

Chair: * Councillor Blann

Councillors: * Arnold * Miles
* Knowles * Seymour
* Lavingia * Anne Whitehead

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL

PART II - MINUTES

186. **Local Area Agreements:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy, which outlined the development of Harrow's Local Area Agreement (LAA). Officers advised that Harrow had been awarded the opportunity to negotiate an LAA with Government Office for London, which meant that the Council and its partners would agree targets and priorities for Harrow with central Government. It was explained that the benefits of the LAA would include increased flexibility to find local solutions to local problems, and to prioritise spending to achieve the priorities set by the LAA. These priorities were grouped around four blocks: Children and Young People, Safer and Stronger Communities, Healthier Communities and Older People, and Economic Development and Enterprise.

The Sub-Committee was briefed on the timetable for the development of the LAA, according to which Harrow had to decide headlines within the four blocks by the end of September 2005. Specific freedoms, flexibilities and funding streams would then be determined in the following months, with Harrow's LAA to be submitted to the Government Office for London by the end of February 2006, in time for the LAA to come into operation on 1 April 2006. Members heard that the LAA set a three-year programme of delivery.

Responding to questions from Members, officers explained that the priorities within the headline indicators had been decided by Cabinet and the Harrow Strategic Partnership Board and Executives, in consultation with lead officers in relevant directorates. As yet there were no additional costs imposed on the Harrow Strategic Partnership, as the costs of the proposals were incurred in terms of time taken to develop the LAA by officers.

Some Members expressed the view that the report contained technical uses of language which they considered to be unclear. Although they were grateful for the clarification provided by the officer present, they considered that it would be useful in future to receive reports which provided both more background information and context. Members considered that this issue had arisen as a result of reports to scrutiny committees being written in the same style as similar reports to Cabinet, and suggested that because of the differing roles of each body, a different approach in drafting and presenting reports be adopted. It was resolved that this issue be raised with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a general comment on reports presented to Scrutiny Sub-Committees. The Chair also proposed that the Sub-Committee receive a follow-up report on the LAA at its March 2006 meeting.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) the appropriateness of this style of report for Scrutiny purposes be raised with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

(3) the Sub-Committee receive a follow-up report on the LAA at its March 2006 meeting.