <p>June 2023 (date tba) – Final Scrutiny Report presented to O&S</p> <p>Option 1 – June Cabinet</p>



		<p>May – Legal Clearance</p> <p>May – Cabinet briefing papers dispatched</p> <p>May – Report deadline</p> <p>June (date tba) – Cabinet briefing</p> <p>June (date tba) - Final deadline for Scrutiny Report</p> <p>June (date tba) – Final Scrutiny Report presented at Cabinet</p>
	RESOURCE COMMITMENTS	Policy team will provide a briefing and administrative support to the Challenge Panels. The Policy team will report recommendations to O&S; officers from the appropriate Service Area will provide a response to Cabinet and take forward any recommendations agreed by Cabinet.
	REPORT AUTHOR	Mira Chauhan
	REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS	<p>Outline of formal reporting process:</p> <p>The relevant Divisional Director(s) and Portfolio Holder(s) will be consulted in the drafting of the final report and recommendations</p> <p>Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Report referred to Cabinet</p> <p>Officer response to Cabinet</p>
	FOLLOW UP ARRANGEMENTS (proposals)	It is anticipated that Cabinet would consider any recommendations made (alongside the officers’ response) at the Cabinet meeting in [insert month] and responded to in [insert month].



London Borough of Harrow

Key Decision Schedule (November 2023 - January 2024)

November 2023

This is a list of Key Decisions which the Authority proposes to take at the above Cabinet meeting. The Cabinet agenda containing all the reports being considered will be published 5 clear days before the meeting.

31 A Key Decision is one which is likely to:

- (i) result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to its budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. A decision is significant if it involves expenditure or the making of savings of an amount in excess of £1m of capital or £500,000 of revenue or where savings or expenditure are less than these amounts but they constitute more than 50% of the budget attributable to the service in question; or
- (ii) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area of two or more wards of the Borough.

Decisions which the Cabinet intends to make in private

The Cabinet may meet in private to consider reports which contain confidential information. A private meeting of the Cabinet is open only to Members of the Cabinet, other Councillors and Council officers. This Schedule also contains non-Key Decisions which involve Cabinet meeting in private. Any person can make representations to the Cabinet if they believe the decision should instead be made in the public Cabinet meeting by emailing democratic.services@harrow.gov.uk.

The membership of the Cabinet is:

[Councillor Paul Osborn](#) (Leader), (Strategy)

[Councillor Marilyn Ashton](#) (Deputy Leader, Planning & Regeneration)

[Councillor David Ashton](#) (Finance & Human Resources)

[Councillor Stephen Greek](#) (Performance, Communications & Customer Experience)

[Councillor Hitesh Karia](#) (Children's Services)

[Councillor Jean Lammiman](#) (Community & Culture)

[Councillor Mina Parmar](#) (Housing)

[Councillor Anjana Patel](#) (Highways, Infrastructure and Community Safety)

[Councillor Pritesh Patel](#) (Adult Services & Public Health)

[Councillor Norman Stevenson](#) (Business, Employment & Property)

Subject	Nature of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted and any Consultation to be undertaken
NOVEMBER 2023				
Procurement of Education IT System	To request an award of contract to Capita Business Services for One Education modules plus Family Hub and Youth Justice software.	<p>Councillor Hitesh Karia; Councillor Stephen Greek; Councillor David Ashton</p> <p>Divisional Director, Education Services david.harrington@harrow.gov.uk (report author), tel. 07714 089170</p>	Part exempt	
Harrow Youth Justice Annual Plan 2023-24	To approve the Plan.	<p>Councillor Hitesh Karia</p> <p>Director of Children's Services, Parmjit Chahal</p> <p>mark.scanlan@harrow.gov.uk (report author) tel: 07860 828861</p>	Open	Harrow Youth Parliament, Youth Justice Partnership Board including Police, Probation, Social Care, Health and Mental Health Providers, Community Safety, Education, Tri-Borough Judiciary and Voluntary Sector Provider: IgniteYouth.

Subject	Nature of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted and any Consultation to be undertaken
Climate & Nature Strategy 2023 to 2030: consultation results and finalised Strategy for approval	Note the results of the public consultation on the draft Strategy and approve the final Strategy.	Councillor Anjana Patel Matthew Adams, Assistant Director of Climate Change & Natural Resources matthew.adams@harrow.gov.uk	Open	Climate & Nature Strategy 2023 – 2030 and Equalities Impact Assessment
Harrow Long Term Transport Strategy: Draft for public consultation	Approve the draft Strategy for public consultation. Note that the results of public consultation will be considered and reported back to Cabinet with the final Strategy for approval.	Councillor Anjana Patel Dalton Cenac Dalton.Cenac@harrow.gov.uk	Open	Draft Long Term Transport Strategy, Draft Equalities Impact Assessment , The draft strategy will be consulted upon publicly if approved by Cabinet for consultation.
Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy: Draft for public consultation	Approve the draft Strategy for public consultation. Note that the results of public consultation will be considered and reported back to Cabinet with the final Strategy for approval.	Councillor Anjana Patel Dalton Cenac Dalton.Cenac@harrow.gov.uk	Open	Draft Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, the draft strategy will be consulted upon publicly if approved by Cabinet for consultation.

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Subject	Nature of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted and any Consultation to be undertaken
DECEMBER				
DEFRA and Greater London Authority Silk Stream Chandos Recreation Ground	Approval for the procurement of the delivery phase for the DEFRA and GLA Silk Stream Chandos Recreation Ground Project	Councillor Anjana Patel Director of Environment michael.bradshaw@harrow.gov.uk (report author) tel: 07927 548042	Open	Ward Councillors and Chandos Recreation Ground User Group
Calculation of Council Tax Base for 2024-2025	To approve the Council's Council Tax Base for 2024-25	Councillor David Ashton Sharon Daniels, Interim Director of Finance & Assurance (S151 Officer) sharon.daniels@harrow.gov.uk	Open	

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Subject	Nature of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted and any Consultation to be undertaken
Estimated Surplus / (Deficit) on the Collection Fund 2023-2024	To agree the Council's collection fund position and to allow the appropriate transfers to the general or collection fund to clear surplus or deficit.	Councillor David Ashton Sharon Daniels, Interim Director of Finance & Assurance (S151 Officer) sharon.daniels@harrow.gov.uk	Open	
Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2023/24	To note the Revenue & Capital Budget for 2023-24 and to approve amendments to the Capital Programme if applicable.	Councillor David Ashton Sharon Daniels, Interim Director of Finance & Assurance (S151 Officer) jo.frost@harrow.gov.uk (report author) tel: 020 8424 1978	Open	

Subject	Nature of Decision	Cabinet Member / Lead officer	Open or Private Meeting	Additional Documents to be submitted and any Consultation to be undertaken
<p>Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024-25 & Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2026-27, HRA Capital Programme 2024-25 to 2028-29 and 30 year HRA Business Plan</p>	<p>To make recommendations to Council to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the HRA Budget for 2024-25; - HRA capital programme 2024-25 to 2028-29; - rents, service and facility charges for HRA social rented properties - community halls, garages and water charges for 2024-25 and - the HRA Business plan 	<p>Councillor David Ashton; Councillor Mina Parmar</p> <p>Tasleem Kazmi, Finance Business Partner - Housing and Regeneration tasleem.kazmi@harrow.gov.uk</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>List of fees and charges to be considered for increase, summary budgets for MTFS – 3 years, Capital Programme 5 years and HRA Business Plan 30 years</p>
JANUARY				
<p>Calculation of Business Rates Tax Base for 2024-2025</p>	<p>To approve the Council's Business Rates Retention amount for 2024-25.</p>	<p>Councillor David Ashton</p> <p>Sharon Daniels, Interim Director of Finance & Assurance (S151 Officer) sharon.daniels@harrow.gov.uk</p>	<p>Open</p>	

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PROGRESS ON SCRUTINY PROJECTS

Review	Methodology	Type of report	Expected date for report to Cabinet	Comments
North West London Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)	Joint Committee	Update reports provided to Health & Social Care sub committee (for information)	As required	<p>The North West London (NWL) JHOSC last met on 12th September 2023. Key agenda items included the NWL adult community-based specialist palliative and end-of-life care review programme; Consultation Proposal on the Future of the Gordon Hospital; and the NWL Mental Health Strategy. The next JHOSC meeting is on 5th December 2023.</p> <p>There are regular update reports on the JHOSC to Harrow’s Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee so that there is a formal feedback loop between regional and local health scrutiny. Councillor Chetna Halai, chair of Health Sub, is Harrow’s member on the JHOSC.</p>
Customer Experience	Review	Report to September O&S and Cabinet thereafter	October 2023	Customer Experience Scrutiny Report has been approved at O&S Committee in September (subject to some changes). This is due to Cabinet in October. Cabinet response expected in November when the Chair of the review will be present to respond to questions (if any).

Contact: Nahreen Matlib, Senior Policy Officer

Email: nahreen.matlib@harrow.gov.uk

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Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	26 October 2023
Subject:	Harrow Town Centre Business Improvement District
Key Decision:	Yes The decision affects Harrow Metropolitan Town Centre whose catchment area is greater than one ward. The income generated over the term of the HA1BID will be greater than £500,000
Responsible Officer:	Mark Billington, Director Inclusive Economy, Leisure and Culture
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Norman Stevenson Portfolio Holder Business, Employment and Property and Cllr David Ashton Portfolio Holder Finance and Human Resources
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	Greenhill
Enclosures:	Operating Agreement, Draft Business Plan of Harrow Town Centre Business Improvement District (HA1BID).

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the benefits of Harrow Town Centre Business Improvement District (HA1BID) and the rationale for voting “Yes” for a third term of the HA1BID.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Approve a third term for the Harrow Town Centre Business Improvement District for a further five years.
2. Delegate the casting of the vote to Cllr Paul Osborn, Leader of the Council and Strategy Portfolio Holder
3. Note that the Operating Agreement between The London Borough of Harrow and the BID company will be authorised and signed under officer delegated powers.

Reason:

The HA1BID provides a vehicle to raise additional funds to invest in Harrow Metropolitan Town Centre and to provide a voice for businesses within the BID boundaries.

Section 2 – Report

1. The HA1BID was established in 2013 following a ballot of eligible voters in Harrow Metropolitan Town Centre. There was a second ballot in 2018 with businesses voting to retain the BID for a second term. There will be a third ballot between 15th November and 14th December 2023. The BID between 2018 to 2024 will have generated £2,268,226. If the BID secures a third term further investment from businesses would be secured for Harrow Town Centre. The key themes of HA1BID are Clean, Green and Safe. If the HA1BID secures a third term, it will be able to use funds raised from a levy on the business rates to invest in those themes. Those themes closely align with the corporate priority of “A borough that is clean and safe”. The Green theme is in line with the London Borough of Harrow’s Climate Change Strategy.

Options considered

2. Option 1 :

The London Borough of Harrow votes in favour of a third term of the HA1 BID

2.1 Option 2 :

The London Borough of Harrow abstains from the BID Ballot

2.2 Option 3 :

The London Borough of Harrow votes against a third term of the HA1 BID

2.3 Option 2 and 3 are rejected. This is for a number of reasons. The HA1BID provides a vehicle to raise additional funds to invest in Harrow Metropolitan

Town Centre. The BID proposal aligns to the corporate priority of a borough that is clean and safe.

2.4 The Operating Agreement between the local authority and the BID company which is attached to this document, sets out the arrangements by which the BID Levy shall be collected together with general arrangements on the relationship to be established between Harrow Council and the HA1 BID Company for the duration of the BID. Those arrangements are as follows:

- Confirm the basis upon which the Council will be responsible for collecting the BID Levy.
- Agree enforcement mechanisms for the collection of the BID Levy
- Set out procedures for accounting and transference of the BID Levy
- Set out procedures for monitoring and review of the collection of the BID Levy
- Identify and agree the baseline services that are currently provided by the Council in the BID

If the HA1BID is retained, additional money can be invested by the BID board in street cleansing and measures to reduce anti-social behaviour. This investment would be through a Baseline Agreement with the local authority which sets out the local authorities services in Harrow Metropolitan Town Centre and provides an opportunity for the BID to purchase additional services from the local authority or from a third party.

The attached HA1 Business Plan sets out the BID's role, its past achievements, proposed objectives, actions, budget and governance arrangements. The area covered includes in full or in part the following Clarendon Road, College Road, Greenhill Way, Gayton Road, Havelock Place, St Ann's Road, St John's Road, Station Road, St Ann's Shopping Centre, St George's Shopping Centre, and William Carey Way. The Operating Agreement sets out each hereditament.

The retention of a BID would ensure a single body is able to co-ordinate activities with over 200 businesses, the police and the London Borough of Harrow in Harrow's key commercial hub.

2.5 HA1BID was the central body in supporting the London Borough of Harrow to dispense mandatory and discretionary grants to businesses during the pandemic and to communicate key messages directly to its members. Furthermore, in the absence of a BID the London Borough of Harrow would need to identify the resources to provide a town centre management function.

Background

3. A Business Improvement District (BID) is a flexible funding mechanism to improve and manage a clearly defined commercial area. The HA1BID area includes St Ann's Road and parts of College Road, Station Road, Kymberly Road, Greenhill Way Car Park, and one address respectively on Gayton Road, St John's Road and Headstone Road. (Streets attached as a background paper). The geography of the BID is defined by the BID board, the Board is chosen from eligible businesses within that defined commercial area.

3.1 The BID raises income from an additional levy on “all defined ratepayers” following a majority vote. The BID levy is chargeable on the occupier rather than the owner. The proposed HA1 BID Levy will be applied to rated properties in the BID with a rateable value of £30,000 or more. This will exempt small businesses. The levy will be a fixed rate of 2% Rateable Value as at 1 April 2024 using the 2023 list for all eligible rate payers. This means that businesses that qualify to pay the levy, will pay no more than they did between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2024. The BID levy will raise circa £330,000 per annum to be reinvested in Harrow Metropolitan Town Centre. The levy is collected by the London Borough of Harrow. The collection costs are met by the BID.

3.2 A BID provides the financial and management structure necessary to implement projects which have been agreed in a BID proposal (business plan). The Proposal is developed in consultation with businesses in the BID boundary. Eligible businesses will then vote in favour or against the establishment of a BID.

Current situation

4. On the 14th July 2023 the HA1BD Board wrote to the Secretary of State, Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities stating its intention to ballot in accordance with the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations (2004).

4.1 The HA1BID Board wrote to the council on the 24th July stating “it will be seeking a third 5 year mandate by way of a ballot of businesses as indicated in the attached Notification of Ballot to the Secretary State.”

4.2 The BID ballot will be undertaken between the 15th November to 14th December, with the result announced on the 15th December 2023.

4.3 At the last ballot in 2018, 90% of businesses voted in favour of the BID

4.4 The London Borough of Harrow Electoral Services will administer the ballot and the cost of administering the ballot will be met by the BID. The collection and IT costs of collecting the levy will also be met by HA1BID.

4.5 A third term of the HA1BID will have no negative implication on resources or staffing. The systems are already in place should businesses vote in favour of a third term for the BID. However, the London Borough of Harrow will be required to pay the levy of £9,520 based on the following hereditaments.

Hereditament	Cost
Car Park at Queen’s House, Kymberly Rd HA1	£1513
Car Park (South) Greenhill Way, HA1 1LE	£2635
Vip Nursing, Pt 3 rd Floor, Kings House, Kymberly Rd, HA1 1YR	£773.5

Greenhill Library, Percival Sq, College Road, HA1 1AA	£3,128
3 rd Floor, Kings House, Kymberly Rd, HA1 1YR	£1,470.50
Total	£9,520

4.6 A Baseline Agreement between the London Borough of Harrow and the HA1BID sets out the baseline position for Street Cleansing, Refuse and Waste Collection, Street Lighting, Enforcement, Environmental Health and Greening (inspection and remedial work on trees). The HA1BID can use its income to buy additional work above the baseline.

Ward Councillors'

Greenhill Ward members have been consulted and support the HA1 BID.

Performance Issues

5. The Corporate Scorecard measures footfall and town centre vacancy rates. The information in footfall is provided by Springboard and funded by HA1BID. The town centre has seen a continued rise in footfall since the ending of trading restrictions imposed to restrict the spread of Covid. The town centre vacancy rates are lower now than in 2013 when the BID was formed. It is difficult to show a correlation between a reduction in empty shops, the activities of HA1BID against what would have happened without a BID. However, there would have been a reduction of over £3million spent on events to attract shoppers, and additional funding to address anti-social behaviour and street cleansing.

6. Risk Management Implications

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **/No**

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 into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
If the recommendation is not agreed, a vehicle to provide an economic benefit and raise additional funds to invest in Harrow Metropolitan Town Centre and also to provide a voice for businesses within the BID boundaries, would not be offered to the borough	Acceptance of the report's recommendations will mitigate this risk	GREEN

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
The HA1 BID secures a YES vote from businesses, and the London Borough of Harrow vetoes the BID, and any person who was entitled to vote in the ballot appeals to the Secretary of State.	The London Borough of Harrow votes YES	GREEN

Procurement Implications

There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendation of this report. Any procurement arising will be supporting by the Corporate procurement team and undertaken compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations and the Contract Procedure Rules.

Legal Implications

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were introduced by Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2003 (LGA 2003). Their establishment, enforcement and operation is regulated by the framework set out in the LGA 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 (BID regulations) as amended by the Business Improvement Districts (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Setting up a BID enables businesses to work together alongside local authorities to effect improvements to the area in which they operate. BIDs allow the local business community to obtain additional, environment-enhancing services through a BID levy paid to the local authority in a similar way to non-domestic rates.

BID arrangements are not to come into force unless proposals for the arrangements (“BID proposals”) are approved by a ballot of the non-domestic ratepayers in the proposed business improvement district who are to be liable for the proposed BID levy.

The proposers set out in their BID proposal the period for which BID arrangements are to run. The legislation sets the maximum period as five years. At the end of a period, it is possible for the BID board to seek to renew the BID (section 54, LGA 2003).

Renewal of BID arrangements is brought about in much the same way as the original establishment of the BID, through a ballot. A BID renewal ballot operates under broadly the same system as an original BID ballot, including the submission of a proposal for terms of the renewal scheme.

When a BID period expires, the BID does not have to be renewed in identical terms to the original arrangements. This means that there is scope to amend BIDs at the renewal stage, for example, by altering the BID area or the class of non-domestic ratepayers liable for the BID levy.

Under section 51 of the LGA 2003, the London Borough of Harrow may, in prescribed circumstances, veto the proposals within 14 days from the date of the ballot as may be prescribed. The prescribed circumstances are that the London Borough of Harrow is of the opinion the BID arrangements are likely:

- (a) to conflict to a material extent with any policy formally adopted by and contained in a document published by the authority (whether or not the authority is under a statutory duty to prepare such document); or
- (b) to be a significantly disproportionate financial burden on any person or class of persons (as compared to the other non-domestic ratepayers in the geographical area of the BID) and:
 - (i) that burden is caused by the manipulation of the geographical area of the BID or by the structure of the BID levy; and
 - (ii) that burden is inequitable.

In deciding whether to exercise the veto, the London Borough of Harrow is to have regard to following prescribed matters:

- (a) the level of support (as evidenced by the result of the BID ballot or re-ballot of a BID ballot, as the case may be) for the BID proposals;
- (b) the nature and extent of the conflict referred to in paragraph (a);
- (c) in relation to paragraph (b), the structure of the proposed BID levy and how the financial burden of the BID is to be distributed amongst ratepayers in the geographical area of the BID;
- (d) the extent to which the BID proposer discussed the BID proposals with the authority before submitting the BID proposals to the authority; and
- (e) the cost incurred by any person up to 14 working days from the day of the ballot in developing the BID proposals and canvassing in relation to the BID proposals.

If the London Borough of Harrow vetoes BID proposals, it must give notice of the exercise of the veto to the persons entitled to vote in the ballot, and a copy of the notice must be sent to the Secretary of State. The notice

- (a) must set out the reasons for the exercise of the veto, and
- (b) must give details of the right of appeal to the Secretary of State under section 52 of the LGA 2003.

If the BID proposals are vetoed by the London Borough of Harrow, BID arrangements which give effect to the proposals are not to come into force unless the Secretary of State allows an appeal against the veto under section 52. Where the Secretary of State allows such an appeal, BID arrangements which give effect to the proposals are to come into force on such day as the Secretary of State may determine.

Financial Implications

As The Harrow BID is seeking a third 5 year mandate by way of a ballot, there would be a one-off cost of administering the ballot by the Council's Electoral Services. This will be fully recovered from HA1BID. The BID levy will be collected by the Council on behalf of HA1BID. The collection costs will also be fully recovered from HA1BID.

As the Council has hereditaments within the BID area as set out in paragraph 4.5, it will also be liable for the BID levy should businesses vote in favour of the third term of the BID. This is estimated at £9,520 per annum, relating to car parks, Greenhill Library and Kings House. The levy will be met from the revenue budget of respective service areas.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Impact Assessment stated that the proposal to vote in favour of a third term for the Harrow Business Improvement District positively impacts some groups with protected characteristics.

The London Borough of Harrow is one of the most culturally diverse local authorities in the UK, with over 60% of residents being Black, Asian, Multi-ethnic or Other ethnic group.

Throughout the year, the HA1 BID organise events to mark a variety of celebrations and traditions which reflects Harrow's diverse community.

Council Priorities

Please identify how the decision sought delivers this priority. ???/

- 1. A council that puts residents first**
- 2. A borough that is clean and safe**
- 3. A place where those in need are supported**

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Jessie Mann

Signed on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 11 September 2023

Statutory Officer: Stephen Dorrian

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 14 August 2023

Chief Officer: Dipti Patel
Signed off by the Corporate Director
Date: 27 September 2023

Head of Procurement:
Signed by the Head of Procurement Nimesh Mehta

Date: 14 August 2023

Head of Internal Audit: Neale Burns
Signed on behalf of Head of Internal Audit
Date: 17 August 2023

Has the Portfolio Holder(s) been consulted? Yes

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: YES

EqlA carried out: YES

EqlA cleared by: Yasmeen Hussain

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mark Billington, Director Inclusive Economy, Leisure and Culture mark.billington@harrow.gov.uk.

Background Papers: None

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee: No

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OPERATING PROCEDURES for 2024/25 to -2028/29 BID

Dated **5th January 2024**

NAME OF COUNCIL

London Borough of Harrow

NAME OF BID COMPANY

Harrow Town Centre Business Improvement District Company Ltd.

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Schedules

Schedule A: Background to the BID Arrangements.

Schedule B: BID Levy rules as issued to stakeholders and described in the Harrow Town Centre BID Proposal 2024-2029 and published on the www.ha1bid.co.uk website.

Schedule C: Map of geographical area highlighting the areas covered by the BID, published in the BID Proposal and on the website. The BID Arrangements in Schedule C and Section 8 of this Operating Procedures Agreement describe the Council's procedures for how it will administer, bill and collect the BID Levy charges.

Schedule D: List of the Hereditaments within the BID area when the ballot was announced liable for the BID Levy, also published on the website as the Voter Listing.

Operating Procedures

Dated

Between

- (1) **London Borough of Harrow** (the “Council”) PO Box 731, Forward Drive, HA3 3RG, and
- (2) **Harrow Town Centre Business Improvement District Company Ltd.** c/o Management Suite, St George’s Shopping Centre, St Anns Road, Harrow, HA1 1HS

Recitals

- A The Council is a billing authority for the purposes of the Local Government Act 2003 which has made BID Arrangements in accordance with section 41 of that Act and is responsible for the administration, billing and collection of the BID Levy.
- B The BID Company is the “BID Body” for the purposes of the Regulations as defined therein and is therefore responsible for the operation of the BID and for using the BID Levy for the purposes of achieving the objectives and aspirations set out in the BID Arrangements.
- C Both parties wish to agree the arrangements by which the BID Levy shall be collected together with general arrangements as to the relationship to be established between the Council and the BID Company for the duration of the BID
- D The purpose of this Agreement is to:
 - Confirm the basis upon which the Council will be responsible for collecting the BID Levy
 - Agree enforcement mechanisms for the collection of the BID Levy
 - Set out procedures for accounting and transference of the BID Levy
 - Set out procedures for monitoring and review of the collection of the BID Levy
 - Identify and agree the baseline services that are currently provided by the Council in the BID.

It is agreed:

1 Definitions

Agreement means these contractual terms and conditions and schedules attached hereto.

Annual Report means a report to be prepared by the Council in accordance with clause 8.6 below which shall include, for the relevant Financial Year the following information:-

- (i) the Financial Accounts;
- (ii) the total amount of BID Levy Raised;
- (iii) the total amount of BID Levy collected;
- (iv) the total amount of the Deductions;
- (v) the total amount of uncollected debit c/fwd at the end of the Financial Year
- (vi) any proposals from the Council to help improve its efficiency in the collection and enforcement BID Levy
- (vii) a report including a schedule of all non-paying Stakeholders existing at the end of the relevant Financial Year and the enforcement action taken or to be taken by the Council in respect of such Stakeholders

Bad or Doubtful Debts means those sums which are recorded as bad or doubtful debts by the Council as a result of non-payment of the BID Levy by Stakeholders in accordance with the Council's usual accounting practices

BID means the Business Improvement District which operates within the area highlighted on the map in Schedule C and which is managed and operated by the BID Company

BID Arrangements means the arrangements attached hereto at Schedule C as amended from time to time in accordance with the conditions stipulated therein and the Regulations

BID Levy means the charge to be Raised and collected from the Stakeholders within the area of the BID in accordance with the terms set out in the BID Arrangements and the Regulations and to be used, subject to the terms of this Agreement, by the Council solely to procure from the BID Company the services and proposals set out within the BID

BID Revenue Account means the account to be set up in accordance with Regulation 14 and operated in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Regulations

Head of Collections & Housing Benefits means the Council officer responsible for the implementation of the Council's obligations under (and the management of) this Agreement

Chief Finance Officer means the officer designated with responsibility for the financial administration of the Council under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972

Contract Standard means in relation to the performance of any of the Services, carrying out such Service(s) in accordance with all relevant provisions of this Agreement and in compliance with all relevant Acts of Parliament, Statutory Regulations, Orders and Codes of Practice in operation from time to time

Deductions means the agreed administrative fee, relief, write offs, losses, refunds, hardship relief awarded, enforcement income collected in accordance with Schedule C and Bad or Doubtful Debts together with all other sums agreed with the BID Company as the Council may deduct from the BID Levy in accordance with paragraph 2 of Schedule 3 of the Regulations

Enforcement Notice means a notice to be served on the Council by the BID Company for failure to enforce payment of the BID Levy as specified in Clause 7

Force Majeure means any cause materially affecting the performance by a party of its obligations under this agreement arising from any act, events, omissions, happenings or non-happenings beyond its reasonable control including, without limitation, acts of God, strikes, lock-outs or other industrial disputes, war, riot, fire, flood or any disaster affecting either one of the parties hereto or a third party for which a substitute third party is not reasonably available;

Financial Accounts means a statement of all debits and credits made to the BID Revenue Account by the Council for the relevant Financial Year in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Regulations including the total Payable BID Levy for that Financial Year;

Financial Year means the financial year for the Council which runs from 1stApril to 31st March

First Demand Notice means the notice to be served on the relevant non-paying Stakeholder by the Council pursuant to Clause 7.1

Monitoring Group means the group to be set up to monitor the collection and enforcement of the BID Levy such group to consist of relevant Council officers and representatives from the BID Company as set out in the BID Arrangements

Operational Date means the date upon which the successful ballot result has been declared in favour of putting in place the BID Arrangements or the date of this Agreement, whichever is the later.

Payable BID Levy means the balance (in cleared funds) of the BID Revenue Account plus all credits and less all debits and Deductions made or to be made by the Council in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Regulations and this Agreement

Quarter means a period of three months from the start of each Financial Year and every period of three months thereafter

Raised means sums calculated and to be demanded by the Council as being due and payable by Stakeholders in accordance with Schedule 4 of the Regulations and “Raise” shall be construed accordingly

Regulations means the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 as amended from time to time

Second Demand Notice means the notice to be served on the relevant non-paying Stakeholder by the Council pursuant to Clause 7.1

Services means the services to be provided by the Council in accordance with this Agreement and described in Schedule A.

Stakeholders means the non-domestic rate payers liable to pay the BID Levy as identified in the BID Arrangements

Term means the term of the BID Arrangements as stipulated within that document and attached to this Agreement at Schedule C

VAT means United Kingdom value added tax or similar tax which may be imposed in place from time to time

2 Statutory Authorities

- 2.1 This Agreement is made pursuant to Part IV of the Local Government Act 2003 and Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all other enabling powers.

3 Commencement and Term

- 3.1 This Agreement is conditional on and shall not take effect until the Operational Date.
- 3.2 Following the Operational Date this Agreement shall continue in full force and effect for the duration of the Term.

4 Good faith Obligations

- 4.1 Both parties will act in good faith towards each other in relation to all matters arising under this Agreement and in particular (without failure to comply with the same amounting to a breach of contract) each party shall inform the other fully and as soon as reasonably possible of any circumstances of which it becomes aware which might lead to a necessity for a change to this Agreement, a potential dispute or any other circumstance of which both parties should be aware.
- 4.2 Any approval, act, omission, decision, requirement, agreement or any other step of any kind taken by or on behalf of either party shall be so taken reasonably and in good faith and any reference (express or implied) to period, time, occasion, amount, price or any other matter shall be subject to the qualification of reasonableness, unless the context otherwise requires.

5 Payment for the Services

- 5.1 The Council's charge for the provision of the Services will be £20,000 in the first year of the Term (excluding VAT), that sum to be reviewed at the end of year 1 and increased or decreased in subsequent years by the proportionate increase or decrease in RPI during the previous year should the Council so choose to increase or decrease the annual charge.
- 5.2 Following receipt by the BID Company of a valid VAT invoice, payment of that invoice will be due together with VAT thereon on the date of this Agreement and on the anniversary thereof in each year of the Term.

VAT in respect of BID Levy

- 5.3 All payments of Payable BID Levy made from the Council to the BID Company under the terms of this Agreement shall be exclusive of VAT chargeable in respect of the implementation of the BID Arrangements for which the payment of Payable BID Levy is consideration and such VAT shall be added to the amount thereof and paid in addition thereto upon production of a proper VAT invoice by the BID Company.

6 Enforcement Procedures by the Council for payment of the BID Levy

6.1 In the event that the BID Levy is not paid by a Stakeholder by the date specified within a demand notice, the Council shall instigate enforcement action against such non paying Stakeholder in accordance with Schedule C

6.2 Where the Council instigates Court action as required in accordance with Schedule C, it shall do so at its own expense and for the avoidance of doubt such costs and expenses shall not be a Deduction for the purposes of this Agreement unless and until such time as the Council successfully recovers such costs and expenses from the relevant Stakeholder on behalf of the BID Company at which time the relevant Deduction shall be the sum recovered in respect of the Council's costs in bringing the Court action.

