

**Report for: Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**

Date of Meeting:	8 February 2022
Subject:	Borough Plan – Key Achievements and Future Intentions
Responsible Officer:	Sean Harriss, Chief Executive
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Sachin Shah – Chair of O&S Councillor Stephen Greek – Vice-Chair of O&S
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Borough Plan: Key Achievements and Future Intentions

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out progress to date against our Borough Plan 2020-2030. The Plan has been developed with our partners and voluntary and community sector colleagues in setting out aspirations for the borough for the 2020-2030 decade. This incorporates the council's Corporate Plan in representing our role in delivering the broader partnership agenda and our corporate priorities. Progress and future intentions are presented against each of the eight priority areas and the two cross cutting themes specifically looking at tackling inequality.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

1. Note the progress to date against delivery of the Borough Plan.
2. Consider how scrutiny wants to be involved in the further development of the Borough Plan and for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme.
3. Forward scrutiny's comments to Cabinet for its meeting on 10 February 2022.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on progress against the Borough Plan priorities agreed in February 2020, and further refreshed in November 2020.

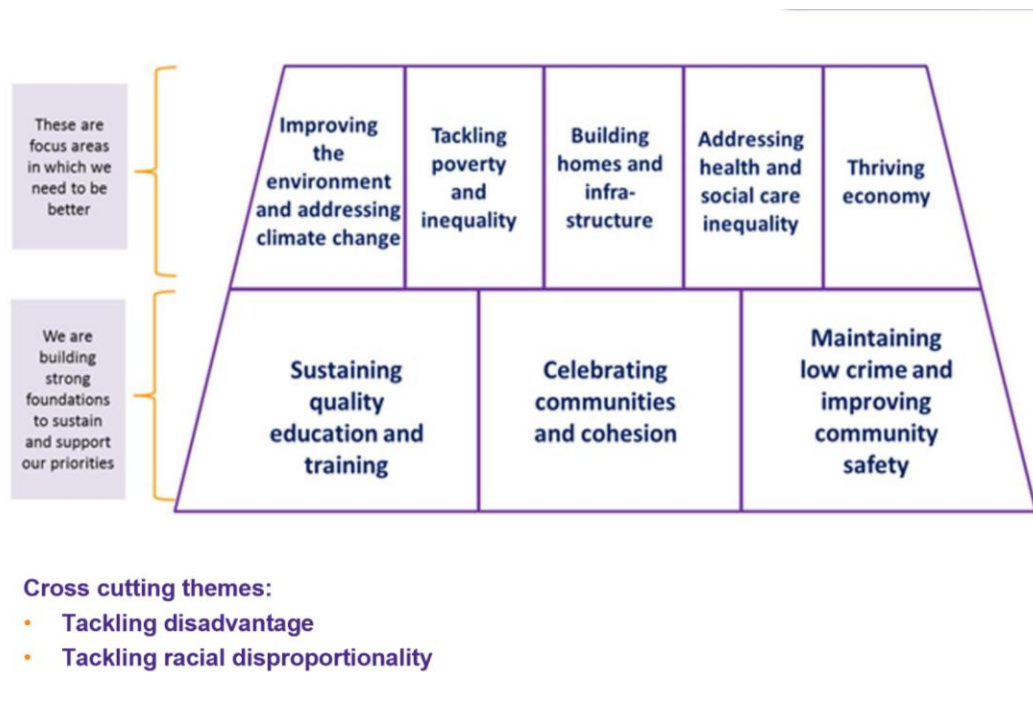
Whilst our original plan had been to use 2020 as the year of engagement on the Borough Plan, this has not been possible due to the ongoing Covid pandemic, the country going into lockdowns and the practical implications of social distancing rules. We had also intended to bring the Council Delivery Plan to Cabinet for approval 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 Covid pandemic, with a focus on ensuring we delivered our core services well during this time as well as ensuring we appropriately planned for subsequent waves. The timescales for producing the Council Delivery Plan have therefore had to be extended and the planned community engagement activity has not been able to take place. Yet despite all this, work on delivering against the Borough Plan priorities has continued and it is important for the council to recognise these key areas of progress and set down markers for future intentions against the Borough Plan's priorities.

Background

Developed in partnership with key public sector providers in the borough and colleagues from the voluntary and community sector, our Borough Plan sets out aspirations for the borough over the 2020-2030 decade.

