

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	11 th November 2020
Subject:	Borough Plan Update
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Sean Harriss - Chief Executive
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Graham Henson – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships, Devolution and Customer Services
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 - Borough Plan - Amended

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides members with an update on the progress with the Borough Plan. It sets out some of the main activity to date but also proposes that the Borough Plan be amended to include: three new corporate equality objectives; a new over-arching priority around tackling racial disproportionality in light of the Black Lives Matters movement and, to take account of the impact the evolving Covid emergency is having on our thinking and actions in relation to the Borough Plan.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Note the progress to date against delivery of the Borough Plan.
2. Recommend to Council any of the proposed amendments to the Borough Plan to take account of the Council's response to the Black Lives Matters movement; tackling racial disproportionality and the Covid public health emergency and the new corporate equality objectives.

Reason: (for recommendations)

To update the Council's Policy Framework and set out the Council and partners' intent with regard to tackling racial disproportionality and Covid.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

This report provides Cabinet with an update on progress against the Borough Plan priorities agreed in February 2020. Whilst our original plan was to use 2020 as the year of engagement, this has not been possible due to the outbreak of Coronavirus, the country going into lockdown and the practical implications of new social distancing rules. We also intended to bring the Council's Delivery Plan to Cabinet for approval in the summer which would set out the Council's shorter term contribution to the delivery of the Borough Plan and the performance measures against which progress would be assessed. However, organisational capacity has had to be re-prioritised and re-directed towards dealing with the emergency, setting up brand new services, re-starting services that were temporarily closed down and then planning for a second wave. The timescales for producing the Council Delivery Plan have therefore had to be extended and the planned engagement activity has not been able to take place. Yet despite all this, work on delivering against the Borough Plan priorities has continued.

The other significant development over the last six months has been the death of George Floyd at the hands of the police in Minnesota, USA which has highlighted the deep inequalities and systemic racism that still exists in this country and other countries around the world and has left many of our staff and residents feeling hurt, scared and angry. It also comes at a time

when we know that Harrow and people from Black, Asian and Multi Ethnic groups have been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. We have reflected on the findings set out in the Public Health England report on the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 in the UK and discussed with trade unions, members and staff about how best to go forward. As a result we felt it was appropriate for the Borough Plan, our blueprint for how we want Harrow to move forwards over the next 10 years, to be amended to explicitly take account of both these issues.

Options considered

1. Continue with current Borough Plan without making any amendments and incorporating the change in thinking and actions as a result of the Black Lives Matters Movement and Covid-19 into the Council's Delivery Plan. This was rejected because feedback from staff and the BLM staff group was that this failed to grasp the significance of these agendas and the systemic change the Council and its partners have committed to make in response.
2. Amend the Borough Plan to add in a new overarching priority on tackling racial disproportionality to sit alongside the existing overarching priority of the Plan which is to address socio-economic inequality and disadvantage. The plan should also be amended to reference the impact and difference Covid has had and cross-reference the Council's Recovery Plan.

Background

The Council approved the draft Borough Plan in February 2020 which set out the partnership view for Harrow as a borough and eight key priorities that contribute towards an overarching theme of tackling socio-economic inequality and disadvantage in order to continue to make Harrow a better place for all of our residents and businesses.

There are three priorities, which form the foundations for addressing our vision, where we seek to maintain the standard of current provision. These are:

1. Sustaining quality education and training
2. Celebrating communities and cohesion
3. Maintaining low crime levels and improving community safety

There are then five priorities where there are significant challenges to deliver the desired outcomes:

4. Improving the environment and addressing climate change
5. Tackling poverty and inequality
6. Building homes and infrastructure
7. Addressing health and social care inequality
8. Thriving economy

Current situation

Since approving the Borough Plan priorities in February 2020 and despite the challenges that Covid has presented, we have managed to make progress in all areas of the Borough Plan:

