

New Harrow Business Transformation Partnership

Sharing a vision for Customer Service: The Business Transformation Partnership and the Harrow Strategic Partnership

1. Background to the Business Transformation Partnership (BTP)

The Council has been in the process of procuring a transformation partner since May 2004. From an original list of 19 serious bidders it has now been narrowed down to two potential partners – Capita and Fujitsu. It is hoped that the final evaluation of their bids will be completed and a contract signed by the end of July.

2. What will the Partnership deliver?

- 2.1 The Partnership will last 10-15 years and will be the catalyst for driving forward the Council's programme of modernisation, and take a leap forward in terms of the capability and capacity to change.
- 2.2 The Council has agreed that the first three projects to be undertaken by the partner will be:
 - First Contact (covering how people access and use all Council services)
 - Improved operating systems (new Council wide back office systems covering HR, payroll, procurement and finance)
 - Management information systems (new ways for the Council to manage its performance)
- 2.3 In addition the new partner will support the development of Harrow's IT services, helping it to improve performance and develop new skills. At a wider level the Partner will also be required to transfer knowledge into the Council in areas such as project management, business process re-engineering, and change management.
- 2.4 After the initial projects, which will last about 2 ½ years, Harrow will be looking for proposals for new projects, in consultation with all its stakeholders and partners. These can be of any nature that will have a significant and strategic impact on Harrow, but must justify themselves as viable a business case.

3 How will the Business Transformation Partnership support improved services?

3.1 The initial projects were selected on the basis that they would have the most dramatic effect on improving Council services and efficiency.

The Council also stated specific requirements of its initial projects related to improving the effectiveness of its links and work with partner organisations. This is particularly relevant to the First Contact project, which will deliver:

- a Contact Centre which will deal with all telephone calls from the public;
- a One Stop Shop (OSS) at the Civic centre providing a single point of contact for all citizens requiring a Council service;
- the roll out of One Stop Shops at locations across the borough, designed to match patterns of need and use;
- the installation of a series of automated kiosks at locations across the borough, allowing citizens access to a variety of Council services, including bill paying;
- a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system to provide customer related information to the OSS and Contact Centre staff to enable them to handle enquiries more successfully at their 'first contact' with the Council.

3.2 To obtain the most from the new technology the Council will have to review its processes and combine information to allow it to get a complete picture of each inquiry.

3.3 First Contact will enable the Council to further improve service through:

- capturing and analysing customer transaction data, building up a comprehensive set of accurate information on each customer;
- tracking individual transactions over time, enabling the development of choice, and the personalisation of the delivery of service;
- more detailed knowledge of operational 'hot spots', customer service standards and internal best practice;
- the delivery of services through the channels preferred by customer (visits, telephone, e-mail, text etc.).

3.4 So far both partners have submitted plans for the development of the Civic Centre. When a Partner is selected the relevant plan can continue to be progressed. This will ensure that there is no delay in progressing the project to the agreed timescales. In addition the Council is in the process of recruiting its own team. It is anticipated that a joint team of 150 people will be required to deliver the initial projects.

4. Benefits to our Partners

- 4.1 The Council has specifically stated that the new systems and processes must support its work with its community partners. This will be achieved specifically through:
- the linking of systems to support the further development of a holistic picture of an individual or family, to support integrated action by the Council and its Partners;
 - the potential to share information (as allowed under data protection and freedom of information legislation) by teams and projects;
 - the development of a pro-active and co-ordinated approach to our relationship and transactions with members of the community;
 - the removal of barriers to successful and equal access by individuals to Council Services, such as language and disability;
 - improved information about the needs of residents;
 - the creation of an informed referrals function by the Council to Partner organisations;
 - support to Harrow's Corporate University through access to the Partner's leading edge knowledge base and training facilities, and as a means of completing the initial training of Harrow staff on the new systems;
 - assistance in joint performance management of activities with community partners.

5. The Way Forward

- 5.1 As stated earlier, we aim to have the partner in place by mid-July. Once appointed, the partner will immediately begin work on the first three major projects. We aim to have the contact centre and OSS operational within six months of the start of the partnership and new finance systems in place by the next financial year.
- 5.2. Upon the commencement of the partnership, the partner will begin scoping future projects across the Council. The Partners know of the importance of Harrow Strategic Partnership and are aware that Harrow Council is keen to form stronger links with its partners, with the eventual aim of providing a better service to Harrow citizens.

6. Conclusion

6.1. In conclusion, the BTP will bring many advantages to Harrow Council and its partners.

- The introduction of a call centre will not only vastly improve the interface the Council has with its customers, it will provide an unprecedented level of information about Harrow residents, at both a macro and micro level;
- Improved finance and procurement systems will make the Council a far simpler organisation to deal with, and the prospect that some of these benefits could potentially be shared with Harrow's strategic partners;
- Improved management of information will mean that the wealth of information held by the Council will be far more accessible and easier to manipulate.

We expect to sign the final contract with the chosen partner in mid-July, with work on the Partnership beginning immediately. We would like to bring along the chosen partner to meet the Harrow Strategic Partnership Board at a future meeting to encourage their deeper understanding of the role of the HSP.

Carol Cutler

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