The Council approved the draft Borough Plan in February 2020 just before the pandemic took hold and we refreshed the Plan in November 2020 to take account of the impact of the pandemic on our borough and how we will recover from it, as well as the inequalities highlighted by the work supporting Black Lives Matter and the broader race equality agenda.

We worked with partners to develop collective priorities for the borough, based on feedback received from the people of Harrow in our annual residents' survey. There are three foundations for maintenance / incremental improvement and five priorities presenting a significant challenge / requiring step-change improvement, in addition to the two cross cutting themes that were identified in last year's refresh of the Borough Plan. These priorities are set out below.



We had anticipated engaging residents, businesses, communities and other interested parties, in developing this vision and turning it into reality during 2020. However with the ongoing pandemic and the council and partners' focus on responding to this and recovery, we have had to pause this intention. Nevertheless, we have used the Borough Plan to drive our partnership response to Covid-19 and used the partnership principles to guide our recovery, as the report on key achievements demonstrates. We will continue to shape the borough's priorities through the pandemic and beyond.

It is clear that tackling the impact of the pandemic is going to be a long-term issue, creating significant demands on council capacity and that of our partners. The activity that we are now undertaking to contribute to the Borough Plan has a large Covid-recovery dimension to it.

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:

- Funding secured through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme sees Harrow deliver energy related works at six schools and corporate sites. Measures include retrofitting commercial scale air source heat pumps to council owned public buildings (significantly reducing or eliminating those sites' gas heating requirements), heat pump installations, insulation, solar panels and LED lighting upgrades.
- All of our school and council electricity supplies are now being procured on a green tariff.
- Secured Green Homes Grant funding from Government to retro-fit 130 low-income households with energy saving measures.
- Worked closely with community groups to complete (in 2021) major works to Headstone Manor Park which increase biodiversity, improve resilience against flooding and encourage better wildlife, complementing the improvement works at the museum and café.
- Installed ground source heating pumps at three sheltered housing schemes costing £1.7m, with more planned, to significantly reduce carbon emissions and reduce residents' heating bills.
- Made significant investment in fighting flytipping – identifying the top 20 hot spot areas in the borough and assigning crews to work intensively in these hotspot areas.
- Invested £300k for a Priority Enforcement Team and introduced area based enforcement teams which provide capacity to deal with emerging issues and demands in ward areas, meeting specific needs on a ward basis.

2. Tackling poverty and inequality

- Established Community Hub and Help Harrow platforms which continue to support the most vulnerable in our communities with support, advice and food supplies. During the two waves in 2020, we made over 70,000 call outs to residents and nearly 7,000 food deliveries.
- Worked closely with NHS partners to ensure Harrow has one of the most successful vaccination rates across NW London.
- Grants totalling £67m have been given to around 2,500 local businesses, to support them through the pandemic.
- Commissioned Citizens Advice Harrow to expand the borough's debt advice service.
- Working with schools and Young Harrow Foundation to run a very successful Holiday and Food Activity Programme providing over 3,000 vulnerable children with food and activities over the school holidays.
- Delivering the Household Support Fund to continue funding nearly 6,000 pupils with free school meals over winter school holidays and providing a further 9,000 vulnerable households with supermarket vouchers.
- Selective licensing schemes operate in some areas of the borough to ensure residential accommodation is safe, well maintained, and of good quality.

3. Building homes and infrastructure

- Harrow Strategic Development Partnership between the council and Wates established and is the largest investment and development opportunity Harrow has seen.
- Redevelopment of three core sites – Byron Quarter, Peel Road, Poets Corner - will create housing, jobs and other opportunities.
- Council's major development at Forward Drive in Wealdstone is nearing completion, delivering an office building designed to provide the council with modern, collaborative and flexible workplace environment for staff and integrated service providers.
- Grange Farm Regeneration has continued, with Phase 1 on site delivering 89 new affordable homes, and a further 485 new homes being built around green space and community facilities.
- Town Centre developments through the High Street Fund and broader work in to improve Wealdstone.
- Council is partnering with broadband providers to enable digital connectivity and install superfast broadband to all council estates and blocks with vulnerable residents eligible for free broadband deals.