1. Improving the environment and addressing climate change
 - Installed solar panels on 14 Harrow schools and agreed plans to have solar panels fitted on the Depot.
 - Switched our energy bills to green tariffs.
 - Secured a Green Homes Grant from Government to retro-fit 50 low-income households with energy saving measures.
 - Adopted a new emissions-based policy for parking permit charges
 - Appointed to the new post of Head of Natural Resources and Climate Strategy.
 - Secured £638,000 for street scene changes and cycle lanes.
2. Tackling poverty and inequality
 - Community Hub established and made nearly 28,000 call outs to residents and made over 6,500 food deliveries.
 - Progress made on the development and delivery of a Black Lives Matter action plan for tackling racial disproportionality in outcomes, services and the workforce.
 - Housed 22 rough sleepers in emergency accommodation and worked towards offering them better long-term housing solutions.
 - Developing a homelessness early action strategy due for approval later this year.
3. Building homes and infrastructure
 - Appointed Wates as Harrow's Strategic Development Partner preferred bidder.
 - Public Art commissions for Rayners Lane, South Harrow and Wealdstone have been awarded
 - Grange Farm regeneration has continued.
 - Building work on key regeneration sites like Harrow View East and West has recommenced after ceasing during lockdown
 - The Wealdstone Regeneration Plan is being turned into a Regeneration Strategy which will be part of the Regeneration Masterplan for Wealdstone
 - Works have continued on the redevelopment of the Depot site at Forward Drive and the Harrow Arts Centre site
4. Addressing Health and Social Care Inequality
 - Health relationship in a very strong place as a result of Covid, with recovery work based on real and sustained integration ambitions.
 - Development of an Out of Hospital Recovery plan, signed off by all key partners based upon a deeper integration of services
 - Adult Social Care has delivered all Hospital discharges alongside community partners throughout the emergency period, with the brokerage team being available seven days a week.

- The Integrated Learning Disabilities Service has continued to provide clinical and practical support to people with learning disabilities who are very vulnerable to Coronavirus. Our Harrow Integrated Service has been shortlisted for a prize at this year's MJ Awards ceremony on the 2 October 2020.
- The DfE have commended Harrow's Children's Services for its resilience during the time of the emergency.
- Public Health have been at the forefront of the Council's response to Covid. They have implemented test, track and trace in the local area, giving advice on the safe re-occupation of office space and reassurance to the workforce both on an individual level and at systems level, as well as overseeing all deliveries and distribution of PPE for Harrow frontline staff.

5. Thriving Economy

- Working across West London to assess economic risks and impact of Covid and co-ordinate a response to economic recovery.
- Development of a Harrow economic recovery strategy based on a 'green recovery'.
- Kickstart programme with strong cross-partner support offering work placement opportunities for almost 70 young people from Harrow.
- Allocated more than 2,234 business grants to provide over £33m in financial relief for local businesses
- Submitted bid to the Future High Street Fund to create affordable workspace and digital infrastructure

6. Sustaining quality education and training

- Harrow's Education Services have supported schools to remain open throughout lockdown for vulnerable and key worker children, and ensure they were Covid-ready to reopen to nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children.
- Families and their children also continued to be supported during National Offer Day and undertaking virtual School Admission appeals.
- Harrow schools all opened for all children at the start of the new school year this September.
- Secured an additional £463,000 to increase provision of ESOL, skills for life, ICT and employability courses.

7. Celebrating communities and cohesion

- Wealdstone and South Harrow community work re-started in July, with plans to roll out to the East starting in September
- Created a £600k emergency fund to support local community projects helping vulnerable residents
- Worked with the local Somalian, Romanian, Indian and Tamil Community in the borough to produce specialist and targeted information and videos on Covid-19 - the social distancing rules, testing and tracing and where to access help and support
- We have delivered webinars on test and trace to engage the voluntary sector as champions to spread the messaging within their communities
- Ran a digital version of Harrow's Heroes – our flagship community event celebrating the hard work and dedication of local people.

8. Maintaining low crime and improving community safety

- Partnership with the Police at operational level has been very effective regarding violent incidents during lockdown.
- The Ignite Trust continued with detached youth work during lockdown, and a range of remote youth intervention programmes were delivered by The Wish Foundation.
- We have maximised the use of tools and powers on enforcement inclusive of closure powers where vulnerable people are being exploited, and Environmental Health are operating Covid patrols within the borough
- Days of action continue to be carried out in hotspot areas with police and homeless charities.

