

## **Cabinet – 18 September 2014**

Written Responses to Councillor Questions 9 and 10 not reached at Cabinet

9.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

**Asked of:** Councillor Sachin Shah, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Major Contracts

**Question:** “In light of your comments about a “cost of living crisis”, will you rule out a council tax rise for Harrow residents in 2015/16?”

**Written Response:** We have recently launched our budget consultation, Take Part. That consultation includes a question on council tax. As the Cabinet Member in charge of this policy area, it would be wrong of me to comment while the consultation is open.

10.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

**Asked of:** Councillor Sue Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Community, Culture and Resident Engagement

**Question:** “Could you provide a list of the community groups and organisations who informed the drafting of the administration’s new corporate plan?”

**Written Response:** In July a similar question was asked of us.

Our Corporate Plan, agreed by Council in July, was based on the things that we learnt through our engagement with the community in the run up to the election. All the aspects of the delivery programme in the Corporate Plan are either projects and initiatives that were in the Corporate Plan we agreed in February 2013, or were set out in our manifesto. We list in the Manifesto some of the groups that we listened to which informed our thinking, such as community groups, women’s groups, businesses and trades unions. We undertook a lot of consultation and engagement in the development of this manifesto, and given an election is the ultimate test of what people in Harrow want, we took this as a clear indication of what we should do when we won.

We intend to work with residents every step of the way and we will do this in a transparent and inclusive way. The launch of the

'Take Part' consultation last week shows this commitment. We have some very difficult decisions to make, driven by the government spending cuts being put upon us. We felt it was right to get this debate into the open setting out the types of choices we face as a Council. Personally, I'm proud of the fact that we've done this as a lot of other Councils are as yet not doing so.

Engagement needs to be at the heart of everything we do and rather than criticise the Council for trying to treat residents with respect by starting a dialogue with them on the reality of the decisions we face, I'd ask Councillors to 'Take Part' in the debate on the future of Harrow in the manner in which we have started it.