7 BID Company Recourse in event of non-collection of BID Levy by the Council

7.1 In the event that the Council fails to take reasonable steps to enforce payment of the BID Levy in accordance with clause 6.1 above and Schedule C the BID Company shall serve an Enforcement Notice on the Council (such notice to be copied to the Monitoring Group) requesting that:-

- (i) it serve a First Demand Notice;
- (ii) it serve a Second Demand Notice; or
- (iii) it commence court proceedings pursuant to clause 6 above and Schedule C.

Within 14 days of receipt of such Enforcement Notice the Council shall provide written confirmation of the action taken or to be taken (including timescales for the implementation of such action) to recover the unpaid BID Levy to the BID Company and the Monitoring Group

7.2 If after serving an Enforcement Notice the Council fails to take the requested action within the specified time frame the BID Company shall inform the Monitoring Group of the Council's failure to act and request that the Monitoring Group arrange a meeting between the Monitoring Group and the BID Company and relevant Officers of the Council in order to achieve a solution and/or agree a strategy to recover the outstanding sum. Such strategy shall include a time frame within which action will be taken by the Council to recover the unpaid sum or sums.

7.3 If after serving an Enforcement Notice and attending the meeting arranged by the Monitoring Group pursuant to clause 7.2 the Council fails to take the requested action

within the time frame agreed during the said meeting then the BID Company shall serve an Appeal Notice to the Chief Finance Officer of the Council, such notice shall:-

- (i) Detail the sum/s which remain unpaid;
- (ii) Confirm that the Council has failed to use the enforcement mechanisms available to it under this Agreement to recover the sum; and
- (iii) Request that a meeting take place between the relevant officers of the Council and BID Company to achieve a solution and/or agree a strategy to recover the outstanding sum such meeting to take place in any event no later than 28 days from service of the Appeal Notice

7.4 Where the Council fails to attend the meeting specified at clause 7.3 (iii) above; or fails to implement any action plan agreed at that meeting within a period of 14 days from the date of the meeting the Council shall use its best endeavours and take all necessary steps required of it by the BID Company to enable the BID Company to enforce collection of the BID Levy which may include the appointment of the BID Company as its agent and/or the grant to the BID Company of the conduct of any litigation and enforcement on behalf of the Council.

7.5 In the event that:

- (i) the BID Company is unable to take steps to enforce the BID Levy itself by any method; and
- (ii) the Council has failed to use its best endeavours or taken all necessary steps to assist the BID Company in enforcing the BID Levy itself; and
- (iii) the total outstanding sum remaining unpaid as a consequence of the failure of the Council to take the appropriate action exceeds 10% of the total BID Levy for that Financial Year; then

the Council will pay to the BID Company from its own resources and on written demand from the BID Company the outstanding sums for which the Council has failed to enforce payment in accordance with this Agreement up to a maximum sum of £5k provided that nothing within this clause 7.5 shall prevent or limit any other claim or remedy the BID Company may have against the Council in tort for breach of statutory duty.

8 Accounting Procedures and Monitoring

8.1 Within 1 month from the Operational Date the Council and BID Company shall form the Monitoring Group which shall include the following representatives:

- (i) from the BID Company, the BID Company's Representative and Programme Co-ordinator (Finance); and
- (ii) from the Council, the relevant representatives from the Regeneration, Business Development Manager and Finance Sections as appropriate and the Head of Collections & Housing Benefits

8.2 Each month thereafter the Council shall provide the BID Company with a report which shall include:-

- (i) the BID Levy due and payable by each Stakeholder together with details of any refunds or credits owed by the Council to any Stakeholder
- (ii) the amount of BID Levy collected from each Stakeholder;
- (iii) details (together with the outstanding unpaid sum) of those Stakeholders who have not paid the BID Levy together with the Council's enforcement action or intended enforcement action in respect of such Stakeholders;
- (iv) summary details of any unpaid sums due to the Council from the BID Company;
- (v) information any changes in the occupation of hereditaments liable to BID Levy and on any new Stakeholders.
- (vi) The balance then standing to the credit of the BID Revenue Account
- (vii) The sum being retained in the Bid Revenue Account for the time being in respect of Bad or Doubtful Debts

8.3 Within 14 days following the end of each Quarter both parties shall arrange for the Monitoring Group to meet for the purposes of:-

- (i) reviewing the effectiveness of the collection and enforcement of the BID Levy from the information made available pursuant to clause 8.2 above; and

- (ii) reviewing the progress in achieving the objectives set out in the BID Arrangements

8.4 The persons attending the quarterly meetings shall be the members of the Monitoring Group together other appropriate officers depending upon the matters to be discussed.

8.5 Both parties will also attend regular liaison meetings. Review of performance will be a standing item on the agenda. These meetings will be minuted and progress will be reported to the Head of Collections & Housing Benefits and the BID Company member in charge of the implementation of this Agreement.

8.6 Within 1 month from the end of the Financial Year the Council shall provide the Annual Report to the BID Company.

9 BID Company's Representative

9.1 The BID Company's Representative shall be such person nominated in writing by the BID Company from time to time to act in the name of the BID Company for the purposes of the Agreement.

9.2 From time to time the BID Company's Representative may appoint one or more representatives to act for the BID Company's Representative generally or for specified purposes or periods. Immediately any such appointment is made, the BID Company's Representative shall give written notice thereof to the Council.

10 The Council's Obligations

10.1 The Council shall, subject to this Agreement, carry out the Services in compliance with the Agreement. The Council shall proceed with all due expedition and diligence when demanding and collecting BID Levy from Stakeholders.

10.2 The Council shall administer the BID Revenue Account in accordance with good accounting practice and the Regulations and on receipt from the BID Company of a properly vouched invoice shall, subject to the Regulations, make payment to it within 28 days thereafter by BACS from the balance in the BID Revenue Account after due allowance has been made for Bad or Doubtful Debts.

10.3 At all times the Council shall provide the Services described in the Agreement with: reasonable skill, care and diligence; the utmost good faith; and to the Contract Standard set out herein and, subject as aforesaid, to the reasonable satisfaction of the BID Company's Representative.

10.4 The Council shall inform the BID Company's Representative promptly and confirm in writing if the Council is unable or fails to provide the Services or any part thereof, or if the Council is aware of anything of whatsoever nature which may hinder the Council from complying with the Agreement giving details of the circumstances, reasons and likely duration. The provision of information under this Clause 10.4 shall not in any way release or excuse the Council from any of its obligations under the Agreement.

11 Audit

11.1 For the purpose of conducting any audit investigation of the Agreement, each party shall throughout the Term provide all facilities and allow full access to the other or its auditors to:

11.1.1 all offices and premises for the purpose of inspecting records and documents in its possession, custody or control in connection with the Services;

11.1.2 all technology, resources, systems and procedures used or proposed to be used in connection with the provision of Services; and

11.1.3 interview its staff and officers.

12 Assistance in legal proceedings

12.1 If requested to do so by the Head of Collections & Housing Benefits or the BID Company's Representative, each party shall provide the other with any relevant information in connection with any legal inquiry, arbitration or court proceedings in which the Council or the BID Company may become involved or any relevant disciplinary hearing internal to the Council or the BID Company and shall give evidence in such inquiries or proceedings or hearings, arising out of the provision of the Services. The reasonable costs and expenses of and occasioned by provision of such assistance shall be paid by the requesting party unless the inquiry, proceedings or hearings arose from the acts, defaults, omissions or breaches of the party providing assistance.

13 Confidentiality

13.1 To the extent permissible under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, both the Council and the BID Company agree to keep confidential and not to divulge to any person without the prior written consent of the other party all information (written or oral) concerning the business affairs of the other nor any information which has been exchanged about the Stakeholders or about other third parties which it shall have obtained or received as a result of operating the BID. This obligation shall survive the termination or lapse of the provision of the BID.

14 Notices

14.1 Any notice or other written communication to be served or given to or upon any party to this Agreement to the other shall be in writing and shall be sent to the address provided for above or such substitute address in England as may from time to time have been notified by that party.

14.2 A Notice may be served by

14.2.1 delivery to the Head of Collections & Housing Benefits at the Council's address;

14.2.2 delivery to the Company Secretary at the BID Company's address specified above

14.2.3 registered or recorded delivery post.

14.3 Any notice served shall be deemed to have been validly served or given at the time when in the ordinary course of business it would have been received.

15 Intellectual Property Rights

15.1 Copyright in all documents provided by either party to the other in connection with this Agreement shall remain vested in the party who provided them.

15.2 Where under Clause 15.1 copyright remains vested in the Council, the BID Company shall have unrestricted licence to use such document for all purposes envisaged by or arising under this Agreement.

16 Health and Safety

16.1 The parties shall at all times comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act, 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 and all Orders or rules of law pertaining to health and safety.

17 Equal Opportunities

17.1 The parties shall comply with their statutory obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 which gives practical guidance to employers and others on the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment, including the steps that can be taken to encourage members of the ethnic minorities to apply for jobs or take up training opportunities.

18 Data Protection

18.1 The parties shall comply with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 so far as applicable to this Agreement and the Service and shall indemnify each

other against all actions, costs, expenses, claims, proceedings and demands which may be brought against the other party for breach of statutory duty under this Act which arises from the use disclosure or transfer of personal data by the other party or its servants or agents.

19 Force Majeure

- 19.1 Either party shall notify the other in writing of any Force Majeure event as soon as it shall be aware of it.
- 19.2 Neither party shall be in breach of the Agreement by reason of any Force Majeure event. Each party shall bear their own cost arising as a consequence of the Force Majeure event.
- 19.3 Both parties shall use all reasonable endeavours to secure the resumption of the Services at the earliest possible opportunity following a Force Majeure event.

20 Whole Agreement

- 20.1 The Agreement constitutes the whole agreement and understanding of the parties as to the subject matter hereof and there are no prior or contemporaneous agreement between the parties with respect thereto.

21 Miscellaneous

- 21.1 For the avoidance of doubt where any part of this Agreement is incompatible with the Regulations or any other regulations which the Secretary of State may issue pursuant to Part IV of the Local Government Act 2003 then such part shall be struck out and the balance of this Agreement shall remain
- 21.2 The headings appearing in this Agreement are for ease of reference only and shall not affect the construction of this Agreement
- 21.3 For the avoidance of doubt the provisions of this Agreement (other than those contained in this Clause) shall not have any effect until this document has been dated
- 21.4 References to the Council includes any successors to its functions as local authority
- 21.5 References to statutes, bye laws, regulations, orders, delegated legislation shall include any such instrument re-enacting or made pursuant to the same power

22 Exercise of the Council's Powers

22.1 Nothing contained in this Agreement or implied in it shall prejudice or affect the rights discretions powers duties and obligations of the Council under all statutes bye-laws statutory instruments orders and regulations in the exercise of its functions as a local authority.

23 Contracts (Rights of Third Parties)

23.1 The provisions of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 shall not apply to this Agreement.

24 Arbitration

24.1 The following provisions shall apply in the event of a dispute:

24.2 Where a complaint is made against either party or a dispute arises in relation to any part of this Agreement which appropriate representatives of the parties fail to resolve within a reasonable period of time (complaints or disputes should be resolved at the lowest level, wherever possible), the matter shall be referred in writing to the Council's Chief Finance Officer and the Chairman of the BID Company. These parties shall then meet and use all endeavours to resolve the issue or dispute.

24.3 Where any dispute is not resolved in accordance with clause 24.2 above within 28 days of referral to the same, it shall be referred to arbitration before a single arbitrator.

24.4 The parties shall jointly appoint the arbitrator not later than 28 days after service of a request in writing by either party to do so.

24.5 If the parties are unable to agree within 28 days as to the appointment of such arbitrator then such arbitrator (hereinafter referred to as "the tribunal") shall be appointed on the application of either party to the President for the time being of the Law Society.

24.6 In the event of a reference to arbitration the parties agree to:

- (i) prosecute any such reference expeditiously and
- (ii) do all things or take all steps reasonably necessary in order to enable the tribunal to deliver any award (interim, final or otherwise) as soon as reasonably practicable

24.7 The award shall be in writing signed by the tribunal and shall be finalised within 21 days

24.8 The award shall be final and binding both on the parties and on any persons claiming through or under them

25 Amendments

25.1 Other than in respect of amendments to the BID, the BID Arrangements and/or the BID Levy in accordance with the Regulations (the definitions of which within this Agreement shall be amended to refer to the revised BID, BID Arrangements and/or the BID Levy) no amendment to this Agreement or Schedules shall be binding unless it is in writing and signed by the duly authorised representatives of the Council and of the BID Company and expressed to be for the purpose of such amendment.

26 Reciprocal Indemnities

26.1 The BID Company shall be liable for and shall fully and promptly indemnify and keep indemnified the Council, its employees and agents, against all liabilities, demands, proceedings, damages, costs, losses, claims, charges and expenses whatsoever in any way arising out of or in connection with:

26.1.1 the management of the BID by the BID Company; and

26.1.2 the injury to, or death of, any person howsoever arising whether in contract, tort or otherwise except and to the extent that it may arise out of the act, default or negligence of the Council.

26.2 The Council shall be liable for and shall fully and promptly indemnify and keep indemnified the BID Company, its employees and agents, against all liabilities, demands, proceedings, damages, costs, losses, claims, charges and expenses whatsoever in any way arising out of or in connection with:

26.2.1 a failure of the Council in the provision of the Services (other than a failure by the Council to take the steps and actions referred to in clauses 6.1 and 7 to enforce the BID Levy for which liability shall be limited in accordance with clause 7 above); and

26.2.2 the injury to, or death of, any person howsoever arising whether in contract, tort or otherwise except and to the extent that it may arise out of the act, default or negligence of the BID Company.

26.3 Both parties shall ensure that they have appropriate insurances in place to cover their potential liabilities under this Contract and in particular the BID Company shall maintain, continue to maintain throughout the Term, and provide reasonable evidence thereof to the Council, Public Liability Insurance up to a minimum level of cover of £5 million in respect of any one incident.

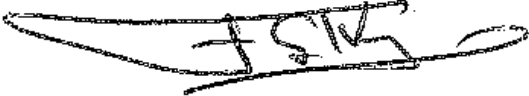
27 Applicable Law

27.1 This Contract is governed by and interpreted in accordance with English Law, and shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English Courts.

IN WITNESS hereof:
EXECUTED as a Deed by the parties on the date which first appears on this instrument

THE COMMON SEAL of London Borough of Harrow

was hereunto affixed in the presence of:



Fern Silverio
Head of Collections & Housing Benefits

Authorised Signatory

..... Director/Secretary

..... Director

Schedule A: Background to the BID Arrangements

On Friday 13 December 2013 businesses in Harrow Town Centre voted in favour of the establishment of a Business Improvement District to commence operations on 1 April 2014.

Services to be undertaken by the BID

The work programmes to be undertaken by the BID are outlined in the BID proposal and can be summarized as:

Town Centre Management

- Business leadership
- Influencing matters that are important
- Responding to alternative Centre's
- Reducing business costs
- Better communication, insight and intelligence

Promotion

- Clear brand & identity
- Increasing shopper numbers
- Events
- Seasonal lighting

Improving the Pedestrian Experience

- Collective voice
- Improved streetscape
- Enhanced enforcement
- Crime intelligence partnership

The BID proposal further sets out the year 1 budgets for delivering the work programmes together with a 5 year cash flow.

Who will provide the services?

The programme of work will be delivered by the Harrow Town Centre BID Company who will be the legal entity that will run the activities of the BID. The BID Company is a company limited by guarantee, the Articles of Association, of which, are available on request.

The BID Company has evolved from the Harrow BID Development Group, which led and championed the establishment of the BID.

Provision of a Baseline Agreement

A baseline agreement has been established between the BID Company and LB Harrow and was available for inspection during the ballot campaign to help inform the decision making of voting businesses. The document is available at www.ha1bid.co.uk

Schedule B: BID Levy Rules

- The BID term will be 5 years from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2029;
- The BID levy will be applied to rated properties in the BID with a rateable value of **£30,000** or more;
- The BID levy will be fixed at 2% of rateable value using the 2024 rating list as at 1st April 2024;
- The liability for the BID levy will fall on the eligible ratepayer;
- Charitable organisations in receipt of mandatory charitable relief from rates will receive **80%** allowance;
- The BID levy will not be increased other than that specified in the levy rules;
- The eligible ratepayer will be liable for the BID levy for empty properties with no void period - listed properties will be exempt;
- An inflationary increase of 5% will be applied annually to the BID levy
- There will be no VAT charged on the BID levy.

Schedule C: Map and Geographical area covered by the BID and the BID Arrangements

A map illustrating the geographical area covered by the BID is provided below. A list of those businesses liable for the BID levy (as provided by LB Harrow) at the time of the ballot are listed in Schedule D.



The streets incorporated in the BID are outlined in the BID proposal and can be found online at www.ha1bid.co.uk

Station Road: 182- 194 even, 276 – 380 even, and 229 – 381 odd
St John’s Road: property previously known as Cumberland Hotel and property previously known as St John’s Library
St Ann’s Road: All
St Ann’s Shopping Centre: All
St George’s Shopping Centre: All
Kymberley Road: All
Clarendon Road: All
William Carey Way: All
Greenhill Way: Car park
College Road: 2-134 even, 3-79 odd and Bus Station
Havelock Place.

Any new, developed or refurbished properties which subsequently enter the rating list will become liable for the BID levy provided the criteria for inclusion is satisfied.

Businesses liable for the BID levy

The liability for the BID levy will fall upon the eligible ratepayer. All rated businesses in the geographical area covered by the BID over a rateable value of 30,000 are liable for the BID levy.

As outlined in the BID proposal the BID levy is 2% of the rateable value using the 2023 rating list as at 1 April 2024. The BID multiplier is 2p in the pound.

The BID levy is a daily charge based upon the rateable value. The BID levy is to be paid in full in advance. The due payment is the 1 April of the relevant financial year.

The eligible ratepayer will be liable for the BID levy for empty properties with no void period. Listed properties are not exempt from the levy.

The initial list of non-domestic ratepayers liable to the BID levy will be set and available following formal notification of the ballot. This list will be updated with any changes to the billing authority’s rating list during the lifetime of the BID and any new refurbished or reconstituted hereditaments subsequently entered into the rating list after the BID commencement date.

Any property that is split or merged over the period of the BID will be liable for the levy if the new rateable value is £30,000 or higher.

Collection of the BID levy

The collection criteria is outlined in the BID Operating Agreement which has been agreed between the BID Company and the LB Harrow. The agreement can be found at www.ha1bid.co.uk

In the event that a business asks for payment terms, a decision will solely be made by LB Harrow. No interest will be payable on any overpayments.

Refunds

In the event that refunds are to be given, LB Harrow will pay the refund back by BACS payment.

Costs of establishing the BID

The costs of developing the BID are not included in the BID levy. The costs of establishing the BID have been funded by the existing BID and are payable upfront before a ballot takes place.

Charitable relief

Charitable organisations in receipt of mandatory charitable relief from rates will receive 80% allowance.

Alteration ballot

The BID levy will not be increased other than specified in the BID rules.

The BID arrangements may be altered without an alteration ballot in the following circumstances.

- An inflationary increase of 5% will be applied annually to the BID levy.
- The rating list is likely to change during the lifetime of the BID and as such those ratepayers subsequently meeting the criteria for inclusion within the BID will become liable for the BID levy. Similarly if a rate payer fails to meet the criteria during the lifetime of the BID it ceases to be liable for the BID levy eg its rateable value falls below the threshold of £30,000.

Term of the BID arrangements

The BID term will be 5 years from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019.

Commencement of the BID arrangements

The BID arrangements will commence on 1 April 2014.

Schedule D: List of Hereditaments within the BID area when the ballot was announced

See Schedule C for details of how changes in the BID area are dealt with.

Voter Listing							
Property Business Name		Property Address					
Debenhams Retail Plc	275-287		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TA	
Harrow The Hub Investments Limited	53	53-61	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BZ	
Vue Cinemas (Uk) Ltd	27	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2ZZ	
Marks And Spencer Plc	31	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU	
Bhs Plc	STORE D	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Primark	13	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Wilkinson Hardware Store Ltd	15	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2ZZ	
Jones Lang Lasalle	ADJ	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Ipsos Mori Uk Ltd		5TH -7TH FLRS INC 5TH FLR LINK KINGS HOUSE	Kymerberley Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1YR	
Next Plc	50-54		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LX	
Boots Properties Plc	16	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Mothercare Uk Ltd	80		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LX	
W H Smith Plc	STORE A	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
River Island Clothing Co. Ltd	1	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
H & M Hennes & Mauritz Uk Limited	STORE B	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
St Georges Harrow Ltd	MULTI STOREY CAR PARK	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2ZZ	
Zurich Assurance Ltd	76		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LX	
Dixons Ltd	3-4	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
St Georges Harrow Ltd	25	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Argos Distributors Ltd	57		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU	
T.K.Maxx	31	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
The Photographic Angle		2ND & 3RD FLS, KINGS HOUSE	Kymerberley Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1YR	
Boots The Chemist Ltd	9	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Halifax Plc	56-58		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AG	
Monsoon Accessorize Ltd	1	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
New Look Retailers Limited	273		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TB	
Benefits Agency		GND & 1ST FLS, KINGS HOUSE	Kymerberley Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1YR	
Linens Direct Ltd	23	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU	
Poundland Limited	38		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LA	
Hsbk Bank Plc	26-28		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LA	
Waterstones Booksellers Ltd	60-62		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LX	
Ag Retail Cards Ltd	35	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU	
Nandos Chicken Ltd	17	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Burton Group Plc	STORE E	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Iceland Frozen Foods Plc	368		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DE	
Deichmann Shoes	19-20	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
H & M Hennes Ltd	22-23	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Caversham Trading Limited	68		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LX	
Fitness First Plc	35	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Santander Uk Plc	64-66		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LX	
Coyle Personnel Plc		1ST FL, HYGEIA HOUSE, 66	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BG	
Barratts Trading Ltd	46		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LA	
A Levy And Son Ltd	42-44		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Town & City Pub Co Ltd & Bay Restaurant Group Ltd	269-271	YATES WINE LODGE	Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TB	
J D Sports Ltd	72		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LX	
Tiger Retail Ltd	5	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
C & J Clark International Ltd	7	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Arcadis Group Limited	7	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Natwest Group Property	315		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2RN	
Jones Lang Lasalle	FOOD COURT	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Spar UK Ltd		MEZZ FL, HYGEIA HOUSE, 66	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BG	
Shoe Zone Ltd	8	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Maplin Electronics Limited	342-348		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DR	
Ann Summers Ltd	16B	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Frankie & Benny'S Uk Ltd	11	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Lloyds Tsb Bank Plc	53		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU	
H Samuel Jewellers	11	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Holland & Barrett	12	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Phones 4 U Ltd	14	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Superdrug Stores Plc	297	297-301	Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TA	
The Photographic Angle		7TH FL & 6TH & 7TH FL LINKS, QUEENS HOUSE	Kymerberley Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1US	
Mitchells & Butlers Retail Ltd	335-339		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AA	
Sportsworld Ltd T/A Card Factory	32		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LA	
Sports World International Ltd	36		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LQ	
Wiser Retail Ltd(In Administration)	51		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU	
Tesco Stores Limited	303-305		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TA	
Benefits Agency		4TH FL, KINGS HOUSE	Kymerberley Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1YR	
99p Stores Ltd	304		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX	
Newman and Partners	373-375		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AW	
Mr Kurt Jansen	29	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Boots Opticians Professional Services Ltd	30		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LA	
Carphone Warehouse	84		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JP	
Arianya Limited	1-3	CUMBERLAND HOTEL	St Johns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2EF	
Brentpark (Harrow) Limited	321		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AA	
Foot Locker Uk Limited	34		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LQ	
Zales Ltd T/A Ernest Jones Ltd	15	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Hotels & More Limited		UNIT 2 5TH FL, HYGEIA HOUSE, 66	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BG	
Home Store	5	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
John David Group PLC	18	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Partners The Stationers Limited	9	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Graydon UK Ltd		2ND FL FRONT HYGEIA HOUSE 66	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BE	
Diablue Ltd	19		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU	
The Works Stores Ltd	29	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LA	
Costa Coffee Ltd		UNIT 1 119	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AP	
Telefonica Uk Ltd	24		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG	
Barclays Bank Plc	355		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AW	
Moss Bros Group Plc	21	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU	
Starbucks Coffee Co Ltd	6	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Britannia Invest A/S Ltd		PT 4TH FL, HYGEIA HOUSE, 66	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BG	
Westside Retail Ltd	7	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Spirit Pub Company(Services)Ltd	86		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JP	
Hygeia Harrow Ltd		PT 4TH FL, HYGEIA HOUSE, 66	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BG	
Orange Retail Ltd	33	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU	
The Body Shop International Plc	55		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU	
Vision Express Uk Ltd	21	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS	
Santander Uk Plc	9		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Farid Accessories Limited	22		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG	
Jessops Ltd	16A	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS	
Niruma Investments Llp	11-15		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG	
J D Wetherspoon Plc		THE MOON ON THE HILL 373-375	Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AW	

HARROW

TOWN CENTRE

Business Improvement District

Chelsea Building Society	16		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG
Carphone Warehouse	20		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG
Lloyds Bank Ltd	286-292		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2EA
3g Uk Ltd	3GUK 46A		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LA
Kilomile Limited	18		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG
Optika Ltd,		4TH FL & 4TH FL LINK, QUEENS HOUSE	Kymberry Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1YR
The Photographic Angle		3RD FLR QUEENS HOUSE	Kymberry Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1YD
Café Nero	27	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LA
Vodafone Limited	48		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JX
Spring Retail Ltd	8	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS
London Borough Of Harrow		QUEENS HOUSE	Kymberry Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1NJ
Lawrence Grant Ltd		2ND FL REAR HYGEIA HOUSE 66	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BE
Ablethrid Ltd (In Administration)	12		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG
Nandos Chicken Ltd	300		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Claire's Accessories	2	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS
Act Teleconferencing Ltd		PT 3RD FL SOUTH, HYGEIA HOUSE, 66-68	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BG
East End Cosmetics Ltd,	2		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG
Harvey & Thompson	14	Gnd Flr	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG
Prezzo Plc	26	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS
Burton Group Ltd	314		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Asia T.V. Limited		SUITE B PT 3RD FLR, HYGEIA HOUSE 66-68	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BG
Pizza Express (Restaurants) Ltd	28	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS
Savers Health And Beauty Ltd	336-338		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DR
St Georges Harrow Ltd	24	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS
London Borough Of Harrow		CAR PARK (S), GREENHILL WAY	Greenhill Way	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LE
The Carphone Warehouse Ltd	59		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JU
Rivara Ltd	4		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG
Ablethrid Ltd	10		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1JG
T Mobile Uk Retail Limited	3	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS
Instant Cash Loans Ltd T/A The Money Shop	8		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG
Mochi Ltd T/A Esquires Coffee	Atrium Kiosk 2	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS
I Bet Services T/A Bet 90 Ltd	347-349		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AA
Toni And Guy Harrow Ltd	4	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS
Greggs Plc	6		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG
Robert Dyas Ltd	318		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Carphone Warehouse Ltd	351		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AW
Royal Bank Of Scotland Plc	354		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DE
Mrs Vahide Bektas	309		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TA
Coralis Estates Ltd	311		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TA
Luxury Leisure	312		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Amberstar Ltd		THE FAT CONTROLLER 362-366	Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DE
Bon Marche	323		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AA
Virgin Money Plc	307		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TA
Blacks Outdoor Retail Ltd	316		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Power Leisure Plc	330-332		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DR
Halifax College Ltd(in Liquidation)	11-15		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LG
K & G Restaurants Ltd T/A Macdonalds	361		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AW
Royal Mail Group Plc	14		College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BQ
Danmerc		UNIT 1 5TH FL, HYGEIA HOUSE, 66	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BG
Tfi Group Property		OMNIBUS STATION	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BY
William Hill Organisation Ltd	320		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Tcm Care Ltd T/A Dr Herbs	13A	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS
Centrica Plc		GND & 1ST FL 329-331	Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AA
Rydon Maintenance Ltd		GND FL REAR, HYGEIA HOUSE, 66	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1FD
Beauty 4 You Ltd	13B	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS
Rydon Maintenance Ltd	66-68	GND FL REAR, HYGEIA HOUSE	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1FD
Raw Mango Limited	190-194		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2RH
Frankie & Benny'S Uk Ltd	12	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS
Aims Vignani Dada Bhagwan Foundation		1ST FL COLLEGE HOUSE	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BA
Centrestyle 1 Ltd	26-28		College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BE
The Photographic Angle		1ST FL QUEENS HOUSE	Kymberry Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1YR
Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society	322		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Nationwide Building Society	325		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AA
Pizza Hut (Uk) Ltd	370-372		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DE
Albermarle & Bond Jewellers & Pawnbrokers Ltd	313		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TA
The Photographic Angle		6TH FL, QUEENS HOUSE	Kymberry Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1US
Nationwide Building Society		1st Floor 327	Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AA
Sproull & Co		1ST FL 31-33	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BA
Kish Seven Ltd		2ND FL, QUEENS HOUSE	Kymberry Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1YR
Cards N Gifts Ltd	291		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TA
Specsavers Superstores Ltd	289		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2TA
C E X Limited	282		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2EA
The Photographic Angle		2ND FL LINK, QUEENS HOUSE	Kymberry Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1YR
Avanta Properties Ltd	79	ROOM 501 5TH FLR	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BQ
Skipton Building Society	352		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DE
Traid Ltd	324D		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
M & M Hair And Beauty Limited	280		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2EA
L C P Real Estate Ltd	326	TRINITY HOUSE 1ST FLR	Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DR
St Anns Shop Ctr Gp Ltd Acting For St Anns Shop Ctr L	KIOSK VO 5	ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AS
Charter Construction Plc	1-9	2ND FLR	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LQ
Critical Business Functions Ltd	326	TRINITY HOUSE 2ND FLR	Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DR
Aston Brooke Solicitors	9-11		St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LQ
Dinemart Ltd T/As Cafe Express	278		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2EA
European Retails Ltd	317		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AA
Chocco Ltd	324		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Thomas Cook Group Ltd	324C		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
The Perfume Shop		THE PERFUME SHOP, MALL KIOSK, ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AR
Nottingham County Council	1-9	3RD FLR	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1LQ
Millies Cookies Ltd		MALL KIOSK, ST ANNS CENTRE	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AR
Nottingham County Council	1-9	3RD FLR	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1AR
Harvey & Thompson Ltd	324B		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Fcm Master Franchise Ltd	294		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Sue Ryder	324A		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Tui Uk Ltd	334		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Brentpark (Harrow) Limited		1ST & 2ND FLOORS 3321A	Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DR
T/As Trinity Bar		TRINITY BAR, 375A	Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DE
Ladbrokes Betting & Gaming Limited	340		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DR
Tabs Training Ltd		GND FL LEFT, HYGEIA HOUSE, 66-68	College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BG
Thorntons Plc	10	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS
Brian Cox Estate Agents	310		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2DX
Costa Coffee	63		College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1FD
Tfs Stores Ltd	2	ST GEORGES	St Anns Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1HS
Coral Racing Ltd	379		Station Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 2AR
Artisan Haircutters Ltd	6		College Road	Harrow	Midxx	HA1 1BE

HARROW
TOWN CENTRE
Business Improvement District

For further information contact:

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Louise Baxter: louise@ha1bid.co.uk Telephone: 020 8863 9933
www.ha1bid.co.uk/bid-renewal

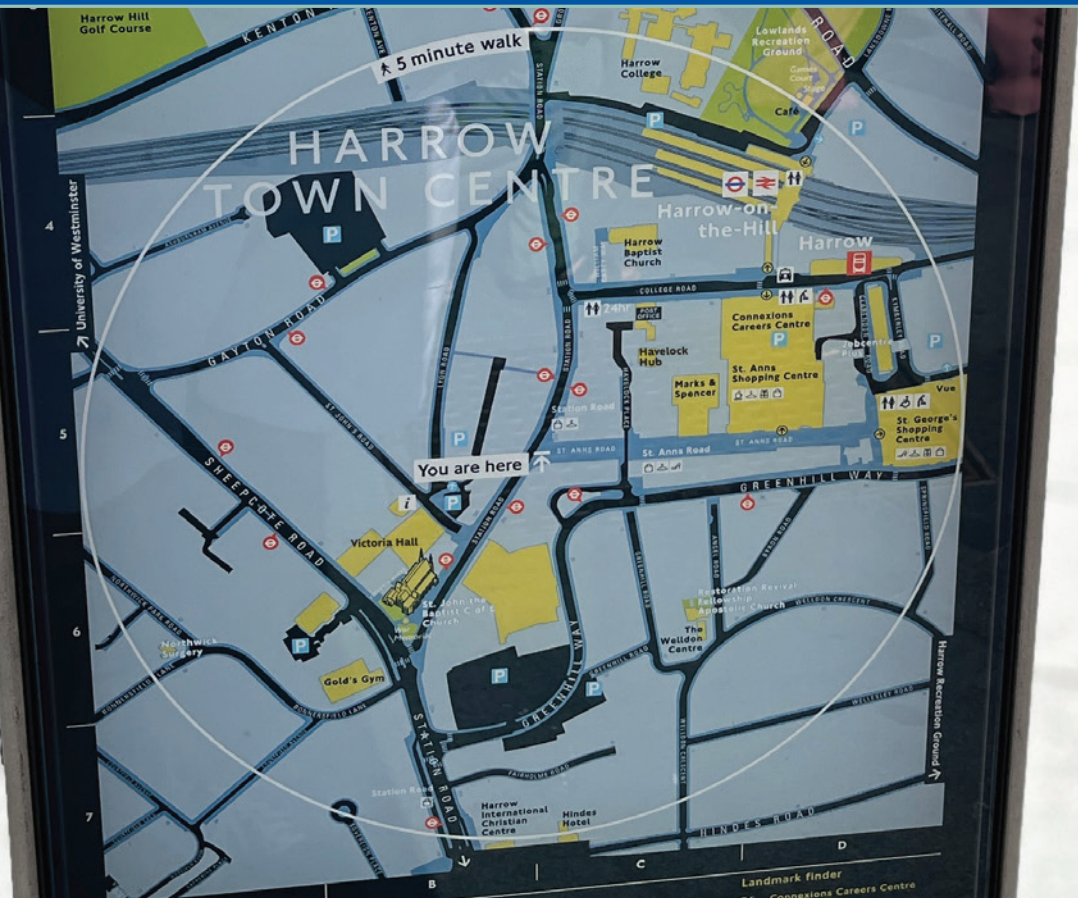
HARROW
TOWN CENTRE
Business Improvement District

BID Renewal
2024-2029
Business Plan



Vote 'yes' to The Harrow Town Centre BID

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Foreword

This Business Plan is the Harrow Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) £1.5 million, five-year programme of investment for Harrow Town Centre to enhance the sustainability and physical presence of the area and the range of services required to ensure that it looks and feels safe, clean and welcoming. It builds on the successes already achieved in maintaining the special appeal of Harrow.

