

Harrow Borough Plan 2030

Key Achievements and Future Intentions

Harrow – the borough we are proud to call our home



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Harrow Borough Plan is a partnership plan for Harrow. Current partners supporting this plan are:

Harrow Council

Metropolitan Police

Voluntary Action Harrow

London Fire Brigade

*London North West
University Healthcare
NHS Trust*

*Central & North West
London Mental Health
Trust*

*Harrow Voluntary &
Community Sector Forum*

*Central London
Community
Healthcare NHS Trust*

Harrow Health CIC

Harrow College

Young Harrow Foundation

Home Group

*Harrow Clinical
Commissioning Group*

Harrow Schools

University of Westminster

*Harrow
Community Action*

February 2022

HARROW BOROUGH PLAN 2030

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE INTENTIONS

	Page
Leader's Introduction	3
Introduction	4
Our Vision and Priorities	5
Progress and key achievements against priority areas:	
• Improving the environment and addressing climate change	7
• Tackling poverty and inequality	11
• Building homes and infrastructure	17
• Addressing health and social care inequality	20
• Thriving economy	24
• Sustaining quality education and training	27
• Celebrating communities and cohesion	30
• Maintaining low crime and improving community safety	34
A modern and responsive council	38
Next steps	40
Future intentions - recap	41

Leader's Introduction

To follow.

**Graham Henson
Leader of the Council**

Introduction

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 Plan recognises that there will be significant change over that period, and as the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated, some of these changes cannot be predicted. The Borough Plan was launched in early 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 agenda.

We have a clear vision of our borough and are building a strong partnership to deliver this to make significant improvements for the borough by 2030. We want to focus on

- Tackling racial disproportionality in life outcomes
- Improving our district centres for living, shopping and entertainment
- Narrowing the gap in healthy life expectancy
- Reducing inequality in earnings, attainment and opportunity
- Achieving net-zero carbon emissions across the borough
- Building 3,000 more affordable homes

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 the emergency 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 you will see from the key achievements that follow. 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. Council services continue to run in a Covid-secure way whilst also managing the response to the pandemic in terms of: PPE, communications, test and trace, emergency payments and benefits, the community hub, enforcement and supporting the vaccination programme.

As you will see from the Plan¹, we set out our priorities along with a series of objectives we want to achieve during its life - these will be reviewed frequently during the ten-year implementation period. Much of what we seek to do relies upon others to deliver, or support delivery, meaning that we will need to work with and influence others to enable achievement of our ambitions for Harrow, including influencing and lobbying government at a regional and national level. There is also a strong role for individuals and communities in delivering this plan: we need a collaborative model where everyone has a role in caring for our people and caring for our place.

¹ [Draft Borough Plan \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](https://modern.gov.co.uk)

This review looks over what we have progressed and achieved over the first two years of the Plan against the priorities, recognising that it has not been a 'normal' two years but ones heavily impacted by a global pandemic. Although the pandemic has brought the world to a standstill at times, we cannot afford to stand still in delivering improvements for our borough.

Our Vision and Priorities

Within Harrow, we are serious about making the borough a great place we are all proud of and in which families flourish. We have set out a bold Borough Plan through to 2030 which will deliver strong and positive outcomes for our residents, businesses and our environment for future generations to enjoy. Whilst being bold, we cannot deliver this on our own and require the support and commitment from a range of stakeholders. We will pool our resources and effort to deliver, influence and enable others to meet our shared vision for the borough.

Vision

Our Plan proposed to create a vision which demonstrates why we are proud of Harrow and set out aspirations for the partnership across the borough, encapsulating our sense of community, including:

- Everyone looks after each other
- Neighbourliness and cohesiveness
- Sense of belonging
- Caring for people and the area
- Resilience

We seek to retain our many strengths, but also collectively tackle the challenges we face as a borough. In delivering our vision for Harrow, we want to ensure equality of opportunity for all of our communities and multi-ethnic groups who contribute significantly to the diversity and culture within the borough. We want to ensure that Harrow is accessible to all.

Tackling Racial disproportionality, Inequality and Disadvantage

Harrow prides itself in being one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse boroughs in the country with people of many different backgrounds and life experiences living side by side. However, we recognise that the council and its partners can do more to enhance the lived experience and better outcomes for all residents. That is why, when the Plan was refreshed in November 2020, we agreed that the two main issues that cut across all of the priorities we want to tackle over the next decade are racial disproportionality and socio-economic inequality and disadvantage.

These are recurring themes throughout our Borough Plan and its eight priorities and across our partnership. Through engagement we will ensure that our approach and actions to tackling racial disproportionality and tackling socio-economic inequality and disadvantage continue to make Harrow a better place for all of our residents and businesses.

Priorities

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 the refresh of the Borough Plan in November 2020. These priorities and cross-cutting themes are set out below.



Cross cutting themes:

- Tackling disadvantage
- Tackling racial disproportionality

The Borough Plan was agreed just a month before the pandemic took hold, and therefore much of the efforts of the council and partners on progressing the priorities has been rooted in responding to the pandemic and the needs of our residents in this context. Our progress and achievements against each of the priority areas are set out in the pages that follow.

[All figures quoted are correct as of 31 December 2021 unless otherwise stated]

PRIORITY: Improving the environment and addressing climate change

The council has set itself the ambitious target of being a **carbon neutral borough by 2030**. In autumn 2021 we held our first Climate Emergency webinar to look at how we are creating a sustainable borough and identifying what more we have to do. We are committed to helping our residents understand the impact of their choices and help them to switch to less carbon emitting alternatives e.g. the switchover to electric vehicles. We have established a framework around which the council, our partners and residents can take action to reduce the climate impact of everything that happens in our borough. This includes clean energy used efficiently, zero-emission transport, a waste-free borough, healthy places for us and the rest of nature, good governance for long term sustainability, eco-literate and engaged communities and a socially just transition.

In **addressing the council's carbon use**, our vehicle fleet now includes 16 electric vans, from which our meals on wheels and a range of other services are delivered, and the majority of our remaining vehicles meet the highest Euro 6 emissions standard. Over recent years we have supported a significant programme of solar panel installations at school sites, with 16 Harrow schools now producing a proportion of their own electricity. Since October 2021, all of our school and council electricity supplies are being procured on a green tariff, with our demand matched by generation from renewable sources such as wind and solar. We are engaging with companies that provide the council with goods and services to see what opportunities exist to drive down emissions throughout our supply chain. We have also reviewed our pension investment strategy and diverted significant funds towards delivering low carbon outcomes.

We are also undertaking a range of initiatives to **help the borough as a whole to decarbonise**. In October 2020 we introduced an emissions-based parking permit scheme for residents, to incentivise a transition to low emission vehicles. In early 2021 we installed a further 24 on-street charging points for electric vehicles, with plans to install more over the next 12 months.

Like many large organisations, the council recognises that a significant part of its overall carbon footprint is associated with the goods and services that it procures. During 2021 we introduced a standard question as part of our procurement activity that tests suppliers' ability to deliver low carbon outcomes when providing the relevant goods and services to the authority. Building upon this we have coordinated a West London wide project to develop a more comprehensive **Low Carbon Procurement Toolkit** for use by local authorities, which includes a low carbon charter that will be widely distributed to existing and prospective suppliers across the sub-region.

The council is implementing a £2.4 million grant from the **Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme** to carry out energy related works to six school and corporate sites. This will significantly reduce or eliminate the gas heating requirements of these council owned sites. The range of works include LED lighting upgrades, external, loft and cavity wall insulation, solar panels and air source heat pumps. We are installing ground source heat pumps at three sheltered housing schemes across the borough at a cost of £1.7 million. These will significantly reduce carbon emissions and reduce residents' heating bills. Further pilots of air source heat pumps are planned.

In 2021 we helped low income families retrofit their homes via the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme which as part of a West London consortium, provides for **domestic retrofit in the borough**. The scheme targets homes with a poor energy rating that are occupied by households on low incomes. Around 130 properties are anticipated to be retrofitted in the borough with fabric improvement measures, as part of implementation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the scheme.

In the spring and summer of 2021, we participated for the first time in the **Solar Together London Scheme** helping residents save money on the cost of solar panel installation. 1,500 households responded, demonstrating an appetite amongst residents for exploring installation of solar panels at their homes. The scheme is expected to open again in early 2022.

Working closely with community groups, in 2021 we completed major works as part of the **Headstone Manor Park Project**, which increases local biodiversity and resilience against future flood events. New wetland areas and improvements to the flow of the brook have been completed, which will help reduce the flood risk around North Harrow. There is a new orchard and planting to encourage wildlife, a new playground for children and nature walks and picnic area. This complements the improvement works at the museum and café at this historic site.

The **Grove Open Space** behind Lowlands in Harrow has seen saplings planted by Trees for Cities volunteers and Harrow residents, as a lasting memorial for the over 700 lives lost to Covid in the borough. The 21 trees were announced by the Mayor of Harrow during the pandemic and represent the borough's 21 wards.

As in many other London boroughs, the levels of **fly tipping** are a concern that many Harrow residents have. There were 8,844 fly tips reported in the 12 months ending April 2021. In Harrow the trend appears to be waste predominantly left in black bags and in small numbers. This suggests that the individuals fly tipping in Harrow are more likely to be from local residential properties. The council will always look to take enforcement action when the perpetrator can be easily identified, such as when there is a witness to the act of dumping or the bags themselves contain evidence clearly identifying the owner, as it makes it easier for the council to issue fines and take people to court. Areas once known locally for fly tipping will repeatedly attract further fly tipping. As a result, clearing a fly tip does not always solve the problem and it is costly for the council to repeatedly clear locations of fly tip rubbish. Therefore, the council's strategy has been focused on finding perpetrators, issuing fines and taking them to court but also putting up signs and sending letters to residential homes to deter people from fly tipping.

Fly tips themselves are often found where there are other local issues that may be contributing to the issue, such as unlicensed HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupation) and commercial premises without a trade waste agreement. Areas susceptible to fly tipping may also experience other nuisance issues or anti-social behaviour. The Licensing and Enforcement service have identified the top twenty hot spot areas and created a strategy to deal with these which we will progress - this involves taking a bespoke and holistic approach to each fly tip hot spot area.

There has been more investment in fighting fly tipping, with crews working across the borough and intensively in hotspot areas to gather evidence including from new CCTV cameras and responding promptly to reports of illegal dumping.

Our **licensing and enforcement** team help improve the environment in Harrow by reducing fly tips, dealing with filthy and verminous properties, and reducing nuisance from smoke, odour, light and noise. During the height of the pandemic, we suspended normal enforcement patrols and our enforcement team concentrated on patrolling communities to ensure that residents and businesses were complying with Covid regulations and good practice. Kingdom LA Support were tasked with monitoring the borough for compliance with the various stages of control and lockdown. Environmental health staff suspended business as usual and moved to a seven-day a week format providing support to the Public Health England Track and Trace Service, monitoring parks and neighbourhoods and providing the enforcement escalation for businesses.

Guidance was issued locally and nationally at the beginning of the first lockdown and subsequently to ensure that businesses were aware of the restrictions in place. Working with the Health and Safety Executive, many small and medium businesses were directly contacted to assess their compliance in the workplace and our team supported the recovery of High Streets with guidance and simplified street trading or 'pavement licences'.

