

**REPORT FOR: HEALTH AND  
WELLBEING BOARD**

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**Date of Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> July

**Subject:** **INFORMATION REPORT  
Local Assurance Test**

**Responsible Officer:** Chris Spencer  
Corporate Director, Children and  
Families

**Exempt:** No

**Wards affected:** All

**Enclosures:** Local Assurance Test Report

## **Section 1 – Summary**

This report sets out the assurance arrangements as they relate to the Council's proposal to create a People's Directorate which was presented to Cabinet on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

**FOR INFORMATION**

## **Section 2 – Report**

The Council commissioned the LGA to carry out a 'Local Test of Assurance' (LAT). An independent assessment of the Council's proposals for restructure will provide members of the Board with a high level of confidence that important functions, including statutory responsibilities, will continue to be fully met following the creation of a People's Directorate.

## **Section 3 – Further Information**

The LAT was carried out by John Harris, Sector Led Improvement advisor for the LGA, during May and June 2015. Overall the report attached to this paper is positive about arrangements in place which will enable the Council to continue to meet important statutory responsibilities while offering caution that the outcome of the assurance test relates to the Council's 'intentions' rather than 'actions' already taken. The author makes a number of recommendations which the Council needs to address if those 'intentions' are to be realised.

Recommendations include the following:

1. Establish and appoint the role of Corporate Director – People as soon as possible, ensuring that the person appointed has recent, relevant and successful experience in leading Children's Services.
2. Ensure that there is a clear implementation plan for the establishment of the People Directorate. The plan needs to give detailed consideration to the identification and mitigation of key risks. The plan needs to incorporate immediate actions and phased development of the long-term opportunities arising from integration. The plan must ensure a close match between priorities and resources linked to the three-year medium financial strategy.
3. Ensure that there is dedicated change management capacity to support the development of the new directorate, working as part of an overall corporate change management process.
4. Ensure that the relevant Safeguarding Boards and Scrutiny provide timely and effective scrutiny of the progress and impact of the People Directorate, drawing on the views of the workforce and service users to inform their understanding.
5. Maintain the 'test of local assurance' as a 'live' process and commission a formal review after twelve months of the operation of the Directorate.

The implementation of these recommendations will all be monitored by the Strategic ~Directors Board of Harrow Council and a clear implementation plan developed to maintain the pace of change.

## **Section 4 – Financial Implications**

The findings from the recent independent ‘local test of assurance’ require a clear implementation plan for the establishment of the People Directorate and to ensure that there is dedicated change management capacity to support the development of the new directorate, working as part of an overall corporate change management process. Funding and resources will need to be identified to support this.

## **Section 5 - Equalities implications**

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? Yes/No (delete as appropriate)

Covered by the Cabinet Report, Senior Management Restructure, dated 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

## **Section 6 – Council Priorities**

The Council’s vision:

### **Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow**

Please identify how the report incorporates the administration’s priorities.

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

Vulnerable Groups will have their needs met more effectively by better quality services delivered through a life course approach to disability and vulnerable groups.

Local Communities will benefit from seamless engagement with the Council. Communications with the public will be better served by a single point of contact.

Local Businesses will benefit by a People’s Directorate developing more effective commissioning and procurement procedures.

Families will find it easier to do business with the Council. They will have a bigger say in how their personal needs can be met and more influence in determining what services are offered to them

Families will have greater self determination and choice.

## **STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE (Council and Joint Reports)**

Name:	Jo Frost	x	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2015		

<b>Ward Councillors notified:</b>	<b>NO</b>
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### **Section 7 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Chris Spencer  
Corporate Director, Children and Families  
020 8424 1356 (x2356)  
[Chris.spencer@harow.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.spencer@harow.gov.uk)

#### **Background Papers:**

The report by John Harris dated 5<sup>th</sup> June is attached.

**Proposals to establish a People Directorate:  
Independent Local Test of Assurance**