4. Addressing Health and Social Care Inequality

- The partnership relationship between the council and local NHS is one of the best in London, with the collective response to the pandemic being used as catalyst for this.
- Through the Harrow Conversation, partners all signed up to support integration. The Integrated Care Partnership's 100-day plan was agreed in September 2021 and progress through new workstreams and work programmes monitored by the Joint Management and Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- Established an Independent Discharge Hub, staffed by all partners, during the pandemic which sees the transition of patients back into the community in the most efficient pathway.
- In-depth work on reducing health inequalities and improving outcomes for those with long term conditions (e.g. diabetes, hypertension, obesity) has led to designing more appropriate interventions and culturally appropriate services. The Harrow East pilot rolled out initiatives on access to primary care, immunisation and antenatal care, predominantly in the Romanian community.
- Established a Care Providers Support Group to support domiciliary care providers and care homes, initially with Covid-related issues but continuing as an ongoing resource to respond to the needs of the care economy and support care providers.
- Successful testing and vaccination programmes and messaging, enabled by close work between the council, NHS, pharmacies, VCS, and schools.
- Much work on community engagement to build trust and confidence during the initial stages of the pandemic (e.g. with community leaders in Harrow's Black Communities) is now able to be taken forward in areas beyond Covid in conversations about wider health issues.

5. Thriving Economy

- The Harrow Economic Strategy 2021-2030 was adopted in July 2021 and will support the economic recovery from Covid.
- Around £70m has been provided in business grants to provide financial relief and support businesses that have suffered as a result of trade restrictions through the pandemic.
- £7.8m has been secured to support district and metropolitan town centres.
- £1.4m in funds has been secured to increase the number of residents supported through skills and employment programmes.
- Providing employment brokerage through the Kickstart scheme, we have offered 80 apprenticeships across the council, small businesses and the VCS in the borough to young people aged between 16 and 24.
- Business Skills Accelerator programme helps 250 local micro businesses
- Traders' associations are being established across district centres and we have helped high streets bounce back from the pandemic by investing in improvements that make them safer, more vibrant and more desirable to visit, spend time and shop.

6. Sustaining quality education and training

- A sector led response to pandemic with schools staying open in Harrow throughout Covid to support vulnerable children and key workers.
- Supporting the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability a key focus of recovery from the pandemic with additional investment agreed.
- Council and schools worked together to make sure funding was distributed for children eligible for free school meals over school holidays.
- Vaccination programme for 12-15 year olds successfully rolled out in secondary schools.
- Standards of educational outcomes broadly maintained despite impact of lockdowns.
- Learn Harrow piloted Ofsted's new set of standards for quality of online delivery during the pandemic, doubling its funding, capacity to deliver and achieving all intended outcomes set.
- 'How Are You' survey carried out in 25 schools and two colleges to understand the health and wellbeing of over 6,000 pupils in the borough.

7. Celebrating communities and cohesion

- Proactively supported communities through Covid with well-attended webinars, engagement and the community champions programme.
- Through the Covid Awareness Fund, over 50 organisations have been funded to build understanding and support positive messaging on Covid and vaccinations to Harrow's diverse community, and ensure regular dialogue on community needs and co-producing community solutions.
- Building on the impetus given to work in tackling inequalities by the Black Lives Matter movement, we heightened our work with communities of Black heritage, bringing groups together on a single platform at two meetings to focus on improving inequality and health

inequalities. The ICP subsequently funded an Engagement Commission, delivered by Voluntary Action Harrow, to follow up issues with communities.

- Through the Home Office's Afghan resettlement programmes (the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme), working to match evacuated Afghan families suitable properties, and welcome, integrate and resettle them in the Harrow community.
- Wealdstone Action Group has continued to support local engagement with the community and businesses to make sure that the installation of lights, a mural, TfL infrastructure and footbridge were what the local community wanted.

8. Maintaining low crime and improving community safety

- Partnership with the Police at operational level was very effective during lockdown.
- The Youth Offending Board and partnership working across the Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation space continues to operate effectively.
- Safer Harrow has renewed its commitment to tackle Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and improve commissioning arrangements. Safer Harrow has established a VAWG sub-group to progress a multi-agency approach to VAWG and increase connectivity between agencies.
- Stopping domestic abuse remains a key priority and we have invested further in domestic abuse services to support victims and children to access specialist support.
- Our New Pathways Partnership brings together statutory partners, the VCS and schools to achieve positive change for children and young people through contextual safeguarding and early intervention. Projects commissioned include tackling the disproportionate impact of exclusions on Black boys, parenting programmes and supporting girls at high risk of Child Sexual Exploitation.

Ward Councillors' Comments

The Borough Plan affects all wards and has been developed with full engagement of all Cabinet members.