We have recently invested an additional £300k for a **Priority Enforcement Team** to tackle a range of environmental issues. Areas that have been identified as being priority enforcement include:

- Visiting fly tip hotspots, securing evidence and taking enforcement action
- Undertaking evening/morning visits to evidence possible Houses of Multiple Occupation properties
- Monitoring commercial licensed premises in evenings and weekends
- Responding to ongoing nuisance such as bonfires

Six additional officers were recruited by mid-December 2021 to take on this work. As part of this delivery an 8-week rolling calendar has been created, moving resources around ward by ward to deal with priority enforcement issues in each area. Each week the focus has been on a particular ward undertaking enforcement and engagement focused on the specific problems in that area/ward, with regular feedback and engagement with the ward councillors. Due to varying levels of priority enforcement need in each ward, different actions may be undertaken in each ward and the levels of resources given to a focus ward in each week will differ. Local policing teams and other council departments are kept informed of the focus ward programme for the forthcoming weeks and given an opportunity to be involved where appropriate.

These new **area-based enforcement teams** have moved away from traditional subject matter-based teams. The benefit of this model is that it creates a multi discipline environment where the area team can pull their combined expertise together to resolve complex issues. It provides capacity to deal with emerging issues as the teams meet the demands of the ward area rather than being focused on individual subject areas. In turn, this allows us to set priorities for different areas depending on need. Being based by area also means closer working relationships can be established with the local police, other council departments, resident, businesses and ward members.

We have already seen the impact of the £300k investment to the Enforcement team, with additional staff and the new area-based focus, for example more perpetrators have been identified and issued fines in the Greenhill ward (town centre) in the November to December 2021 period than in any other two-month period of 2021.

Looking ahead

We will continue to make sure Harrow is an attractive and healthy environment with improved streets, enhanced parks and accessible open spaces, providing relaxing recreation, supporting sport and active travel opportunities for all. We will do this by encouraging active travel and creating a modal shift in favour of sustainable transport – walking and cycling – and address the over reliance on cars to reduce the carbon footprint, reduce pollution and improve health. We will continue to improve our access to clean air and water, and the other ecosystem services that are essential for us to all live healthy lives, reduce residual waste and increase recycling, and support equitable access to sport and physical activity across Harrow. Green spaces enable exercise and the reduction of carbon footprints.

We will play our part in implementing London Council's Retrofit London Action Plan by retrofitting all council housing. Our ambition for high quality and energy efficient housing will also address fuel poverty, carbon emissions and heat loss causing global warming.

Our commitment to be a carbon neutral borough by 2030 remains and we will make sure that the way we address climate change does not disproportionately impact on the poorest and most vulnerable in society and builds a more sustainable borough.

Deploying our Priority Enforcement Team to target priority environmental issues and delivering quick results to residents is a key area we will be improving in 2022. By targeting our enforcement and engagement efforts on an area-by-area basis, we can focus on the enforcement issues that matter most to specific areas and communities.

We will continue to target fly tipping - fly tipping needs to be made socially unacceptable across all parts of the borough. Publicity and communications will be used to educate the public to dispose of their waste correctly and also focus on the fact that the continual clearance of the fly tip is a cost borne by the public purse. We will continue to progress the strategy developed to address the fly tipping hot spot areas and we continue to adopt a zero tolerance approach with offenders.

We will also continue to promote the ways in which residents and councillors can report fly tipping to the council and how best to relay information to our Priority Enforcement Teams, so that we not only work with our communities to tackle the issue that blights our borough but also encourage information sharing so we can tackle the issue.

PRIORITY: Tackling poverty and inequality

The last couple of years have been unprecedented and challenging. The pandemic has affected us all and exacerbated inequalities that already existed in society. In supporting our residents through such challenging times, the council and its partners have responded to the pandemic in several ways: emergency response to protecting vulnerable residents, providing financial support, addressing food poverty, tackling poor housing and homelessness, encouraging the development of employability skills and promoting mental wellbeing and resilience.

Harrow Council along with several local voluntary sector organisations came together to form a partnership called the **Community Hub** to support Harrow residents during the Covid-19 outbreak. This initial response was to create a borough wide, coordinated approach to support residents unable to access support, advice or food supplies. Operating from Wealdstone, as an immediate response to helping the most vulnerable at the start of the pandemic, this initiative continues to support residents. Struggling and vulnerable residents can also receive regular food parcels, through a support platform called **Help Harrow**, which was launched in March 2020. The service was initially set up to respond to the need to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (Shielding) residents access food at the start of the pandemic but has since been expanded further to include add-on services such as the provision of general advice and information and a referral point for mental health support. Help Harrow has been working in collaboration with several key partner organisations and stakeholders across the borough and nationally. On average up to 500 residents have received food parcels each month since the scheme's launch.

We have protected the most vulnerable in our communities by checking in on residents and making calls to people **shielding**. In the first wave in 2020, we made 27,862 calls to the 8,167 local residents who were identified as clinically extremely vulnerable and shielding, to identify any support that they needed. We worked with our partners to deliver 3,557 food packages. In the second wave and from October 2020 onwards, the total number of residents who were shielding rose to 25,033 and we made a further 42,670 contacts, delivering another 3,176 food packages, alongside other support. Working with others in the local voluntary and community sector, Harrow Central Mosque has also been running the Helping Hands support service to help meet the critical and urgent needs of the most vulnerable and needy people within the borough such as assistance with food shopping and medications.

Between 14 November 2020 and 12 November 2021, our teams dealt with 6,219 **Track and Trace** cases, attempting to contact 100% of cases within 24 hours of notification. All but a small number who could not be contacted were provided with advice on self-isolation and the support available. Complex cases were passed on to the relevant experts in Public Health and Environmental Health teams for their follow up.

As at 5 January 2022, 188,307 Harrow residents (72% of over 12's) had received their first dose of the **Covid vaccine**, 171,661 (66% of over 12's) their second dose, and 122,504 (47% of over 12s) their booster. The rollout of the vaccination and booster programme has demonstrated the value of partnership working and how public services need to work in tandem to deliver such services efficiently and effectively. Harrow had one of the most successful vaccination rates across NW London.

Providing financial support

The council maximised the additional funding from Government during the pandemic to develop a range of different schemes to support employed, as well as unemployed residents. These include the Covid winter grant, housing support, the Hardship Support Fund, and targeted Covid Local Support Grants.

Around **2,500 local businesses have been given grants during the pandemic**, totaling £67m from a variety of national and discretionary schemes. £39m was distributed in the first tranche (up to August 2020) to support all those who pay business rates. Since then, a further £28m has been awarded to the hospitality, leisure and accommodation type of businesses (including some non-ratepayers, micro businesses and market traders etc.) There is still £4.5m left to give from the latest tranche of financial relief for businesses.

Self isolation payments to support those who have been notified by the Test and Trace system: 971 grants in total have been awarded to the value of £485,500 from the national grant scheme, from which £197k were discretionary payments. In addition, the council made extra funds available to help those facing financial hardship and allocated 285 grants totaling over £142k to help individuals and young people, including students (16 have been helped and awarded a total of £4,800).

The Winter Covid fund was also used to expand the borough's commissioned **debt advice service** provided by Citizens Advice Harrow and was targeted at supporting small and micro businesses that have been impacted by the pandemic.

For Winter 2021/22, Harrow has been allocated a grant of £1.48m from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver a **Household Support Fund** to support the most vulnerable in our communities over the winter period. This funding will be administered to support vulnerable households most in need with food, energy fuel and water bills. It will also be used for other essential costs and in exceptional circumstances, it can be used to support housing costs or for financial advice. 50% of the funding must be allocated to households with children. The council has moved quickly to set up this scheme so the support reaches families when they most need it. Around £500k of this allocation has been used to continue with free school meals for nearly 6,000 pupils for each of the 2021 October half term and Christmas school holiday, and similar is planned for the February half term in 2022. Some families with children in Early Years settings have also been supported with meals during the holiday periods from this allocation. In addition, funds in the form of supermarket vouchers were distributed to around 9,000 vulnerable households to help pay towards food and general household items.

Addressing food poverty

The pandemic has brought to the fore the disproportionate impact on young children and adults. The council has been working collaboratively with partners to further and maximise the impact of key programmes to tackle child poverty and deprivation. The Young Harrow Foundation (YHF) has run a very successful **Holiday and Food Activity Programme** in accordance with the Government's plan. This has been a very successful partnership model with YHF working with schools and the voluntary sector to provide food and activities for vulnerable children and families across the borough over the school holidays. Together, we

have arranged for over 3,000 school children to be provided with free hot meals and activities over the summer period. Free school meal vouchers for school age children have been provided throughout the pandemic - through the Covid Local Support Grant, the council has provided vouchers to children eligible for free school meals since the half term of 2020 and we will continue to do so into 2022. This supports around 9,000 children in Harrow. Families with children have been able to sign up for further support through the Healthy Start support, providing help to buy basic foods and milk and issuing payments to low-incomes families.

We have been supporting several youth and children programmes through the **London Community Kitchen**, such as:

- Plant To Plate - addressing issues of nutrition, healthy eating, and encouraging students to be more aware of the journey of their food.
- Food To Go - supporting children living in food insecurity and child poverty.
- Sharewear - collecting all unsold clothes from major supermarkets and supplying over 400 families with free school uniforms; distributing school shorts to over 700 children.
- Mini Food Hubs - supplying food parcels to over 20 schools across Harrow to support parents.

Children services continue to support a higher number of care leavers than in previous years. Children looked after and children protection numbers have reduced from the highest levels seen during 2020 and early 2021.

Tackling poor housing and homelessness

The work by our licensing and enforcement teams around the enforcement of **unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and selective licensing** ensures that residential accommodations are safe, well maintained and of a good quality for all Harrow residents. In 2021, we had 209 reports of unlicensed HMOs, up from 169 the year before. Our selective licensing scheme requires that all privately rented homes in parts of Harrow are licensed and means that landlords must make sure their properties meet certain standards. The initiative first came into effect in Wealdstone in 2016 and seeks to improve the quality of privately rented houses and address associated issues such as fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. We renewed this scheme in September 2021 and worked with landlords to make sure they understood the rules and applied for licences. The scheme also operates in Edgware, Roxbourne and Roxeth wards and has made a significant difference in bringing down cases of overcrowding, anti-social behaviour, damp and abandoned vehicles. The number of selective licensing applications in the borough has risen from 366 in 2019 to 547 in 2021.

The **Harrow Homelessness Reduction Board** is responsible for working together to tackle and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in the local area. Made up of council services, other statutory partners and voluntary and community sector partners, it met for the first time in December 2020, meeting bi-monthly since. The partnership delivers a joint focus on improving housing allocation, mental health and equality. It has been working on six defined goals to address the disproportionate impact of homelessness on some groups, to involve those with lived experiences, to offer practical support and to help residents in receipt of benefits, who have been discriminated against by landlords.