From its inception as a Business Improvement District (BID) in 2014, The Harrow BID has sought to embrace its members and the wider business community behind a shared vision for Harrow Town Centre. Every five years we undertake a mandatory ballot for the BID area, where we ask our members to vote on our proposal for the Town Centre BID.

Our action plan is outlined in this document. We invite you to read it, before casting your vote in the November 2023 ballot, to fully understand how your business and trading environment can benefit from the BID.

During the past decade we have developed the BID's services and offer to best meet our members' needs; from keeping the area safe and clean, to promoting and marketing the Town Centre as a vibrant hub. The cost of living crisis, weakening of department and chain stores and increased competition from internet shopping have all provided challenges we have worked hard to mitigate. In particular we worked tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting existing services to be able to offer the best response for the membership and the area as a whole.

Our success was substantiated by our most recent ballot result. In 2019, a ballot of members voted in the BID's favour by a 99% majority.

Since our establishment in 2014, we have matured in our influence and ability to effect positive change and delivered tangible results. And whilst we are a not-for-profit organisation, we have adopted a commercial approach to our work and relentlessly pursue return on investment for our members.

Throughout our lifespan we have invested a total of £3 million of BID levy directly into the area to address the shared priorities of our members. During the past decade the Harrow Town Centre BID has provided a formal mechanism to provide enhanced leverage, investment, sustainability, profile, operational and promotional activity, and scale and budget to the overall management of Harrow Town Centre - benefiting its member businesses and the wider community.

In everything we do, we will continue to be ambitious, embracing the changes taking place whilst protecting the essence of what makes Harrow Town Centre a great place to be. We will continue to develop our work with partners and ensure that our members benefit from both a vibrant and commercially successful destination of choice.

Another 'YES' vote in the November 2023 ballot will allow us to deliver on our 2024-2029 Business Plan. A five-year plan developed in response to our members' and wider stakeholders' shared priorities which will help drive Harrow Town Centre towards a renewed and prosperous future.

LOUISE BAXTER
Harrow Town Centre BID Manager

DARREN HARMAN
Chairman 2019-23

ADAM DURRANT
Chairman 2024

About Us

The Harrow Town Centre BID is a Business Improvement District representing c200 businesses in Harrow Town Centre.

Business Improvement Districts are not-for-profit partnerships, in which the local businesses have voted to invest together to improve the environment of their local area. A BID is brought in through a democratic ballot process and the services provided are additional to those delivered by the statutory authorities.

There are c350 BIDs in the UK, and growing, suggesting an increasing benefit to the local business communities where BIDs are operating. The total annual BID levy currently raised across the UK is c£110m which leverages around £175m when including investment raised from local economic partnerships and commercial activity. The typical number of businesses within a BID is 200-400.

The overall success rate for BID ballots since their inception in 2005 is over 95%.

Through partnership and engagement the Harrow BID helps to create and enhance an economically vibrant destination, offering tangible and collective benefits to business and those that work, live and visit Harrow Town Centre. Since 2014 we have invested over £3m of BID levy directly into the area to support the themes and shared priorities of our members. Over that period we have matured in our influence and ability to affect positive change, delivering tangible results and return on investment.

The Harrow BID provides the business community with a collective voice and the ability to influence and shape the future. It acts as a catalyst to promote public and private investment into projects which enhance the neighbourhood and delivers funding towards the delivery of services which add value to Harrow Town Centre and its business community.

The BID embraces a number of representative sector groups - Retail, Leisure, Office, Hospitality - within its governance structure, all of which contribute to the Partnership's overall decision making.

The Harrow BID will continue to provide a greater strategic context for business. It will galvanize the business community, statutory authorities and wider stakeholders with a common vision for the district and generate an enhanced income stream to benefit the whole area in terms of service provision.

Continued investment in Harrow Town Centre is not just good for businesses but for everyone who works, lives and visits the district. If businesses vote 'yes', this Business Plan will guide the district-wide activities of Harrow Town Centre BID.



“ BRILLIANT SUPPORT FROM AN ABSOLUTELY AMAZING TEAM. ALWAYS HELPFUL, ALWAYS CHECKING IN TO MAKE SURE WE ARE OK. GREAT PRESENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA. ”

Diana Plavko
The Bodyshop

The Past 5 Years

Performance Highlights

COVID-19 Response

Something not anticipated at the outset of our 2019-24 plan was the arrival of COVID. Throughout the pandemic the BID adapted its services to be able to offer the best response for our membership and the area as a whole. Our key focus was safety and security together with member communications. Over time, the focus became recovery with a priority on the reactivation of public space and providing greater confidence for returning businesses.

In partnership with Harrow Council the BID helped facilitate £350,000 support from the Council to fund the BID levy for 12 months during the period of COVID lockdown and initial period of recovery.

Safer and Cleaner

We have explored innovative and effective ways of working to ensure Harrow Town Centre is memorable and inspiring. Our daily safety, security and environmental inspections help make our streets safer, cleaner and more welcoming. We have reviewed how we manage and enjoy public space, what takes place and how it looks and feels - advocating change where necessary.



Promotion and Events

During the past 5 years the Harrow BID has organised a range of activity to both drive footfall and add vibrancy to the Town Centre.

Events have sought to leverage the retail calendar, complement the shopping offer and continually create news, content and reasons to visit. Our keynote event each year being our seasonal lights campaign.



The Past 5 Years

Insight

The BID has brought the membership together through business focused events to provide access to insights and commercial opportunities. Weekly newsletters reporting on footfall, town centre activity and industry insight have assisted businesses decision making and planning.

Our vacancy rate is consistently lower than the national average.

July 2019	Vacancy rate (%) ground floor units
Harrow	6.6%
South East	8.5%
UK	10.4%
April 2021	
Harrow	9.2%
South East	12.0%
UK	11.5%
April 2023	
Harrow	8.5%
South East	9.2%
UK	11.0%



“ WHEN WE HAD AN ISSUE WITH BINS AND DUMPING OF RUBBISH AT THE BACK OF THE STORE THE BID WERE A HUGE HELP. THROUGH NO FAULT OF OUR OWN WE ENDED UP WITH A FINE. HOWEVER THE BID WERE ON HAND AND WORKED WITH THE COUNCIL TO SORT THE SITUATION OUT AND TO HELP US APPEAL THE FINES. ”

Akin Avci
Hunters Home Store

Town Centre Development

We have provided businesses with an influential voice to stimulate change and where necessary resolve challenges and take advantage of opportunities. We have worked in partnership with and lobbied the Council to help support our business community to grow and flourish in Harrow.

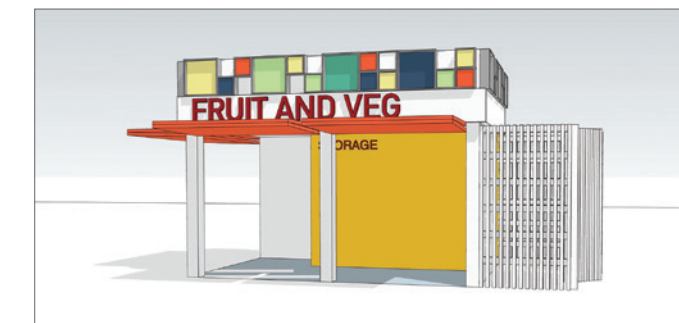
Delivered one hour free parking in Council managed car parks.



Greenhill Library



Kiosk Design Development



Why support the Harrow BID?

- ▶ £1.5m investment into Harrow Town Centre
- ▶ Return on investment
- ▶ Safer, cleaner, greener, more vibrant district
- ▶ A focus on increasing footfall and dwell time
- ▶ A more sustainable Town Centre
- ▶ Collective business voice on issues that matter

Meeting our members' priorities

The Harrow BID meets regularly with member businesses and seeks constant feedback. This input and the recent business survey has shaped the priorities for our renewal business proposal for 2024-2029.

Businesses in Harrow seek a... Safe and Secure District

What happens if the BID is not renewed?

We will lose:

- ▶ £1.5m Town Centre Investment
- ▶ The BID Team
- ▶ Business leadership and advocacy
- ▶ Harrow Business Against Crime
- ▶ Ambassador Services
- ▶ Events and promotional programme
- ▶ Christmas Lights

If there is a **NO vote** we will not have the resource to fund the activities outlined in this plan or indeed those undertaken for the past five years.

A **YES vote** opens the door for the private and public sector to work together with a meaningful resource that can help maintain a vibrant town centre and make ongoing development happen.

HARROW BUSINESS AGAINST CRIME



STREET WARDEN TEAM



PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH THE POLICE



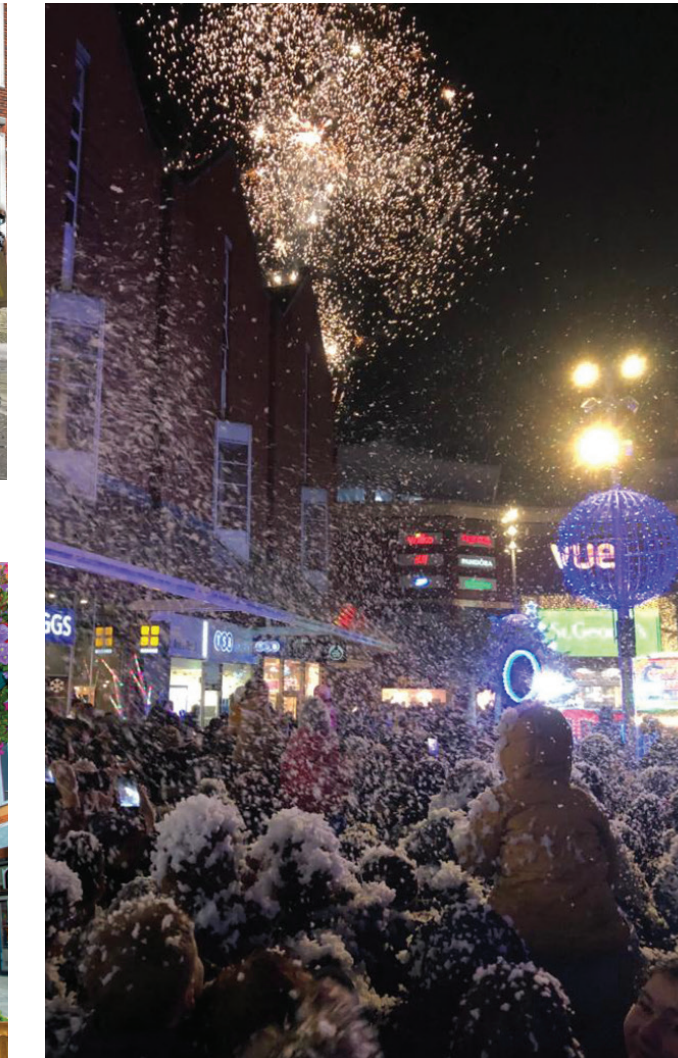
A CLEAN DISTRICT



QUALITY PUBLIC SPACE



EVENTS

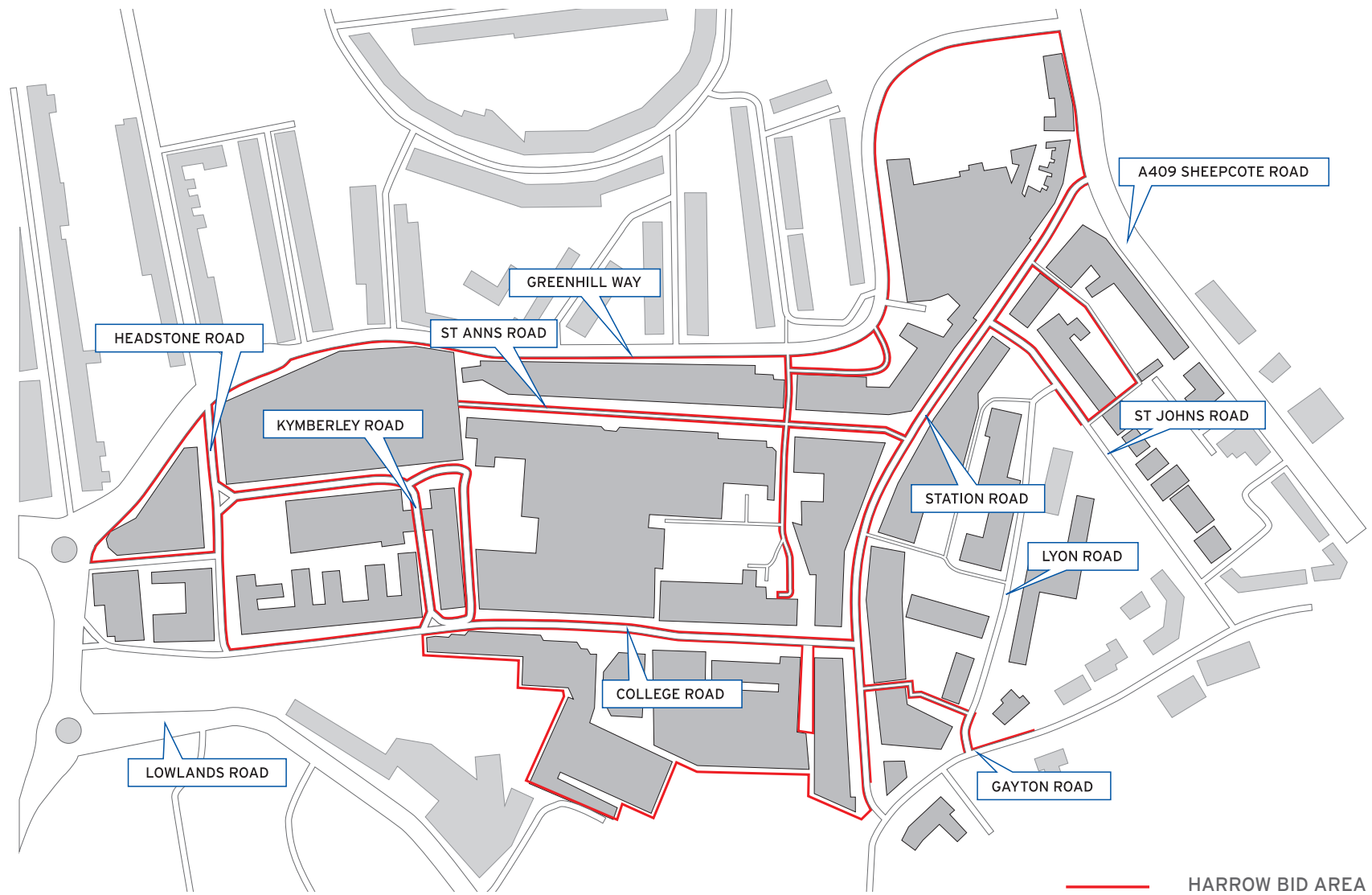


The BID District

All of the following streets are included in full or in part:

- Clarendon Road
- College Road
- Gayton Road
- Greenhill Way
- Havelock Place
- Headstone Road
- Kymerley Road
- St A Road
- St Anns Shopping Centre
- St George's Shopping Centre
- St Johns Road
- Station Road
- William Carey Way

The BID will engage with its neighbours to support projects that will benefit the wider area.



“ THE BID TEAM ALWAYS HELPS WITH OUR PROMOTIONS. THEY POP IN TO MAKE SURE WE ARE OK; ALWAYS WILLING TO HELP AND SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS. THEY PUT ON EVENTS THAT HELP INCREASE THE FOOTFALL AND THIS ALSO HELPS OUR BUSINESS PROFIT. ”

Adrian Matwiejuk
Card Factory



2024-2029 Our Ambition

As a destination of choice to maintain Harrow as a prosperous and vibrant place to visit, shop and do business.

The Harrow BID has an important leadership role to play, working with members to reduce the environmental impact of conducting business, whilst improving the economic and social sustainability for businesses and wider stakeholders alike. The Harrow BID will deliver collaborative activities which individual businesses often find difficult to achieve. Within our collective, members will have the opportunity to work with one another to benefit their business.

The Harrow BID will be a key facilitator in the implementation of sustainable programmes at a local level, co-ordinating public-private sector partnerships to implement activities that have a greater cumulative impact, and significantly, contributing to London's overall goal to become 'safer, cleaner, greener'.

Working in partnership with Harrow Council the activities of the Harrow BID will support the objectives of the Harrow Plan and support the delivery of creating the conditions for economic growth and investing in our community to ensure a sustainable neighbourhood.

“ I HAVE WORKED WITH
WATFORD AND UXBRIDGE BIDS
AND YOU GUYS ARE THE BEST. ”

Melissa Hollander
Waterstones

Action Plan

The Harrow BID provides independent business leadership and positions itself as the representative and authoritative voice on issues relating to the Harrow BID Area.

Our leadership and advocacy programme focuses on the role the Harrow BID will play in the broader strategic context, and the relationships and activities it engages in to influence on-going economic development. It provides business with an influential voice to stimulate change where necessary, resolve challenges and take advantage of opportunities.

The Harrow BID will continue to work in partnership with and lobby local government to help support our business community grow and flourish in Harrow. The BID will compliment Harrow Council's Economic Strategy.

Through advocacy and collective voice the BID will seek to:

- ▶ **Inform policy and respond to consultations**
- ▶ **Comment on proposed development and infrastructure changes, local planning policy and licensing regulations**
- ▶ **Respond to the climate emergency to help improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions and reduce surface transport and congestion**
- ▶ **Affect change on the issues that matter most to our members**

Work will focus on maintaining the BID area as a destination of choice which is safe, well managed and communicated and attracts high levels of satisfaction from visitors, businesses locating in the area and those choosing to work in Harrow.

The Harrow BID will help ensure that a quality trading environment is maintained and play a role in stimulating on-going investment. Harrow BID will help to maintain confidence in Harrow by talking up the town, its economic performance and overall potential. It will seek to attract new and exciting businesses and in particular independent traders that are increasingly faced with difficult economic conditions.

Insights

As a collective, the Harrow BID brings members together through business insight events to provide access to insights and commercial opportunities. Reliable and relevant information is key to understanding trends and essential to business planning. The BID will continue to provide intelligence through shared business performance monitoring and commission and collect research data to provide business market insight, such as the GLA High Street Data Service.

The BID will provide an opportunity for its members to engage in business-to-business activity through issue-led briefings, networking events, member-centric promotions and direct introductions; it will provide a platform for members to engage with industry specialists and fellow members from the business community.

A dedicated monthly member newsletter will provide updates on current projects, events, security and key issues impacting the area, and promotional opportunities for members.

The BID will provide a conduit with the local Council and Police to assist business in matters relating to planning, licensing, crime, waste services, cleansing and highways.

Safe, Clean, Green, Vibrant

Operationally the BID will focus its delivery programme on four interconnected themes which together will be effective in supporting and promoting the management of Harrow Town Centre and its business community, whilst reflecting any additional interests of the wider community.

These 4 key themes will be underpinned in their delivery by economic, environmental and social objectives - ESG.

Safe

A safe and secure working environment is a fundamental requirement and as such the Harrow BID will connect effectively with the Metropolitan Police, Council and business community to help reduce levels of criminal activity and anti-social behaviour while enhancing the perception of safety.

- ▶ **Shoplifting**
- ▶ **Aggressive begging**
- ▶ **Personal theft**
- ▶ **Staff assault**
- ▶ **Drug abuse**
- ▶ **Illegal street trading**
- ▶ **Working with schools**
- ▶ **Mental health matters**
- ▶ **Graffiti & fly posting**
- ▶ **Street lighting**

Our operations team will respond to on-street disruptions, referring cases to the Police and assisting members with antisocial behaviour and low-level crime issues. Through our peer-to-peer radio link network, members are informed of disturbances or threats, and can call on our operations team for rapid assistance.

We will play an active role in voicing members' concerns to public bodies through coordinated neighbourhood tasking meetings, as well as providing access to an online crime reporting system.

Harrow Business Against Crime (HBAC)

Continuing and strengthening our work with Harrow Business Against Crime (HBAC) we will continue to make Harrow a safe environment to visit. Working together with HBAC, CCTV and the Police, and with our business community we will keep our businesses connected and inform of new intelligence, trends and ongoing issues.

Reducing business crime in a safer environment will be a priority.

A key focus in partnership with the Police and Council will be the prevention and detection of crime and a reduction in business losses. The crime partnership will be developed, building on the work already undertaken by the BID. Radio Link and WhatsApp will enable members to share fast time information with each other. The Harrow BID will provide free crime prevention advice and equipment and could also provide a security presence in the town to act as a deterrent.

Street Wardens

A street warden service will be employed by the Harrow BID. Their core services will concentrate on reducing crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, monitoring the street environment, providing an additional presence with particular respect to visitor wellbeing and providing information to visitors and shoppers.

Our street warden will have responsibility for ensuring a welcome for customers and acting as an information point and ambassador for the town. The warden will be equipped to answer questions and queries about the area in order to promote businesses. They will act in a supporting role to all Harrow BID businesses and be a familiar face - a friendly and welcoming presence in the town centre to make customers remember their visit to Harrow.

Security

The BID will provide resilience preparedness training and play an active role in voicing members' concerns to the Council and Police through coordinated neighbourhood tasking meetings.

Safe, Clean, Green, Vibrant

Clean

The BID will promote and provide additional street management services in partnership with the local authority. It will work with the Council to improve cleanliness and maintenance across the district, measured against an agreed baseline agreement.

A significant portion of illegal and unacceptable activities that take place on the streets are regulated but often enforcement levels fail to curb matters in a timely manner. Our Operations Manager will provide services to help maintain and meet the demand for a well-presented and clean area.

The Harrow BID will work with the Council to help facilitate additional support when required. We will ensure the area's streets operate as they should every day. Our team will monitor and report on street infrastructure issues and street works to the Council and utility companies, while our Operations Manager will provide direct support to our members.

- ▶ Litter
- ▶ Street cleansing issues
- ▶ General refuse
- ▶ Damage to paving and highways
- ▶ Damage to street furniture
- ▶ Busking and noise pollution

We will instigate monthly monitoring of crime, anti-social behaviour and street cleanliness with the Council and seasonal monitoring of trees, shrubs and general greening within the Town Centre.



Trade Waste

In partnership with the Council we will seek to introduce waste consolidation and delivery consolidation schemes, saving businesses money, reducing carbon emissions and encouraging more recycling.



“ WE HAVE A GREAT
 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BID
 WHO SUPPORT THE SHOP,
 HELP WITH ACTIVITIES,
 CHECK UP ON ALL
 OUR PROMOTIONS AND
 HELP SHARE DETAILS. ”

Rajiv Perera
Yako

Green

Increasingly businesses are recognising their role and responsibility both in protecting and enhancing the environment in which they operate and the Social Value that can be created. The climate emergency is now higher on the agenda than ever before. The BID will collaborate with businesses to help them operate more sustainably and seek campaigns that support its ambitions on issues such as climate change, economic vitality and employment.

The Harrow BID will bring together the different activities of individual businesses in Harrow into a framework aimed towards enhancing the future sustainability of the area.

- ▶ A vibrant community
- ▶ Increased recycling
- ▶ Improved air quality
- ▶ Reduced carbon emissions
- ▶ Business resilience
- ▶ Reduced business costs through collective buying
- ▶ Assisting members achieve ESG targets through collaboration
- ▶ A richer outdoor environment
- ▶ Reducing the environmental impact of the Town Centre
- ▶ Work in collaboration with the Council and businesses, improving local employment and skills
- ▶ Seek to engage the local community into a CSR programme



Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is becoming more instrumental as a means of improving the local streetscape. In order to enhance the quantity of green space in the area the Harrow BID will develop, stimulate and encourage planters and hanging baskets, living walls and green space generally.

The BID will support and enhance the floral displays that already exist in the town centre to help make sure that Harrow looks smart, vibrant and seasonally there is always a reason to visit.

The BID will focus on creating a more pleasant outdoor environment for people to enjoy while helping businesses to reduce their environmental impact.

Safe, Clean, Green, Vibrant



Vibrant

Town Centre Development

The BID is working with Harrow Council who have secured £8.1 million funding for the town centre. The investment will be used for a variety of plans including new kiosks along St Anns Road, 'meanwhile use' in Greenhill Way car park, and linking the town up - particularly at night time.

Jan Kattein Architects have been engaged and have provided some initial draft drawings illustrating possible kiosk designs. The current traders including Key Cutting Kiosk, St Anns Flowers and the Fruit & Veg stall are being consulted so that designs can be honed to exactly what is needed.

The Council has also agreed to spend around £1 Million of the funding from the Future High Streets Fund on developing an exciting new project for Greenhill Way car park known as 'meanwhile use'. The plan is to develop a space which could offer a mix of affordable commercial workspaces, a leisure-led business open to the public, and attractive public space. The finished development will be leased to the successful operator who will be responsible for managing the operation of the site for the next 5 years.

Discussions are taking place as to what would be required to change the perception of the area, to attract people and increase footfall following the closure of Debenhams/The Landmark, and your opinions will help shape this fantastic project.

Additionally, connectivity will be looked at by improving pedestrian links to the town centre, specifically by improving the public realm along St Anns Road and routes both around and into the town centre, e.g. between Harrow on the Hill Station and the town centre along Clarendon Road.

This will provide an alternative link to St Anns Road when St Anns Shopping Centre is closed and along College Road to encourage movement of pedestrians along an underused part of the town centre; improving town centre severance by improving links from Pinner Road and Greenhill Way. The public realm improvements will also include multi-sensory design/adaptive sensory environments, power and water, bollards, lighting and signage.

Events

The Harrow BID manages an active communications and events programme. We will continue to promote and communicate what is happening in the town centre to targeted audiences; from local business and visitors to Harrow, to employees and the local community.

Our events, business collaborations and promotional programmes will make the area a fun and vibrant place to be. Providing engaging events to animate our streets, will give the area a sense of place, where staff and the whole community will be proud to work and spend time.

Working alongside media partners our social media presence will promote key messages about the town, events and specific business promotions.

The BID will also seek to ensure that all Harrow initiatives are conscious of the environment when organising and promoting events.

Specifically the Harrow BID will:

- ▶ Deliver the Harrow Christmas Lights installation and associated promotional programme.
- ▶ Enhance the Evening Economy by connecting retail and leisure offer and extending the trading day into the early evening.
- ▶ Build relationships with the Council and commercial partners to continually create news, content and reasons to visit Harrow
- ▶ Deliver promotional activity via social media, website, printed material and newsletter
- ▶ Introduce exclusive member-to-member offers and facilitate member collaborations, connecting the office community with retail and hospitality venues.

Measurement

The Harrow BID will provide evidence of quality management and return on investment through service delivery. Focus will be placed upon transparency, accountability, financial management and member engagement.

“ I HAVE WORKED WITH THE BID OVER MANY YEARS NOW AND THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ON HAND TO HELP OUT WITH ANY ISSUES THAT WE HAVE. THIS HAS INCLUDED ASB, BINS NOT BEING EMPTIED, ILLEGAL TRADING AND MUCH MORE. WITHOUT THE BID IN THE TOWN CENTRE I DON'T KNOW HOW WE WOULD HAVE GOT THIS SORTED. ”

Tony Izzet
Goodfellas Cafe

Governance - Evaluating the selection process and effectiveness of the board, directors and members of the Harrow BID.

Management and Operations - Evaluating the staffing structure, contracts, insurance policies and data protection.

Financials - Evaluating the Harrow BID financial systems, ensuring professional and transparent procedures.

Performance Management - Evaluating the methods used by the Harrow BID to review performance and ensuring the views of levy payers are communicated effectively.

Communication and Reporting - Evaluating the Harrow BID's communications activities, focusing on how processes and activities are reported to levy payers and how return on investment is assessed.