Why a change is needed

The Covid second wave is here. Case levels continue to rise but the exact situation remains uncertain due to limitations around testing capacity in London. Adapting to living with the virus will see the Council and its partners having to take on a different, more complex role than we had during wave one. During the first wave in the spring, many services were stood down in order to free up capacity to deal with the emergency. During the second wave, we are expected to keep services running in a Covid-secure way whilst also managing the response to Covid in terms of: PPE, communications, test and trace, emergency payments and benefits, the community hub and enforcement. It is clear this is going to be a long-term issue and it is creating significant demands on Council capacity and that of our partners. The activity that we will be undertaking therefore to contribute to the Borough Plan will now have a large Covid-recovery dimension to it. Further detail about the Council's Recovery plan is contained with the update report that went to Cabinet in July.

With regard to inequality and disadvantage, our end goal is to address the issues of disproportionality experienced by all protected characteristics. But we are specifically starting with a focus on the disproportionality experienced by those of black heritage as this is where the greatest injustices are currently felt¹:

- Black people are nearly 10 times more likely to be stopped and searched by police than white people
- Not a single police force in England or Wales registered an arrest rate of less than 20 for every 1,000 black people, by contrast not a single police force registered an arrest rate of more than 20 for every 1,000 white people
- Police forces were 7 times more likely to fine BAME people during lockdown
- White British people have higher than average home ownership rates – nearly double that of black Caribbean people and more than treble that of black African people

¹ Ethnicity facts and figures service: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/>

- In Harrow, you are 7.5 times more likely to be homeless if you are black, than any other ethnic group.²
- White British students are more than three times as likely to achieve high grades at A-level than black Caribbean students
- Levels of unemployment are at least double for Black people than they are for white people
- Black people are also paid less on average than white people with the average hourly pay for black people being between £9.91- £10.80 and £10.58 - £11.87 for white people
- People from BAME backgrounds were up to twice as likely to die from Covid than people of white ethnicity.
- Council data shows there is an overrepresentation of Black ethnicity in lower pay bands
- Council data also tell us that absence and exclusions of children of black heritage in Harrow schools are above the national average.

As a consequence, we are recommending that the Borough Plan is revised and updated to include a new over-arching priority on tackling racial disproportionality. This new strand of the Borough Plan will sit alongside the existing over-arching priority around tackling socio-economic inequality and disadvantage, and all eight priorities of the Borough Plan will have a contribution to make to delivering against both the themes.

In support of this new racial disproportionality priority, the Borough Plan will also include a new set of corporate equality objectives which relate to all the protected characteristics. However, in light of the murder of George Floyd, and the Black Lives Matter protests, coupled with the Public Health England report evidencing the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on people from a BAME background, we will focus our work initially on race and ethnicity. The objectives are to:

1. *Address inequality in life outcomes*

Using the Borough Plan, a comprehensive medium-term strategic vision, which we're developing with partners and in consultation with the people of Harrow to ensure that our borough is a place where everyone, regardless of background, can reach their full potential.

2. *Review our services*

Senior leadership will head a thorough review of the way we provide our services. We'll speak to service users and examine issues of cultural sensitivity and any unconscious bias that may affect outcomes for different groups.

3. *Take action as an employer*

To ensure senior management is representative of our communities, examine pay gap issues, put programmes in place to nurture black and multiethnic talent and review our internal HR policies and practices to ensure they are fair and equitable.

² Runnymede Trust 2016

The accompanying report to Cabinet on the Council's response to Black Lives Matter proposes an EDI Strategic Framework that sets out in more detail the high level objectives for each of the three strands and our approach and principles for how we will work to support the council in its on-going commitment to being an anti-racism organisation. The programme of work will be enhanced through working closely with a range of local agencies, members, statutory partners and the voluntary and community sector.

Looking forwards to the next 12-18 months the Council and its partners will have to continue to prioritise the priorities in order to be able to manage the competing demands of responding to the Covid emergency alongside continuing to deliver services.

The Harrow Strategic Partnership has been looking at how its recovery work can be governed through the priorities of the Borough plan and has identified that the response to Covid and health and social care inequalities, tackling racism and racial disproportionality and economic recovery should be the three main priorities for collective action over the next 12-18 months.