Through the Board, we have enabled more people to avoid homelessness by early intervention across the partners involved. The Board has developed a Duty to Refer protocol,

mapped services and gaps and improved communication and partnership working. A successful Call to Action event in July 2021 uncovered issues around Covid-19 challenges and successes, quality and cost of temporary accommodation, rogue landlords and agents, illegal evictions, obstacles (for example rent guarantors and welfare benefits regulations), addressing the needs of specific groups and a need for a 'whole system approach'.

The council successfully bid for funding to tackle **rough sleeping in Harrow**. We were awarded £1.6 million to provide a new "housing first" programme for rough sleepers with complex needs, who will be provided with a home and wraparound support package. We were also awarded Rough Sleeping Initiative funding to set up a new Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub and a new outreach team. At the end of October 2021, the estimated number of individuals sleeping rough in the borough was 9, compared with 13 at the end of September.

There is also work going on our estates for example, **Grange Farm estate regeneration programme** is delivering a range of activities to address poverty – including training, food poverty and community events.

The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of good broadband connections as demand at home has increased due to a combination of increased working from home, home schooling and increased online shopping. Average data usage per household increased by more than a third from 315 Gb in 2019 (itself up from 241 Gb in 2018) to 429 Gb in 2020 and usage and the need for increased capacity is likely to increase over the coming years. The Council is partnering with broadband providers to **install superfast broadband** to all council estates/blocks with vulnerable residents eligible for free broadband deals.

Encouraging the development of employability skills

Learn Harrow targets residents in the most deprived areas, who are least likely to engage with local services and who have multiple barriers to engagement and learning and progression. Targeting residents from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, older people (60+), residents in receipt of benefits and disabled people, its curriculum is based on:

- Developing employability skills and social mobility
- Widening access to English language skills
- Improving Health and Wellbeing needs
- Enhancing community cohesion and citizenship

Promoting mental health, wellbeing and resilience

Mental health and wellbeing has been a key focus in the council's response to the pandemic. Mind in Harrow has been offering a Covid-19 befriending service called 'Side by Side', specifically adapted to vulnerable residents, whose mental health is being negatively impacted by prolonged isolation and who have no other support networks. Community Connex (formerly Harrow Mencap) has mobilised a team of 15 volunteers who distribute meals using their own vehicles. In addition to the hot meal, volunteers provide vital social contact to individuals, many who live on their own and are the only form of contact they have with another person. Staff at our Neighbourhood Resource Centres (NRC) were reassigned during the pandemic to liaise via phone calls with residents who are most vulnerable and who would become socially isolated as the NRCs were closed. These virtual calls and activities,

doorstep visits and community sessions helped address concerns of **social isolation in our most vulnerable residents**.

Ensuring **people are able to protect their mental health** has been a key area of work for Public Health as we come through the pandemic. We have created messages and resources for council staff and have been working with Thrive, and the Young Harrow Foundation to promote mental health and the Mental Health First Aid course. Work is now ongoing through the Integrated Care Partnership to develop a comprehensive prevention programme across Harrow.

The Public Health team has conducted several **needs assessments** including mental health, homelessness, children's emotional wellbeing, children's substance misuse and maternal outcomes. These are now being developed into a series of actions across a partnership to begin to address the inequalities within Harrow. Working with our **Health Visiting** colleagues the Maternal and Early Childhood Sustained Health Visiting programme has been developed and is scheduled to begin in the new year. This is an intensive support programme for vulnerable families during pregnancy and up to two years after birth. It will take two years to be fully implemented and will have the capacity for about 5% of the birth cohort each year (about 200 families).

The number of decayed missing and filled teeth in children is a priority area of work for Harrow. This year **the oral health promotion** programme has directly engaged with 1,300 children and 110 parents through schools and children's services. A total of 10 schools are running a supervised toothbrushing exercise and over 200 toothbrushing packs (Brush4life packs) have been distributed to children. The programme routinely trains staff with over 70 staff trained so far this year.

Looking ahead

We will strive to level up the disproportionate impact (including health, economic and social) on communities of Covid-19 and the issues raised by the Black Lives Matters movement across all protected characteristics in supporting the levelling up of all communities, across for example race, ethnicity, gender and disability. Our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will develop the appropriate actions within the council and communities to deliver on this ambition.

By understanding health and wellbeing risks and ensuring children have the best start in life, we will reduce the gap in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between people in the most affluent and the most deprived parts of the borough. We will continue our collaboration with key voluntary partners such as the Young Harrow Foundation to create and advance opportunities for young people and tackle child poverty – looking at key socio-economic disparities by tackling the root causes of inequality and poverty, and creating new opportunities for skill development and employability and investing in a range of grassroots activities of partner organisations, who will be at the centre of actions to secure better paid, sustainable employment and targeted skill creation. We will empower young people and use data to address specific needs and/or skills shortages in the community, and make sure we include the voice of young people in designing the most suitable programmes to progress. We will ensure every child has a safe, suitable home and child poverty is addressed via initiatives set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Everyone should live in a home suitable for their needs and to enable this we will look to eradicate homelessness and overcrowding, improve the living standards of residents and tackle income inequality. We want all people wanting to work to have a job that pays above London Living Wage and be employed on a contract that meets their requirements, to live in households free of unsustainable debt. To do this this we will address high debt levels in the borough and the stress this causes, and seek to build a culture of responsibility and compliance with local taxes.

No-one in the borough should be left behind and excluded from the transition to digital ways of working, studying or engaging with the community. We will continue to enable digital inclusion and reduce digital exclusion across the borough by improving the digital infrastructure, broadband connectivity and access to equipment to provide businesses and residents with a more equitable access to digital technology. We will invest in digital skills creation through training programmes for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents and migrant communities and collaborate with partner organisations to ensure there is no increase in social exclusion or reduced access to employment opportunities. We will also increase levels of digital self-service to the council and make sure council resources are utilised to support those most in need.

PRIORITY: Building homes and infrastructure

Harrow has one of the largest council-led regeneration programmes in London. This will be delivered with the council's development partner, Wates Residential, a hugely experienced national home builder, through the **Harrow Strategic Development Partnership (HSDP)**. This partnership was formally signed in August 2021 following an extensive procurement process. The HSDP will transform Wealdstone and the current Civic Centre site (Poets Corner), with three underused urban sites at the heart of the regeneration programme. More than 1,500 new homes (including affordable new council housing) will be developed, plus a range of new business opportunities and public and green spaces. Across the three sites - Byron Quarter, Poets Corner and Peel Road – there will be an average of 43% affordable housing, that is housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market².

Byron Quarter will be redeveloped as part of the first phase of the HSDP as a 100% residential scheme. This will see 337 new homes being built, of which 50% is affordable housing. The site will be designed to integrate seamlessly with the extensive leisure opportunities provided at the adjoining Harrow Leisure Centre and Byron Park. The design will create a defined park frontage of the highly desirable new residential neighbourhood. This route forms part of the strategic green link and cycle connection from Headstone Manor to the Belmont Trail which is a green link between Christchurch Avenue, running north to Vernon Drive in Stanmore.

Poets Corner is where the current Civic Centre is located. Building on this site will take place over three phases which will see 1,047 new homes, at least 39% of which will be affordable housing. The redevelopment will offer a mix of residential, workspace, retail and commercial spaces, as well as a primary school. There will be a local park for residents to enjoy. The vision for Poets Corner includes two large residential blocks along the High Street with a new town square fronting the High Street, creating space for local community events and supporting social value. Phase 1 of the Poets Corner redevelopment will deliver 414 new homes across two blocks, creating homes and jobs in the new look High Street.

Peel Road in Wealdstone will see the development of new buildings with active frontages to help repair the urban fabric of Wealdstone town centre. 191 new homes – at least 39% of which will be affordable housing – will be delivered through residential buildings. One will comprise of affordable homes and another Build to Rent. This is also where Harrow Council's new Civic Centre will be located and we have committed that the delivery of the new Civic Centre will be at no cost to the council through the overarching principle of 'cost neutrality'. We hope that by creating a landmark site we will create visual awareness of change in the area and in a flexible and technologically equipped Civic Centre for Harrow Council which will be the civic heart for the borough.

In a regeneration programme worth an estimated £600 million, the partnership is the largest investment and development opportunity Harrow has seen and will create an inviting, attractive and thriving Wealdstone high street that generates apprenticeships, training and wealth in the borough. Through the regeneration of the three core sites, the HSDP will

² As defined by the National Planning Policy Framework: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-affordable-housing-funding>

promote large scale social value and targets to create a minimum of 129 apprenticeships, 120 work experience opportunities and 213 new jobs.

These are exciting times for the borough and designs and business plans are now progressing, with a view to the first planning application being presented in March 2022 for the Byron Quarter project.

The council's major development at **Forward Drive in Wealdstone** is nearing completion. Forward Drive is an office building designed to provide the council with a modern, collaborative and flexible workplace environment for staff and integrated service partners. The building forms part of the wider Central Depot development that provides accommodation and plant facilities for the council's front-line operations for Environmental Services. It will provide a base for all council teams working in an agile way, and is designed to support new ways of working, optimising digital integration and paperless processes, encouraging collaborative working and embedding a change of culture. The office will provide capacity for 650 people across four storeys - this is made up of individual work settings, with collaborative and touchdown settings, informal and formal meeting spaces, with additional space at ground floor for staff welfare and café seating. A multi-faith room with wudu washing facilities and a first aid room are provided on site along with showers, changing and drying facilities.

In addition to the homes delivered by the HSDP, as part of the **Building Council Homes for Londoners** programme for Harrow, we are delivering a considerable number of affordable homes. We have completed, acquired or are on site with nearly 250 council homes which are let at social or affordable rents. We have a further development pipeline of almost 1,100 new council homes, of which over half will be affordable homes.

The **regeneration of the Grange Farm estate** in South Harrow is underway. Phase 1 of the programme is on site, delivering 89 new affordable homes. Subsequent phases will deliver a further 485 new homes built around green space and community facilities. In principle approval was given by Cabinet in November 2021 to include this in our HSDP and the partnership is putting this into effect.

Harrow has agreed with Apex Airspace to build up to 48 **additional homes on top of one of the council's housing estates**, helping to make best use of existing housing and offering new homes for local residents. The development uses modular construction methods which will speed up build time and reduce carbon emissions.

The council is currently on-site nearing completion of 29 new mews homes across two sites in Stanmore and Pinner. **Leefe Robinson and Pinnora Mews** will be complete in January 2022 and March 2022 respectively. The two new developments have delivered on underutilised council sites to provide a number of new homes which include: for sale, affordable and homes under the Help to Buy scheme.

We have brought three redundant buildings back into use on the **Harrow Arts Centre** site creating nine additional spaces comprising of dance studio, multi-use rooms, office and artists' studios as creative workspaces through a programme jointly funded by the council and

the GLA. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) have also been installed as part of these scheme in addition to a swale – the latter to meet the next phase’s requirements.

In January 2022, **Homes in Mind**, a partnership between local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations working with Harrow council, secured £150k of funding from the GLA’s Community Led Housing project. This grant will fund the work on two local schemes to deliver much needed housing that supports people with mental health issues. The two schemes are now fully funded up to a full planning application. The project aims to be in a position to apply for planning permission in the summer/autumn of 2022.