Finance

The levy that provides the BID's funding is governed by a set of BID rules.

When the BID is approved at ballot all eligible businesses will pay 2% of their rateable value to fund the action plan set out in this Business Plan. The BID will be in place for five years and all retail, leisure, food and beverage and office businesses at or above the £30,000 threshold of rateable value level will be liable for contributing to the BID.

Income generated from the BID will be ring-fenced to be invested in our BID area to deliver our business plan. Projects delivered by the BID will be above and beyond those carried out by public services through statutory provision.

The BID Rules

1. The BID term will be a period of five years from 1 April 2024-31 March 2029;
2. BID Levy will be applied to rated properties in the BID with a rateable value of £30,000 or more;
3. The levy will be a fixed rate of 2% RV as at 1 April 2024 using the 2023 list for all eligible rate payers;
4. Properties coming into the rating list during the BID term will be subject to the levy from the effective date that the property is brought into the rating list and the rateable value effective at that time;
5. Charitable organisations in receipt of mandatory charitable relief will receive 80% allowance;
6. Empty properties will be liable for the BID levy via the ratepayer with no void period;
7. The levy will assume an annual growth rate for inflation of 3% to be applied 1 April each year;
8. There will be no VAT charged on the BID levy;
9. The BID levy will not be increased other than as specified in the levy rules;
10. The BID levy rules and BID area cannot be altered without an alteration ballot.

“ WE HAVE SHOPS LOCATED IN OTHER BID AREAS. HARROW BID IS BY FAR THE BEST. THEY ARE ALWAYS THERE FOR YOU AND VERY SUPPORTIVE WITH ANY ISSUES OR QUESTIONS WE HAVE. THEY HAVE A GOOD VISIBLE PRESENCE IN THE TOWN AND NOTHING IS TOO MUCH FOR THEM. ”

Spencer Davis
Stag London

Budget

Income and Expenditure 2024-2029

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Income						
BID levy	329,000	338,870	349,036	359,507	370,292	1,746,705
Voluntary contributions	7,000	7,210	7,426	7,649	7,879	37,164
Crime Partnership Support	4,000	4,120	4,244	4,371	4,502	21,237
Total Income	340,000	350,200	360,706	371,527	382,673	1,805,106
Expenditure						
Clean	30,000	30,900	31,827	32,782	33,765	159,274
Green	45,000	46,350	47,741	49,173	50,648	238,912
Safe	80,000	82,400	84,872	87,418	90,041	424,731
Vibrant	50,000	51,500	53,045	54,636	56,275	265,456
Administration	50,000	51,500	53,045	54,636	56,275	265,456
Management	40,000	41,200	42,436	43,709	45,020	212,365
Contingency	32,900	33,887	34,904	35,951	37,029	174,671
Total Expenditure	327,900	337,737	347,870	358,305	369,053	1,740,865
Annual surplus / Deficit	12,100	12,463	12,837	13,222	13,619	64,241
Cumulative reserves		24,563	37,400	50,622	64,241	64,241

Figures contained within this publication are correct as of October 2023.

Notes to Budget

Budget figures are indicative, based on the anticipated levy income using 2023 rateable values. Assumed 3% annual inflationary increase and 100% levy collection rate. Levy income may fluctuate in relation to occupancy and is subject to the market at the time of the ratings assessment.

Allocations reflect current priorities; these may change causing variances and re-allocations across the five-year term. Any material variations of the budget will be approved by the Board. Contingency based upon 10% of BID levy.

Our management and overheads will be maintained where possible beneath the industry benchmark of 20%. We seek to leverage voluntary income, which will help enable more of our members' contributions to be allocated to work programmes, which directly benefit business and the local area in general.

BID Levy Monitoring

Through an Operating Agreement with the Council, a process is put in place to monitor the collection of the BID levy over the duration of the five-year tenure.

Within one month of the ballot result, the Harrow BID and the Council will set up a Monitoring Group. There will be at least two meetings of the group each financial year throughout the BID term. At each meeting the monitoring group will:

- ▶ Review the effectiveness of collection and recovery of the BID levy
- ▶ Assess and review management reports

Leveraging additional non-BID Levy Funding

The Harrow BID will seek to grow its voluntary members scheme and in particular leverage its activity towards the delivery of additional funding to support ongoing work programmes. This is with particular regard to public funding opportunities and commercial/corporate partners.

Business Improvement Districts provide an effective organisational model which bring together the business community, public authorities and property owners, to work for the benefit of defined locations.

The Harrow BID company membership will have two categories:

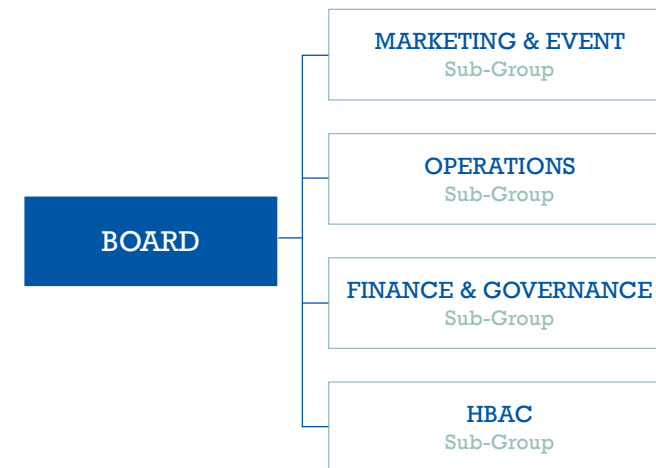
Harrow BID levy payers - commercial occupiers liable to pay the Harrow BID levy will be admitted to membership in accordance with the Harrow BID Company's Articles of Association.

Voluntary members - companies and organisations that are not Harrow BID levy payers will be admitted to membership of the Harrow BID subject to the approval of their application by the Harrow BID Company Board.

The application of voluntary members will be supported by either a financial contribution of a fixed annual sum (cash or in-kind) or their strategic importance to the delivery of the Harrow BID's business objectives. Key groups may include smaller businesses that choose to join the Harrow BID on a voluntary basis, property owners, the Council and the Police.

Organisation Structure

A Board of Directors will lead and guide the work of the Harrow BID which is chosen from the businesses which form the constituency of the organisation. The Board will seek a wide range of skills, experience and a balanced opinion.



The Harrow BID Board will meet quarterly and drive the longer-term ambitions of the company, as well as performing the corporate governance role, setting the strategy, overseeing the budget and monitoring performance. The Board will consist of a maximum of 12 Non-Executive Directors including the Chair.

Directors will be appointed by the Board subject to ratification by Harrow BID members at annual meetings of the company.

*Further details available in the Company Articles of Association

The BID Board

Retailer representatives at least 4 members
 Leisure representatives at least 2 members
 Office representatives at least 1 member
 Chair of Finance and Governance Group
 Chair of Marketing sub-group
 Chair of Operational sub-group

Observers

Observers can be appointed by the Board subject to ratification by Harrow BID members at annual meetings of the company. Key groups will include the local Council and Metropolitan Police.

Board Sub-Groups

To help guide the Harrow BID in this pursuit, Board sub-groups will be set up to encourage participation and help to add value to the decision making of the Harrow BID:

- Finance & Governance Group
- Marketing & Promotions Group
- Operations Groups
- Harrow Business Against Crime

Current Board members

Adam Durrant (Chair) - Metro Bank
 David Robinson (Vice Chair) - St Anns Shopping Centre
 Stephen Spence - The Junction
 Beaven Conniff - Wilko
 Vimal Patel - Boots Opticians
 Reema Mavani - McDonald's
 Thomas Russell - McDonald's (Alternate)
 Cllr Norman Stevenson - LB Harrow
 Mark Billington - LB Harrow
 Geoff Rimmer - St George's Shopping Centre

LB Harrow

A key relationship exists between the Harrow BID and the Council. Harrow Council is the main determining authority in respect of the streets and properties in the BID area. Two important legal agreements exist between the Harrow BID and the Council:

- ▶ An Operating Agreement which outlines how the Harrow BID levy monies are collected, administered and passed over to the Harrow BID.
- ▶ A Baseline Agreement which specifies the level of service provision in the area, ensuring that any services the Harrow BID provides are additional.

* To view the Operating Agreement and Baseline Agreement go to www.halbid.co.uk/bid-renewal

Voluntary members

Businesses of all sizes are important to the Harrow BID. The Harrow BID will maintain a voluntary membership scheme for businesses falling beneath the BID levy threshold or outside of the BID area.

This will provide smaller businesses the opportunity to engage with and benefit from the Harrow BID, while not being compelled to contribute a mandatory levy. By enabling businesses with a rateable value of less than £30,000 to provide a voluntary levy, we will be able to enhance the level of the annual budget.

Property Owners

Property owners in the area are encouraged to join the Harrow BID on a voluntary basis and help inform the longer-term objectives of the organisation. As set out in the member criteria, membership is on the basis of a financial contribution towards the overall management of the Harrow BID or towards specific projects the Harrow BID seeks to advance.

Wider Stakeholders

The BID has sought to embrace the wider community within its programme of work, which meets its stated aims and objectives. The BID will continue to communicate and work with the local community and provide an opportunity for wider views to be embraced within the Harrow BID's decision making.

Engaging with the wider community, those that work and live in the area will be an important part of the organisation's work plan to help deliver an improved sense of place for all to enjoy and benefit from.

Using your Vote

Make your vote count

If you would like to secure a further five years of dedicated investment in the area and the delivery of this plan, please cast your vote.

Following a successful ballot, the Harrow BID will begin its third term on 1 April 2024.

In the instance of an unsuccessful ballot, the projects, services and campaigns funded by the Harrow BID will be terminated. We will not be replaced by another company. Instead, the Harrow Town Centre will return to the statutory services provided by public bodies.

Voting process

Governed by Government legislation and regulations, BIDs are statutorily established once voted for by the majority of businesses in an area. They have a maximum term of five years before returning to their electorate for renewal.

A successful BID has to have 'buy-in' from the majority of those businesses who will finance it - both for a successful vote and also to ensure the partnership evolves in a positive environment. For a BID to be introduced, the ballot of business must meet two conditions: a majority in number of those voting and a majority in proportion of rateable value of those voting. The BID levy is then applicable to all eligible businesses.

When the majority of eligible businesses vote to establish a Business Improvement District, they create a legal vehicle and give it legitimacy as the voice of local businesses.

Throughout the UK, this combination has proved a powerful force for delivery of change.

From November 2023 you will be given the opportunity to vote on this business proposal for the renewal of the Harrow Town Centre BID. All eligible businesses will be entitled to one vote per hereditament. Some businesses occupying more than one hereditament within the area will therefore be entitled to more than one vote.

To ensure neutrality, the BID ballot will be administered by the Council's Returning Officer and Electoral Services staff. It will be arranged in line with the rules set out in the BID regulations (2004) as approved by Parliament.

Contact Details

To discuss this document in more detail please call:

020 8863 9933

to speak to Louise Baxter.

Full ballot arrangements are available at:

www.halbid.co.uk/bid-renewal

Voting procedures

- ▶ Notice of ballot issued on:
1 November 2023
- ▶ Ballot papers distributed on:
15 November 2023
- ▶ Ballot papers returned by:
5pm, 15 December 2023
- ▶ Ballot result announced on:
Monday 18 December 2023

The BID is your opportunity to have an influential voice and implement changes that will positively affect your business and help us all to promote a thriving Harrow Town Centre.

Working together with our partners and our local communities, we can ensure that the Harrow Town Centre BID remains a safe, clean, green and vibrant area which works for businesses and of which everyone can be proud.



It's your vote.
Use it.

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	26 October 2023
Subject:	Re-procurement of the Repairs & Voids Contract, Electrical Services and Water Hygiene
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Dipti Patel Corporate Director, Place David McNulty,
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Mina Parmar, Portfolio for Housing Councillor David Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Human Resources
Exempt:	Public with exempt Appendices 1, 2 and 3 by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information in relation to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information)
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All wards
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 - Repairs & Voids Specification (exempt) Appendix 2 - Evaluation Criteria Repairs & Voids (exempt) Appendix 3 - Price Evaluation (exempt)

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report requests Cabinet approval to exercising the renewal of the Council’s Repairs and Voids contract in respect of HRA and PAP (Property Acquisition Programme) properties, and the use of 2 public frameworks for Electrical services and Water Hygiene testing via delegated authority granted to the Divisional Director of Housing.

Recommendations:

- 1.2 Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Approve the re-procurement of the Repairs and Voids Contract including PAP properties noting that the contract would commence on the 1 July 2024 and expire on the 30 June 2028 with the option to extend for a further 4 years in periods of 2 years.

[The 4 year and 8 year revenue budget value are £17.96m and £35.92m respectively. Approval of capital expenditure of 7m, £1m per year within existing capital programme, from year 2 of contract. Total revenue and capital budget total £43m].

- 2) Approve the re-procurement of the Electrical Services and Water Hygiene Services Contract to all HRA stock and PAP properties, to be procured compliantly via a Framework in March 2024 for a period of 5 years with the option to extend for 2.

[Contract commencing on the 1 July 2024 and will expire on the 30 June 2029 with the option to extend for further 2 years. The 7 year revenue budget value is £3.51m].

- 3) Delegate authority to award contracts to the successful contractors for the above procurements to the Corporate Director of Place, following consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Housing and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Human Resources.
- 4) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Place, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to make any changes required to the procurement documents following approval.

Section 2 – Report

2.0 Introductory paragraph

2.1 The current repairs and voids contract has been extended to its maximum length and expires on 30 June 2024. We need to commence the work to procure new service providers, and this report sets out the timescale and direction the new contract will take.

- The re-procurement of the Repairs and Voids contract will allow the Council and residents to re-shape the responsive repairs service and to appoint new contractors to ensure housing repairs are carried out effectively and in a timely manner. The procurement will help ensure that the new contract offers a high-quality service and good value for money
- A continued provision of services as per our statutory duties as a social housing landlord.
- Appropriate time for the Housing Team to consult all stakeholders in detail. This also ensures adequate resources are put in place to deliver this to deliver a new customer led procurement exercise.
- This would include completely re-examining the service specification and associated documents required for a new tendering exercise to meet the high expectations of Harrow's customers.

2.2 There are a number legislative and regulatory changes within which housing services have to respond. Most notably:

- Social Housing Act (2023)
- Building Safety Act (2022)
- Changes in EPC standard to re-let properties.

The revised contracts will take into account these changes.

The decision on how the repairs service should be delivered in the future must be measured against our main principles for the service:

- Customer satisfaction – Improves the customer journey including, flexible appointments, high rates of first visit completions and clear communication.
 - Value for money – fits within the framework of the HRA, delivers reduced visits per job, and improve voids turnaround times.
 - TSM compliant – can deliver year on year improvement in Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) results.

- Help the local economy – creates jobs for local people and opportunities for local businesses to deliver our services.
- Local depot – provides a depot within Harrow to deliver the service.
- Ensure services are flexible and adaptable to change – build in control, flexibility and resilience to manage future change.
- Engages residents in service improvement

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) went live on April 2023. LBH will be required from April 2024 to report to the regulator the residents' satisfaction in several areas including repairs, safety checks and complaints. The results will be published annually and the Council will be included in a league table with other Registered Providers. TSM's are a move away from transactional surveys to perception surveys. Generally, when you move to perception surveys satisfaction tends to reduce as it can be based on several factors not just how good your last repair was.

- 2.4 The proposed timetable for the procurement of the new contracts will be fully compliant with procurement rules and allow for sufficient time to mobilise new contracts to coincide with the end date of existing contracts.
- 2.5 The condensed timeline for the new procurement is shown below: (this is an indicative timeline and may be subject to change)

Procurement Process	Schedule Start/ Due Date	End/Return Date
Publish UK Notice, Selection Questionnaire & ITT via the e-tendering portal	02/11/2023	02/11/2023
Clarifications Period	02/11/2023	10/11/2023
SQ Evaluation Period -short list up to the top 5	20/11/2023	30/11/2023
Moderation	01/12/2023	01/12/2023
Issued ITT to shortlisted Bidders (up to Max 5)	13/12/2023	22/01/2024
Tender Deadline and compliance checks	22/01/2024	22/01/2024
Tender Evaluation	23/01/2024	05/02/2024
Moderation	05/02/2024	05/02/2024
Section 20 Stage 2 Consultation	06/02/2024	07/03/2024
Internal Governance	06/02/2024	18/03/2024
Notification of Intention to Award	19/03/2024	19/03/2024

10 day Standstill Period – Alcatel Period	19/03/2024	29/03/2024
Award of Contract	01/04/2024	01/04/2024

2.6 A new specification for the repairs and voids service will be drafted to modernise the service in line with delivering on the key current issues:

- Minimising disrepair cases
- Addressing damp and mould within the properties
- Improving the EPC ratings of re-let properties.

2.7 The planning and amount of officer time required to ensure a new service delivers the level of service we need to provide to our residents is considerable. It is important the whole process is well planned and thought through to deliver the best outcomes.

2.8 Due to the Council's statutory obligations as a social landlord it is imperative, we have a maintenance contract in place to ensure the health and safety of our residents, including those that are elderly and vulnerable.

3. Options considered

In terms of the length, value and parameters of the new contracts an options appraisal was carried out to shape the new contracts.

3.1 Contract length

Various time periods were considered for these contracts, but it was decided to opt for an 8-year term. An initial period of 4 years followed by two 2-year extension options.

The rationale for having a contract of this length was that it provided the following benefits:

- A longer-term contract offers a larger value of turnover to any potential service provider and hence will yield better value from the outset of the new contract.
- A service provider will have the commercial comfort to invest in a longer-term contract and be prepared to invest more properly from the outset to get the service right with a view to yielding a return over the span of the contract.
- There is a significant saving to the authority both in cost and time of having to go through new full procurements more regularly. Also, there will be less disruption to residents with having to change service providers less regularly.
- A longer term enables a better chance to develop successful working relationships with a service provider.

- A longer-term contract allows long term aspirations to be shared and road-mapped from the start between both parties giving a much better chance of success.

3.2 Scope of each the contract

When considering the current contract and what elements should potentially be separated it is proposed to have one contract covering all repairs and voids work for the Borough.

In Addition to this main contract, it is the intention to award 2 separate contracts to run alongside this to cover via a pre-procured public framework

- Electrical testing to properties covering the 5 year rolling testing programme. This will cover communal/domestic and any identified capital works
- Water treatment works – covering all necessary legionella testing to water installations in Council owned properties. These scope of work looks at Water Risk Assessments and associated remedial works. The term of contract will be 5 years with an option to extend for 2 years

These contracts are proposed to be procured through existing frameworks which the Council can access.

3.3 Do nothing

This is not an option due to the statutory nature of this service.

The re-procurement is essential to maintain service to residents.

Doing nothing is not an option, as failure to have a contract provision in place for the delivery of this integral service could result in a breach of Health and Safety Regulations and our statutory responsibilities as a social housing landlord, as well as in breach of our internal governance policies and Contract Procedure Rules.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 In 2016, the Council let a 5-year contract to Slade and Wates to undertake the repairs and maintenance needs within the Council's domestic housing stock.
- 4.2 Within the contract that was awarded in 2016, there was an option to extend for up to another five years with delegated authority being awarded to the Divisional Director to approve an extension.

- 4.3 The maximum extension under the contract has been exhausted now. We have reviewed the current contract and what changes we need to make for the future contract taking into consideration changes in legislation.
- 4.4 This report follows on from the previous report requesting that Cabinet approve the current contract extension period. As above, new contracts are now required to be put in place as the extension is due to end in June 2024

Following on from the Asset Management strategy agreed at Cabinet January 2023, the service is aiming for a 'golden ratio' of service spend of at least 60% planned and preventative activities and 40% responsive activities, and that the direction of travel maintains a trajectory towards decreasing instances and the cost of responsive repairs. A key innovation in delivering this will be through incorporating up to £1m per annum of Capital planned works. The successful provider will from year two of the contract be required to submit an 'Annual Investment Plan' which based on intelligence from repairs volumes of the proceeding year demonstrates how through planned investment can reduce day to day repairs volumes and provide value for money to the Council.

5.0 **Current situation**

- 5.1 A brief internal assessment of the contract took place recently as a follow on from the Housing Quality Network (HQN) report carried out prior to the previous contract extension being awarded. The key themes of both of these exercises are expanded on below.

5.2 **Value for Money**

The HQN report has stated that value for money could have been improved on the current contract, rates were re-negotiated for the contract extension period to improve value for money.

- 5.3 The current market for repairs and voids main contractors is in a better position than it was immediately following the covid-19 pandemic but is still suffering from instability caused by high inflation and shortages in labour.
- 5.4 Ensuring that the new contract now covers the whole borough for repairs and voids, and is an 8-year term gives the Council the best chance to procure one of the larger contractors in the market place by presenting an opportunity of a good size of turnover and good longevity. Currently the repairs and voids service are split between 2 service providers and hence lower value for each organisation.
- 5.5 The benefits of attracting a larger organisation to tender for the new contract are largely aligned to them offering better value the other benefits are:

- The larger the volume of work offered under a new contract the better value service providers will consider when submitting prices.
- The larger the contract the more importance it will be from the service providers point of view and as a result they will put more emphasis on it being a success.
- A larger contract will attract the larger service providers who have better access to the limited resources and can support the contract with existing resources from other local contracts.
- A larger contract and hence large service provider will have better IT systems and be able to provide better data and integrate easier into the Councils IT. They will also have better Health & Safety and procurement systems.
- A larger service provider will have solutions to a range of problems that a smaller service provider may never have had to overcome.
- The potential cost to the Council from having to 'client' one service provider as opposed to two is in theory cheaper.

5.6 In terms of the method of valuing the new contracts it has been proposed that we continue to use a schedule of rates, the main reasons for using this method of valuing the works are below:

- Value for Money: Easiest way to demonstrate value for money as each task is priced against the original tender rate.
- Data: Because you are recording each repairs and voids task and the data capture in terms of what works are being done in each property is much more meaningful.
- Leasehold: It is the easiest way to capture data on what works have been done to pass on costs to leaseholders.
- More Repairs: The service provider need to generate more tasks to obtain a return and hence more repairs get completed. This is a key driver for helping reduce disrepair
- Specification: Using a well-defined schedule of rates makes it so much easier for clients to issue clear instruction to the service provider.
- IT: Often IT systems on both client and service provider side are driven by entering and using schedules of rates, not using them can result in costly work-arounds.

5.7 The new contract will be having an option so that service providers can carry out some planned works which arise from repairs or voids, it will be important to benchmark these costs against those offered by our planned maintenance service providers so the mechanism for moving planned into or out of the new contract works to the best value of the authority. It is intended to give the opportunity for the new supplier to tender for major from the HRA capital programme from year 2 of the new contract.

5.8 **Voids**

The proposed method for valuing the works done in void properties is to use the schedule of rates, this enables each task to be valued in line with the original tendered rates. The new contract will set out to ensure void properties are re-let in a good standard with one of the objectives to be not needing to go back to the property to carry out repairs. It will be important to have some sort of 'warranty period' for the works done so we aren't paying for repairs to be done on properties where we have paid out to bring the property to a good standard. A key part of the new contract will be improving the energy performance of void re-lets, from 1st April 2025 all new lettings will need to be Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) category C or above.

- 5.9 One of the key performance statistics will be to hold new service providers to account regarding void turn-around times.

A housing wide voids improvement group has already been formed to make some improvements and a number of initiatives have been implemented, such as appointing a single energy supplier, improvement of management arrangements and information management and monitoring overall.

5.10 **Improvements to Contract Management**

The new contract will have new performance measuring KPI's which will be agreed with resident involvement and tailored to providing easy to assess meaningful statistics which are the most important outcomes for the residents. The KPI's form part of the specification.

- 5.11 The implementation of an IT system called Civica-CX will improve contract management and new service providers will be required to interface into this system. Controls around costs and service levels will be improved under this new IT system. Further asset management modules which are due to go live will integrate with the repairs and voids service. The call centre will also be able to use new front-end diagnostic software which should help with defining the required repairs from the outset of the reported repair.
- 5.12 LBH have already started to address some of the issues raised in the HQN report. For example, contract surveyors have had contract management training. In addition, there is a Quantity Surveyor resource based in the repairs team to check relevant job coding and invoicing
- 5.13 The Council's repairs team will continue to audit repairs by calling residents and post inspecting works following the completion of works.

The new contract will ensure all the service providers operatives have the most up to date handheld technology enabling live time planning and updates, so residents can be kept fully informed regarding the status of their reported repair.

5.14 The customer experience

The existing service does have some excellent practice. This includes a bi-monthly performance review meeting with contractors, staff and resident representatives who also carry out audits of contractor information and processes (on site at contractor's offices) to review order information, this will be continued under the new contracts.

As above, one of the key issues highlighted by residents was service providers having to return to complete works and the resident not being kept informed, service providers will be required to put in place systems which provide residents with key updates at each point of the repair.

5.15 It is important we continue to improve how residents can report repairs to the Council and that this can be done easily. Further reviews will take place to ensure all modern communication methods are fit for purpose and that the call centre is operating in line with expectations.

5.16 HQN also advised that more data collection should take place at the initial call centre point of contact. Where possible Civica-CX will be designed to pick up issues of service provider performance such as recalls, missed appointments and unsatisfactory works.

A lack of this information also limits the data intelligence required to put the appropriate service development in place. Again, it should be noted that call centre staff are also not helped by the limitations of current systems and effective diagnostic tools (which are due to be upgraded).

5.17 Improvements are being made with repairs staff providing detailed training sessions to call centre staff. We are examining recorded training sessions which will compensate for staff turnover in the call centre. We are also working jointly with our colleagues in the call centre to improve the service and data collection.

5.18 Details of the New Contracts

As set out above, it has been determined that the main repairs contract allow for specialist service providers to bid on the main repairs contract. The electrical service contract and the Water Hygiene works will be procured via a compliant framework. Increasing the size of the main repairs and voids contract to have one service provider covering the whole borough should attract the major bidders in the market place and hence provide best value. Below we outline the key objectives and focus points of the new contract.

5.19 Key Objectives

When designing the new contract, the following key objectives have been identified.

- Transparent and clear data on the repair condition of all properties, we need a repairs contract which has clear accurate data which can update our Asset Management Data.
- Transparent and clear data on cost and value. We need to use a repairs and voids pricing mechanism where we can clearly report back to residents on what their money is being spent on, and the we are spending it prudently. This includes designing a repairs service which prevents costly disrepair cases being brought against the authority.
- A responsive repairs service is often a source of complaints even when being run effectively. The new contract has to be very clear on how complaints are managed and how timescales around responses are to be adhered to.
- We need a responsive repairs service where we begin to incorporate the views of residents where possible.
- Probably most importantly we need a responsive repairs and voids contract which delivers good quality homes for our residents to live in.

5.20 Social Value

New service providers will be required to commit to social value outcomes and these need to be agreed in conjunction with the Council, and both parties will work on achieving these outcomes. It is clear that this investment in local jobs and businesses is vital as Harrow moves through the current period of economic uncertainty

Service providers will be expected to:

- Have a local base/depot.
- Employ a set number of apprentices at any time.
- Employ local residents where possible.
- Provide work placements each year
- Commit to at least £15,000 per year for community projects which are defined and agreed by resident groups.
- Commit to training opportunities for the Building Futures programme.

5.21 Carbon Reduction

Key to any new contract will be the requirement that from April 2025 all newly rented properties will need to be an EPC category C or above. And from April 2028 all existing rentals will need to be EPC category C or above. It is difficult to ascertain the impact on a responsive repairs contract going forward. There will almost certainly be in impact on the void budgets with increased decarbonisation works at this stage.

Prescribed costs should be included in the contract for the common works that will need to be carried out in order to improve the EPC ratings of dwellings. These will include:

- Loft insulation
- Cavity wall insulation
- Triple glazed windows.
- Floor insulation
- Heating controls, efficient boilers
- Solar PV installation on roof.

5.22 **Damp and Mould**

Harrow Council has like all other social landlords faced a sharp increase in cases of damp and mould cases since October 2022.

In any new contract we need to consider how the service provider needs to be motivated to resolve these cases promptly and with a long-term solution. The new contract needs to cover:

- Costs for installing air quality monitoring within dwellings.
- How damp and mould issues which require planned maintenance improvements are either completed or passed into a programme of works.
- Response times and costs for washing down mould from walls and ceilings using approved products.
- Costs for installing positive air flow systems into dwellings.
- Costs of any specific team assigned to deal with these cases.

5.23 **Performance Incentives.**

Imposing penalties on a responsive repairs and voids contract usually has the effect of deteriorating the relationship between client and service provider.

Often the service provider will work towards not incurring penalties rather than delivering the objectives of the service. A better option is to consider incentivizing service providers to consistently deliver on the key performance indicators.

When thinking about suitable levels of incentivization, the service provider will aim to return 3-5% profit on a contract like this one, so offering a realistic chance to increase this by 1-2% would provide an attractive option for the service provider. In this instance we would look to reward good performance financially and penalise the contractor should they perform poorly.

These incentives will be measured against the new Key Performance Indicators.

5.24 **Disrepair**

The Council needs to urgently combat the high costs associated with managing and settling disrepair cases. How best to prevent this are now a key driver when designing the new responsive repairs and voids service.

- **More means less:** Service providers need to do a set volume of repairs in order for the service provider to be able to make the contract work for them, authorities need to embrace the concept by encouraging all repairs to be done to combat disrepair, the authority needs to focus on the quality works being completed and it being valued correctly rather than what exact works needed doing in the first instance, this represents a broad change in philosophy but ultimately provides a more complete service and will yield better value over the course of the whole contract term.
- **Accessing all Properties:** A key part of a new contract will be the aim of attending every property within the first 12 months. Seeing, assessing and recording the repair condition of each property is the key task in managing disrepair. A recording system which captures assessment data from each visit needs to be set up so this all encompassing approach can take effect.
- **Using technology:** Similar to the damp and mould works, using air quality monitoring equipment can help flag when the condition of properties is failing. Also, we need to start using video to record non-access so this cannot be disputed.

5.25 **Information Technology**

The new service providers will be required to fully interface with Civica-CX and to have open and easy access to their systems to enable full transparency around cost and service.

Key IT features which will be necessary for the new service provider to implement are shown below:

- All operatives will carry a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) for real time reporting and updates on repairs.
- Text alerts to be sent to residents at key point in the repair being carried out.
- Transparent performance data.
- Data analysis to pick up on repairs trends to better inform planned maintenance works.

5.26 The above may involve amendments to our repairs policy; we will need to define the type of relationship we want with a new service provider

and will need to engage with all key stakeholders around the changes above and ensure all views are incorporated.

External support (specialist consultants) will also need to be secured to assist in delivering such an exercise as well as considerable internal resources. This may come at a cost and will need to be built into future financial planning.

We will continue to comply with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (amended) A robust and rigorous tender process will (as above) take at least a year to deliver. We would also require adequate time to effectively mobilise the contract to limit any post contract issues. With time contingencies built in this would provide a new contract go live date of July 2024.

5.27 Property Acquisition Programme (PAP)

To meet the demand for temporary accommodation, the council has an approved programme to purchase properties on the open market, refurbish and let them as temporary accommodation. To date the council has purchased 167 properties for use as temporary accommodation, of which 70 are out of borough the majority of which are in Aylesbury.