For the Council's part the organisational priorities that will continue to be the focus of our attention in terms of our capacity and contribution towards the delivery of the Borough Plan will be:

- Continue with Health and Social Care integration to ensure co-ordinated and robust approach to Covid second wave and health inequalities
- Local economic recovery from the impact of Covid
- Responding to racial inequalities and disadvantage through the adoption of a new Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and BLM action plan
- Addressing homelessness challenges as a result of Covid
- Our response to the climate emergency
- Regeneration and HSDP next steps

We will continue work on finalising the Council Delivery Plan, although this will take longer than anticipated due to capacity constraints, and will bring this back to Cabinet at a later date. We will consider when best to start any community engagement and dialogue on the Borough Plan and integrate this with wider engagement on Black Lives Matter. We will also look to improve our communications both internally and externally on our continued progress against delivery of the Borough Plan and continue to work with London and national government to lobby to get best deal for Harrow with clear and explicit asks on funding as the impact of additional expenditure and loss of income continue to impact negatively on our budget position and pose a risk to delivery.

Implications of the Recommendation

Performance Issues

The amendments to the Borough Plan will lead to a refresh of the performance framework as the new priorities are developed and agreed for

the borough. We will continue work to re-cast the measures and targets under the eight priorities and identify new and appropriate performance measures for the new additions which will feed into a fully refreshed performance framework to be implemented for 2021/22 and the Council's Delivery Plan for the next two years, setting out the Council's commitments.

Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications from the proposed recommendations.

Data Protection Implications

There are no data protection implications from the proposed recommendations.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes
Separate risk register in place? No

Most delivery against the Borough Plan priorities is heavily reliant on the budget position over the next 2-3 years and the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review. If the outcome is not positive for the council there will be a risk to delivery.

The on-going public health emergency will pose a significant risk to delivery in terms of limiting our ability to undertake resident engagement activity and diverting resource and capacity away from borough plan work.

The delay in the production of the Council delivery plan poses a low to medium risk to our ability to be able to monitor delivery and demonstrate progress against our targets and measures.

The consequence of these risks would be that it would take longer to achieve the objectives of the Borough Plan.

Specific risks relating to each of the Borough Plan priorities are contained either within the corporate

Procurement Implications

There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Any procurement that is required as a result of these recommendations will be undertaken compliant with the Public Procurement Regulations 2015 and the Council Procurement Procedures.

Legal Implications

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other form of conduct prohibited under the act; and,
- (b) to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it.

Having regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of the persons who share that characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and,
- (c) encourage persons of the relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the council to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent:

- (a) crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
- (b) the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and
- (c) re-offending in its area.

By the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations, SI 2017/ 353 the council is required to publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The information must include information relating to persons who share a protected characteristic, who are its employees, or who are affected by the council's policies or practices. Publication is required annually. Under the same regulations the council is also required to set and publish one or more equality objectives to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, at least every 4 years.

Financial Implications

There will be financial implications arising from delivery of the Borough Plan: these have been addressed in other reports such as the Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan report where more of the detail on the £100k allocated to support the Council's response to BLM is set out; and the update reports to Cabinet on Covid-19 and the MTFS which sets out the government grants received to cover some of the additional costs associated with dealing with Covid and the implications on our budget from additional demand and lost income.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The revised Borough Plan with a new and additional focus on tackling racial disproportionality as well as socio-economic inequality and disadvantage will support delivery of our equalities duties across the borough by enabling us to publish in the Borough Plan the latest data we have on protected characteristics in the borough and our Corporate Equality Objectives, as required by the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

Whilst there is much that can be done working in partnership across the borough, there are many aspects of addressing inequality that cannot be driven purely within Harrow: in these instances we will work with and lobby others to support delivery of our bold plans.

Council Priorities

This Report contributes towards all Council priorities.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Dawn Calvert

Signed by the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 30th October 2020

Statutory Officer: Jessica Farmer

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 30th October 2020

Statutory Officer: Nimesh Mehta

Signed by the Head of Procurement

Date: 3rd November 2020

Statutory Officer: Alex Dewsnap

Signed by the Corporate Director

Date: 2nd November 2020

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: YES, as it impacts on all Wards

The Borough Plan affects all wards and proposals have been developed with full engagement of all cabinet members.

EqIA carried out: NO

Specific activities and deliverable are still being developed, once these are confirmed EQIAs will be developed to support these.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Rachel Gapp – Head of Policy: Rachel.gapp@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

NO