The project’s core objective is to deliver social affordable housing to service users of Mind in Harrow as part of a community led housing project. The value of this housing cannot be underestimated. Over the lifetime of the units delivered, hundreds of service users will find a safe, supported and affordable place to live and thrive. Initially the two schemes will deliver nine units between them (subject to planning) and will act as a pathfinder for future sites that have been identified and are available for inclusion into the project. The project has ambitions to deliver a further 30 units across Harrow, creating a thriving, self-sustaining community. The partnership working between a number of VCS organisations and the council has been exceptional.

Looking ahead

The Harrow Strategic Development Partnership will continue to deliver much of our regeneration programme and we anticipate a planning application for the Byron site in spring 2022 and submissions for the other sites in the HSDP in the summer. The council will be moving offices and work will begin at the Milton Road site in early spring 2022, with the council handing over the existing Civic Centre to the HSDP in October.

We will use our regeneration programme, like the development at Grange Farm, to improve the quality as well as number of homes available, striving for everyone to have quality, energy efficient and digitally-enabled homes in a thriving community. We also want neighbourhoods that are integrated and well connected to thriving district centres by strong transport links and connections that enable people to travel to their destination sustainably and safely.

We want everyone in Harrow to be able to live in the right size and tenure of home to meet their needs and expectations. To do this we must continue to address overcrowding, lack of social housing and affordability challenges, as well as ensure that there is sufficient genuinely affordable housing for key workers and other Harrow residents who cannot afford to buy/rent on the open market. Our work with private landlords will be critical to this ambition.

PRIORITY: Addressing health and social care inequality

The relationship between the council and NHS partners is one of the best in London, with the coordinated response to the pandemic acting as a catalyst for this. Opportunities for integration have been explored and partners have all signed up to support. The **Harrow Conversation** was undertaken to engage stakeholders (including the council, GPs, NHS Trusts, voluntary and community sector and service user representatives) to shape the next stages of development for local health and social care integration in Harrow.

A governance structure for the **Harrow Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)** has been agreed and the ICP's **100 Day Plan** agreed in September 2021. Progress is monitored and reported to the Joint Management Board and Health and Wellbeing Board. ICP workstreams have been established and work programmes developed to support improved outcomes in a post covid environment. Additional capacity has been agreed for the ICP with a Programme Manager, business analyst and reablement programme manager coming into post and there is Integrated Care System additional winter pressures funding for adults' social care. The Harrow Health and Care Executive continues to meet weekly with broad representation from across agencies involved in planning and delivering health and social care. There has been a collaborative approach to delivering the testing and vaccination programmes across Harrow.

The 100 Day Plan lays the foundations for a strong ICP, builds momentum for change and delivers change for citizens. The core purpose of the ICP is to tackle health inequalities and improve outcomes and experience through truly integrated care. At the heart of this are citizens and staff delivering the care, and securing their voice is critical to success.

The pandemic has particularly shone a light on the **health inequalities** that exist in the borough. Working with our partners in the NHS, we have explored some of these in more depth to come up with solutions that reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for Harrow's communities. Sophisticated data analysis on long term conditions, such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity, in different cohorts of residents (for example based on ethnicity, gender, age) has revealed disproportionate health outcomes. These health conditions affect the lives of many on the borough and we have used this intelligence to inform our plans for engaging communities in health issues, designing suitable interventions and commissioning culturally appropriate services. For example, we have established a new 'Good Weight Pathway' for patients, allowing them to self-refer for the first time.

We have established a pilot in the Harrow East Primary Care Network and rolled out initiatives such as the 15-step NHS toolkit in accessing primary care, vaccine outreach in the Romanian community, focusing on childhood immunisations and antenatal care in predominantly the Romanian community as we know they currently access these services less than other communities in Harrow.

During the pandemic, Social Care and Public Health colleagues have supported domiciliary care providers and care homes with infection prevention and control advice. Seminars and advice have been made freely available across internal and external teams in Harrow. The **Care Providers Support Group** is a multi-disciplinary team that supports all of the adults' social care providers in Harrow and its partners and is made up from the council, Public Health, Clinical Commissioning Group, Central London Community Healthcare and where

appropriate care providers and GPs. Set up at the early stage of the pandemic, it will continue long term to respond to the needs of the care economy, support providers, facilitate continued collaboration and enable the delivery of pathway improvements. The group supports the Care Homes Response Team (CHRT) by helping to unblock operational issues. The CHRT is responsible for reducing unnecessary hospital admissions, being the first point of contact for any issues in care homes and delivering new interventions directly to the providers.

At the start of the pandemic, the pressing need to improve the coordination and effectiveness of the through-put of hospital discharges was identified. An important variable to this was the need to have more vacant hospital beds to be able to absorb the impact of Covid-19 on patients. As a result, all partners across the Acute, Health Community Services and Adult Social Care developed **Independent Discharge Hubs (IDH)** staffed by all partners. The shared aim was to work in an integrated style regardless of the type of partner agency and its funding source, with the sole ambition to transition the citizen back to the community in the most efficient pathway. This method drastically improved the discharged flow and partnership working. It also created an integrated and seamless approach to discharges for the citizen. Following its huge success, the IDH has now become business as usual and has been adopted across all boroughs.

We have continued to implement the **Three Conversations approach** to providing social care to adults and older people, which helped with the response and recovery stage of Covid-19, and the associated increase in requests for support. It enabled us to keep our attention on really listening to what is important to our citizens and finding different ways of working, and positive community solutions. It also opened up a dialogue with our health and voluntary sector colleagues which has helped strengthen the partnership.

From March 2020, the **Neighbourhood Resource Centres** were closed due the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, we successfully redeployed staff to the integrated Learning Disabilities community services to support with the delivery of statutory work in the form of welfare checks and calls and undertaking low level reviews. The willingness, resilience, and flexibility of staff to take on new roles, new responsibilities and different duties helped in maintaining the delivery of safe services during the pandemic. Our teams, for example in **Learning Disabilities and Mental Health**, acclimatised very quickly and effectively to agile working from home and using technology rather than face to face meetings with clients when during lockdown. Systems were created and implemented to ensure citizen and staff welfare remained high on the agenda, with regular check-ins and continuing to undertake reviews, albeit the majority were virtual. Effective liaison with other corporate and third sector partners ensured practical support such as with food parcels and PPE equipment was made available. Regular meetings and collaborative working with key stakeholders such as Community Connex ensured we remained aware of wider emerging community issues.

We have used a common sense approach to the use of Personal Budgets during the pandemic, to ensure **Care Act needs** were continuing to be met. An independent review of the Community Learning Disability Team service in Autumn 2020 confirmed the positive work achieved and the joint working, for example with health colleagues, undertaken. An integrated approach to referrals and allocations encouraged joint working and resulted in better outcomes. The Enablement Team pilot was another positive outcome delivered during the

pandemic. This is a service aimed at delivering early intervention and support for citizens with learning disability / autism issues who may not be known to services.

The council commissioned a **review of mental health services** with recommendations agreed by Cabinet in November 2020. During the pandemic we have continued to make progress implementing these recommendations. New contracts have been commissioned as part of the supported accommodation pathway to independent living, the Section 75 agreement with CNWL (mental health trust) has been reviewed, experts by experience have been appointed to begin developing co-production as a new way of working. Community services have continued to be offered virtually and the contract with Rethink has been extended. Dual use of The Bridge with the Community Hub was started in December 2021 so that mental health face to face services resumed, however this was impacted by the introduction of temporary restrictions due to the Omicron/Covid surge. We are keeping this under review and will look to resume face to face services when it is safe to do so. Furthermore, we are working with partners to develop and implement the ICP's mental health workstream.

Obesity can reduce people's life expectancy and enjoyment of life. It is also linked to other long term conditions like diabetes and hypertension and we know from looking at data on health inequalities, that long term conditions can disproportionately affect some communities more than others. Our Public Health team have developed an **obesity pathway** between primary care and lifestyle services. The programme provides an introduction to the Shape Up Harrow project run by Watford FC Sports Community and Education Trust. The service has launched a face to face service at three hubs across the borough with an additional digital/App based offer. Residents who have an increased BMI will be able to self-refer or be referred by their GP for the 12 weeks nutrition and exercise programme.

Looking ahead

Working together with NHS colleagues, we will develop a population health management approach to identifying health and wellbeing needs and inequalities, making sure that data is shared appropriately to inform the development of plans across health and social care pathways and a collaborative approach. This will help us to develop a mutual understanding of the causes of ill health and coordinate care.

We need to address the large gap in health inequalities between our residents from the least to the most deprived wards and as highlighted by Covid, increase the healthy life expectancy for all, particularly those in disadvantage, improve physical activity and ensure children experience a healthy start to life with good diet and appropriate exercise, as well as supporting families to access early support where required, enabling them to be more self-sufficient and rely less on public services.

Following our engagement in 2021 with community leaders in Harrow's Black communities on initially Covid and then more broadly health inequalities, we have recently commissioned Voluntary Action Harrow to run an Engagement Commission as the next step to our conversations about wider health issues. This will follow up some of the concerns and insight shared by the community leaders and build on the what the data has shown us around health inequalities, for example on weight management, hypertension and diabetes.

We will progress to an integrated reablement service that builds on the independent discharge hubs and improve the reablement offer within the structures already in place. The integrated model transforms the way in which intermediate care and reablement are delivered by joining the offers, bringing together teams, introducing shared information and systems, and improving processes, to deliver a truly person-centered experience of support for the citizens of Harrow.

We will further integrate our strength-based approach with our health partners that enables citizens to achieve clear outcomes when using our in-house provider services, and reprofile provision to deliver a fit-for-purpose, integrated and holistic whole life strength-based service. We will ensure the whole life Learning Disability and Autism Strategy, which covers learning disability and autism separately but under one holistic strategy, promotes integration by placing key decision making within an integrated arena. This approach has been agreed across agencies and stakeholders and will ensure that there is an integrated health and social care response to managing the demand upon learning disability services and to the needs of its cohort of citizens. We will equip our workforce with the skills and awareness to deliver these great outcomes for our citizens.

PRIORITY: Thriving economy

The impact of the pandemic in Harrow has been deep and wide ranging, and the immediate responses to mitigate the economic consequences of the pandemic now need to be built upon to deliver inclusive and sustainable economic growth. We have developed the **Harrow Economic Strategy 2021-2030** to support the economic recovery from Covid. Adopted by Cabinet in July 2021, the strategy states that “The pandemic has exacerbated unemployment and poverty among Black, Asian and multi-ethnic residents, young people, families, and disabled people, particularly in the most deprived areas.” It then sets out a range of objectives over the short, medium and long term to reverse this and grow a sustainable inclusive economy – these are broken down into key strands of skills and employment; business and job creation; connecting communities; and sustainable place making. The strategy makes explicit reference to addressing racial inequality and disproportionality across all four priorities.

In the short term we have focused on developing employability skills and social mobility, widening access to English Language skills, securing funds and implementing targeted provision for young people and commissioning provision to increase the diversity of participants. We used the £9m discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant to **develop business support programmes** to support our micro businesses and distribute cash grants to businesses most affected by the pandemic. Those programmes include supporting businesses to develop their online presence, support to help businesses secure contracts with the public sector, help to grow the circular economy, and a range of generic support from financial management to marketing.