Housing Services has an ongoing requirement to undertake void, disrepair work and repairs on both a responsive and planned basis for these properties acquired under the Property Acquisition Programme.

It is critical that the PAP empty properties are put back into use quickly and that Housing Services have capacity to undertake repairs, including specialist repairs as otherwise the Council incurs the cost of more expensive and less suitable B&B. Also the financial model for the PAP programme assumes properties will be let and rental income received to cover the cost of maintaining the homes. Lengthy void times will impact on the sustainability of the financial model so it is essential we are able to carry out works and let them as quickly as possible.

All associated PAP repair costs are recovered through the rents the properties generate.

It is proposed that the works for these PAP properties are included within the scope of the new Repairs and Voids contract proposed in this report.

5.28 Electrical Testing

The Council must comply with Health and Safety regulations and legislation across its housing. Regarding electrical testing of domestic properties. The Council needs to urgently undertake at scale an Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs) following on from a

notice received in March 2023 from the Regulator of Social Housing. EICRs are required at the start of the tenancy and periodically over a 10-year cycle – good practice is that this is done in five years. The total number of EICR's required is in the region of 4800 tenanted properties. The council will also be carrying out domestic communal area testing within blocks. There are 482 communal areas identified in our stock and we are currently 100% compliant in this area for this cycle of works. The council also carries out Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) across its sheltered schemes.

To ensure expediency a procurement Framework for Electrical Services was identified which permits the council to carry out a mini competition with ranked suppliers for Electrical services on the framework and the report is recommending their appointment.

In May 2023, LBH appointed WG Wigginton via direct award from the Public Procure framework to deliver the first tranche of 2000 EICR's up to March 2024. The intention is to now procure via a compliant framework to complete the remaining properties. By carrying out a mini competition we can ensure value for money before embarking on the next phase of works as well as future cyclical inspection costs within a 5 year cycle.

An EICR records the outcome of periodic testing of electrical installations. The process commonly involves a visual inspection of the electrical installations (e.g., broken power points) followed by a check of the integrity and function of the electrical installations (e.g., circuit tests).

5.29 Water Hygiene

LBH manage the water hygiene of 17 sheltered schemes and 448 residential blocks. These have Water Risk Assessments (WRA's) completed anywhere between 2 and 5 years on a risk-based approach. We are currently 100% compliant on these assessments.

LBH would look to secure a 5 years plus1 plus 1 contract via a compliant framework. This arrangement of directly awarding compliance works to specialist contractors as opposed to a term repairs contractor sub-contracting the work will better value for money.

5.30 Section 20 – Qualifying works under long term agreement

Where the long-term agreement includes provision for the carrying out of works to the property (for example, a schedule of rates agreement for general maintenance), and these works will result in a charge to any one leaseholder of more than £250, then a separate consultation must be carried out under the provisions of Schedule 3. The original consultation under Schedule 1 in respect of the agreement itself does not provide any exemption from consultation for the works.

Section 20 consultation will take place for any major electrical works identified on the capital programme. There is no requirement for section 20 consultation to take place for EICR and Water Risk Assessments and remedials.

6.0 Why a change is needed

- 6.1 As discussed in Section 5 of the report, the previous contract that was procured was fit for service at the time but the new contracts can now offer the chance to review how the service can be improved to provide better service, satisfaction, value and care to Harrow's tenants.
- 6.2 There are also many technical innovations that we now need to consider, to provide a streamlined process to Harrow's residents, as well as ensuring that we are working towards continued value for money which is an essential consideration for a contract of this size. For example live appointment tracking

7.0 Implications of the Recommendation

- 7.1 The implications of the recommendation have been discussed as above in Section 2, (Introductory paragraph), and at Section 5 (Current Situation). These have been summarised as below:
- We will continue to provide a statutory service to our tenants, some of those being those that are most in need/vulnerable, whilst embedding service improvements.
 - We believe that this new procurement will deliver the necessary modernisation and improvement to deliver essential services for up to another 8 years.
 - As discussed in Section 5 of the report there will be a new set of prices determined through the selection process and this may well result in higher prices for services being paid.
 - We will be engaging with our residents on the current Repairs policy and taking into account the Housing White Paper outcomes. Any changes or updates will require Cabinet approval and could take considerable governance and time to review and update.
 - In addition, we are gearing up for the installation of our new housing software Civica-CX, the new contracts will need to interface into this system.
 - We believe that this 4 years with options to extend to 8 years give the Council some long-term security around the service with the option to re-negotiate along the term.

8.0 Ward Councillors' comments

- 8.1 In response to the Council's commitment to continue to provide a statutory repairs and maintenance service, there needs to be a modernisation of the service.

- 8.2 Some Improvements have been put in place already and will continue to be implemented throughout the remaining term of the existing contract and into the new procurement.
- 8.3 Some of the uncertainty in the market has eased following the pandemic and initial fuel crisis. We acknowledge however there is still uncertainty around high inflation and shortages of labour.

9.0 Environmental Implications

It is the intention that the delivery of any new contracts will continue to contribute to the Council's objectives around social, economic and environmental sustainability. The Council intends to do all it can to ensure that its service providers continue to support Harrow's economy by encouraging spend locally wherever practical and maximise opportunities for local people in employment and training.

- 9.1 Environmental considerations have extra significance as the Council has declared a Climate Emergency. As such the Council have started moving towards ensuring carbon neutrality. With the Council declaring a Climate change emergency we will work together with all partners to ensure that measures we are putting in place are compliant with this policy, either by achieving carbon neutrality or energy efficiency in provision of materials transportation and recycling.
- 9.2 The new service providers will be required to sign up to the Considerate Contractor Scheme and once we are at the appropriate stage, our re-procurement conditions will ensure that tenders provide detailed information about their contribution to the environment and sustainability.
- 9.3 Specific requirements on social value will be discussed, agreed and delivered between resident services and Asset Management from the financial commitment to community projects contributed by the incumbent contractors. This will enable delivery of meaningful social value contributions within the borough.
- 9.4 Where practical the scheme will use products that will help reduce the Council's Carbon footprint. New service providers will be encouraged to engage with local businesses to ensure that materials purchased are manufactured ethically.
- 9.5 During 2023/24 we will also be liaising with the existing contractors about any potential for innovation for the duration of the new contract term that will feed into the Council's Climate emergency policy toward our goals of being carbon neutral by 2030.
- 9.6 The new contract amongst other objectives will:
- Monitor targets for employing apprentices and offering work placements and training opportunities to local young people.

- Review environmental performance in such areas of reduction of waste, reducing energy costs and reuse of products and materials.
- We will also explore further options for implementing the introduction of new technology to reduce our stock's carbon footprint.

10.0 Data Protection Implications

10.1 All personal data processed in connection with the contract will be carried out in full compliance with data protection laws including the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation.

11.0 Risk Management Implications

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? **Yes**

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

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

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
If the report's recommendations are not agreed, there may be insufficient time to appoint new contactors before the current contracts end creating a gap in services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the recommendations are agreed this will mitigate the • Procurement timetable in place overseen by a Project Team in place for this procurement which is monitored weekly • Regular update of Portfolio Holders and Members 	GREEN
Statutory services are not discharged as a result of gaps in services created by the re-procurement exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above • Procurement timetable in place overseen by a Project Team in place for this procurement which is monitored weekly 	GREEN
No suitable or acceptable or affordable tenders are received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market engagement indicates there are sufficient number of interested suppliers in the market • Prior Information Notice published to the market in August 2023 	GREEN
The potential existence and implications of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) have not been explored and identified in the re-procurement exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAAC is a very specific risk and we have already got a statement and briefed members on it. A very small % of our stock is non-traditional concrete build and we haven't got any records of RAAC in social housing stock 	GREEN
The re-procurement does not fully comply with the Council's Procurement Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Team in place with specialist procurement membership will ensure that this service is procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015 	GREEN

<p>The new specifications required for the contracts are not fit-for-purpose and do not meet the requirements of the Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Pre-Prescribed Schedule of Rates has been used to develop the specifications and this is a national industry standard 	<p>GREEN</p>
<p>The re-procurement specification fails to adequately define and evaluate value for money for the Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative Schedule of Rates approach will enable Value for Money to be identified by capturing/identifying market rates via the re-procurement • The Schedule of Rates are monitored and managed by the Repairs Team on the ground and on the job to ensure quoted process are adhered to 	<p>AMBER</p>
<p>Critical success areas for the contract have not been identified and are not evaluated as part the re-procurement exercise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Procurement documentation includes these areas which are voids, IT integration, de-carbonisation, social value, contract management, customer complaints and customer experience and KPIs and these will be evaluated as part of the re-procurement 	<p>GREEN</p>
<p>The financial and technical viability of tenderers and also their overall and wider suitability to provide services to the Council is not evaluated as part of the re-procurement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These will be evaluated at the selection questionnaire stage and the Invitation to Tender stage • We also run Dunne and Bradstreet enquiries to evaluate suppliers in these areas • 	<p>GREEN</p>
<p>The 4-5 year initial contract periods are overly front-loaded in terms of the contract period, and this de-incentivises the contractors to perform well early in the contract and also prevents the Council from exiting the contracts quickly should poor contractor performance or other factors warrant this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our contract management and monitoring protocols will address any potential for this in the early years of the contract and beyond • We will also take advice from Legal Services on the contract 	<p>GREEN</p>
<p>Residents are not adequately engaged or consulted on the re-procurement and the exercise does not include and deliver on their expectations as residents or customers of the service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leasehold Sect 20 consultation will be undertaken in relation to the tenders • We will also be consulting with resident forums • Resident and Leaseholder involvement will be undertaken in quality assessment of the tender submissions 	<p>GREEN</p>
<p>Repairs costs are adversely affected by limited investment in stock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock condition survey has taken place. • Stock performance appraisal will be delivered over the next few months followed by consideration of options for stock investment. • Ensure Capital Programme Delivered 	<p>AMBER</p>
<p>Contract management may not be effective leading to poor financial and service management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client led control on contract management. • validating contract performance data • call centre service delivery and improvements (i.e., more data collection at point of contact). • Contract management training for surveyors focussing on expenditure. • Implementation of a revised Key Performance Indicator (KPI) in collaboration with business intelligence colleagues. • Updating to Civica CX system will inform of more real time data that will be utilised to inform of trends/issues. 	<p>AMBER</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls in place to prevent job building – re disrepair jobs 	
Voids cost and turnaround times are high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes are being re-examined by voids improvement group to reduce turnaround times both internally and within contractual arrangements. • A housing wide voids improvement group as above has been formed to make improvements to the current process and a number of initiatives have been implemented to reduce turnaround times, such as appointing a single energy supplier. • Controls in place to review contract specs prior to works commencing 	AMBER
Lack of compliance contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the council’s Health and Safety compliance with electrical services and water hygiene services to be procured from public frameworks going forward 	AMBER
Moving from 2 Providers to Single provider. Business Continuity Plan if contract is failing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract will attract larger suppliers who can provide greater resource throughout the borough • Engage with compliant Repairs & Maintenance Frameworks • Transfer all works orders and Works in progress to new contractor to maintain smooth flow of delivery 	GREEN

12.0 Procurement Implications

12.1 The Council will run a competitive procurement process in accordance with the Councils Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015 to procure the Repairs and Voids Contract. It has been agreed that the Restricted Procedure will be followed, this is a two-stage process.

12.2 In March 2024 the Council will access a compliant framework to procure the Electrical Services and Water Hygiene Contracts

12.3 The Procurement Team will support the service area and ensure the future award is made in compliance with relevant governance and demonstrates value.

13.0 Legal Implications

13.1 As a social landlord, the Council has statutory obligations to ensure appropriate repairs and maintenance of its housing stock is undertaken to enable it to meet that statutory duty.

13.2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 as amended, to consult with leaseholders in relation to the re-

procurement of these works and services. The 2-stage consultation will need to be completed prior to the award of the contract.

- 13.3 The proposed contracts are subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“PCRs”) as their estimated value is above the financial threshold for public works and public services under the PCRs. The Procurement team have indicated that a Restricted Procedure and access to Framework Agreements will be used to procure the proposed contracts. These procedures are compliant procurement routes under Regulations 28 and 33 of the PCRs.
- 13.4 The award of the contracts to any new service provider may constitute a relevant transfer under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (“TUPE”). So, as part of the tender exercise the Council should as far as possible facilitate the exchange of relevant employment liability information to fulfil transparency duties although the employment obligations under TUPE will be the responsibility of the incoming and outgoing service providers.
- 13.5 The Council’s Contract Procedure Rules provide that any procurement for contract with a value over £500,000 requires cabinet approval, which is the authorisation sought under this report.
- 13.6 In accordance with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules, any call-off contract documentation will be checked and finalised by HB Public Law in consultation with relevant authorised officers. The proposed terms and conditions for the Repairs and Voids contract will be based on the JCT Measured Term Contract 2016 (with suitable amendments), which is a tried and tested contract widely used in the industry, for the delivery of repair and maintenance works and services.

14.0 Financial Implications

- 14.1 The 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account Repairs, Maintenance and Voids budgets total £4.49m and the 2023/24 HRA budgets for Electrical Testing and Water Hygiene total £0.67m i.e. £0.37m and £0.30m respectively.
- 14.2 The HRA Responsive Budgets were increased in real terms by £0.666m in 2023/24 to address staffing resource issues and pressures such as damp, mould and disrepair costs.
- 14.3 Sufficient monies were also included in the 2023/24 Budget to address the compliance regimes, both to support the current approaches and to address the future requirements flowing from the Fire Safety Act 2020, and the Building Safety Act 2022 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, including the likely need for a bi-annual check of all fire doors and improved building safety information. Running in parallel will with the be 3-year capital works programme and aligned with the

new Asset Management strategy will move to a 60/40 planned to responsive spend ratio over the next 3-5 years.

- 14.4 The table below shows the 2023/24 HRA Budgets for 4 and 5 year from 2024/25. The budget value for R&M and Voids at year 4 is £17.96m and the value at year 5 for Electrical and Water Testing is £2.59m. The R&M and Voids profile for additional years is expected to remain the same so an additional two-year budget equates to £9.98m and a total of £35.92m for eight years.
- 14.5 The annual values for electrical testing will vary according to the cycle of inspections and will range from £0.190m to £0.240m per year. The Water Testing is £0.270 pa from 2024/25.
- 14.6 The figures do not include any contractual price increases which will be factored in to the HRA 2024/25 budget update.

HRA Budgets	2023/24 Budget	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	4 year Budget Value	5 year Budget Value
	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m	£ m
*All responsive R&M works	3.44	3.44	3.44	3.44	3.44	13.76	17.19
Void property works including clearance costs	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	4.20	5.25
Total Responsive and Voids	4.49	4.49	4.49	4.49	4.49	17.96	22.44
Electrical Testing							
EICR individual - catch up 2023/24 and 2024/25	0.30	0.31	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.67	0.79
EICR Communal	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.10	0.10
PAT Testing	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.28	0.35
Total EICR Budgets	0.37	0.38	0.24	0.24	0.19	1.05	1.24
Water Testing							
Sheltered	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.56	0.70
Street Properties / Flushing £10k per month (additional works 2023/24)	0.16	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.52	0.65
Total Water Testing	0.30	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	1.08	1.35
ECIR and Water Testing	0.67	0.65	0.51	0.51	0.46	2.13	2.59
Total budgets	5.16	5.14	5.00	5.00	4.95	20.09	25.03

14.7 Responsive Repairs and Voids

The responsive repairs budget was increased in real terms by £666k to £3.44m in 2023/24 and indications are that pressures including damp, mould and disrepair are being contained within budget. These budgets are demand led and as such controls will need to be in place in the new contract arrangements to contain any overspends within available resources whilst not compromising statutory responsibilities to our residents.

The Voids budget of £1.05m includes clearance costs as well as R&M but not capital works including decarbonisation. Where these are

identified as part of the works to be completed they will be met from the Planned Investment and Decarbonisation Capital budgets which are £8.28m and £1.0m for 2024/25.

The new supplier will have the opportunity to bid for capital works from year 2 onwards up to a value of £1m based on performance

14.8 **Property Acquisition Programme**

Housing Services has an ongoing requirement to undertake void, disrepair work and repairs on both a responsive and planned basis for the 167 properties acquired under the Property Acquisition Programme.

The financial model for the PAP programme assumes properties will be let and rental income received to cover the operational cost of maintaining the homes. The target net income budget for 2023/24 is £1.645m.

All associated PAP repair costs are to be recovered through the rents the properties generate.

It is proposed that the works for these PAP properties are included within the scope of the new Repairs and Voids contract proposed in this report.

14.9 **Electrical Testing**

All EICR for individual properties are expected to be complete by the end of 2024/25 to address the current backlog. The assumption from 2025/26 is that all properties are then inspected every 5 years. The actual phasing and expenditure may vary according to number of void properties (where an inspection is carried out) and risk assessments for those properties with vulnerable residents.

EICR for communal areas are factored in to take place every 5 years over two years from 2025/26 and 2026/27.

The cost shown do not include remedial works which will be met from the responsive repairs budget or capital budgets in the case of major rewires when they arise.

14.10 **Water Hygiene**

This covers monitoring and maintenance (M&M) temperature testing, flushing across communal schemes and cleaning of showers which are mandatory. Issues with water flushing highlighted in 2023/24 are included in the budgeted figure to ensure compliance with regulations and best practice.

Currently this work is sub-contracted by the existing contractor due to its specialist nature. Under the new contract arrangements this work will be awarded directly to a specialist contractor and therefore be better value for money.

14.11 Inflation and Economic Factors

Due to recent high inflation, high fuel costs and shortages in labour following Brexit, it is likely that all service providers in this field have increased their prices for delivering their services. It is important we design a cost tendering exercise which enables us to ensure we have obtained the best rates for this size of contract that we can whilst staying within the budgeted resources available.

Cost review

14.12 The contract needs to build in fixed dates where benchmarking against market rates is completed, to ensure the contract continues to demonstrate value across the term. The 2 extensions also offer a chance to re-assess prices.

14.13 The service needs to ensure there is a robust contract management process in place, ensuring adequate training is provided where necessary, monitoring contractor performance against spend and that the results of this are fed into the Council monthly reporting cycle.

15.0 Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The contract extension will continue to deliver on existing policies and strategies maintaining the current level of equality in service provision. The contract specification will be very clear on the equalities related duties on contractors, given the wide range of needs of our customers.

16.0 Council Priorities

Below we have identified how the decision sought will deliver on some of the Council's priorities:

The new contract will capture and deliver on the key council priorities:

A council that puts residents first

A borough that is clean and safe

A place where those in need are supported

16.1 Improving the environment and addressing climate change

- As previously stated in Section 5 of this report, the re-tendering will take into account modernisation (use of appropriate technology) related to Climate Change and will encourage implementation of relevant measures in response to the Council's declared Climate Emergency.

- As the re-procured contract would run until 2032 we will be working jointly with the incumbent contractors to agree on ways to implement relevant measures in response to the Council's declared Climate Emergency.

16.2 Addressing health and social care inequality

The new contractors will have to continue to deliver existing policies and strategies maintaining the current level of equality in service provision.

Going forward, for the re-procurement exercise, the contract specification will be very clear on the equalities related duties on contractors, given the wide range of needs of our customers including Aids and Adaptations repairs within the HRA.

The specification for the contract will ensure that the successful contractor is equipped to provide a high level of customer service to all our residents.

16.3 Thriving economy

Section 5 of the report discusses current social value initiatives and further commitments that new service providers will need to commit to under the new contracts. This demonstrates that the new service providers will need to be proactive in engaging with Harrow Council's Community Engagement strategy, and their financial commitment will help to drive and deliver meaningful social value initiatives across the borough.

New service providers will be required to use local suppliers (wherever possible) to ensure a high percentage of their supplier spend is in Harrow.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Tasleem Kazmi

Signed on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 25/09/2023

Statutory Officer: Sonia Kounasso

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 25/09/2023

Statutory Officer: Lisa Taylor

Signed on behalf of the Head of Procurement

Date: 22/09/2023

Statutory Officer: Neale Burns

Signed on by the Head of Internal Audit

Date: 25/09/2023

Statutory Officer: Dipti Patel

Signed by the Corporate Director

Date: 27/09/2023

Has the Portfolio Holder(s) been consulted? Yes

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: YES, as it impacts on all Wards

EqIA carried out:

YES An overarching EQIA was undertaken for the programme Directorate Equality Task Group.

EqIA cleared by: (DETG) Chair

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Rukshan Kariy, Head of Asset Management,

Background Papers:

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee: NO

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Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	26 October 2023
Subject:	LGA (Local Government Association) Corporate Peer Challenge – final report and response
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Managing Director
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Paul Osborn, Leader of the Council
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – London Borough of Harrow: Feedback Report (Appendix A) London Borough of Harrow Peer Review Response (action plan) (Appendix B)

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the recommendations from the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge earlier in the year and presents an action plan by way of response.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Agree the contents of the report and accept the recommendations of the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review team (as set out in Appendix A).
2. Agree the contents of the action plan prepared in response to those recommendations (Appendix B) and that implementation of the actions is delegated to the Managing Director, who will report progress to Cabinet or appropriate committee.
3. Note that there will be a follow-up visit from members of the Peer Team, in early 2024, to review progress against the action plan (currently set for 8th January 2024).

Reason: To respond to recommendations arising from LGA Corporate Peer Challenge 2023.

Section 2 – Report

This report considers the key findings (recommendations) of the February 2023 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. The action plan, that has been developed by way of response, addresses each of the thirteen recommendations by outlining the activity the council intends to take or is already taking. Overall, the response describes a high degree of improvement activity in the vast majority of the recommendation themes that is already ongoing or planned within the organisation. This therefore aligns very much with the council's vision and corporate priorities.

Options considered

- Do not respond to the Peer Challenge feedback report and recommendations (rejected)
- Respond to the Peer Challenge feedback report and recommendations with an action plan (recommended option)

Background

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – February 2023

The LGA were invited to carry out a Peer Challenge of the London Borough of Harrow. The LGA open these Peer Challenges out to all local authorities in supporting their continuous improvement. This challenge was undertaken in February 2023 and their final report was received in late April. The feedback report is appended to this report and has been published on the council's website.

The peer team considered five themes which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges - areas that are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?
2. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
4. **Financial planning and management** - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?
5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

In addition, the council asked the peer team to provide feedback on a theme focused on the customer experience:

6. **Customer experience** - Does the council demonstrate leadership and a clear vision for the customer experience?

The peer team, made up of experienced member and officer peers, prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent four days (7-10 February 2023) onsite at the council, during which they:

- Gathered information and views from more than 60 meetings, in addition to further research and reading.
- Spoke to more than 140 people including a range of council staff together with members and external stakeholders.

Feedback report and recommendations – April 2023

In their feedback report, the Peer Challenge team made a number of observations and suggestions. The LGA ask that the recommendations are taken on board by the council and that an action plan be developed to articulate and subsequently track the council's response to these recommendations.

The 13 recommendations are:

1. **Corporate Plan:** Whilst the flagship actions are helpful in providing focus, the council should ensure that they do not distract from the business as usual. The council should take steps to embed the Corporate Plan across the council and establish alignment with other key policies and strategies.
2. **Improvement, transformation and capacity:** There is a need for a defined strategic improvement programme with sequenced actions, supported by further capacity for transformation and change. A properly established and resourced Project Management Office (PMO) alone will not solve this (but would be a helpful start); capacity is required across the organisation. There is a need to urgently reprioritise programmes and allocate resource accordingly. This may involve moving resource around and the revision of milestones and targets. There is also a need to acknowledge not everything that needs doing can be done now so some phasing with clear communications and expectations is required.
3. **Organisation:** A determination is needed as to whether to agree and require (or not) a standard operating model for the council and all service areas. If this is agreed clarity should be provided with clear design principles for either devolved or centralised services, and the overall model of service delivery. There is currently a mixture of devolved and centralised (hub and spoke) corporate services and they vary across departments.
4. **Financial planning and management:** Continue to develop alignment between the Corporate Plan, MTFs and other financial strategies.
5. **Savings and MTFs:** Ensure a relentless tracking and reporting system is in place with clear ownership of budgets with a focus on delivering the agreed savings proposals and avoiding double counts that might arise from changes to the operating model.
6. **Internal systems:** Identify, agree and implement a range of options to urgently resolve key system issues (e.g. Microsoft Dynamic 365 and planning). Consider what alternative options might be available to help deliver the necessary urgent improvements.
7. **Performance:** Introduce a consistent council-wide performance framework which provides organisational assurance. Ensure this performance monitoring is used to inform service delivery and decision making. Develop a suite of performance information and data packs

which go through formal council governance arrangements e.g. reports to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.

- 8. Human Resources and Organisational Development:** Systems, processes and policies need to be reviewed, refreshed and made fit for purpose to deliver the council priorities as a matter of urgency. It is important that a culture is developed to ensure that all council services understand and comply with agreed corporate policies. This needs to be closely monitored and any non-compliance identified and appropriate corrective action taken. A robust annual appraisal system should be developed that aligns individual and organisational objectives, values and behaviours as set out by the new Corporate Plan.
- 9. Workforce Strategy and Culture:** The council should develop a workforce strategy setting out plans to attract, recruit, retain and develop the workforce with the skills and capabilities required to achieve the council objectives. LBH could also look to zone the council office by service area to enhance team working and support collaboration. The council should discuss and agree with staff a set of expectations about when and why they should be in the office, informed by service need and job roles. Thereafter monitoring will be needed to ensure compliance is in line with the agreed approach.
- 10. Member development:** The existing member training and development offer should be evaluated and in line with member feedback should be expanded, targeting key roles such as Cabinet members and committee chairs.
- 11. Governance:** The council's schedule of meetings should be reviewed to allow for sufficient pre-decision engagement and the timely issuing of reports.
- 12. Commissioning:** The council should develop a long-term commissioning strategy and implementation plan. Longer term planning is needed in areas such as extra care housing and leisure provision.
- 13. Health partnerships:** Build on the strong relationships established locally and the role the council plays in the borough partnership. The council should look to be more influential across the ICS footprint to make sure Harrow residents get their fair share of resources.

Response to LGA recommendations and monitoring of progress

In responding to the recommendations from the LGA Peer challenge, an action plan has been developed (Appendix B), by which to monitor progress against each of the recommendations. This is aligned to the council's Corporate Improvement Programme (CIP) as the LGA peer challenge is very much welcomed as part of the council's ongoing improvement journey and there are significant overlaps in the LGA recommendations and the CIP. This should give a high degree of confidence that regarding critical areas for improvement identified, the council is self-aware, has begun a considerable

amount of development activity and can be confident (subject to ongoing monitoring) of delivering considerable improvements.

Governance mechanisms have been put in place to support this: A new working group of lead officers responsible for the Peer Review recommendations and the CIP has been established and meets monthly to monitor progress and take a coordinated look at improvement across the council. The group reports on a monthly basis to the Corporate Leadership Team and will periodically report to Cabinet, or other relevant committee, on progress as a part of the usual performance and improvement reporting mechanisms.

As the action plan demonstrates, the council accepts all the recommendations made by the LGA Peer Challenge team. The only proviso to this is in relation to recommendation 3 on 'organisation'. The council has determined that recommendations to explore a single operating model overlook the potential to consider cutting-edge, innovative and progressive ways to deliver council services to ensure better outcomes for our residents. Therefore, this is not a model that will be looked at as part of delivering on the recommendations put forward by the Peer Review team.

The council looks forward to welcoming back the Peer Challenge team early in the new year, to assess progress made on recommendations.

Ward Councillors' comments

N/A – affects all wards.

Risk Management Implications

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **No**

The relevant risks are summarised below **N/A**

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

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
Risks preventing the action plan from being achieved are not proactively identified and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A project or similar risk register will be put in place by the working group to proactively identify and mitigate any risks to full implementation of the action plan and this will be regularly reviewed and updated by the group. 	GREEN
Insufficient organisational capacity, focus and co-ordination have been put in place to fully achieve the action plan to time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The action plan has been aligned with the the Council's Corporate Improvement Programme (CIP) and will be driven and implemented throughout the organisation alongside and on a par with the CIP. 	AMBER

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A working group of lead officers responsible for the Peer Review recommendations and the CIP has been established, meeting monthly to monitor progress and take a coordinated look at improvement across the Council. • The above group reports on a monthly basis to the Corporate Leadership Team and will periodically report to Cabinet on progress as a part of the usual performance and improvement reporting mechanisms to the Executive. 	
The action-plan is not "SMART".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All recommendations agreed and forming part of the action plan will be stated in SMART terms - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound terms where this is not already the case 	GREEN
The timelines set for completion of actions in the action plan are overly optimistic resulting in some or all actions not being achieved within the designated time frame.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The action plan has been aligned with the the Council's CIP, as have the timelines in the action plan. • A working group of lead officers responsible for the Peer Review recommendations and the CIP has been established, meeting monthly to monitor progress and take a coordinated look at improvement across the Council. This group will report back progress, including any slippage against timelines, on a monthly basis to the Corporate Leadership Team and will periodically report to Cabinet on progress as a part of the usual performance and improvement reporting mechanisms to the Executive. 	GREEN
Arrangements for the measuring and reporting of progress against the action plan are not adequate or timely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A working group of lead officers responsible for the Peer Review recommendations and the CIP has been established, meeting monthly to monitor progress and take a coordinated look at improvement across the Council. 	GREEN

Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

Legal Implications

Some of the peer review recommendations fall within the terms of reference of Cabinet and others within the terms of reference of Council or other committees.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of the Peer Review as many of the recommendations are already in place and require no additional resources.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The Council's commitment to equality will be integral to our approach to governance, service delivery and improvement when taking these recommendations forward. Whereby the recommendation requires a change in policy, practice or procedure, an EQIA will be completed. Whereby an EQIA is not required, LB Harrow will ensure that any changes or improvements made in response to the recommendations do not inadvertently create barriers for certain groups or individuals.

