



## HARROW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

### Harrow Community Cohesion and Integration Charter

#### **Introduction**

On 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011 the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP) Board decided, as part of its wider partnership review, to disband the Community Cohesion Management Group (CCMG). It was further agreed to create a smaller transition task and finish group, which would be tasked with embedding the principles of community cohesion across the partnership work plan and groups.

The Board wanted to ensure that the partnership work plan and partnership groups' terms of reference continued to consider community cohesion as an underlying principle.

Following the Board's decision the CCMG formed a task and finish group to develop a Harrow definition of Community Cohesion and a Community Cohesion and Integration Charter that could be adopted and used by all partners as guiding principles.

The task and finish group is made up of representatives from the Council, the Police, the PCT and the voluntary, community and faith sectors.

#### **Proposed Action**

It is intended that the Charter is adopted by the Partnership Board on behalf of all partners and disseminated to all members of the Board. It is also hoped that the Charter will form part of the two remaining Partnership Management Groups terms of reference.

#### **What are you asking the Partnership Board to do**

To adopt the Harrow Community Cohesion and Integration Charter.

The Chair of the Partnership Board to sign on behalf of all members.

For the Safer Harrow and the Shadow Health and Well Being Boards to amend their terms of reference to include the Charter

For all members of the Partnership Board to disseminate the Charter within their organisations to adopt and embed the principles.

## **Summary of the issue**

The task and finish group have developed the following Harrow definition for community cohesion:

We are committed to the development of Harrow as a thriving and cohesive society of many communities, cultures, diverse faiths and beliefs.

We believe in building on our existing cohesive and integrated communities but recognise the importance of continuing, harmonious and good relations with our diverse communities. We are committed to creating a positive and productive environment where difference is valued and celebrated and we will take every opportunity to work to improve those relations and encourage greater understanding and contact between people and communities.

### **A cohesive community has three foundations:**

- There is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities – people know what everyone expects of them and what they can expect in turn and people are treated with respect
- People of all backgrounds have equal life opportunities, access to services and fair treatment
- There is a strong sense of trust and confidence in institutions locally that they will act fairly and be open to public scrutiny

### **And three ways of living together:**

- A shared sense of belonging for all communities
- There is a strong recognition of the contribution of those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, celebrating points of commonality and diversity
- There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within and across neighbourhoods.

This definition reflects the guidance issued by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion and the national guidance issued in the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) paper 'Creating the Conditions for Integration'.

The Community Cohesion and Integration Charter develops the Harrow community cohesion definition to a set of principles for all partners to acknowledge and adhere to.

The role of the Charter is to reinforce and embed the different elements that contribute to maintaining positive community cohesion and support integration. Given the huge diversity within the borough this is vital to ensuring continued positive relations within and across communities.