We have **provided circa £70m in business grants** to support businesses that have suffered as a result of trading restrictions which were imposed to reduce the spread of Covid-19.

We have secured an additional £1.4m in funds to increase the number of residents we can support through **skills and employment programmes**:

ESOL (Integration Fund)	£100,000
Covid-19 AEB Response Fund Strand 1	£162,925
Covid-19 AEB Response Fund Strand 2	£20,000
London Skills Recovery Adult Education Budget	£100,000
Emergency Recovery Relief Fund	£78,220
Reopening High Streets Safely Fund	£221,203
DWP Kickstart	£611,000
DWP Flexible Support Fund	£98,048
Social Care Workforce Capacity Fund Proud to Care	£15,000
National Skills Fund L 3	£65,000
Community Budget	£98,000

We have secured an additional **£7.8m to support our District Centres and Metropolitan Town Centre**:

Reopening High Streets Safely Fund	£221,203
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Future High Streets Fund (business case)	£7,448,582
High Streets for All Challenge Fund	£170,000

In addition, we have transferred £143k from the council’s apprenticeship fund to small and medium businesses in Harrow to provide quality training for 27 **apprenticeships** and contribute to the Covid economic recovery programme. We provide employment brokerage placing Harrow people into work through both the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Community Budget programme and young people aged between 16 -24 have been found work through the DWP Kickstart scheme - this is within the council, SMEs and the voluntary sector.

Economic development and local investment

The council has invested heavily in local businesses, the creation of jobs and new training opportunities to instigate growth of the local economy. We have:

- distributed £67m in Government grants to around 2,500 businesses with £4.5m left to give out from the latest business relief announcements.
- provided businesses with free 1:1 business advice, training and health checks through the business diagnostic programme.
- funded a free specialist debt advice, delivered by Citizen Advice Harrow, to individuals and businesses experiencing debt problems.
- invested in a Business Skills Accelerator programme, helping 250 local micro businesses.

The draft Digital Infrastructure Strategy that sets out a clear strategic direction to **increase digital connectivity** was agreed by Cabinet in December 2021. The Strategy provides clear objectives and guidelines for infrastructure providers to facilitate the deployment of digital infrastructure as well as to increase digital inclusion, maximise opportunities to secure social value benefits as a result of the investment and identify opportunities for funding. Our work to reduce digital exclusion within the borough has led to the agreement with Community Fibre Limited to provide full fibre broadband to all our council housing, linking in almost 5,000 properties. As well as connecting these homes, Community Fibre will initiate a programme to upskill our residents, create digital champions and increase connectivity across the borough, ensuring that many more people can access digital opportunities. Work starting in 2021/2022 includes the creation of 10 free Community Centre connections, three digital drop-in sessions per year and free online training sessions for Harrow residents. This will create employment opportunities to work for Community Fibre themselves as well as enabling more people in the borough to have a suitable connection to enable them to work from home or access digital services

Through the **High Street Fund**, we have invested in a range of business support programmes to help business growth in Harrow. The High Street Fund is a centrally funded programme which is intended to identify areas of improvements to support local district centres. It offers an opportunity to refresh the area, creating a vibrant, safer and more pleasant environment for all. Council officers alongside ward councillors and the local community drive forward this change. Wealdstone High Street and the new Wealdstone Square have welcomed bright murals using this fund, brightening up the area and stimulating footfall.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on small businesses, but with the business support programmes we have helped our local economy thrive again – not just through funding. The council has been working alongside **Harrow's Business Improvement District** to help local retailers become Covid secure - that means full compliance with Government safety guidelines. We have also been working with local businesses and residents to provide the latest jobs, training, and volunteering opportunities.

We have helped our **high streets bounce back from the pandemic** by investing in improvements that make them safer, more vibrant and more desirable places to visit, spend time and shop. To create vibrancy and thereby stimulate inward investment, festive lights have been installed in district centres with switch-on events held in support with local traders' groups. In addition, murals have also been applied to add cultural experience to our High Streets. Residents in Edgware, North Harrow, South Harrow and Rayners Lane have told the council what they would most like to see, and the festive lights were installed in time for Diwali, Hanukkah and Christmas.

Looking ahead

Harrow's new Economic Strategy will help drive forward the economic recovery from Covid whilst the adult learning and further education services across the borough will support delivery of the need to raise the skill levels of many adults within the borough to enable them to meet their earnings and employment aspirations. We need employment opportunities to match skills available within the borough and encourage entrepreneurship so that micro, small and medium sized enterprises can grow sustainably in Harrow.

We are committed to investing in programmes that foster growth of the local economy and ensure long-term, sustainable economic advancement of individuals and businesses. We will build on the support and encouragement we have provided in distributing a number of grants as an emergency response to the pandemic. We will do this by nurturing the budding knowledge economy in the borough (predominantly made of micro businesses); invest in key sectors that generate growth in Harrow (information technology, professional, construction and creative industries) and secure inward and outward investment, supporting residents in finding a job and developing new skills, and building on links with education and training providers.

We will cultivate vibrant town centres and district centres as commercial hubs and connect communities by having borough wide Full Fibre availability (1GB) to match the London average over the 3-year period from September 2021 to September 2024.

We will continue to support local businesses to recruit young people into apprenticeships and employment, as well as create apprenticeship opportunities within our own workforce.

PRIORITY: Sustaining quality education and training

There is a strong partnership between the council and our local schools in Harrow and we have always shared a strong commitment to work together for the best for Harrow's children and young people. Because of these strong relationships, we have been able to navigate the impact of the pandemic successfully.

Schools remained open in Harrow throughout Covid lockdown periods to support vulnerable children and key workers. We continued to work with the Harrow Education Partnership Board and the new Early Years Learning Partnership to support their activities in **sector led responses to the pandemic**. During the periods of lockdown we established an online process for key worker families to reach out for support in finding a setting for their children, especially those currently attending settings outside the borough.

The Educational Psychology Service provided advice during lockdown to schools and separately to families and young people to support mental health and well-being. Partner agencies worked together to signpost **mental-health and well-being services for children and young people**.

Holiday funding has supported all children on Free School Meals (FSM), and the equivalent groups in early years and emergency accommodation, receiving funding through each term since October 2020. The council has worked with schools to ensure the distribution of **funding for free-school meals over the school holidays** during the pandemic and FSM will continue to be funded in school holidays through to February half-term 2022.

The council facilitated the **12-15 vaccination programme** in all local secondary aged educational settings and for those electively home educated. The take up in Harrow has been one of the highest in the region at over 41% and second vaccinations are now taking place in schools.

A regular forum exists to directly talk to headteachers to support them on the response to Covid and impact on schools and education. This is in addition to a 24/7 offer to schools to contact our Public Health team to discuss **outbreak control**. A regular session is also offered to Trade Unions who have members who work in schools.

Supporting and meeting the needs of **children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)** was identified as a key focus of recovery from the pandemic and additional investment agreed. A multi-agency working group was established over the period of lockdown and after; this group ensured that necessary support and interventions were put in place for children and their families and that support was effectively signposted by all agencies. Services were adapted to provide online support to children and young people with SEND or who are looked after and their families / carers. This group has now ended its work but individual cases are still addressed through inter-agency arrangements as needed.

During 2020, we secured funding to place six social workers in secondary schools in Harrow, as part of a **Social Workers in Schools programme**. There are major benefits from situational collaboration in responding to the needs of young people and there is an enhanced understanding of both professional roles and the creation of opportunities to intervene earlier

from a prevention perspective. Young people welcome the chance to pop in to see their social worker and parents are supported in understanding the challenges of adolescence and how to minimise conflict in the home. Social workers have introduced anxiety groups, particularly for Year 7 students who are finding the transition from primary school daunting. The co-location of social workers and Mental Health Schools Therapists in some schools is also proving beneficial in addressing mental health presentations of young people and working jointly in providing support at the point of need. This newly developed environment has enhanced relationship-based practice and removed some of the barriers and misconceptions of the role of social workers for children, young people and their parents. The project was the subject of a BBC London news article in the summer of 2021 which featured one of our social workers in a project school.

An independent evaluation of this programme is being conducted by the University of Cardiff and the project has been very well received by our education colleagues. The Department for Education has extended the funding of the project to the end of the summer term 2022 and options are being considered on how we can continue to have social workers embedded in schools, extending to primary settings, at the conclusion of the pilot.

We have continued to carry out an **annual analysis of a range of educational outcomes** by different groups, including gender and ethnicity and a specifically in-depth analysis of school exclusions by ethnicity. Importantly, despite some increased behaviour issues on the return to school, permanent exclusions have not risen in comparison to previous years. Indications suggest that standards of educational outcomes have been broadly maintained despite the impact of lockdowns.

Learn Harrow took part in an Ofsted pilot to set the standards for quality of online delivery during the pandemic. It doubled its funding, capacity to deliver and achieved all intended outcomes and objectives for funders and successfully delivered against the Harrow Adult Learning Strategy, Skills for Londoners and London Recovery Missions. It has designed and delivered new vocational courses for unemployed residents such as Care, Childcare and Business qualifications. The team also delivered the first level 3 qualifications in Business and Essential Digital Skills. These courses are intended for adults and has been funded for the first time (outside Further Education and sixth form colleges in Harrow). Furthermore, it supported 13 providers to continue to deliver adult learning through challenging periods to benefit Harrow's disabled residents, parents, people with ESOL needs and unemployed residents.

The quality of Learn Harrow's overall delivery (set against the Education Inspection Framework – Ofsted) has improved throughout the year with the best tutor observation grade profile achieved ever. Outcomes for our learners also improved with a 3.5% increase in achievement rates (up to 93.9% for 2020-2021 academic year). This was especially challenging as many of our learners attended online classes while having conflicting caring and childcare responsibilities.

As part of the **Healthy Schools London programme**, Public Health are providing support to enable schools achieve the Healthy Schools status. We are collating a series of case studies to share how individual schools are approaching the programme. Public Health have also launched the **Youth Health Champion** project to give young people the skills, knowledge and

confidence to promote healthy lifestyles as peer mentors and educators. Four schools and a college have been recruited to take part with up to eight students in each setting. The initiative is partnered with the Young Harrow Foundation, Compass, Brook and Harrow Horizons.

The **HAY (How Are You) Harrow survey** received over 6,000 responses from children and young people aged 9 to 18 years across the borough. The survey on their health and wellbeing was run through 25 schools and two colleges. We will use the results to further refine our support for schools alongside our existing commitment for the Healthy Schools London framework.

Looking ahead

The pandemic has impacted hard on children and young people and put education behind nationally. We will, therefore, continue our close work with schools to support learning and to sustain Harrow's high quality education system so that it continues to work for children, young people and their families.

Our ambition is that no children and young people are 'left behind' in their aged-related learning. We will progress on this by carrying forward the relevant work of the last year and in particular, assist children and young people who on the statutory assessment pathway in SEND but who may have been delayed due to the pandemic. Further investment is supporting this. We will continue to work in partnership with schools to seek a reduction in the levels of any type of school exclusion by contributing research and analysis and an adjustment in services where needed. This includes the ongoing work with the school-led and school funded working party on exclusions to reduce the rate of permanent exclusions for all groups but especially for boys from black groups.