Council Priorities

Delivery of the action plan resulting from the LGA Peer Challenge will help deliver all council priorities:

1. **A council that puts residents first**
2. **A borough that is clean and safe**
3. **A place where those in need are supported**

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Sharon Daniels

Signed by the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 21 September 2023

Statutory Officer: Jessica Farmer

Signed by the Monitoring Officer

Date: 28 September 2023

Chief Officer: Alex Dewsnap

Signed off by the Managing Director

Date: 22 September 2023

Head of Procurement: Nimesh Mehta

Signed by the Head of Procurement

Date: 21 September 2023

Head of Internal Audit: Neale Burns

Signed on behalf of the Interim Head of Internal Audit

Date: 25 September 2023

Has the Portfolio Holder(s) been consulted? Yes

Mandatory Checks

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

EqIA carried out: NO

EQIA not needed as no service change proposed in this report.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Nahreen Matlib, Senior Policy Officer,
Nahreen.matlib@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – London Borough of Harrow: Feedback Report

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee: No

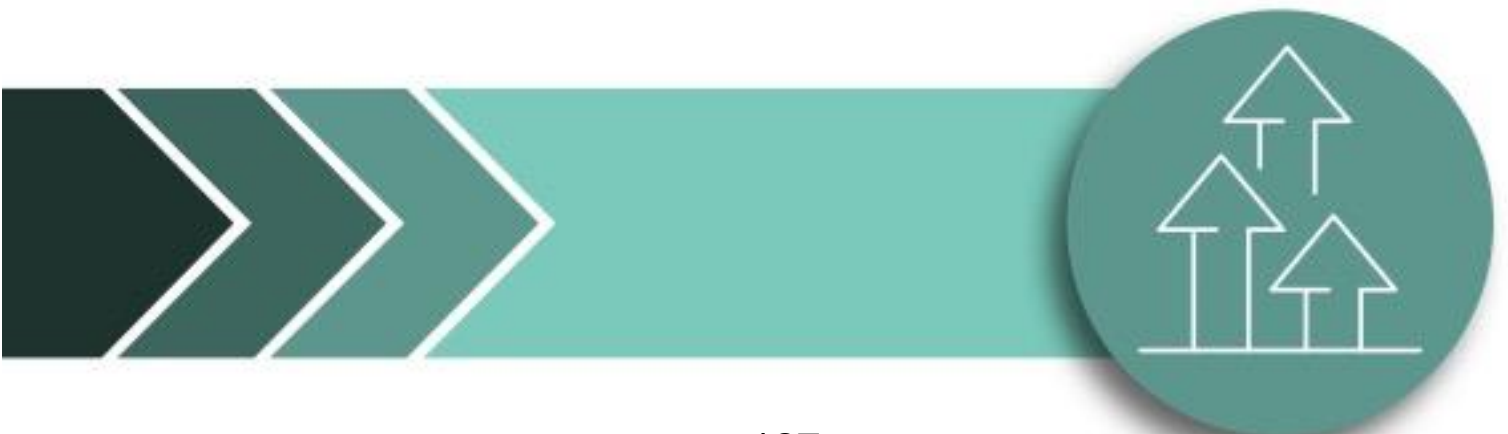
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LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

London Borough of Harrow

7th – 10th February 2023

Feedback report





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1. Executive summary

The London Borough of Harrow (LBH) has gone through a period of significant change in the last 12 months with a new administration, a new Chief Executive, and a move to a new council office. Now is an exciting time for LBH: a time of transition with new ambitious plans for the organisation and the borough.

During the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) the peer team recognised the fresh impetus and energy the new administration had brought, with a strong desire to improve services and to generate pride in Harrow. The Leader of the Council is well-respected and, along with his Cabinet, has developed a clear ownership of the ambitions for the council and the place. Staff and members are well-motivated and committed to delivering the council's priorities. LBH is a largely self-aware council and is able to evidence many of the challenges it faces.

A new Corporate Plan has been developed along with a series of flagship actions for delivery over the term of the administration. The new Corporate Plan is a helpful strategic document, setting out the priorities for the organisation. LBH though does have limited capacity, particularly in change and project management, meaning transformative projects will need to happen on a sequential basis. Members and officers recognise this and appreciate that lasting change will take time. An overarching improvement plan would be helpful for the council to plot out the transformation projects in order priority and urgency.

LBH is a good partner, something recognised by organisations such as the police and the Integrated Care System (ICS). LBH is engaged in the wider borough agenda and is committed to cross-organisation working. The peer team would encourage the council though to position itself to take more of a leading role in partnerships such as the ICS to ensure Harrow's voice is heard and the borough gets its fair share of resources.

In recent years the council's introduction of new human resource (HR), finance and planning systems have been problematic. These systems are not fit for purpose and are causing significant issues. The council is aware of this and has launched the 'fix the basics' programme. Improvements need to happen at pace and the council should consider contingency options if this cannot be achieved. It was clear to the

peer team that continuing to use the systems in their current state is not sustainable and urgent progress must be made.

There is a lot of work to be done to develop and modernise the council through updated and consistently applied policies, processes and a culture that allows it to act and operate as a single organisation. The peer team heard about dissatisfaction amongst staff about what they felt was an inconsistent application of policies such as hybrid working and recruitment practices, and high levels of silo working and conflicting priorities. The absence of a workforce strategy and HR capacity and capability will impact on the achievement of improvements required to deliver the Corporate Plan priorities.

Strong working practices and relationships exist between members and officers. The peer team heard that the balance in the relationship has changed somewhat under the new administration, with greater involvement from members in the detail and delivery of projects. The peer team noted that Cabinet members appeared to be involved in operational matters, it was explained that this was a temporary arrangement, while senior members gained assurance that progress was being made. The peer team stressed that care should be taken to ensure members had appropriate oversight and delegation in place and there was clarity and understanding of member and officer roles and responsibilities.

LBH has recently delivered balanced budgets in the face of funding reductions, whilst maintaining strong outcomes in certain services. Positive steps have been taken to move the council away from drawing on reserves to set balanced budgets. The 2023/24 and the projected 2024/25 budgets are forecast to be set without any draw on reserves. The council has a regularly updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which includes an ambitious savings programme of £17.2m. A robust monitoring and tracking system will be required to oversee the delivery of the savings.

The new administration are champions of a 'customer-first' approach and this is evidenced within each of the council's priorities. Partners told the peer team they had noticed a positive change in the responsiveness of the council to enquiries and requests. The test now for the council is to ensure these positive changes are embedded in the fabric of the organisation.

2. Key recommendations

There are a number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

2.1. Recommendation 1: Corporate Plan

Whilst the flagship actions are helpful in providing focus, the council should ensure that they do not distract from the business as usual. The council should take steps to embed the Corporate Plan across the council and establish alignment with other key policies and strategies.

2.2. Recommendation 2: Improvement, transformation and capacity

There is a need for a defined strategic improvement programme with sequenced actions, supported by further capacity for transformation and change. A properly established and resourced Project Management Office (PMO) alone will not solve this (but would be a helpful start); capacity is required across the organisation. There is a need to urgently reprioritise programmes and allocate resource accordingly. This may involve moving resource around and the revision of milestones and targets. There is also a need to acknowledge not everything that needs doing can be done now so some phasing with clear communications and expectations is required.

2.3. Recommendation 3: Organisation

A determination is needed as to whether to agree and require (or not) a standard operating model for the council and all service areas. If this is agreed clarity should be provided with clear design principles for either devolved or centralised services, and the overall model of service delivery.

At present, it is unclear what the future operating model preference is for the council. There is currently a mixture of devolved and centralised (hub and spoke) corporate services and they vary across departments.

2.4. Recommendation 4: Financial planning and management

Continue to develop alignment between the Corporate Plan, MTFs and other financial strategies.

2.5. Recommendation 5: Savings and MTFS

Ensure a relentless tracking and reporting system is in place with clear ownership of budgets with a focus on delivering the agreed savings proposals and avoiding double counts that might arise from changes to the operating model.

2.6. Recommendation 6: Internal systems

Identify, agree and implement a range of options to urgently resolve key system issues (e.g. Microsoft Dynamic 365 and planning). Consider what alternative options might be available to help deliver the necessary urgent improvements.

2.7. Recommendation 7: Performance

Introduce a consistent council-wide performance framework which provides organisational assurance. Ensure this performance monitoring is used to inform service delivery and decision making. Develop a suite of performance information and data packs which go through formal council governance arrangements e.g. reports to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.

2.8. Recommendation 8: Human Resources and Organisational Development

Systems, processes and policies need to be reviewed, refreshed and made fit for purpose to deliver the council priorities as a matter of urgency. It is important that a culture is developed to ensure that all council services understand and comply with agreed corporate policies. This needs to be closely monitored and any non-compliance identified and appropriate corrective action taken. A robust annual appraisal system should be developed that aligns individual and organisational objectives, values and behaviours as set out by the new Corporate Plan.

2.9. Recommendation 9: Workforce strategy and culture

The council should develop a workforce strategy setting out plans to attract, recruit, retain and develop the workforce with the skills and capabilities required to achieve the council objectives.

LBH could also look to zone the council office by service area to enhance team working and support collaboration. The council should discuss and agree with staff a set of expectations about when and why they should be in the office, informed by

service need and job roles. Thereafter monitoring will be needed to ensure compliance is in line with the agreed approach.

2.10. Recommendation 10: Member development

The existing member training and development offer should be evaluated and in line with member feedback should be expanded, targeting key roles such as Cabinet members and committee chairs.

2.11. Recommendation 11: Governance

The council's schedule of meetings should be reviewed to allow for sufficient pre-decision engagement and the timely issuing of reports.

2.12. Recommendation 12: Commissioning

The council should develop a long-term commissioning strategy and implementation plan. Longer term planning is needed in areas such as extra care housing and leisure provision.

2.13. Recommendation 13: Health partnerships

Build on the strong relationships established locally and the role the council plays in the borough partnership. The council should look to be more influential across the ICS footprint to make sure Harrow residents get their fair share of resources.

3. Summary of the peer challenge approach

3.1. The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected on the basis of their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- Lead Peer: Jackie Belton, Chief Executive, London Borough of Bexley
- Member Peer: Cllr Alan Jarrett, Leader, Medway Council
- Officer Peer: Sarah Ashmead, Deputy Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire Council
- Officer Peer: James Marshall, Director of Customer Experience,

- Southampton City Council
- Officer Peer: Barry Scarr, LGA Finance Improvement & Sustainability Associate
 - LGA Peer Challenge Manager: Harry Parker

3.2. Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement.


1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?
2. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
4. **Financial planning and management** - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?
5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

In addition to these themes, the council asked the peer team to provide feedback on a theme focused on the customer experience:

6. **Customer experience** - Does the council demonstrate leadership and a clear vision for the customer experience?

3.3. The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and



knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent four days onsite at LBH, during which they:

- Gathered information and views from more than 60 meetings, in addition to further research and reading.
- Spoke to more than 140 people including a range of council staff together with members and external stakeholders.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members.

4. Feedback

4.1. Local priorities and outcomes

Harrow is a suburban outer London borough in north-west London, approximately ten miles from central London. Harrow is bordered by four other London boroughs and Hertfordshire to the north. The borough benefits from fast links into central London, served by overground trains and three underground lines. Over a quarter of the borough is designated green belt.

Harrow's population has been steadily increasing over the past 30 years, with the 2021 census estimating the borough's population at 261,300. Harrow has a rich diversity of backgrounds, according to census data it is the fifth most diverse area in the UK¹. Across the borough's schools more than 169 languages are spoken. This diversity of backgrounds brings a multitude of different cultural identities.

In May 2022 the council changed control to a Conservative administration, and in the following months LBH set out a new vision – *Restoring Pride in Harrow* – and a new set of council priorities. The political leadership has set out a clear purpose and focus for the council to be trusted to listen and effectively respond to residents. This renewed focus on the customer and improving the council's responsiveness was something the peer team clearly felt during the peer challenge.

Since the May 2022 election the administration can point to the delivery of manifesto commitments such as introducing an hour's free parking in all council spaces and free bulky waste collection. To date more than half a million hours of free parking slots have been used by residents, with the council's intention of encouraging visits and spend across the borough's high streets.

The council's new Corporate Plan was approved in February 2023 and set out three priorities for delivery: a council that puts residents first, a borough that is clean and safe and a place that supports those in need. These priorities align with the overarching vision of prioritising residents and making Harrow a place where residents can be confident to settle, make roots and raise a family and those in need

¹ Census 2021. Office for National Statistics (2021): 2021 Census aggregate data (Edition: November 2021). <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS021/editions/2021/versions/1/filter-outputs/4152c579-81c7-49e5-8945-164c4d6ede65?f=get-data#get-data>

are supported.

As part of the Corporate Plan a series of flagship actions across service areas have been developed to be delivered by 2026. These flagship actions are useful in providing a focus for delivery; however, it is important that they do not distract from the business-as-usual activity across service areas. This continued focus on achieving high standards of service provision is of crucial importance especially in areas such as Adults and Children's services.

Further work is required to fully communicate and embed the Corporate Plan across the council. More work is also needed to communicate and embed the priorities and flagship actions within service plans and staff appraisals.

The Corporate Plan and the flagship actions helpfully set objectives for delivery, but to turn this into a reality it is important that the council gets the basics right first. The organisation needs to be on a stable footing so it can be equipped to deliver on the council's priorities and achieve the necessary transformation. Currently the basics do not always work and this will impede progress.

In line with the new administration and the arrival of the new Chief Executive in September 2022, a renewed focus has been given to corporate performance monitoring. Performance processes were effectively 'stood down' during the pandemic in order to free up capacity to support the council's response activity. The peer team agreed with the chief internal auditor's assessment in the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement (AGS) that the step down of performance monitoring is of concern and represents a governance issue. The peer team were pleased to hear of the reintroduction of corporate performance monitoring and the development of performance scorecards, aligned to the Corporate Plan and the flagship actions.

The peer team heard consistently during the CPC a welcoming of the renewed focus on performance "*I'm a big fan of the new performance focus.*" Positive governance processes have been developed such as the quarterly performance boards for the three directorates reporting data and information to senior officers and relevant portfolio holders.

This renewed performance focus is still relatively recent and remains underdeveloped. More work is required to build, strengthen and embed a performance culture across the organisation and build the capacity and expertise of

this function. The quality of data sources needs to be improved, the council should ensure that data is benchmarked from comparable councils and should utilise the potential of the data visualisation tool Microsoft Power BI which would help with engaging stakeholders and automating the flow of data. The council is aware of the need to improve the performance function and is undertaking a review of governance and the resultant improvement plan will focus on driving improvements in this area.

Beyond the corporate scorecards the council has also brought in new systems for recording workforce data, financial reports and risk registers, this is something the peer team welcomed. Established performance metrics are useful mechanisms for senior members and officers to increase focus and grip on service performance and establish accountability for that performance. The peer team felt that once a consistent council-wide performance framework has matured, a suite of performance information and data packs should be developed and taken through formal governance boards such as Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny on a quarterly basis.

The peer team heard of positive work across the People Directorate. There is significant pressure across northwest London with Northwick Park Hospital having one of the busiest Accident and Emergency Departments in the country. The health and social care system has a relatively strong performance regarding discharge times.

Strong working relationships are in place and LBH plays a valued role in the borough-based partnership. The size of the northwest ICS does pose challenges, making it a difficult task to ensure the voice of Harrow is heard. Harrow receives a lower amount of NHS funding from the ICS than other boroughs. The peer team would encourage LBH to build on the strong working relationships and look to take on a more influential position in the ICS to ensure Harrow residents gets their fair share of resources.

The peer team heard of good practice with the council making strides in establishing a greater presence in local healthcare services, working closely with Harrow Together, Voluntary Action Harrow and local food banks.

The council can be proud of its Children's Services being rated as 'Good' by Ofsted in 2020. LBH faces similar challenges to councils across the country when it comes to the recruitment and retention of their social workers, higher cost and churn of

agency staff, an increasing demand, case complexity and cost of meeting vulnerable children needs and maintaining effective services to children. This must be monitored closely because of the risk this places on the in-year budget outturn position and the delivery of the MTFS.

An area where the council recognises the need for improvement is around the provision for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In particular the council needs to improve the timeframe for completion of Educational, Care and Health Plans (ECHPs), in quarter three of 2022/23 only 9.5 per cent were issued within the 20-week timeframe. Significant improvement is required otherwise the council will be at risk of a Department for Education written statement of action.

The peer team heard the council had effectively co-designed the recently adopted new learning disability strategy. The peer team heard of other instances of close working with the local voluntary and community sector (VCS) with organisations such as the Young Harrow Foundation.

The opportunity to further strengthen the co-design and co-delivery of services is possible with the opening on the new multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) on Gayton Road. This will serve as the council's new emergency front door, with people services, housing, police and citizens advice based in the same facility, offering a multi-agency response in a one-stop-shop, aligning with LBH's residents-first priority.

The council has sought to adopt a hub model in a variety of areas including the MASH, an adult social care mental health service, a wellbeing hub and the Greenhill Library. Also, within the Corporate Plan there are plans to further consolidate the council's children's centres and develop revised family hubs, and the peer team also heard about future ambitions around libraries. With this approach the peer team would encourage the council to build a strategic vision for the current and future community and partner need for these service delivery hubs and align this to an asset review to ensure best value for money.

An area where the peer team felt that there was room for improvement was with the council's approach to strategic commissioning. LBH's commissioning approach lacks innovation and the extent of strategic commissioning and market shaping is minimal. A long-term commissioning strategy and implementation plan should be developed with the council developing its approach and capability here to deliver

efficiencies, improved outcomes and revised delivery models working with partners. This will be important with key strategic decisions required in areas such as extra care housing and leisure provision.

The collaborative work undertaken to develop and strengthen the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda is recognised and valued as a strength by the workforce and highlights and celebrates the diversity of Harrow.

LBH developed an EDI strategic framework in September 2020, commissioned an independent race report in April 2021 and in response to this developed a race equality action plan in November 2021. The action plan has looked to bring forward several positive programmes such as introducing a diversity talent programme in response to the council's ethnicity pay gap. The council also committed to producing the Race Equality Action Plan 'One Year On' report, highlighting the progress that has been made and identifying where more work is needed. In doing so, the council has demonstrated its commitment to EDI.

LBH has seven active staff network groups, providing representation, support as well as acting in a 'critical friend' role to the organisation. The networks have supported the ongoing improvement in organisational development and cultural change work. Representatives of the networks are engaged, thoughtful and appropriately challenging of the council's EDI plans and delivery. The consultative role is welcomed, embraced and working with senior managers contributes to ensuring the continued focus and ambition on EDI in Harrow.

4.2. Organisational and place leadership

LBH has gone through a period of significant change with a new administration, a new Chief Executive and a new council office. The peer team heard throughout the peer challenge a wide recognition of the positive impact the new Leader and Chief Executive have had. After a period of significant change, staff have welcomed the permanent appointments that have been made at Corporate Director and Director level. However, with the forthcoming retirements of the council's Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) and Director of Children's Social Care experience and organisational knowledge will be leaving, important recruitment decisions will be required for these key positions.

The peer team clearly saw the enthusiasm and passion for delivery amongst the council's workforce. Staff accept the need to become a more efficient organisation, they recognise and are willing to meet the challenge ahead.

In January 2023 the council approved a new asset management strategy providing a framework for managing its housing stock efficiently and effectively in line with corporate landlord responsibilities. The council owns a stock of just under 4,800 homes managed through its Housing Revenue Account. LBH have recently commissioned a review of assets which will help in informing the medium to long term capital programme. The council are aware of the need for estate improvements to maintain compliance with the Decent Homes Standard and to improve the energy efficiency of its stock.

In September 2020 the council entered a joint venture with Wates for the development of three key sites: Bryon Quarter, Peel Road and Poets Phase 1. These schemes will contribute considerably to the council's regeneration aims bringing forward an estimated 1,700 new residential units. By entering the joint venture external expertise can be utilised for the development of the three strategic sites. However, the council should consider and look to address the limited internal capacity it has for contract oversight and for developing smaller sites in the borough.

The peer team were impressed with the quality of the council's external communications. Resident communications are well organised and innovative, with strong involvement from elected members. The council's weekly newsletter is sent out to 70,000 residents and the quarterly Harrow People magazine is distributed to over 100,000 households.

LBH has been successful in involving and tailoring communications for its diverse communities. A good example of this was during the pandemic, the council carried out partnered communications with the VCS on topics like infection control and vaccinations. There is a significant opportunity to build on the good work that has already been delivered with new campaigns around supporting the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

The council has recently conducted a residents' survey to get an honest assessment on council services and residents' opinions. It is important that LBH builds the findings from the survey into longer-term plans and feedback loops are established

with residents.

LBH is increasing capacity with its internal communications. At present the council maintains a regularly updated intranet news feed, carries out monthly virtual staff briefings and regular pulse surveys. With the adoption of the new Corporate Plan internal communications will have an important role to play in embedding these priorities.

The peer team did hear that the quality and relevance of communications for staff can vary depending on where they sit within the organisation. The council recognises the need to develop communications channels with frontline staff in particular and appreciates the importance of diversifying communications approaches and not simply relying on a cascade system of messaging.

An area that is currently hindering the effective leadership of the organisation is with the HR service. The 2021/22 AGS highlighted an absence of corporate policies which is something the peer team found as well during the CPC. Policies and procedures are outdated and ineffective, adherence with policies is patchy and compliance is not enforced. Policies are not currently fit for purpose; this needs to be urgently rectified as it poses a major risk to the council. It also causes difficulties for managers to manage effectively and consistently.

There is scope for improvement in several areas such as establishing a robust annual appraisal system for all staff. Annual appraisals are important for performance checks, setting goals and identifying development needs. An established appraisal process will help to align both individual and organisational objectives whilst promoting a healthy culture of continuous learning and improvement. This is something the peer team encourage the council to put in place at pace.

LBH's HR team of 10 full time employees is small when compared to other similar sized councils. The council recognises the need for additional investment in HR and organisational development (OD). Capacity needs to be strengthened on a sustainable basis, both HR and OD will be crucial components in the council's overall transformation programme.

The 2023/24 budget includes a growth bid of £200k for strengthening the organisation's OD offer, as well as one off funding of £300k to bring in additional HR capacity to support organisational change. The council has a good opportunity to

target this funding at a programme that supports its improvement ambitions and it will be important to agree the priorities for this spend. The development offer for staff is currently fairly limited and an investment in the development of the council's own talent could bring significant benefits to both the individuals and the organisation as a whole.

LBH is well regarded by key stakeholders across the borough, spanning the public, private and third sector. The strength of its partnership working is a source of pride, with the council recognised for taking a collaborative 'convening role' in working with anchor institutions on priorities ranging from early intervention programmes to reducing crime.

Harrow has one of the highest levels of educational attainment in London, this is a real asset for the borough. The council has established strong working relationships with schools. The high quality of educational provision within Harrow brings a sense of pride for members and officers and serves as a real pull factor for families choosing to move to Harrow to bring up children.

The council has set out plans to become more of an outward looking council, seeking out best practice across the local government sector. The council has also committed to exploring opportunities to work closer with neighbouring authorities, where there are shared priority areas. The peer team would encourage the council to explore the possibilities here whilst ensuring lessons are learned from previous shared service ventures where service delivery could have been better.

The council faces a big decision shortly with the procurement of its leisure contract in 2024/25. The council should adopt a holistic approach linking in outcomes from public health and wellbeing, the strategic asset review and regeneration aims. A decision on major capital programmes for the borough's leisure provision is needed. The existing leisure facilities are not at the highest standard, the peer team understand several options are under consideration. A new leisure strategy is being developed, within this a strategic decision will be required on the shape of the leisure offer for communities for the medium to long term.

The council has a valued cultural offer for residents with assets such as the Harrow Arts Centre providing a varied programme of activities. Programmes exist that celebrate the local diversity with previous exhibitions on Jewish life, Tamil history and

south Asian culture.

The council has strong relationships with local faith groups and the VCS. Following the May 2022 election, the new administration re-committed to a VCS representative sitting on the council's Cabinet as a non-executive member, as well as quarterly meetings as a Cabinet with a network of VCS organisations.

The peer team heard examples of strong partnership working such as during the pandemic the council partnered with local faith institutions to encourage vaccination uptake and community testing. Another demonstration of strong working practices has been the collaborative efforts in delivering the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Harrow is blessed with many faith and VCS organisations, however there are opportunities to go even further with regards to co-delivering services – harnessing the energy of local groups – for the benefit of the borough.

LBH declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and has a stated ambition to make the organisation carbon neutral by 2030 both in terms of production and consumption of emissions. A refreshed climate strategy is currently being developed. LBH is an active participant in London partnerships on climate change, where the council led the development of a carbon reduction toolkit for all London councils. Harrow has also introduced a low carbon procurement policy and developed a toolkit on behalf of seven other west London boroughs and West London Waste.

4.3. Governance and culture

Following the arrival of the new Chief Executive an internal governance review was commissioned as part of the 2022/23 internal audit plan covering policies, procedures, compliance measurement and reporting. This review echoed the opinion of the 2021/22 AGS that the level of assurance of governance was 'reasonable'. As mentioned previously in this report policies and procedures require updating and information and performance governance can be significantly improved. The council has established a governance board to oversee the improvement and action plans following the governance review.

The relationships between members and officers are strong, with a developing but good level of trust and respect. The change of administration has altered this

relationship somewhat. The peer team heard the council prior to May 2022 was characterised as 'officer-led', with a change since then with the new administration, the agenda and the council programme now being led by senior members.

This new working arrangement has taken some getting used to. Officers felt that the parameters for member engagement were not clear with members involving themselves in quite operational matters. The council should look to provide firmer clarity on the respective roles and responsibilities of members and officers and give greater understanding on delegations. The administration recognises that the level of detail it has sought to involve itself in since the election is not typical and has shared its expectation that this level of involvement will decrease as the organisation progresses, and member/ officer relationships mature and greater assurance is provided. The council is planning on rolling out a training offer on member and officer working. This is a positive move, and the council should be aware that external support from the LGA is available to get a perspective from other councils.

Relationships between the two political groups are respectful with healthy debate and disagreement as would be expected in a political environment. Member conduct is good and meetings are well managed and aligned to the constitution and code of conduct.

The council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee has an established four-year work programme aligned to the new council and its priorities. This is a positive development; the council should make sure it reviews the workplan on an ongoing basis to ensure it reflects current and emerging priorities. The council should also consider and look to clarify the relationship and roles between Scrutiny and Cabinet. Developing a working protocol could be helpful in contributing to rounded policy development.

The council has an existing member development programme. LBH should expand the existing scope of the development offer, reflecting members' feedback, providing bespoke training for Cabinet members and committee chairs. Senior members may want to consider attending [LGA Leadership Essentials](#) programmes which are free to attend and offer specific training on a variety of policy areas.

During the CPC the peer team heard of a few instances of delays to reports being published. While not ideal, this is to be expected from time to time in a busy local

authority. However, to minimise the frequency of this happening, and to allow for sufficient engagement, robust scrutiny and good governance the council should look to review the annual calendar of meetings, the sequencing of formal meetings and timelines for the timely issuing of reports.

The peer team were pleased to hear most respondents speak positively of the culture at LBH. Staff reported a supportive environment where there “*is a sense of camaraderie*”. Officers at all levels have an appetite for developing policies and strategies to shape and improve services, there is plenty of energy that can be harnessed for the delivery of the council’s priorities and vision of restoring *Pride in Harrow*.

There were comments from both officers and members which suggested that the council was siloed and fragmented in the way that it operates. The peer team heard the authority described as three councils – place, people and resources. More work is required to promote a whole-council approach. The development of a coherent operating model for the organisation could help to encourage greater cross council collaboration and join up services to focus on achieving shared outcomes.

Clarifying the future operating model is an important step for the council to take. There is currently a mixture of devolved and centralised (hub and spoke) corporate services which vary across departments. The council should determine whether it wishes to agree and require (or not) a standard operating model, which will apply to all council services. If this is the preference, clear design principles, which support the future operating model would need to be developed, agreed, understood and consistently costed and implemented.

With the pandemic and the advent of established hybrid working arrangements there is a recognition of the difficulty in developing and evolving an organisational culture via Microsoft Teams. At present the council has an inconsistent approach to hybrid working and would benefit from establishing clear expectations for staff. The council’s new office provides a good office space and “*a good opportunity to collaborate*”. Indeed, a growing use of the Harrow Hub would help in tackling fragmentation across the organisation. The peer team heard almost universal support for zoning of the building, maximising the value of staff coming into the office.

LBH should discuss and agree with staff a set of expectations about when they

should be in the office and how hybrid working can be implemented, taking into account service needs and job roles. Once these are determined, it is important the organisation ensures compliance.

Unions noted to the peer team an improvement in the level of engagement, with the new Chief Executive and Director of HR having had a positive impact.

Given the recent and planned changes at the Corporate Leadership Team level, the peer team would encourage senior officers to seek out opportunities to increase their visibility across the council and especially with frontline staff.

4.4. Financial planning and management

LBH has a track record of good financial management, consistently spending within budget in the face of funding reductions, whilst maintaining strong outcomes in certain services. The council has one of the smaller budgets for London boroughs with a net revenue budget of circa £183m. The council's core spending power per head in 2019/20 was estimated to be £170 lower than the London average. The peer team would agree with what a respondent said during the CPC that "*Harrow is a high achiever for the funding it receives.*" Though LBH has a comparatively small finance team, the team is highly regarded by members and officers.

In previous years the council had been balancing budgets by drawing heavily on reserves. For example, the 2022/23 budget was set using £14.7m of one-off reserves. This was not a sustainable strategy, which the council recognised. There has been a significant shift towards ensuring the council returns to spending within its budget envelope and to minimise the draw-down against the planned use of reserves. The peer team were pleased to see the council move away from this approach as the council's external auditors had already raised this as an issue. The 2023/24 budget has been set without a draw on reserves.

As with all councils, the majority of the budget is spent within the People Directorate. The council has done well within the last three years to manage Adults services within budget. In Children's though, the council is facing increased costs and several challenges in areas such as placement fees, a lack of supply and an increase in the demand and complexity of cases. Pressures are also emerging amongst the

designated schools grant high needs block, which should be closely monitored and contained as much as possible. These collective challenges will make the scheduled savings of £2.9m over the MTFS within Children's difficult to achieve.

A savings programme of £17.2m over the MTFS has been agreed. The council will need to ensure a relentless tracking system with focus on the delivery of savings. Service directors and portfolio holders should be held accountable for delivery of the agreed budget savings. Regular monitoring should also cover any potential service impacts over and above those identified when the savings were risk assessed.

The council has a MTFS for 2023/24 – 2025/26 and work has been done to align this with the new Corporate Plan. The recently approved MTFS reflects the flagship actions from the Corporate Plan and the budget right sizing in the Place Directorate (£3.9m) and in Adults (£2.2m). The current MTFS and associated strategies have been developed around a small number of priority areas and existing action plans. As the Corporate Plan is further developed, and the scale and cost of ambitions are clearer, financial plans and strategies will need to be further developed and refined. This will be essential as the MTFS represents the financial envelope for delivery of the Corporate Plan, and will demonstrate robustness, prioritisation and affordability. Key decisions linked to the borough's regeneration and the impact of the new leisure and highways contract will have a considerable impact on the medium-term outlook.

Harrow has a sizable capital programme, with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) financial resilience index showing that LBH's capital financing costs as a proportion of net revenue expenditure were amongst the highest for London boroughs. In each of the last four years there has been significant slippage in the delivery of the capital programme (2019/20, spend of £90.6m against a budget of £319m; 2020/21, spend of £54.6m against a budget of £94.8m; 2021/22, spend of £74.6m against a budget of £216.5m).

The causes of this level of slippage are manifold, but one area which the council needs to improve is its approach to programme and project management. The current approach is immature and not consistently deployed across all projects. This is something which is explored further in the capacity for improvement section of the report.

The council is having major issues with its data and finance system. In October 2021

the council implemented Microsoft Dynamics 365, this has been a difficult experience causing significant disruption. The council has a 'fixing the basics' programme in place, it is important this is progressed at pace. If, however sufficient progress cannot be made, the council should decide whether to reprocur a new system. A robust financial control environment is an imperative for an effective council, at present Harrow do not have this. Issues with financial processes are having a significant impact, with partners telling the peer team they are reluctant to work with the council as they cannot be sure the payment to them would be made on time. This is impacting on the council's reputation.

