

REPORT FOR: Annual Council

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| Date of Meeting: | 12 th June 2014 |
| Subject: | Council Vision and Priorities |
| Responsible Officer: | Tom Whiting, Corporate Director, Resources |
| Exempt: | No |
| Wards affected: | All |
| Enclosures: | None |

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out a new Vision and set of Council Priorities.

Recommendations:

That Council adopt the Vision and Council Priorities, within this report.

Section 2 – Report

1. Context

New members of Council have been elected with the aim of working with the residents and communities of Harrow to make the borough a better place to live, work and visit.

Set against a backdrop where further cuts in public funding from Government will impact upon local government's ability to deliver services in the ways that it has previously, there is a need to move towards a model of delivering services 'with' people. This report to Council sets out a change in the vision of the Council, and a new set of Council Priorities, which will start this shift in how the Council works with its residents and communities to deliver those outcomes that residents most value.

1.1 A Vision for Harrow

The Council wants Harrow to be a place where diverse and vibrant communities can flourish and live together, bound by a strong sense of belonging and community.

The following vision is therefore proposed for adoption by Council:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

The vision is rooted in the community we serve and our ambition for the borough. We believe that the people of Harrow are what makes us strong, united and will enable us to succeed. As a community, Harrow is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse boroughs in the country. Cohesion is strong, but as the population continues to grow within the borough, we will not take this cohesion for granted. It is therefore important that we work ever closer together with our residents, the voluntary and community sector, partners and businesses to make sure Harrow is successful and a place where residents are proud to call their home.

To achieve our vision, the Council wants to enable residents to have the chance to become more active citizens by providing support and opportunities to contribute to the decision-making process and playing a greater part in making Harrow better. We remain ambitious about what we can achieve together, and with the level of savings we have to make over the next four years we will place engaging and involving the community at the centre of our approach. We will do this by working more closely with partners such as the voluntary and community sector whilst at the same time being more innovative and saving money in the Council.

We will create a model of local government where the Council works with local people and the voluntary sector every step of the way. The council does not always know best, and it certainly no longer can afford to pay for everything. So as we reduce the amount that we spend and therefore the amount that we can do in Harrow, we will need to work harder with residents,

partners and businesses to make Harrow a place where people want to live, work and visit.

1.2 Council Priorities

As a Council we will deliver the vision by ensuring we target our resources to make the biggest impact on our new Council Priorities:

- **Making a difference for the vulnerable**
- **Making a difference for communities**
- **Making a difference for local businesses**
- **Making a difference for families**

Making a difference for the vulnerable

Although Harrow is a great place to live, there are also many people who are in real need with poverty, ill-health and poor housing all being major issues in the borough. For example, in Harrow there is a larger proportion of older people, when compared to the London average, and older people generally have greater support needs. We will continue to prioritise our core commitment to help and support those most in need in our community. One of the most important ways in which we can help residents improve their quality of life, health and wellbeing in these difficult times is to help those in need to get out of or avoid poverty, by finding work that gives them a good quality of life and helping them to deal with the rising cost of living.

Active residents, either through caring for an elderly relative or friend, or supporting those who need help to travel around the borough are vital for our success in helping those most in need. The Council owes a great debt of gratitude to all those who make such selfless sacrifices within Harrow and we must never take them for granted. We want to listen to individuals and groups in the community to see how they can be supported to continue to do the things which make such a real difference to the lives of so many people.

We know that we are but one of the many organisations and individuals that make a difference day in day out to the lives of our residents and as our resources reduce we will need to support sustainable ways for others to do more in Harrow. However, our pledge to invest an extra £1m to tackle domestic violence, support carers and stand up for those in need is central to how we will deliver this priority and as our vision sets out, we will do this by working together, not through top down decisions and actions.

Making a difference for communities

Harrow is a borough with significant potential. The regeneration programme for the borough is a once in a generation opportunity to make a real difference to the place and people's quality of life by building new houses, encouraging

business development and creating new job opportunities. Harrow's diversity is one of its strengths and ensuring fairness and equality of opportunity for all residents and communities in Harrow is critical.