Using the additional investment we have received, we will deliver the 2019-2024 SEND Strategy, particularly in providing more local provision for children and young people with SEND and, working with experts in local schools, providing continuing professional development and integrating the work in Early Years SEND settings with that in statutory school age SEND settings to ensure that the child's educational journey is well supported and their parents understand and contribute to these important transitions. This work with schools, early years settings, colleges and with parents and carers that ensure that we are meeting needs and signposting support where needed will remain crucial to our services. We are updating the Local Offer for SEND in conjunction with partners in health and in the community.

All children should have a good start in life in Harrow and we will support schools and early years settings in providing healthy learning environments for children and support vulnerable residents into quality employment and occupations, as well as address disproportionate educational opportunities and attainment gaps in striving that all our schools, colleges and other educational settings are rated as good or outstanding.

Everyone should be able to benefit from lifelong learning, training and enrichment opportunities in Harrow so that all people have the level of qualifications required to meet their employment aspirations.

PRIORITY: Celebrating communities and cohesion

Over the last couple of years, we have **proactively engaged with Harrow's diverse communities** especially around Covid-19, Test and Trace, and vaccination. We identified communities disproportionately affected by Covid and those at particular risk through frontline work e.g. Romanian, Tamil, Somali and other Black communities, and worked with them to co-produce accessible and linguistically appropriate resources. The community webinars were well attended across the pandemic period and the penetration into communities sustained through ongoing engagement. Use of the Harrow Covid Awareness Fund by local community and voluntary groups supported work and ensured there was regular dialogue with communities about needs and community solutions.

What started as conversations about Covid has grown into broader dialogue about health inequalities and work within the Harrow East Primary Care Network (PCN) and the Romanian and Eastern European Network has steadily built on this groundwork and is now being taken forward by the local NHS' engagement team. Recognising the shifting emphasis of health from vaccine related engagement to general awareness raising of health provisions, the outreach work looks to hear directly from the community on their priorities, how to make services more accessible and their suggestions for improvements. Work has included developing together a short survey on general health and distributing this through GP surgeries in the Harrow East PCN, with the opportunity for Romanian volunteers to join the outreach. The Romanian community is also being engaged on GP accessibility – an acknowledged health inequality within the Romanian community – to undertake a 15 Steps Audit which is a NHS toolkit where within 15 steps of entering a clinic or hospital, impressions of the place and the kind of support likely to be received are established. This toolkit will also be used by Romanian volunteers within Northwick Park Hospital's maternity services to improve experience of and attendance at antenatal and postnatal services.

Through the **Harrow Covid Awareness Fund (CAF)**, over 50 organisations have been funded to build understanding and support positive messaging on vaccinations to Harrow's diverse community. In total circa £240k of funds from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) has been used to fund community organisations to allow the council to tap into existing community networks and to build advocacy using trusted local leaders in the community. It has also allowed us to develop a regular engagement exercise and share updated information to drive the efforts around Covid and vaccinations.

Working closely with communities, community groups and partners has been critical to addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic. A coordinated approach to engaging communities through joint working has enabled production of local resources, and greater impact and reach on the ground. The pandemic has shone a light on inequalities and highlighted that much work needs to be done with some communities that are experiencing disparity in social, economic and health outcomes, such as the Romanian population which lags behind in access to health services. Through the efforts during the pandemic, we have been able to map and identify communities that we need to reach better. The impetus given to tackling inequalities by the Black Lives Matter movement has also heightened our work with communities of Black heritage. Bringing groups together on a single platform, we held two

meetings with Black heritage community leaders in 2021, with the latter one giving a significant focus on improving health inequalities, linking in with the priority to address health and social care inequality. As a result of this dialogue the council and local NHS are spending around £150k to commission ongoing engagement with these communities to reduce health inequalities.

Afghan resettlement efforts – In response to the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August 2021, the British Government evacuated thousands of locally employed staff, Afghan citizens who were at risk, and British nationals and their immediate families. The two main resettlement programmes announced by the government are the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme and Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the latter of which is yet to open. We are working with the Home Office to match evacuated Afghan families with suitable properties, and welcome, integrate and resettle them on the ARAP and ACRS schemes (when it opens). At the same time, we are also working closely with voluntary sector partners to address social and advocacy needs among those who have left bridging hotels and arrived in Harrow, given the large pre-existing Afghan population in the borough. We have already invested £70k into the voluntary sector to support this effort. The council has pledged to resettle 10 Afghan families on the ARAP/ACRS schemes and as of December 2021 we had already received three families. International events affect our communities and government policy can be fast paced and evolving, so we continue to work closely with communities to respond effectively and sensitively.

Our **Library Service** stock reflects and celebrates the diverse communities and community languages spoken in Harrow. A range of books in community languages including Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Polish, Tamil and Urdu, and Black Interest Collections are available. There is a range of diversity and inclusion titles for children and Dyslexia support stock for children. The library service celebrates key dates throughout the year, including Holocaust Memorial Day, LGBTQ+ month, Chinese New Year, Dementia Action Week, Refugee Week, Windrush Day, Srebrenica Memorial Day, Black History Month and major festivals. Harrow Arts Centre and Headstone Manor and Museum's programme of events and exhibitions also reflect the borough's diversity.

The **Making Every Contact Count (MECC)** approach encourages people to have brief conversations about health issues as part of everyday contact and, if appropriate, show people where they can get further information or support. Public Health are piloting the approach with teams including social care and library staff.

The Stop and Grow project on the Ridgeway garden site has developed for volunteers and for people with mental health conditions as a safe environment to enjoy the rewards of gardening, and meeting other people (subject to appropriate Covid-19 restrictions).

Harrow **Music Service** has established "Represent Music Network Harrow" to focus on Equality and Diversity which celebrates our communities and community cohesion. The Black History Month Schools Event run by the headteacher of Weald Rise Primary School included a competition to write and perform a rap entitled 'Harrow is the Place for Me' (a reference to Lord Kitchener's seminal calypso song about London).

In March 2019 Harrow welcomed and participated in a cultural-musical exchange with Afghanistan's only all girls' orchestra, Zohra. Harrow Council hosted their first public concert

at the Harrow Arts Centre, where the Harrow Young Musicians and Harrow Community Gospel Choir played and sang alongside the Afghan girl musicians. The concert raised £5k from ticket sales, of which half was re-invested into the Arts Centre and half went towards music education to the National Institute of Music in Kabul.

Harrow participates in the **annual London Youth Games** which provides an opportunity for females and young people with a disability to participate in a number of sports including cricket, netball, and basketball. There is also engagement with relevant organisations to encourage participation from black, Asian, and multi-ethnic young people.

Harrow's **leisure centres** run activity programmes for particular community groups, including female only and 60+ swimming sessions, 'Active Community Mondays' for older people tackling physical activity as well as isolation and loneliness. Disability programmes are also delivered including Kingfisher Swim Club, disability trampolining sessions, and disabled school sessions – pool and sports based.

Bannister Sports Centre's new 3G Artificial Grass Pitch facility which opened in May 2021 is now a hub for the '**Harrow Flexileague**', which allows Harrow's residents to have a chance to play community football and gain physical and mental health benefits by participating in a 'come & play' set up. This provides the opportunity for individuals and groups to come together and play football with other members of the community.

Learn Harrow runs a range of **courses celebrating communities** such as those dovetailed with Black History Month. Crucially, all courses will contain elements of celebrating cultures and communities and tutors are trained to promote active citizenship. Operationally this means that embedded in English courses we delivered British Values, Black Lives Matter, keeping women and girls safe and we have embedded a climate change qualification in our maths courses.

The Wealdstone Traders were assisted by the Economic Development Team to secure stage 2 funds from the GLA under the High Streets for All Challenge. They oversaw delivery of an engagement exercise termed '**Wealdstone Conversations**' with new and existing community groups to gather commitments for the area. A cultural event was also held, and the traders have grown a new willing partnership that supported another funding bid to the GLA. The Wealdstone Action Group has continued to support local community and business for example by supporting the local engagement to make sure that the installation of lights, a mural, Transport for London infrastructure and footbridge were what the local community wanted.

In relation to **community cohesion**, Harrow is a hugely diverse borough, which benefits from positive levels of community cohesion. In partnership with Harrow police we have continued to monitor community tensions and where necessary, appropriate action is taken to ensure that tensions do not escalate. The escalation of conflicts in other parts of the world can see an increase in community tensions and it remains an important part of our work to continue monitoring reaction to these events within the borough. Following national and international events the council has brought leaders from different communities together to hear key messages from the police and council and to ensure that messages of unity, community cohesion and reassurance are provided and disseminated back into communities. This has

proven to be a very helpful approach which is also used to address the blame culture which some communities within the borough experienced at the beginning of the pandemic.

Looking ahead

Harrow will continue to be a thriving, multicultural borough where we will grow community cohesion through celebrating heritage in the borough and visibly supporting our communities' continued integration and values. The relationships built through our conversations and engagement on responding to the pandemic will continue to be strengthened. We will build upon this successful model of engagement with our communities and broaden out to wider community conversations.

Hate crimes will continue to have no place in Harrow. We will make sure of this by working with Police colleagues to continue monitoring tensions and, where necessary, put in place interventions as required. We will continue to provide third party reporting arrangements for the reporting of hate crime through Stop Hate UK and promote the reporting arrangements, encouraging communities to report hate crime. We will continue our work with frontline staff, schools, colleges and other partner agencies to offer Prevent training and support individuals vulnerable to radicalisation.

Everyone should take individual and collective responsibility for building good relationships within their community and support cohesion. As a council, we will employ a diverse workforce at all levels in the organisation, to help us to understand and relate to the community we serve. We will build on our enhanced engagement and communication methods used during the pandemic to carry on the journey of developing 'trust' throughout communities.

PRIORITY: Maintaining low crime and improving community safety

Harrow remains one of the safest boroughs in London but we recognise there is still much to do to bring down crime levels and improve community safety. There are **good local partnerships** with the Police Basic Command Unit sharing intelligence and working on joint solutions with the council – particularly effective at an operational level during lockdown – and a strong partnership between the council’s Community Safety team, local Youth Justice team and Youth services who work closely together to ensure early identification and support to young people. Strong local multi agency partnerships have also developed through our Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation team including daily meetings and robust systems of information sharing and joint risk assessments and decision making.

A higher proportion of violence against women and girls is domestic abuse where the violence occurs within the context of an established relationship and the perpetrator is known. However, there has also been an increase in incidents where violence against women and girls is perpetrated by strangers where there is no history of a previous relationship. Any form of violence is a criminal offence and is a direct infringement on the right of women and girls to feel safe within their homes and wider community. The impact is profound both physically and psychologically and in the worst cases can result in the loss of life.