4.5. Capacity for improvement

The council has a comprehensive improvement programme planned which is due to be launched in March 2023. Improvements will be sought across all service areas but in particular around financial and performance monitoring, corporate governance improvements and the development of a workforce strategy. The appetite for change at pace was evident during the CPC. There is though recognition from members from across the chamber that sustainable change will not happen overnight and that a strategic approach is required to establish solid foundations before moving on to longer-term goals.

The council does not have the capacity to deliver concurrent improvement projects, prioritisation is a necessity as otherwise LBH will be at "*risk of doing too much, not very well.*" Prioritisation in the form of an overarching improvement plan is required sequencing transformation projects over the short-to-medium-term.

To oversee these improvements dedicated change resource is required. At present the capacity to oversee an organisational transformation is not there. Staff recognise this and told the peer team that there is a mismatch between the ambition for change and the resourcing to make this change happen.

Harrow has not undertaken organisational transformation to the same extent many other councils have. LBH is not experienced in organisational change and managers are not equipped or have the support in place to make the necessary changes. The peer team heard of a culture of non-compliance and an inconsistent approach to organisational design.

To realise the necessary transformation additional investment with dedicated change agent resource will be needed, this is something which could be funded by the flexible use of capital receipts. OD also will have an important role to play in equipping officers with the expertise to drive change.

There is insufficient capacity and skills across the council, this is impacting on the timely delivery of projects. Project management resources are currently spread across the organisation and there is a reliance on external contractors. LBH has a nominal PMO but there is an inconsistent approach to project management. Most projects are currently overseen within service areas, a consequence of this is that projects are emerging individually rather than being part of a coherent whole council strategy and programme for change. At present the PMO is hamstrung from being effective as projects are not being routed through them and there seems to be no overall prioritisation framework.

If the council is to successfully achieve the multiple improvement projects it has planned, oversight of project and programme delivery needs to be strengthened and widely owned by managers. Project governance and progress tracking is not at the required standard, the peer team heard from officers and members that *“no project has come in on budget and delivered on time.”* A project management standard needs to be established, with project gateways, a consistent methodology integrated into an internal governance board.

This said though the council has achieved some individual service successes in carrying out some large-scale service redesign in recent years. In 2020 the IT service was insourced which increased capacity and capability. The IT service migrated the council’s system to the cloud and oversaw the closure of the on-premises data centre, this enabled the exit from the previous office whilst increasing reliability and resilience of core systems.

Of pressing importance for the council to resolve are the issues with key internal systems. Remedial measures have been implemented with the planning system, which involved recommissioning a new system that is in the process of being introduced.

The issues with the council’s data and finance system are a significant risk and should be a priority for resolution. The lack of reliable information contributes to the

lack of assurance on performance and delivery. This is also causing particular challenges for the council's HR team.

The council is currently missing a workforce strategy, this is something LBH acknowledges and has committed to developing in line with the Big Conversation programme in the spring of 2023. A comprehensive workforce strategy will help to align organisational capacity, transformation and performance management with the council's priorities. A strand of the workforce strategy should focus on workforce development: attracting, recruiting and developing the workforce with the skills and capabilities required to achieve the council's objectives. Within the Corporate Plan the council has committed to accelerating the use of apprenticeships, graduates and traineeships.

Recruitment challenges in areas such as social care planning is something all councils are facing. Harrow have adopted a variety of approaches including the exploration of overseas recruitment. The council has done well to partner with eight authorities in London to establish an academy to support the recruitment and development of workers for the social care profession. This will continue to be an area of focus.

4.6. Customer experience

LBH chose to undertake this CPC with a focus on the 'customer experience', which is a key feature of its Corporate Plan and core values. Once elected the new administration made its clear priority of 'putting residents first' at the heart of all it does and driving an intent for the council to make the necessary changes to make that real.

Nearly all LBH colleagues the peer team met with were passionate, proud and committed to the notion of re-orientating the council further and deeper around customers. The new Corporate Plan and the flagship actions offer a real opportunity to promote and embed customer ambitions. The Corporate Plan is new so understandably the intentions behind these are not yet well understood across all services and partners. Therefore, now is an ideal time to develop and promote this new strategic framework for the council through the eyes of the customer.

In July 2022 the council adopted a new customer service strategy and a customer experience action plan has been developed, setting out activities that will improve things for customers.

The peer team felt it is important that customer access and the channel strategy was clarified as at present it is unclear. Some services did not have any phone lines, but various teams reported issues with this, creating extra work in different ways. While channel shift is important and good progress has been made with this, there is a tension between offering a customer focus and removing choice. There were also examples of different channels reaching different teams, with email addresses going directly to delivery teams meaning there was not a clear flow of requests with the opportunity for triage at the first stage. The peer team heard that there are multiple entry points for customers engaging with the council, leading to the duplication of effort in several instances. A customer journey mapping exercise would be useful in plotting out access points. The council can then establish what the ideal engagement roadmap would be and put steps in place to make that a reality.

During the CPC the peer team came across 'departmentalism' and associated approaches and behaviours that reinforce 'silo working', which means that the customer's end to end relationship and journey with LBH is inhibited as frequently people default to: 'my customer', 'my service', 'my department'. This makes the customer experience with the council disjointed and is not a 'one council approach'. A key challenge is to establish a consistent and coherent customer experience, irrespective of where people engage with the council and to what end.

Currently, contact centre staff are often the gatekeepers of complaints, working with different departments to co-ordinate a response but encounter on occasion insufficient information provided by services who apply a 'computer says no' attitude. The council should model the behaviours and values required to become a customer focused organisation. Managers have an important role in emphasising the council priority of 'putting residents first'.

The peer team heard from staff that current systems do not always support them to properly serve customers. An example provided was a request for a single fly-tip can be received multiple times from different routes, thus creating pressure in the system, wasting time for teams responding to the same issue multiple times and this leads to

backlogs. This is due in part to inconsistencies in the way systems are used but mainly because of issues coming in through multiple sources. If all requests came through the centralised contact centre there would be a clear view of requests and a standardised flow of cases from customer to delivery teams. Automated updates on the status of these cases would support the customer focus and reduce duplication.

The peer team heard from officers that often success is measured by the number of complaints and speed of response rate. Whilst this quantitative data is helpful it should not be the only determinant of success, as often more complex cases will take longer. Resident feedback should be sought too, giving a rounded picture on customer service.

The complaints data though are a rich resource of information which allows the organisation the opportunity to spot trends and inform continuous service improvements.

The council has recently launched a programme to improve the council's responsiveness to councillor and MP enquiries, which was a particular area of concern driving dissatisfaction from members and partners.

In recent years the council has moved to a digital by design approach, with services including Parking, Environment, School Admissions and Planning only accessible online. The strategy to move away from more traditional channels was both based on changing customer trends and on the need to manage services within a reduced budget envelope aligned to the MTF5. This is a move many councils have made which can be a challenging evolution when supporting residents.

The peer team picked up the feeling that *"to a resident, the council is uncontactable,"* with particular frustrations about the difficulty in finding telephone numbers. There was a feeling that the introduction of cashless parking could have been handled better. The council recognises the need to support residents that do not have the means or the skills to engage through digital channels and has undertaken some good work here. LBH is working with VCS partners providing digital masterclasses, supporting residents to build their skills.

The peer team heard from multiple sources the progress that has been made since the election of the new administration. The council is seen as more responsive than it was before. The council has commissioned a residents' survey and it will be

interesting to see whether the perceived progress is demonstrated in the survey findings.

Central to the new customer service strategy is the move of the customer centre to Greenhill Library. This move is an opportunity for the council to reshape how face to face customer service is done. Greenhill Library aligns with the council's strategy of modernising the cultural offer, with co-locating facilities in town centre locations. Greenhill Library is more accessible in terms of location than the old customer centre at the civic centre. The Leader was clear with the peer team his commitment to have "*a customer presence in the town centre.*" The potential for Greenhill Library is large and its roll out can be doubled as a proof-of-concept pilot, where if it is successful, the model could be used for refreshing the library offer across the borough.

5. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss and reflect on these findings.

Both the peer team and LGA are keen to build on the relationships formed through the peer challenge. The CPC process includes a six-month check-in session, which provides space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the action plan and discuss next steps.

In the meantime, Kate Herbert, Principal Adviser for London, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Kate is available to discuss any further support the council requires – kate.herbert@local.gov.uk.

London Borough of Harrow
Peer Review Response



In February 2023, the London Borough of Harrow invited a peer challenge from the Local Government Association (LGA) having gone through a period of significant change. The LGA identified it is an exciting time for Harrow: a time of transition with new ambitious plans for the organisation and the borough, notwithstanding areas of improvement.

This action plan has been prepared in response to the recommendations made by the LGA Peer Challenge team in their feedback report.

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	Recommendation	What are we going to do?	Lead	Timescale
1	<p>Corporate Plan</p> <p>Whilst the flagship actions are helpful in providing focus, the council should ensure that they do not distract from the business as usual. The council should take steps to embed the Corporate Plan across the council and establish alignment with other key policies and strategies.</p>	<p>The Corporate Plan is being developed over the autumn, with engagement from key political and officer stakeholders. This will ensure that there is alignment between the new suite of flagship actions and ‘business as usual’ for the council.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan timelines will run in tandem with the drafting of the budget for 2024/25 and as such the flagship actions will be costed and budgeted for in the 2024/25 budget.</p>	Assistant Director of Corporate Strategy	Corporate Plan and budget to be agreed at Cabinet, February 2024
2	<p>Improvement, transformation and capacity</p> <p>There is a need for a defined strategic improvement programme with sequenced actions, supported by further capacity for transformation and change. A properly established and resourced Project Management Office (PMO) alone will not solve this (but</p>	<p>The major projects and improvement programmes across the Council have been identified, mapped and prioritised. These are monitored at the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) Improvement Board with updates from the Head of PMO on a monthly basis.</p> <p>PMO will be developing a Project Management framework and Centre of Excellence / Community of Practice. This will clearly define best practice for those</p>	Assistant Director of Digital, Data & the Customer Experience	Ongoing

	would be a helpful start); capacity is required across the organisation. There is a need to urgently reprioritise programmes and allocate resource accordingly. This may involve moving resource around and the revision of milestones and targets. There is also a need to acknowledge not everything that needs doing can be done now so some phasing with clear communications and expectations is required.	<p>working with projects and provide sufficient support to achieve successful outcomes.</p> <p>Project Management framework will account for processes for the whole project lifecycle, from early idea to closure, including gateways.</p> <p>New improvement projects and transformation programmes will be categorised through the PMO and signed off at CLT.</p>		
3	<p>Organisation</p> <p>A determination is needed as to whether to agree and require (or not) a standard operating model for the council and all service areas. If this is agreed clarity should be provided with clear design principles for either devolved or centralised services, and the overall model of service delivery. At present, it is unclear what the future operating model preference is for the council. There is currently a mixture of devolved and centralised corporate services and they vary across departments.</p>	<p>CLT has established an Organisational Design Authority to oversee the organisational redesign and restructure. This is ongoing and, in the future, this will be embedded in HR processes.</p>	Director of HR & OD	Ongoing
4	Financial planning and management		S151 Officer	Ongoing

	Continue to develop alignment between the Corporate Plan, MTFS and other financial strategies	The Council’s Budget and MTFS is aligned to the Corporate Plan and other strategies.		
5	<p>Savings and MTFS</p> <p>Ensure a relentless tracking and reporting system is in place with clear ownership of budgets with a focus on delivering the agreed savings proposals and avoiding double counts that might arise from changes to the operating model.</p>	<p>This tracking has taken place historically, and is in place for 2023/24 to 2025/26 to track the delivery of MTFS savings. The tracker is updated on a monthly basis and reported for cabinet on a quarterly basis along with the revenue monitoring.</p>	S151 Officer	Ongoing
6	<p>Internal systems</p> <p>Identify, agree and implement a range of options to urgently resolve key system issues (e.g. Microsoft Dynamic 365 and planning). Consider what alternative options might be available to help deliver the necessary urgent improvements</p>	<p>Dynamics 365:</p> <p>Most elements of Phase 1 project have been completed successfully:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discovery workshops for development of product roadmap completed and detailed recommendations including costs produced - New support contract awarded to HCL and successfully transition from PwC in July 2023 - My4Cast successfully used for Period 3 reporting in Resources and Place Directorates, rolling out to Peoples Directorate in September 2023. - New client-side team manager appointed with interim resources in place, new structure design and costings completed and will be presented to ODA at end of September 2023 <p>Meeting with members in mid-September confirmed high level Phase 2 scope and costings, to be reflected in future updates.</p>	S151 Officer / Director of ICT	

<p>7</p>	<p>Performance Introduce a consistent council-wide performance framework which provides organisational assurance. Ensure this performance monitoring is used to inform service delivery and decision making. Develop a suite of performance information and data packs which go through formal council governance arrangements e.g. reports to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.</p>	<p>Directorate scorecards created with Portfolio Holders and agreed at Cabinet. Leader of the Council and Managing Director chair quarterly Performance Boards for each directorate. Performance Board reports presented at Cabinet on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Corporate Plan has been agreed by Cabinet.</p> <p>CLT meets monthly as a Performance Board to consider corporate performance.</p> <p>Outcomes of OFLOG consultation will share key performance indicators.</p> <p>With new performance framework embedded into the organisation, processes for performance monitoring by scrutiny function are being re-introduced. This includes quarterly performance briefings for the Chair and Vice-Chair of Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee (P&F) using corporate scorecard, developing a watchlist of areas where performance is raising concerns, escalating to Scrutiny Leadership Group (informal) and P&F (formal committee consideration) where trends persist.</p>	<p>Assistant Director of Digital, Data & the Customer Experience</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Human Resources and Organisational Development Systems, processes and policies need to be reviewed, refreshed and made fit for purpose to deliver the council priorities as a matter of urgency. It is important that a culture is developed to ensure that all council</p>	<p>Council wide appraisal and target setting has been reintroduced with promising compliance results. A Management Competency Framework has been developed and will be implemented with a soft launch until 31st March 2024 and a more formal embedded approach from 1st April 2024.</p>	<p>Director of HR & OD</p>	

	<p>services understand and comply with agreed corporate policies. This needs to be closely monitored and any non-compliance identified and appropriate corrective action taken. A robust annual appraisal system should be developed that aligns individual and organisational objectives, values and behaviours as set out by the new Corporate Plan.</p>	<p>Additional (short term) investment has been secured in HR to support with the Council wide reorganisations. Clarity has now been provided in terms of the sign off of HR policies. HR Policies will now be signed off by the Head of Paid Services (with advice from the Director of HR) after it has been discussed with CLT.</p> <p>There is a need for a thorough review of several HR policies. In light of the ongoing reorganisation and the numerous consultations with trade unions, HR will be prioritising the main policies that require review. This approach will enable meaningful consultation with the unions. The key policies will be implemented by 1st April 2024. All other remaining HR policies will be reviewed and implemented by 1st April 2025.</p>		
<p>9a</p>	<p>Workforce strategy and culture The council should develop a workforce strategy setting out plans to attract, recruit, retain and develop the workforce with the skills and capabilities required to achieve the council objectives.</p>	<p>Workforce strategy has been developed. The five main priorities of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and Performance Change - creating a resilient, high performing Council with a culture and way of working that enables everyone to perform to their best for the benefit of residents. • Provide the framework for effective intervention to ensure our workforce is future proofed and is fit for purpose. • Engagement, involvement and collaboration happen across all levels in the organisation. • Strong and sustained commitment to 	<p>Director of HR & OD</p>	

		<p>equality, diversity & inclusion and to wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders and managers are developed, supported and challenged to be their best. <p>One of the main aims of the strategy is to enable the London Borough of Harrow to become an Employer of Choice.</p> <p>The Workforce Strategy will provide guidance to Directorates in developing Workforce Action Plans, supported by HR Business Partners, which align with service operational plans and reflect future workforce priorities and needs. This approach will effectively integrate the strategy into the council's daily operations.</p>		
<p>9b</p>	<p>LBH could also look to zone the council office by service area to enhance team working and support collaboration The council should discuss and agree with staff a set of expectations about when and why they should be in the office, informed by service need and job roles. Thereafter monitoring will be needed to ensure compliance is in line with the agreed approach.</p>	<p>Hybrid working habits and expectations to be developed.</p> <p>Office zoning has been agreed. Further discussion is required between colleagues in Place, Communications and HR around office zoning and staff engagement. To take forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess office zoning feasibility based on building capacity constraints. - Encourage employee use of office space. - Establish a dedicated working group for execution. - Refine hybrid work habits and promote agile methodologies. - Collaborate with managers to empower employees. 	<p>Corporate Director, Place</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve clarity in office zoning. - Maintain regular communication with staff. - Review and integrate information for new employee onboarding. 		
10	<p>Member development</p> <p>The existing member training and development offer should be evaluated and in line with member feedback should be expanded, targeting key roles such as Cabinet members and committee chairs.</p>	<p>Agreed that the offer will be evaluated with members surveyed regarding their requirements. Existing training offers have been advertised and promoted. An application for charter status will be considered.</p> <p>Discussions ongoing around member development approaches.</p>	Director of Legal & Governance	
11	<p>Governance</p> <p>The council's schedule of meetings should be reviewed to allow for sufficient pre-decision engagement and the timely issuing of reports.</p>	<p>Work of this nature is under constant review. The calendar has been reviewed in response to the peer review comments. A full schedule that allows time for engagement is available and timetabling allows for additional meetings should business needs require. Special care has been taken with the calendar.</p> <p>Published schedule of meetings – no further action required.</p>	Director of Legal & Governance	No further action needed
12	<p>Commissioning</p> <p>The council should develop a long-term commissioning strategy and implementation plan. Longer term planning is needed in areas such as extra care housing and leisure provision.</p>	<p>Within People Services Commissioning and Strategy there is a continuously developing Commissioning function responding and planning for demographic changes and demand for services, developing partnership arrangements with Health and the VCS, implementing Government policy changes and continually seeking to increase the efficient use of resources. There is a mixed approach to service delivery including commissioned services, spot</p>	Corporate Director, People	

		<p>purchasing, in-house and decommissioning where appropriate. Market position statement in place, and a refresh of the People Services commissioning plan is in progress.</p> <p>A Housing needs assessment has been completed with Public Health and Housing and Adult Social Care colleagues. A plan with short, medium and long term objectives is being developed. This includes considering the future extra care strategy, once the next facility opens during Spring 2024.</p>		
162	<p>13</p> <p>Health partnerships Build on the strong relationships established locally and the role the council plays in the borough partnership. The council should look to be more influential across the ICS footprint to make sure Harrow residents get their fair share of resources</p>	<p>Harrow’s Managing Director is the local authority lead for all 8 boroughs on the Integrated Care Board, making him a strong representative for Harrow and he will be leading on the community health services review and the Better Care Fund.</p> <p>As part of the wider transformation in People Directorate (Children’s Services and Adults’ Social Care), we are currently working to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the leadership teams for our integrated neighbourhood teams, drawn from clinical and professional teams and local communities. • Finalise the services forming the core integrated neighbourhood teams and confirm the associated workforce. • Design with local teams a development programme that will support to work together in new ways. 	Corporate Director, People	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Various joint focus groups, service development workshops have been held and will continue to do so.		
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Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	October 26 2023
Subject:	London Borough of Harrow Domestic Abuse Service
Key Decision:	Yes - By virtue of spend, which is above £500,000.
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap Managing Director
Portfolio Holder (s):	Cllr Anjana Patel - Portfolio Holder for Highways, Infrastructure & Community Safety Cllr Pritesh Patel - Portfolio Holder for Adult Services & Public Health Cllr Hitesh Karia - Portfolio Holder for Children's Services Cllr Mina Parmar - Portfolio Holder for Housing
Exempt:	Public except for the listed appendices which are exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that they contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All wards
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 - Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) Exempt Appendices: Appendix 2 - Specification Lot 1 - Domestic Abuse Support Service Appendix 3 - Specification Lot 2 - Safe Accommodation Appendix 4 – Pricing template Lot 1 Appendix 5 - Pricing template Lot 2 Appendix 6 - Tender Evaluation Model

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

The London Borough of Harrow's contract for domestic abuse services expires in March 2024. This report seeks Cabinet approval to reprocure and award new contracts for the service.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Approve the commencement of a competitive procurement for the domestic abuse service for a contract term of three years to run from the **1st of April 2024 to 31st March 2027**.
2. Approve splitting the provision of the Domestic Abuse service into two procurement Lots:
 - Lot 1: Domestic Abuse Support Service: Strategic coordination and direct support to domestic abuse victims/survivors.
 - Lot 2: Safe Accommodation: Refuge Support and Management and Floating Support.
3. Following the tender process, delegate authority to the Interim Assistant Director Strategy and Partnerships (as the Acting Corporate Director of Resources post is vacant) following consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Environment and Community Safety and Finance and Human Resources to award the contract(s) for both procurement lots in the new domestic abuse services.
4. Delegate authority to the Interim Assistant Director Strategy and Partnerships (as the Acting Corporate Director of Resources post is vacant) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Safety Finance and Human Resources to allow any changes ahead of the final publication of the Invitation to Tender (ITT).

Reason: (for recommendations)

The combined value of the two contracts to deliver the service is in excess of £500,000. Therefore, Cabinet approval is required to re-procure the service.

Section 2 – Report

1 Introductory Paragraph

1.1 The London Borough of Harrow’s contract for domestic abuse services expires in March 2024. This report sets out the rationale for splitting the Domestic Abuse service into two Lots and, inviting applications to tender for a contract to run the service. The total available budget for the new service is £1,328,636 for the 3-year contract length.

1.2 The value of the domestic abuse service contract is split between the two Lots. The Table below highlights the budget break down for each lot:

£1,328,636 Over 3 Years	DA Annual Budget	LOT 1 IDVA Service	Lot 2 Refuge and Floating Support
Year 1	£431,989	£335,859	£96,130
Year 2	£442,789	£344,255	£98,533
Year 3	£453,858	£352,862	£100,996

1.3 Hestia Housing and Support provide the current domestic abuse service contract. The service includes:

Community based support consists of the following:

- Five Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) to support survivors assessed as high-risk over 1-3 months. Co-located in a community setting, Adults Social Care, Childrens service MASH and at Wembley CSU
- One Full-time Domestic Abuse Case Worker to support survivors assessed as medium risk, provide additional capacity to the IDVAs and help manage demand.
- One Full-time Safety Planner co-located in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) within Children Services. The safety planner is responsible for conducting risk assessments for those referred via the First Response Team and Police Merlin reports. Provide safety plans for those assessed as standard risk and guide those assessed as high-risk survivors of abuse and their families to the IDVA service.
- Coordination of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), which reviews cases of abuse assessed as high-risk and secures input and support from statutory and non-statutory partners to ensure the victim’s safety.
- One Full-time Service Manager to oversee the service.
- One Full-time Domestic Abuse Intervention Complex Needs Worker co-located in Housing Services (commissioned separately)

Support within safe accommodation consists of the following:

- A 6-bed refuge that accommodates up to twelve victims and their families per year, managed by one full-time refuge worker to provide wrap-around support and advice to victims and their children.
 - A Floating Support worker who provides housing and tenancy-related advice and emotional support to help prevent homelessness.
 - Part-time Refuge Manager to manage the refuge worker and floating support.
- 1.4 The service works in tandem with and signposts victims to other services provided by Council departments and externally through the voluntary and community sectors.
- 1.5 The service was last competitively commissioned in late 2015 for a contract period of four years (two years with the option to extend for a further two years to 2019). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Council and partners in tandem with the new Domestic Abuse Act coming live in April 2021, it became increasingly difficult to ascertain what domestic abuse services the Council would be responsible for commissioning. The cross-departmental project group recommended postponing the retendering exercise and awarding a direct contract to the incumbent service provider. Cabinet adopted this in July 2021, with the award period timed to allow for a re-design of the service specification, following the complete understanding of the implications of the Domestic Abuse Act. As a result, a direct award contract was made to Hestia Housing and Support for a period of 1 year and seven months, commencing on the 1st of September 2021 and ending on the 31st of March 2023. The total value of the contract was £536,850.
- 1.6 A further extension of the contract was granted in April 2023 for a 12-month period to allow for the undertaking of the recommissioning exercise. This included a robust market engagement and Survivor engagement process. We had gone out to tender in late 2022, however following an unsuccessful tender we have reviewed our service specification and are going out to tender with a new specification.

2 Options Considered

2.1 Option 1: Do nothing - allow the contract to end in March 2024.

This option is not recommended as domestic abuse has become an important local and national policy area. The Domestic Abuse Act came into force in April 2021. Therefore, discontinuing the service will create a gap in statutory and non-statutory provision which will be detrimental to adults, children and young people impacted by domestic abuse.

2.2 **Option 2:** Bring elements of the service in-house.

This option is not recommended for the following reasons:

- a) This would result in additional management resource and higher staff costs.
- b) The service requires extensive and specially trained staff, which does not currently exist in-house, as well as a high degree of objectivity and neutrality from the perspective of the victim.
- c) In addition, it would be challenging to mobilise an in-house service in the time available before the end of the existing contract term.

2.3 **Option 3:** Continue with a single contract for service provision, incorporating both the Domestic Abuse Support Service and Support in Safe Accommodation.

This option is not recommended for the following reasons:

- a) The market engagement undertaken in 2023 has indicated several potential service providers with the capacity and interest to engage in the procurement process. This engagement also highlighted the ability of potential providers to bid for external funding and facilitate collaborative partnerships working.
- b) While a single provider responsible for the delivery of the whole contract would simplify the procurement process and contracting arrangements, there are risks associated with this approach. There is a heightened risk of delivering the entire domestic abuse service if a supplier underperforms or goes out of business.
- c) The tender would only be obtainable for suppliers delivering both the support service and support within safe accommodation. As a result, this could make the process less competitive.

2.4 **Option 4:** Separate the two critical elements of the service into two lots: Lot 1 being the Domestic Abuse Support Service and Lot 2 being Support in Safe Accommodation. This approach does not impact the budget for the service, which will remain at £1,328,636 over the three years and does not exclude any one supplier from bidding for and potentially being successful in winning both contracts.

There are several benefits to this approach.

- a) Not restricting the process to suppliers who can only provide the whole service broadens the scope of applicants, increasing competition and mitigating the risk that the Council might miss good quality bids (which we have tested with the market to verify).
- b) It supports small and medium sized enterprises by encouraging and enabling them to do business with the Council.

- c) Splitting the contract also spreads the risk associated with relying on one service provider and may increase resilience into the overall service delivery.

Option 4 is recommended. It should be noted that as the funding for the service has been set at £1,328,636 for 3 years. The competitive nature of the tender process will not be based on cost benefit but on the quality of the service that suppliers can provide for the funding envelope.

3 Background

3.1 Profile of domestic abuse in Harrow

Complete data beyond April 2022 will not be available ahead of the Cabinet meeting in October 2023. This information is usually only requested annually for the Strategic Assessment.

The number of recorded domestic abuse offences in Harrow has fluctuated in the last three years. In 2018, the number of recorded domestic abuse offences was 1,791 in April 2018; this rose to 2,254. In April 2022 and went down in April 2023 1,978. Police crime data for 2019/2022 shows that the number of incidents across the borough has remained stable at an average of 3,000 annually. However, there was a sharp increase in incidences of domestic abuse following the introduction of COVID-19 measures in 2022. There has been an upward trend in incidents flagged as domestic since November 2020. However, there has been a downward trend in the proportion of domestic offences resulting in injury – from 26% (July '22) to 20% (June '23)¹

- Most survivors of domestic abuse in the borough were female (74%). Men made up 24%.²
- Domestic abuse impacts all age groups, with 53% of survivors aged 25-44 and 24% of survivors aged 55-64 recorded as survivors of abuse. A further 4% were aged 65 plus. ³
- The Police crime data for 2021 on the ethnic profile of survivors shows that Harrow's white population were impacted most by domestic abuse. The second largest group affected were Asian, followed by Black African and Caribbean.⁴ (Police ethnicity data breakdown is limited and does not break down the Asian community profile any further)
- The main forms of domestic abuse experienced by survivors include Assault without Injury, Actual Bodily harm, and other Injury, Stalking and Harassment⁵

¹ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

² Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

³ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

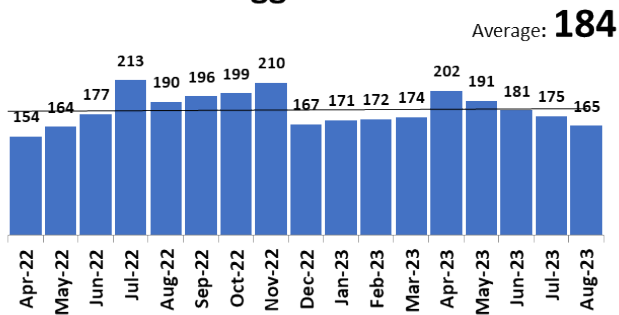
⁴ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

⁵ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

- Domestic abuse incidents have continued to increase. In April 2018 figures stood at 2,960 compared to June 2023 where they stood at 3,186.⁶ However there have been some fluctuations.
- In March 2022 incidences stood at 2226 compared to 2183 in March 2023 rolling year. The number of flagged Domestic abuse offences in Harrow decreased by 2%.
- Compared to April 2021 and April 2022 rolling year, the number of flagged domestic offences in Harrow increased by 374. There were 2,195 offences for 12 months up to 2021 and 1,821 in 2019. This translates to a 1.48 rate increase.⁷
- In the 12 months until August 2023, the highest levels of flagged domestic crime occurred in Marlborough and Greenhill. The highest increases from August 2022 were in Headstone (+42) and Pinner (+45). In the 12 months until August 2023, the lowest levels of flagged domestic crime occurred in Belmont and West Harrow. The highest reductions from August 2022 are Edgware (-49) and West Harrow (-28).⁸

Figure 1 : Number of domestic abuse offences in Harrow 2022-2023

All Domestic Flagged offences

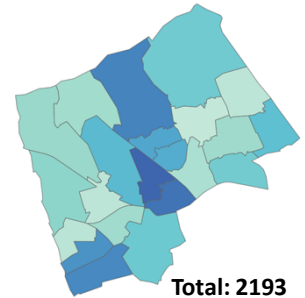


Benchmark
(Aug RY)

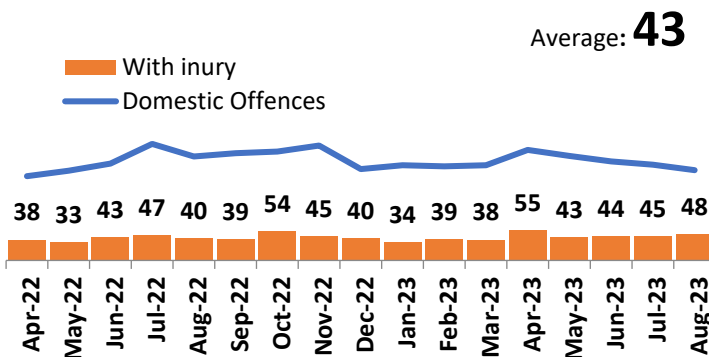
8.7 - Harrow
(offences per 1,000 pop)

10.8 - London
(offences per 1,000 pop)

Ward map (RY Aug 23)



Domestic offences resulting in injury

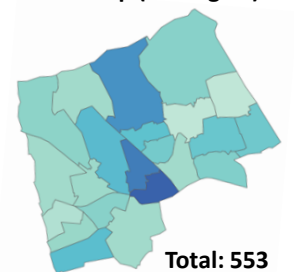


Benchmark
(Aug RY)

2.1 - Harrow
(offences per 1000 pop)

2.7 - London
(offences per 1000 pop)

Ward map (RY Aug 23)



⁶Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

⁷ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

⁸ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

3.2 A Snapshot of the Referrals to the Current Domestic Abuse Service is:-

- The number of referrals to the IDVA service has seen an upward trend since 2017/2018, increasing from 354 to 649 in 2020-2021 and to 919 in March 2023
- Over half of all referrals to the service were from the MASH and other departments within Children’s Services, followed by the Police.
- Most survivors referred to the service are female, with 4.7% of male survivors accessing the service.
- 7.8% of survivors were disabled.
- Services users with children made up 67% of the service.
- The service also provides support for those with no recourse to public funds who qualify for Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) concession However, the numbers are minimal at less than 1%.⁹
- The ethnic make-up of service users was evenly spread across white and non-white backgrounds, with 33% of service users of Asian origin, (Indian Subcontinent) 34.16%% White and 11.7%% African and Caribbean and Dual Heritage and 6% from other ethnic backgrounds.