Financial Implications

The Borough Plan accompanies the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for Cabinet and Council approval. The financial implications of delivering the Borough Plan are therefore supported through the MTFS, and the financial risks to delivery are covered in the Risk Management section above. Where there are financial implications arising from delivery of the major programmes of work supporting the Borough Plan these will be addressed in the relevant reports to Cabinet on those specific pieces of work or projects.

Performance Issues

Given the organisational stretch in capacity posed by the ongoing pandemic, the refresh of the performance framework to reflect the priorities within the Borough Plan is currently paused. We will continue work to re-cast the measures and targets under the eight priorities and identify new and appropriate performance measures for the cross-cutting themes. This will feed into a fully refreshed performance framework to be implemented alongside the Council Delivery Plan which will be developed in the 2022/23 year.

Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications from the proposed recommendations, other than to note the ambition to respond to the Climate Emergency.

Risk Management Implications

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **Yes**

Specific risks relating to the delivery of the Borough Plan priorities themselves are contained either within the corporate or directorate risk registers.

Separate risk register in place? **No**

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below.

Yes (Corporate Risk Register)

The following key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
These are not the most appropriate priorities for the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is nothing to suggest a change in priorities or direction since the Borough Plan priorities were refreshed in November 2020.Members and partners have been engaged as part of drafting this report.	Green
O&S comments and future involvement not appropriately considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The report is being considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 February with the outcomes and comments being referred on to Cabinet along with this report.	Green
The Borough Plan does not have full support of Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cabinet to agree recommendation to refer plan to Council.To be presented to Council 24 February 2022.	Green

<p>The Borough Plan is unaffordable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to deliver the council's approved MTFS over the next three years - most of the delivery against the Borough Plan priorities is heavily reliant on the budget position over the next 2-3 years • The Council's draft budget for 2022/23 (Cabinet – December 2021) required the use of £15.7m reserves to balance the 2021/22 budget, leaving a funding gap of £14.8m over the MTFS. The final budget to Cabinet in February 2022 will not have a material impact on the MTFS funding gap. The Council must now prepare a robust Financial Strategy to address the MTFS funding gap in preparation for the incoming Administration in May 2022. This may require a re-prioritisation against the proposed eight priorities. 	<p>Red</p>
<p>Lack of strategic leadership capacity - caused by the impact of the pandemic and lack of capacity at all levels poses a significant risk to delivery in terms of limiting our ability to undertake engagement activity and diverting resource and capacity away from Borough Plan work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We worked with partners to develop collective priorities for the borough, based on feedback received from the people of Harrow in our annual residents' survey. • Dedicated business planning meetings for the organisation's strategic leaders (CSB and Cabinet) creating time & space for strategic planning. • Director of Strategy post refocused to include partnership development • Staff leadership and management programmes rolled out. • New/refreshed Organisational Development strategy in place. • Additional programme management support in place. 	<p>Red</p>
<p>The delay in the production of the Council Delivery Plan poses risk to our ability to be able to monitor delivery and demonstrate progress against</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue work to re-cast the measures and targets under the eight priorities. • Identify new and appropriate performance measures for the cross-cutting themes. • Use this to feed into a fully refreshed performance framework to be implemented alongside the Council 	<p>Amber</p>

our targets and measures.	Delivery Plan which will be developed in the 2022/23 year.	
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Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

Delivery of a Borough Plan will support delivery of our equalities duties across the borough. The themes that cut across each of the priorities explicitly address tackling socio-economic disadvantage, inequality and racial disproportionality. There is a focus on improving outcomes for lower attaining groups across each of our priorities, as the review of the key achievements and the future intentions has highlighted.

Performance measures established over the next year as part of the Borough Plan development process will enable monitoring of the narrowing of gaps and the improvements achieved in addressing inequality. Multiple datasets support identification of those groups who are not experiencing the same level of outcomes as others, enabling specific and targeted plans to be developed over the 10-year delivery window to improve outcomes.

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 sets out the reaffirmation of the existing Corporate Priorities and details progress made on each of them.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Dawn Calvert

Signed by the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 31 January 2022

Statutory Officer: Caroline Eccles

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 31 January 2022

Chief Officer: Alex Dewsnap

Signed by the Director of Strategy and Partnerships

Date: 26 January 2022

Mandatory Checks

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

The Borough Plan affects all wards and has been developed with full engagement of all Cabinet members.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Nahreen Matlib, Joint Interim Head of Policy,
nahreen.matlib@harrow.gov.uk, tel: 07874 891499

Background Papers: None