In direct response to this issue, the borough’s crime reduction and community safety partnership, Safer Harrow Partnership (SHP), has renewed its **commitment to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) and domestic abuse**. It has established a new sub-group to look at these issues specifically and also to improve commissioning arrangements. This group brings together multi-agency partners – the council, Probation Service, Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police and relevant health partners - to share information and take measures to make the borough’s streets and transport safer for women and girls. Their shared purpose is the identification and delivery of the sub-group’s aims and objectives; to identify themes and priorities; ensure the sharing of information and to take measures to make the borough’s streets and transport safer for women and girls. We want to create a borough where women and girls are and feel safe to live, work and spend time and a multi-agency approach increases connectivity on VAWG between agencies and develops common responses to incidents of VAWG in the borough. This approach will allow the sub-group to identify and utilise productive engagement and effective cross-partnership working.

The sub-group has already held its first meeting, looking at practical solutions for making the borough’s streets safer, and feel safer. For example, it has considered how we can continue to use the borough’s streetlighting to further increase safety and the feeling of safety for women and girls in the borough. Since the initial meeting additional partners from the health sector have been identified and will be joining the sub-group. This will create links to an initiative at Northwick Park Hospital which provides a safe space for victims of domestic abuse.

The **Autumn Nights policing plan** focuses on violence against women and girls (VAWG), safety in public spaces and street violence generally. This saw an increased presence in Harrow Town Centre on weekend nights over winter with high visibility patrols. During the winter months the council’s licensing team increased communications to continue promoting and raising awareness of initiatives like Ask for Angela and work around Safe Haven with the

Community Safety Unit. **'Ask for Angela'** is a safety initiative being rolled out to bars, clubs and other licensed businesses across London whereby people who feel unsafe, vulnerable or threatened can discreetly seek help by approaching venue staff and asking them for 'Angela'. This code-phrase indicates to staff that they need help with their situation and a trained member of staff will then look to support and assist them - this could be through reuniting them with a friend, seeing them to a taxi, or by calling venue security and/or the police.

Safe Haven was a joint operation which saw council volunteers and police on hand in Harrow Town Centre to provide a space where people could feel secure after dark, whether they needed safety advice or to keep trouble at bay. The Safe Haven nights ran over two successive weekends in late November and early December 2021. The events were well received with positive engagement with members of the community who were in Harrow Town Centre over those weekend evenings.

Stopping domestic abuse remains one of our key priorities and the council has invested further in its domestic abuse services to support victims of domestic abuse and children to access specialist support. Our Safeguarding Partnership promotes vigilance to the fact that age, gender, ethnicity and ability do not discriminate in terms of who can become a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse. It ensures all relevant sectors have access to training and awareness training and ensures early intervention and appropriate support for victims.

The Partnership has promoted initiatives such as Operation Encompass – an early notification by the police to schools about incidents of domestic abuse affecting children; and Operation Dauntless which offers support to victims following the release of perpetrators from custody. It also promotes access to specialist intervention programmes for perpetrators and has supported Safer Harrow in future commissioning arrangements for such programmes.

The **Children and Young Peoples Substance Misuse** service has been respecified and is currently out for tender. The counselling service is the cornerstone of supporting the most vulnerable children, and ensuring advice and support is well understood amongst partners is a vital component of the service.

The Community Safety Partnership's **Local Violence and Vulnerability Reduction** Action Plan sets out the multi-agency response to those at risk of or involved in violence, as well as tracking and planning responses to locations of risk and harm. Profiles of individuals and locations are recorded on ECINS software which has the ability to map out the intelligence to formulate a response and cross reference with police intelligence for an accurate picture. Since September 2021 the group has agreed a joint programme of actions to remove weapons and provide reassurance including Trading Standards initiatives (e.g. knife or corrosive substance test purchases). There will be awareness raising with licensed premises and possible warnings or fines if knives are sold illegally.

Our **New Pathways Partnership** (NPP) is a borough wide network of voluntary and community organisations, schools and statutory partners working with the council to achieve positive change for children and young people for example through implementing contextual safeguarding and early intervention as a way to combat youth crime and to bring about cultural change in family homes, schools and within the wider community.

A NPP sub-group was set up in summer 2020 and champions the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement by looking to help young people understand their rights and ensure the voice of the service users is heard when interventions to reduce the number of young people involved in crime is implemented. The BLM pilot project was developed as a direct response to the BLM movement and the growing number of young black boys entering the criminal justice system. The programme commissioned projects which provide diversionary pathways for children who are at risk of exclusion, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and to upskill and build capacity in parents within the Black African and Afro-Caribbean communities:

- **Reducing school exclusions in Black Caribbean boys:** The council commissioned the Josh Hanson Charitable Trust and Watford Football Club Trust to complement existing work in Harrow schools that provide activities in resilience building and diversionary activities specifically aimed at young Black Afro-Caribbean boys aged between 10-18. The programme is delivered through arts intervention and meaningful mentoring support.
- **Parenting programme:** Ignite Youth and the Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations have created a bespoke programme to develop parent/carer champions within the Black African and Afro-Caribbean communities. The role of the champions is to educate, support and signpost other parents and carers on a range of issues and systems such as child sexual and criminal exploitation, and school exclusions. As a result, parents are empowered and have opportunities to shape their own lives and communities. The Parent Champions will engage directly with 100 parents in the community, while also working with three secondary schools and two primary schools, reaching a further 120 parents across 20 bespoke engagement sessions. The programme focusses on three target areas - South Harrow, Wealdstone and Edgware – which are hotspots for gang activity/youth violence.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation:** The WISH Centre supports Black British and Mixed Heritage girls aged 10-18 who have been or are at high risk of ongoing CSE, through helping them overcome the impact of grooming, sexual exploitation and trauma as well as developing positive coping skills, to prevent and reduce their risk of exclusion and improve their choices. Young black girls are referred via various agencies to take part in weekly peer support groups and one to one therapy that will help young people cope.

As part of the council's **HomeSafe** programme, we have been installing improved security measures in council housing estates/blocks. These include secure doors with fob based entry systems, improved lighting, and lockable bin sheds.

Safeguarding adults remains a priority and duty. Last year was a very busy year with 2,621 referrals raising concerns about people with care/support needs who may be being abused. The data for 2020-2021 shows the same picture as it has in previous years i.e. the person most likely to be abused in Harrow (and nationally) is older, female and living in her own home. In contrast, the numbers of safeguarding concerns reported for care homes fell in the Covid period which is unsurprising as registered managers were primarily focused on dealing with Covid related issues and less visitors were accessing the residents. The full year data supports the anecdotal experience of the safeguarding teams that incidents of domestic abuse had increased (up by 284% from the previous year). Most referrals came from health and the police, while only 4% were self-referrals or from family members. The new strategic plan for the Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board (for 2021–2024) includes actions to look further into these issues and also the risks for older people living in their own home.

The **safeguarding conference** in 2020 focused on the theme of modern slavery (titled 'Invisible Chains') and follow up evaluation shows that over 70% of delegates provided evidence later in the year of how the learning had not only influenced their practice, but also raised their level of alertness to this crime in their personal activities too.

Looking ahead

Our Community Safety and Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy will be a key driver in maintaining low levels of crime in the borough and the delivery of community safety across the borough and align with the London Mayor's priorities. We have recently represented Harrow's views on the Mayor's new Police and Crime Plan and will make sure our priorities align together.

As a partnership, Safer Harrow will focus on high volume crimes such as burglary, non-domestic violence with injury, anti-social behaviour and motor vehicle crime. The pandemic has seen the nature of some crimes change and we will continue to tailor approaches to address these most effectively. Addressing fear of crime and supporting victims is also critical.

We will also focus on high harm crimes in youth violence, weapon-based crime, vulnerability and exploitation; modern slavery; domestic and sexual abuse; violence against women and girls; drug and alcohol misuse; and extremism and hate crime. Tackling these will need strong local partnerships between various agencies to ensure the early support and intervention services are in place, the appropriate education and prevention is available, policing and enforcement is robust and support and recovery helps victims of crime.

The new VAWG sub-group has developed an action plan which sets out a local response to violence against women and girls and also links to the Metropolitan Police's action plan. Going forward, the sub-group's focus will be the local delivery of the action plan, devising an internal VAWG strategy and considering ways to enable women and girls from all communities to share or report experiences in safe spaces.

To increase the understanding of what women and girls are thinking and feeling in terms of their safety, we are setting up a listening event. Insight on how this was done in Brent will shape the approach to this work and Harrow Council will work with the Young Harrow Foundation to identify participants who can provide the perspective of young women in the borough.

Everyone in the borough should feel safe within the borough and our town centres throughout the day and at night. Children and young people should be able to grow up safely and without fear of abuse or exploitation.

A modern and responsive council

As an organisation, we are constantly challenging ourselves to find ways of working differently, to make sure in delivering our council services and supporting our communities, we are putting our residents and customers first. At the very core of our programme of **'Modernising How We Work'** are our people - our biggest and most valuable asset.

Our focus is therefore on supporting our people at every level, in every service and job role by providing the framework, opportunity and capability to be able to adopt modern ways of working. We are doing this by:

- Developing a modern service redesign built around the customer, co-created through staff collaboration and consultation and supported by the latest technology and processes to deliver exceptional services that will continuously improve and innovate.
- Creating an agile working model that allows staff to work more flexibly either from home or in modern working environments that foster collaboration and socialisation in new ways of working, supported by the latest IT equipment and tools. This includes a review of our council estate based on our service needs and collaboration space opportunities and the development of Forward Drive as the exemplar of an agile working destination.
- Introducing the latest technology and processes to enable the simplification of administration tasks, creation of better tools for improved decision making, improving our ability to manage performance and the creation of personal self-service.
- Creating a modern culture that not only encourages best practice and a 'one council' mentality that embraces change and innovation, while building an agile workforce by introducing policies and procedures that supports agile working. We want to build our managers' capabilities and capacity whilst engendering an appreciation of the openness, transparency and diversity of our cultural mix and cultivate an environment that values differences, fairness and inclusion - helping everyone to realise their worth in the organisation and the community they serve.

Our primary responsibility is therefore to make a difference to the working lives of our staff by creating and delivering the best conditions, opportunities, technology, valued culture and working environments. This will enable them to fulfil their own potential in delivering our services and support, by putting the people of Harrow first.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

There has never been more urgency around addressing inequality. The council's ambition is to make sure that its workforce is representative of the community it serves at all levels of the organisation. The council's work around equality, diversity and inclusion is aimed at ensuring the needs of all staff are met, irrespective of their background. The strategic approach on equality, diversity and inclusion is rooted in the need to understand the issues of all staff in their own specific way, and in doing so, work on this agenda begins with the pressing issue of the day - addressing racial inequality in the workplace. While current work focuses primarily on race and ethnicity, the strategic approach that we have taken acts as a framework that will underpin the council's forthcoming Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which will be produced in early 2022.