3.2 MARAC

- The volume of referrals: MARAC in 2022-23 saw a slight increase by 8% of cases referred to MARAC from the previous year in 2022/2023. 2021-2022 (369 cases) and 2022/2023 (399 cases). With a repeat rate increased by 9% in 2022-23 (19%) compared to that of 2021-22 (10%).
- Majority of victims were female (93%) with male victims (7%). There was a (1%) increase in male victims in 2022-2023
- In 2021/22 MARAC received 5 LGBTQ+ cases. In 2022/2023 MARAC received 6 LGBTQ+ cases.

3.3 Refuge profile

Year end 2022/2023	
Gender Female	<10
Number of referrals received.	<10
Number of children at the end of period	<10
Disability (The Refuge does not provide specialised support to people with disabilities)	0

⁹ Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) concession is aimed at protecting victims of domestic abuse, by allowing them to notify the UK Border Agency.

LENGTH OF STAY ¹⁰	
1-3 months	7
3-6 months	9
Over 6 months	8
Married Status or in civil Partnership	<10
Single	<10
Divorced	0

4 Why a change is needed.

- 4.1 The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 together with national, regional, and local policies to protect all victims and those affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence, continues to impact existing service provision. The Act has created a broader statutory definition of domestic abuse and placed additional duties on local authorities. In response London Borough of Harrow has set up a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) sub-group which reports directly to the statutory Safer Harrow Partnership. This sub-group brings together key stakeholders to promote safety for women and girls in the borough. Additionally, the Council will continue to work in partnership with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and other Local Authorities in London to fully understand the expectations arising from the Act.
- 4.2 Demand for domestic abuse related support in the borough is increasing and is placing additional pressures on the existing service. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on victims of abuse and has helped highlight pressures on services.

¹⁰ Refuge users with long-term stays numbers have been carried over from previous year 2021/2022

5 Implications of the Recommendation

5.1 Costs

The total contract value for the service across both Lots 1 and 2, totalling £1,328,636 over the three-year contract period. Inflationary uplift is built into the budget envelope for years 2 and 3. Funding for the new service has been confirmed and pooled from across various service areas and directorates for the full term of three years. There is a small shortfall in year 3 of the DA budget, which is expected to be designed into the MTFS process in 206/27; this has been agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team. As a result, the commission will not offer additional years extension to the commission tender beyond the current term of the contract. External funding from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF) has been confirmed for the first two years. In the event that the LCPF funding is not continued for the final year of the contract and funding is not available from other sources, the Authority will need to reduce services by variation of the contracts. This model of funding has been approved by the Councils Managing Director

Domestic Abuse Contract Funding from the 1st of April 2024- 31st March 2027

Domestic Abuse Service Budget Breakdown	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	Total Cost and Funding
	£	£	£	£
Funding Required including estimated inflationary in year 2 and 3	431,989	442,789	453,858	1,328,636
Total Funding Requirement	431,989	442,789	453,858	1,328,636
Funding source				
Housing	72,000	72,000	72,000	216,000
Policy Team	209,334	221,134	180,532	611,000
Children's	84,655	84,655	84,655	253,965
Adults	15,000	15,000	15,000	45,000
Public Health	50,000	50,000	50,000	150,000
Total available funding	431,989	442,789	402,187	1,275,965
Budget Gap			£52,671	Total Gap £52,671

Please see **Financial Implications** Section 10 for further details.

6.2 Staffing/workforce

- 6.2.1 The Council will advise bidders if the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (“TUPE”) and/or Property lease/rental agreements apply to the new contract.

6.3 Performance Management

- 6.3.1 The contract’s performance feeds into the delivery of the priorities of the Community Safety and Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy.
- 6.3.2 Performance and outcomes of the service are assessed on a quarterly basis against performance indicators, which incorporate KPIs and requirements of the Public Health grant conditions.
- 6.3.3 Quarterly performance monitoring meetings will continue to be held with the provider and attended by service leads across Peoples, Policy, and Housing. These meetings are in addition to the data which is submitted quarterly and provide an opportunity to gain an increased understanding of how the services are working to meet their KPIs. This includes the number of referrals, source of referrals and how the service has improved the health, wellbeing, stability and independence of the client.

6.4 Environmental Implications

The service does not have a significant impact on the environment. However, the providers will be required to demonstrate their ability to meet the Council’s Climate Change obligations in ensuring that they have put in place measures to reduce waste, minimise unnecessary travel and adopt energy efficient practices.

6.5 Data Protection Implications

- 6.5.1 The provider will be required to adhere to the Council’s Data Sharing Protocol (for the purposes of sharing some service user data with service areas across the Council and with external professionals). A Data Sharing Protocol will be drafted in line with guidance and approval by the Council’s Information Governance Lead. There will also be comprehensive data protection provisions in the contracts awarded given both the sensitivity of the data and the confidence of victims and survivors to come forward and use the services.

7. Risk Management Implications

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **Yes**

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

The following key risks should be considered when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
Insufficient funding for the term of the contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The recommissioning of the service is for the period 2024-2025 then 2026/2027. ▪ The current total funding secured is for the contract period 2024-2025 with a budget gap in 2026/2027 Therefore, the continuation of the contract is subject to funding for 2026/27 onwards being made available. ▪ External MOPAC funding is secured until 2025/2026. 2026/2027 external funding subject to confirmation. The council is confident that the funding will continue at present value as it has in the past. ▪ It is possible to vary the contract during the term by way of the Change Control Procedure set out in Schedule 7 of the contract. Furthermore, Clause 36A of the contract also allows the Council to terminate at any time by giving 6 months' written notice to the provider. Therefore, any risk of facing penalties for reducing services in line with funding will be mitigated. This has been reviewed and approved by the Council's Managing Director. 	Amber
Insufficient inflationary uplifts have been built into the contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The commission has budgeted 2.5% inflationary uplifts. The previous commissioned service did not include inflationary uplifts. Service providers cited this as an issue in the market engagement process. 	

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
The provider becomes insolvent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The service contract will include mitigations to enable the Council to identify and issue a direct award to another provider. ▪ Splitting the service into two lots may reduce the risk of the whole service being impacted, should a provider become insolvent. ▪ The market has several competitor organisations in it, so we are not reliant on monopoly provision. ▪ Prior to the award of contracts, the Authority will carry out financial due diligence checks on evidence provided by the recommended supplier(s), to validate information they provided in the Selection Questionnaire of the tender. This includes a review of the supplier's two years audited accounts (or other equivalent financial information). 	Amber
Failure of one Lot not receiving any viable bidders may result in an abandoned procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refer to alternative IDVA services in Harrow. ▪ Refer refuge residents to other service. ▪ Provide short-term accommodation for refuge tenants. ▪ Consider all options 1. Award one lot 1 tender ▪ Both Lots are not awarded 	Amber
Failure of provider in service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The contract performance measures and mitigations include regular contract monitoring of KPIs, improvement plans and break clauses. ▪ Assessment of performance. 	Green
Risk of losing potential economies of scale due to splitting into two procurement lots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ While recognising this is a potential risk, it is felt that the benefits gained from this approach (as set out in section 2.4 of this report) outweigh the risks. 	Green

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
Risk of procurement Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competitive tendering process to be undertaken in compliance with the Council's contract procurement rules and Public Contracts Regulations 2015 	Green
Lack of value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The risk is mitigated by a competitive and rigorous tender process which will enable us to select a supplier that can provide the domestic abuse help service that we require for this fixed budget amount. 	Green

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 The procurement process will be carried out in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. A UK Notice will be issued, and the Council will follow an Open Procedure route. The proposed top level evaluation criteria will be:

- Price 30%
- Quality 60% (including 5% allocated to Carbon Reduction)
- Social Value 10%

9 Legal Implications

9.1 The value of the Council's proposed spend for the services as set out in this report exceeds the relevant procurement threshold. The Services fall within Schedule 3 (Social & Other Specific Services) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) and the threshold is £663,540. The PCR 2015 therefore require a Procurement exercise to be undertaken as is proposed in this report.

9.2 In accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs), for contracts with a total aggregate value of £500,000 and over, authorisation to commence the procurement must be sought from Cabinet.

9.3 Legal have been instructed to draft the contract terms and conditions for both Lots and the contracts will be included as part of the invitation to tender documents. The final contracts will be sealed in accordance with the CPRs.

9.4 The service enables the Council to discharge its duties in relation to:

- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Children Act 1989
- The Care Act 2014
- Housing (1996) and Homelessness (2002) Acts
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

10 Financial Implications

10.1 The award for this contract requires in total £1.328m over three years as per Table 1 in Paragraph 5.1. Service has confirmed 100% funding for Year one and Year two of the contract totalling £0.875m. The external funding from London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF) has only been confirmed for the first two years of the contract. Funding from LCPF for the third year of the contract (2026/27) has not been confirmed due to cycle of grant allocation matching the mayor's term in the office and so has been included in the Risk Management Implications Paragraph 7.

Whilst there has been an increase assumed in the budgeted costs of 2.5%, the grants and funding for 2026/27 are yet to be confirmed. If there is a funding shortfall, then either the cost will need to be reduced by a variation of the contract or there will be a growth bid made which will need to be considered as part of the Budget setting for 2026/27.

Please note the 2.5% inflation factor is applied at the level consistent with the average Bank of England published targets for years 2025/26 and 2026/27.

11 Equalities implications /Public Sector Equality Duty

11.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty to which the authority must have due regard. The Council's public sector equality duty is set out in s149 of the Equality Act 2010.

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

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

11.3 The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. The proposed service must be open to all residents and the Council will have due regard to those with protected characteristics. Equalities monitoring is incorporated as part of the contract monitoring process to help identify the profile of service users accessing the service to ensure that the service is able to meet their needs and the Council is able to fulfil its equality duty.

11.4 As part of the re-commissioning process, a full EQIA has been undertaken to identify and address any disproportionality.

Council Priorities

The Domestic Abuse re-commissioning is in line with the following council priorities:

- A borough that is clean and safe.
- A place where those in need are supported.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance (TBC)

Statutory Officer: Sharon Daniel

Signed on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 27 September 2023

Statutory Officer: Mariam Khan

Date: 28 September 2023

Chief Officer: Alex Dewsnap

Signed by the Managing Director

Date: 28 September 2023

Head of Procurement: Nimesh Mehta

Signed by the Head of Procurement

Date 28 September 2023

Head of Internal Audit: Neale Burns

Signed by the Head of Internal Audit.

Date: 28 September 2023

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO, as it impacts on all Wards.

EqlA carried out: YES

EqlA cleared by: Jennifer Rock

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Hodan H Elmi, Domestic Abuse/ VAWG Policy Officer
Hodan.Elmi@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: No

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee: NO

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You will need to produce an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) if:

- You are developing a new policy, strategy, or service
- You are making changes that will affect front-line services
- You are reducing budgets, which may affect front-line services
- You are changing the way services are funded and this may impact the quality of the service and who can access it
- You are making a decision that could have a different impact on different groups of people
- You are making staff redundant or changing their roles

Guidance notes on how to complete an EqIA and sign off process are available on the Hub under Equality and Diversity.

You must read the [guidance notes](#) and ensure you have followed all stages of the EqIA approval process (outlined in appendix 1).

Section 2 of the template requires you to undertake an assessment of the impact of your proposals on groups with protected characteristics.

Equalities and borough profile data, as well as other sources of statistical information can be found on the Harrow hub, within the section entitled: [Equality Impact Assessment](#) - sources of statistical information.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)		
Type of Decision:	<input type="radio"/> Cabinet <input type="radio"/> Portfolio holder <input checked="" type="radio"/> Other (state)	
Title of Proposal	Domestic Abuse Support Service: Strategic Coordination and Direct Support to Domestic Abuse Victims/Survivors	Date EqIA created: 02/08/23
Name and job title of completing/lead Officer	Anthony Ilesanmi – Assistant Policy Officer / Hodan Elmi – Policy Officer	
Directorate/ Service responsible	Strategy & Partnerships	
Organisational approval		
EqIA approved by the EDI Team:	Name: Jennifer Rock EDI Assistant Policy Officer	Signature <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tick this box to indicate that you have approved this EqIA Date of approval:17/10/2023

1. Summary of proposal, impact on groups with protected characteristics and mitigating actions

(to be completed after you have completed sections 2 - 5)

a) What is your proposal?

The new service will form part of a whole system response to domestic abuse, including identification, referral and triage and provide an accessible, equitable service to survivors of domestic abuse. Harrow conducted a Market Engagement exercise with service providers and has listened to the recommendations of the market. Harrow is seeking to procure a Domestic Abuse service that is based on outcomes rather than prescriptive number of post. We invite bidders to design a service that will meet the needs of Harrow Service users, in line with the Safelives recommended standards.

London Brough of Harrow invites applications to tender for a contract to provide a domestic abuse service for the London Borough of Harrow. An initial period of three years, to run from 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2027 (3 years) Budget envelope is for the 3 year period for both Lots totals £1,328,635.

The Care Act 2014 sets out the duty of a local authority to ‘meet the needs of a person who needs care and support.’ In meeting its duties under the Act, London Brough of Harrow is required to:

- Ensure that people’s well-being and the outcomes which matter to them are at the heart of every decision that is made
- Prevent or delay the need for statutory care/support services and reduce the risk of increased demand

In addition, the Housing (1996) and (2002) Acts specify that local authorities have a duty to provide housing advice to anyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness – including those who are living in a refuge.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places new legal duties on English local authorities to provide advice and assistance to any eligible person who is homeless or at risk of homelessness, irrespective of their priority need status. The legislation imposes greater responsibilities on councils to prevent homelessness and provide advice and assistance through a tailored plan to assist an applicant to retain or secure accommodation.

The Domestic Abuse Bill 2021 has also placed additional duties on councils as a priority need status is expanded to include survivors fleeing domestic abuse.¹ The GLA will also be obliged to provide support within safe accommodation across London. Local authorities in London will work in partnership with the GLA to help inform the delivery of support in their borough.

The Draft Victims Bill was published in May 2022. The purpose of this Bill is to improve the end-to-end support for victims of crime so that they get the support needed to cope and recover from the impact of crime and feel able to engage and remain engaged in the criminal justice system.² Together the

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/domestic-abuse-bill>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-victims-bill>

measures will amplify victims' voices in the criminal justice process, strengthen transparency and accountability of criminal justice agencies and improve support for victims. We await further guidance as this bill progresses through Parliament.

b) Summarise the impact of your proposal on groups with protected characteristics

The service specification for the new domestic abuse service aims to support groups from all protected characteristics and ensure a positive impact where possible. It does this by providing a range of support packages to ensure a personalised service for survivors.

c) Summarise any potential negative impact(s) identified and mitigating actions

The number of recorded domestic abuse offences in Harrow has fluctuated in the last 3 years. In 2018 the number of recorded domestic abuse offences was 1,791 in April 2018 this rose to 2,254 in April 2022 and went down in April 2023 to 1,978. Police crime data for 2019/2022 shows that the number of incidents across the borough has remained stable at an average of 3,000 per annum. However, there was a sharp increase in incidences of domestic abuse following the introduction of COVID-19 measures. There has been an upward trend in the level of incidents flagged as domestic since November 2020.

According to Metropolitan Police data:

- Most survivors of domestic abuse in the borough were female (74%). Men made up 24%.³
- Domestic abuse impacts all age groups, with 53% of survivors aged 25-44 and 24% of survivors aged 55-64 recorded as survivors of abuse. A further 4% were aged 65 plus.⁴
- The Police crime data for 2021 on the ethnic profile of survivors shows that Harrow's white population were impacted most by domestic abuse. The second largest group affected were Asian, followed by Black African and Caribbean.⁵ (Police ethnicity data breakdown is limited and does not break down the Asian community profile any further)
- The main forms of domestic abuse experienced by survivors include Assault without Injury, Actual Bodily harm, and other Injury, Stalking and Harassment⁶
- Domestic abuse incidents have continued to increase. In April 2018 figures stood at 2,960 compared to June 2023 where they stood at 3,186.⁷ However there have been some fluctuations.
- In March 2022 incidences stood at 2226 compared to 2183 in March 2023 rolling year. The number of flagged Domestic abuse offences in Harrow decreased by 2%.

³ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

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⁵ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

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⁷ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

- Compared to April 2021 and April 2022 rolling year, the number of flagged domestic offences in Harrow increased by 374. There were 2,195 offences for 12 months up to 2021 and 1,821 in 2019. This translates to a 1.48 rate increase.⁸
- In the 12 months until August 2023, the highest levels of flagged domestic crime occurred in Marlborough and Greenhill. The highest increases from August 2022 were in Headstone (+42) and Pinner (+45). In the 12 months until August 2023, the lowest levels of flagged domestic crime occurred in Belmont and West Harrow. The highest reductions from August 2022 are Edgware (-49) and West Harrow (-28).⁹

A Snapshot of the Referrals to the Current Domestic Abuse Service

- The number of referrals to the IDVA service has seen an upward trend since 2017/2018, increasing from 354 to 649 in 2020-2021 and to 919 in March 2023
- Over half of all referrals to the service were from the MASH and other departments within Children's Services, followed by the Police.
- Most survivors referred to the service are female, with 4.7% of male survivors accessing the service.
- 7.8% of survivors were disabled.
- Services users with children made up 67% of the service.
- The service also provides support for those with no recourse to public funds who qualify for Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) concession. However, the numbers are minimal at less than 1%.¹⁰
- The ethnic make-up of service users was evenly spread across white and non-white backgrounds, with 33% of service users of Asian origin, (Indian Subcontinent) 34.16% White and 11.7% African and Caribbean and Dual Heritage and 6% from other ethnic backgrounds.
- The volume of referrals: MARAC in 2022-23 saw a slight increase by 8% of cases referred to MARAC from the previous year in 2022/2023. 2021-2022 (369 cases) and 2022/2023 (399 cases). With a repeat rate increased by 9% in 2022-23 (19%) compared to that of 2021-22 (10%).
- Majority of victims were female (93%) with male victims (7%). There was a (1%) increase in male victims in 2022-2023.
- In 2021/22 MARAC received 5 LGBTQ+ cases. In 2022/2023 MARAC received 6 LGBTQ+ cases.

With the statistics provided the potential negative impact to the service, may be due to the service being overwhelmed with an increase in service use. The council must ensure appropriate measures to ensure the service can continue running in case of this event.

⁸ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

⁹ Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences, Metropolitan Police Data June 2023

¹⁰ Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) concession is aimed at protecting victims of domestic abuse, by allowing them to notify the UK Border Agency.

2. Assessing impact					
You are required to undertake a detailed analysis of the impact of your proposals on groups with protected characteristics. You should refer to borough profile data , equalities data , service user information, consultation responses and any other relevant data/evidence to help you assess and explain what impact (if any) your proposal(s) will have on each group. Where there are gaps in data, you should state this in the boxes below and what action (if any), you will take to address this in the future.		What does the evidence tell you about the impact your proposal may have on groups with protected characteristics? Click the relevant box to indicate whether your proposal will have a positive impact, negative (minor, major), or no impact			
Protected characteristic	For each protected characteristic, explain in detail what the evidence is suggesting and the impact of your proposal (if any). Click the appropriate box on the right to indicate the outcome of your analysis.	Positive impact	Negative impact		No impact
			Minor	Major	
Age	<p>Harrow is an outer London borough, situated to the North West of the capital. It has borders with the London Boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Ealing, and Hillingdon. The borough covers 20 square miles, and its population currently stands at 261,200, making it the 12th largest borough in Greater London in terms of size and 20th in terms of population.¹¹¹² Its female to male population is evenly split (132428 females and 128771.6males). The Median age of residents in Harrow is 38. and it has an ageing population, with 55% aged 38-85.¹³¹⁴ The number and proportion of older people in Harrow continue to increase. 15.% are now aged 65 and over compared with 15.9 percent (39,988) in 2019 and 14.8% aged 65 plus. It is expected that the number of residents aged 65 plus will increase by 38% and those aged 85 plus could increase by 60% by 2030.</p> <p>The current service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic abuse impacts all age groups, with 53% of survivors aged 25-44 and 24% of survivors aged 55-64 recorded as survivors of abuse. A further 4% were aged 65 plus. • Marac statistics states that 31-40 age group continues to be the highest age group year on year for victims. Victims in that age group for 2021/2022 was 36% compared to 2022/2023 at 26%. Perpetrators in that age group was 36% for 2021/2022 and 27% in 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹¹ 2021 Census data is being released at stages, Data captured is from ONS mid-year Population Estimates

¹² https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/30498/2021_Census_First_Release.pdf

¹³ GLA Population Projections (london.gov.uk)

¹⁴ ONS mid-year Population Estimates 2021

	<p>2022/2023. Both the victim and perpetrators equally have the same highest age group. For 41-50 age group, 2021/2022 victims (20%) and perpetrators (22%) and in 2022/2023 victims (21%) and perpetrators (23%). This age group remains the same as the second highest. However, for the third largest aged group for 2022/2023, (18%) victims are from the 26-30 age range and (15%) perpetrators. In 2021/2023, There was slight difference in third place for age group. Victims third largest age group was 19-25 (16%) compared to perpetrators (13%). For the perpetrators, the third largest age group in 2021/2023 was 26/30 (11%) and victims (17%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed updated service plans to improve on the service by forming a whole system response to domestic abuse, including identification, referral and triage and provide an accessible, equitable service to survivors of domestic abuse. • The updated service intends to be responsive to the needs of families including children and young people, ensuring they receive the right support to deal with the trauma they have endured. Maintaining the services commitment to helping young people as well as the older victim group. • There is no designated service provision for service users in foster homes or care homes but individuals of these characteristics are supported by the overall service 				
Disability	<p>In 2021, 5.9% of Harrow residents were identified as being disabled and limited a lot. This figure decreased from 8.2% in 2011. These are age-standardised proportions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on service user data, 7.8% of survivors were disabled. • There is no change in mental health impacting more on victims compared to perpetrators whilst substance abuse affect more perpetrators than victims. In 2022/2023 victims with mental health remained the same as 2021/2022 (36%) and substance misuse (20%). Perpetrators with mental health (31%) saw a (4%) increase from last year. Substance misuse for perpetrators (46%) also saw a (4%) increase from last year. • Of those that were referred to MARAC, 36% of survivors presented mental health and 35% with substance misuse issues • The new service aims to support survivors to access other services to meet their physical and mental health needs 	☒	☐	☐	☐

Gender reassignment	There is limited data held about this protected characteristic for the Harrow population. The England/Wales Census and Scottish Census have not asked if people identify as transgender. Service user data for the current domestic abuse service shows that no victims identified as transgender. Outreach services will offer support to victims regardless of their gender.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<p>The percentage of adults who were married or in a civil partnership in Harrow increased from 53.8% to 53.9%, while the percentage of adults who had divorced or dissolved a civil partnership increased from 5.4% to 5.7%.profile of Harrow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of perpetrators are ex-partners (30%), spouse (27%) and partners (14%). In 2021/2022, ex-partners (33%), spouse (28%) and, partners (18%). • Current service provision in Harrow remains the same regardless of marital status, It is known that individuals, particularly women, living in couples (married or cohabiting) or who have decided to separate from their partners are more likely to be a victims of domestic abuse. aims to support all residents regardless of their marriage status. Harrow 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and Maternity	Service data provided by boroughs' Multi Agency Risk Conference (MARAC) In 2022-23, show that 22 victims were pregnant at time of referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Race/ Ethnicity</p>	<p>Harrow is a diverse borough, with 45.2% of the population identifying as Asian, which ranks second nationally. It has a growing non-white British population and has the fastest-growing Romanian population in the country. The Hindu-Indian population has traditionally been the largest non-White British community in the borough. However, the Eastern European community accounts for a similar proportion of the population at around 20%. Harrow has a higher proportion of residents whose main language is not English and who cannot speak English, or cannot speak English well, compared to the national and London averages.</p> <p>The Current Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police crime data for 2021 on the ethnic profile of survivors, shows that Harrow’s white population were impacted by domestic abuse the most. The second largest group impacted were Asian followed by Black African and Caribbean • The ethnic make-up of service users was evenly spread across white and non-white backgrounds, with 33% of service users of Asian origin,(Indian Subcontinent) 34.16%% White and 11.7%% African and Caribbean and Dual Heratiage and 6% from other ethnic backgrounds. • The largest number of victims are identified as White British (20%) which has seen a (2%) decrease from 2021/2022 (22%). The other largest groups are Asian or Asian British Other (17%) and Asian or Asian British Indian (15%). In 2021/2022 saw White Other background (18%) and Asian or Asian British Other (13%). • The new service aims to continue providing an inclusive service 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Religion or belief</p>	<p>In 2021, 15.9% of Harrow residents described themselves as Muslim, up from 12.5% in 2011. The rise of 3.4 percentage points was the largest increase of all broad religious groups in Harrow. Because the census question about religious affiliation is voluntary and has varying response rates, caution is needed when comparing figures between different areas or between censuses. In 2021, 33.9% of people in Harrow described themselves as Christian (down from 37.3%), while 25.8% described themselves as Hindu (up from 25.3% the decade before).</p> <p>The new service aims to provide a specialist domestic abuse service which will provide information, advice and direct support to survivors and to provide a service that gives survivors opportunities to share their feelings in an environment which is safe. Irrespective of religion and belief. As with the current service frontline workers are trained to deal with different cases that are culturally sensitive and a range of translation services are available to service users.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Sex</p>	<p>Harrow's population is 261,200, making it the 12th largest borough in Greater London in terms of size and 20th in terms of population. Its female to male population is evenly split (132428 females and 128771.6males)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the Metropolitan Police data the majority of survivors of domestic abuse in the borough were female (71%) Men made up 24%. Marac service user statistics show that Majority of victims are female (93%) with male victims (7%). From last year's figures, there was a (1%) increase in male victims. However, LGBT cases was similar to last year. In 2021/22 we only had 5 cases. In 2022/2023 we had a total of 6 LGBT cases. The majority of survivors that were referred to the Domestic Abuse service are female, with 4.7% of male survivors accessing the service. The proposed service plans to continue support with survivors regardless of gender 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>ONS data shows that the proportion of the UK population aged 16 years and over identifying as heterosexual or straight decreased from 95.3% in 2014 to 94.6% in 2018 and the proportion identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) increased from 1.6% in 2014 to 2.2% in 2018. There is limited information on the LGBT + population of Harrow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current service also provides support to the LGBT + community and they made up 1% of the overall service users. The current and new outreach service will continue to provide support to all victims, irrespective of their sexual orientation. The service provider will also ensure that LGBT victims are supported to access specialist services where required and if requested. Free specialist services will continue to be promoted on the Harrow website. While the Harrow refuge is unable to accommodate male and transgender victims (female to male), the service provider will ensure that victims referred to its service are supported to find suitable/specialist accommodation or supported to remain safe in their own homes.It is important to note that the Transgender community of either forms of transition are supported in this programme 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.1 Cumulative impact – considering what else is happening within the Council and Harrow as a whole, could your proposals have a cumulative impact on groups with protected characteristics?

Yes No

If you clicked the Yes box, which groups with protected characteristics could be affected and what is the potential impact? Include details in the space below.

As part of the Council's Equalities and Diversity Strategic Framework, proposals include conducting a thorough review of the way in which the Council provides services to its residents. This will require consulting service users and examining issues of cultural sensitivity, accessibility and any unconscious bias that may affect outcomes for different groups. Going forward, regular input and feedback from service users will continue to be a part of the performance monitoring process for the new service.

This service will positively affect groups with protected characteristics, especially due to the amount of complex needs staff that are able to assist with ethnically sensitive issues and provide this type of bespoke support to people from these groups

As part of the council's update in corporate objectives, any addition required to the service must fit the objective of putting residents first in any way that this is achieved.

2.2 Any other impact - considering what else is happening nationally/locally (national/local/regional policies, socio-economic factors etc), could your proposals have an impact on individuals/service users, or other groups?

Yes No

If you clicked the Yes box, Include details in the space below

3. Actions to mitigate/remove negative impact

Only complete this section if your assessment (in section 2) suggests that your proposals may have a negative impact on groups with protected characteristics. If you have not identified any negative impacts, please complete sections 4 and 5.

In the table below, please state what these potential negative impact (s) are, mitigating actions and steps taken to ensure that these measures will address and remove any negative impacts identified and by when. Please also state how you will monitor the impact of your proposal once implemented.

State what the negative impact(s) are for each group, identified in section 2. In addition, you should also consider and state potential risks associated with your proposal.	Measures to mitigate negative impact (provide details, including details of and additional consultation undertaken/to be carried out in the future). If you are unable to identify measures to mitigate impact, please state so and provide a brief explanation.	What action (s) will you take to assess whether these measures have addressed and removed any negative impacts identified in your analysis? Please provide details. If you have previously stated that you are unable to identify measures to mitigate impact please state below.	Deadline date	Lead Officer

4. Public Sector Equality Duty

How does your proposal meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
3. Foster good relations between people from different groups

Include details in the space below

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
The new domestic service will support domestic abuse victims from all protected groups where possible.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups - Victims will be supported to lead healthy, safe and independent lives.
Performance indicators will include provisions to help victims into employment and volunteering, and help promote equal life chances for all - particularly those groups that are disproportionately impacted
3. Foster good relations between people from different groups- As above

5. Outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) click the box that applies

Outcome 1

No change required: the EqIA has not identified any potential for unlawful conduct or disproportionate impact and all opportunities to advance equality of opportunity are being addressed

Outcome 2

Adjustments to remove/mitigate negative impacts identified by the assessment, or to better advance equality, as stated in section 3&4

Outcome 3

This EqIA has identified discrimination and/ or missed opportunities to advance equality and/or foster good relations. However, it is still reasonable to continue with the activity. Outline the reasons for this and the information used to reach this decision in the space below.

Include details here

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