We will look at how, by working with residents and the voluntary and community sector, we can improve the capacity and resilience of all communities within the borough to be able to come up with solutions to the challenges that they face, and be able to step in where public services can no longer operate or are affordable. Community engagement and involvement are therefore a key feature of how this Council will approach decision-making. Given the nature of the cuts in funding we are receiving, it has never been more important for everyone to have the opportunity to get involved and take part in the planning, development and delivery of those things that matter most to residents.

Harrow already has a high proportion of residents who volunteer in their communities, gaining new skills and friends while helping others. We want to build on this local resourcefulness within our communities. It will be the role of councillors to bring people together to make a real and positive difference to their area. Councillors should be leaders in their local community and therefore be rooted in the area that they serve and be seen to be active; contributing to what matters to the community, facilitating debate, bringing people together and acting to deliver those things that make a big difference to communities.

We know that people are busy, so we will come out to you for your thoughts and not expect you to come to us. We will make better use of technology, recognising that many residents in Harrow are online and develop more innovative ways to get the views of those residents who rarely contact the Council or have previously found it difficult to get into a meaningful conversation with us.

The look and feel of the local community is also important to our residents, so we will continue to work with our partners to tackle anti-social behaviour, and keep crime low. We also want Harrow residents to be proud of the state of their neighbourhoods and will work together with local people to make a difference to the cleanliness and sustainability of their local area, for example through the efforts and endeavours of Community Champions. We will be tough on those that don't take pride in the look and feel of their neighbourhoods by introducing on the spot fines for littering in our streets.

Making a difference for local businesses

Encouraging growth in the local economy is an important component in being able to help and support residents get a better quality of life. Harrow has a Town Centre and nine local shopping centres. These are all vital to Harrow as a place and ensuring these remain vibrant will help our local businesses, as well as create employment opportunities for our residents. We will provide a period of free parking in our district shopping centres to support our local businesses and make them places where local residents look to spend their time and money.

But we recognise that supporting local business is not just about our local shops. Harrow has a high level of entrepreneurialism, and we want to make sure that as our residents create new opportunities, they can remain in Harrow as their businesses grow. This is also important for local people to access local employment opportunities and will put Harrow on a strong footing to maximise the benefits of any sustainable growth in the economy. As further support we will look to create over 500 jobs and apprenticeships to support our young people into work.

Making a difference for families

Families are at the heart of our communities in Harrow, and we recognise that for some the last few years of 'austerity' have been a struggle. We want to make sure that Harrow is a place where families can thrive, from good quality housing and safe neighbourhoods, to good schools for their children and jobs which enable the aspiration of families to be met. We know that the cost of living has risen in Harrow, and we will do all we can to support families through this, targeting our resources as best we can so that families can feel the full benefits of economic growth. As part of our commitment to this priority, we will also tackle rogue landlords. Our priority for every family is to ensure that they can live in a neighbourhood which has a real sense of community, in a house they can be proud to call their home.

2. Legal Implications

Approving the Council's policy framework is reserved to Full Council.

These priorities were included in the labour party manifesto so they were in the public domain prior to the election. The Vision and Council priorities will be subject to further consultation.

3. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications as a result of the changes in vision and priorities and as such no recommended changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed at Council in 2014 as a result of this report. However, future decisions will be considered on the basis of how they contribute to the delivery of this vision and priorities, so all future reports to Council committees should set out how this new vision and Council priorities will be impacted.

4. Risk Management Implications

There are no direct risk management implications as a result of this change.

5. Equalities implications

These priorities encompass all communities, especially the vulnerable. Initiatives, projects or services which may be required for specific communities (i.e. related to the nine protected characteristics) will be based upon needs analysis and EQIAs as required. These will be based on the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty that requires public bodies to have due regard to the need 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; and
3. Foster good relations between people from different groups.

5. Corporate Priorities

This report sets out a new Vision and set of Council Priorities.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

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| Name: Simon George | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Chief Financial Officer |
| Date: 10/06/14 | | |
| Name: Jessica Farmer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer |
| Date: 10/06/14 | | |

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| Ward Councillors notified: | NO |
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Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Alex Dewsnap,
Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning
020 8416 8250

Background Papers:

Harrow Labour Party Manifesto 2014

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

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| 1. | Consultation | NO |
| 2. | Priorities | YES |