Since the summer of 2020, the council has been examining its role as an employer, actively engaging with staff to understand their experiences and the challenges they face and looked closely at workforce data to examine gaps, bottlenecks and glass ceilings in the organisation. This evidence has given us groundbreaking insight into our organisation, which for the first time, has helped us shape a strategy around race equality that is rooted in evidence and produced in collaboration with staff. The race action plan that was launched in November 2021 sets out the council's strategic vision around race equality, launching a series of new corporate objectives for the organisation, which will ensure policies and practices are fair and equitable for all staff in order to promote a workforce that is inclusive and accessible for everyone. The high-level approach centres around:

- Creating safe spaces
- Changing the organisation's culture and behaviour through leadership, training, and development
- Recruitment and Retention

In taking some of its work forward on race equality, the council has already made a number of key investments since last year, including:

- Establishing a Sponsor for work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) – this is the Chief Executive
- Establishing the council's first ever Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion team
- Signing the Race at Work Charter as a clear commitment towards race equality
- Launching a series of new Diversity Talent Programmes for staff across all grades
- A new renewed commitment towards Apprenticeships for staff seeking to access further skills and training
- Launching new mandatory EDI and anti-racism training for all staff
- Creating a new Dignity and Respect at Work Policy
- Publishing a new Zero Tolerance Statement aimed at staff and all stakeholders
- A review of recruitment practices, which builds equality and inclusion into the process from start to end
- Publishing a Managers' Guidance to help staff understand their role on this agenda

These achievements are only the start of the council's commitment towards building a culture of diversity and inclusivity, which not only reflects Harrow's local population, but ensures that all protected groups are taken along our ambitious journey to create an equal and equitable future for all our staff.

Customer services

In response to the Covid pandemic, our Customer Services (Access Harrow) and Careline continued to provide access to key services alongside a seven-day Covid hotline and outbound telephone support to the 24,000 clinically extremely vulnerable residents. Web content and easy-to-use web forms were created by the Digital team to support this. The council's channel shift programme continues to excel with over 95% of transactions now carried out via self-service.

In improving our customer services and modernising how the council interacts with residents and service users, we have embarked on a series of Whole Service Reviews, to improve both internal and external facing services. As part of this, we are digging deep ('discovery

process') into a range of services, further streamlining and digitalising council processes, and increasing levels of self-service for both staff and residents.

Next steps

We are committed to engaging with more people in informing the Borough Plan. This will allow us to hear feedback about the priorities, gather intelligence and support for developing the actions to deliver our priorities and engage others to take lead roles in delivering these changes within the borough. This engagement will be most insightful if it is ongoing rather than a one-off process and allows everyone who wants to be involved to have their say. As such, we are committed to planning what this could look like and having these conversations once we are on the other side of the pandemic. We will be developing a partner engagement plan and a resident engagement plan, providing opportunities for more people to contribute towards the focusing and delivery of our shared aspirations for Harrow.

As our review of achievements over the last couple of years has demonstrated, much of what we seek to achieve requires us to work in partnership – our local response to the pandemic has very much highlighted the value of collaboration and shared purpose.

To ensure that work continues throughout our engagement period, we are creating a short-term delivery plan for the council's contributions, focused on delivery of the priorities and objectives we are consulting on. This provides an opportunity to focus and deliver on some of the shorter-term challenges so that we are in a stronger position to deliver against the longer term ambitions.

Future Intentions - recap

Below we recap our future intentions under each priority area of the Borough Plan.

Improving the environment and addressing climate change

We will continue to make sure Harrow is an attractive and healthy environment with improved streets, enhanced parks and accessible open spaces, providing relaxing recreation, supporting sport and active travel opportunities for all. We will do this by encouraging active travel and creating a modal shift in favour of sustainable transport – walking and cycling – and address the over reliance on cars to reduce the carbon footprint, reduce pollution and improve health. We will continue to improve our access to clean air and water, and the other ecosystem services that are essential for us to all live healthy lives, reduce residual waste and increase recycling, and support equitable access to sport and physical activity across Harrow. Green spaces enable exercise and the reduction of carbon footprints.

We will play our part in implementing London Council's Retrofit London Action Plan by retrofitting all council housing. Our ambition for high quality and energy efficient housing will also address fuel poverty, carbon emissions and heat loss causing global warming.

Our commitment to be a carbon neutral borough by 2030 remains and we will make sure that the way we address climate change does not disproportionately impact on the poorest and most vulnerable in society and builds a more sustainable borough.

Deploying our Priority Enforcement Team to target priority environmental issues and delivering quick results to residents is a key area we will be improving in 2022. By targeting our enforcement and engagement efforts on an area-by-area basis, we can focus on the enforcement issues that matter most to specific areas and communities.

We will continue to target fly tipping - fly tipping needs to be made socially unacceptable across all parts of the borough. Publicity and communications will be used to educate the public to dispose of their waste correctly and also focus on the fact that the continual clearance of the fly tip is a cost borne by the public purse. We will continue to progress the strategy developed to address the fly tipping hot spot areas and we continue to adopt a zero tolerance approach with offenders.

We will also continue to promote the ways in which residents and councillors can report fly tipping to the council and how best to relay information to our Priority Enforcement Teams, so that we not only work with our communities to tackle the issue that blights our borough but also encourage information sharing so we can tackle the issue.

Tackling poverty and inequality

We will strive to level up the disproportionate impact (including health, economic and social) on communities of Covid-19 and the issues raised by the Black Lives Matters movement across all protected characteristics in supporting the levelling up of all communities, across for example race, ethnicity, gender and disability. Our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

Strategy will develop the appropriate actions within the council and communities to deliver on this ambition.

By understanding health and wellbeing risks and ensuring children have the best start in life, we will reduce the gap in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between people in the most affluent and the most deprived parts of the borough. We will continue our collaboration with key voluntary partners such as the Young Harrow Foundation to create and advance opportunities for young people and tackle child poverty – looking at key socio-economic disparities by tackling the root causes of inequality and poverty, and creating new opportunities for skill development and employability and investing in a range of grassroots activities of partner organisations, who will be at the centre of actions to secure better paid, sustainable employment and targeted skill creation. We will empower young people and use data to address specific needs and/or skills shortages in the community, and make sure we include the voice of young people in designing the most suitable programmes to progress. We will ensure every child has a safe, suitable home and child poverty is addressed via initiatives set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Everyone should live in a home suitable for their needs and to enable this we will look to eradicate homelessness and overcrowding, improve the living standards of residents and tackle income inequality. We want all people wanting to work to have a job that pays above London Living Wage and be employed on a contract that meets their requirements, to live in households free of unsustainable debt. To do this this we will address high debt levels in the borough and the stress this causes, and seek to build a culture of responsibility and compliance with local taxes.

No-one in the borough should be left behind and excluded from the transition to digital ways of working, studying or engaging with the community. We will continue to enable digital inclusion and reduce digital exclusion across the borough by improving the digital infrastructure, broadband connectivity and access to equipment to provide businesses and residents with a more equitable access to digital technology. We will invest in digital skills creation through training programmes for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents and migrant communities and collaborate with partner organisations to ensure there is no increase in social exclusion or reduced access to employment opportunities. We will also increase levels of digital self-service to the council and make sure council resources are utilised to support those most in need.

Building homes and infrastructure

The Harrow Strategic Development Partnership will continue to deliver much of our regeneration programme and we anticipate a planning application for the Byron site in spring 2022 and submissions for the other sites in the HSDP in the summer. The council will be moving offices and work will begin at the Milton Road site in early spring 2022, with the council handing over the existing Civic Centre to the HSDP in October.

We will use our regeneration programme, like the development at Grange Farm, to improve the quality as well as number of homes available, striving for everyone to have quality, energy efficient and digitally-enabled homes in a thriving community. We also want neighbourhoods

that are integrated and well connected to thriving district centres by strong transport links and connections that enable people to travel to their destination sustainably and safely.

We want everyone in Harrow to be able to live in the right size and tenure of home to meet their needs and expectations. To do this we must continue to address overcrowding, lack of social housing and affordability challenges, as well as ensure that there is sufficient genuinely affordable housing for key workers and other Harrow residents who cannot afford to buy/rent on the open market. Our work with private landlords will be critical to this ambition.

Addressing health and social care inequality

Working together with NHS colleagues, we will develop a population health management approach to identifying health and wellbeing needs and inequalities, making sure that data is shared appropriately to inform the development of plans across health and social care pathways and a collaborative approach. This will help us to develop a mutual understanding of the causes of ill health and coordinate care.

We need to address the large gap in health inequalities between our residents from the least to the most deprived wards and as highlighted by Covid, increase the healthy life expectancy for all, particularly those in disadvantage, improve physical activity and ensure children experience a healthy start to life with good diet and appropriate exercise, as well as supporting families to access early support where required, enabling them to be more self-sufficient and rely less on public services.

Following our engagement in 2021 with community leaders in Harrow's Black communities on initially Covid and then more broadly health inequalities, we have recently commissioned Voluntary Action Harrow to run an Engagement Commission as the next step to our conversations about wider health issues. This will follow up some of the concerns and insight shared by the community leaders and build on the what the data has shown us around health inequalities, for example on weight management, hypertension and diabetes.

We will progress to an integrated reablement service that builds on the independent discharge hubs and improve the reablement offer within the structures already in place. The integrated model transforms the way in which intermediate care and reablement are delivered by joining the offers, bringing together teams, introducing shared information and systems, and improving processes, to deliver a truly person-centered experience of support for the citizens of Harrow.

We will further integrate our strength-based approach with our health partners that enables citizens to achieve clear outcomes when using our in-house provider services, and reprofile provision to deliver a fit-for-purpose, integrated and holistic whole life strength-based service. We will ensure the whole life Learning Disability and Autism Strategy, which covers learning disability and autism separately but under one holistic strategy, promotes integration by placing key decision making within an integrated arena. This approach has been agreed across agencies and stakeholders and will ensure that there is an integrated health and social care response to managing the demand upon learning disability services and to the needs of its cohort of citizens. We will equip our workforce with the skills and awareness to deliver these great outcomes for our citizens.

Thriving economy

Harrow's new Economic Strategy will help drive forward the economic recovery from Covid whilst the adult learning and further education services across the borough will support delivery of the need to raise the skill levels of many adults within the borough to enable them to meet their earnings and employment aspirations. We need employment opportunities to match skills available within the borough and encourage entrepreneurship so that micro, small and medium sized enterprises can grow sustainably in Harrow.

We are committed to investing in programmes that foster growth of the local economy and ensure long-term, sustainable economic advancement of individuals and businesses. We will build on the support and encouragement we have provided in distributing a number of grants as an emergency response to the pandemic. We will do this by nurturing the budding knowledge economy in the borough (predominantly made of micro businesses); invest in key sectors that generate growth in Harrow (information technology, professional, construction and creative industries) and secure inward and outward investment, supporting residents in finding a job and developing new skills, and building on links with education and training providers.

We will cultivate vibrant town centres and district centres as commercial hubs and connect communities by having borough wide Full Fibre availability (1GB) to match the London average over the 3-year period from September 2021 to September 2024.

We will continue to support local businesses to recruit young people into apprenticeships and employment, as well as create apprenticeship opportunities within our own workforce.

Sustaining quality education and training

The pandemic has impacted hard on children and young people and put education behind nationally. We will, therefore, continue our close work with schools to support learning and to sustain Harrow's high quality education system so that it continues to work for children, young people and their families.

Our ambition is that no children and young people are 'left behind' in their aged-related learning. We will progress on this by carrying forward the relevant work of the last year and in particular, assist children and young people who on the statutory assessment pathway in SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) but who may have been delayed due to the pandemic. Further investment is supporting this. We will continue to work in partnership with schools to seek a reduction in the levels of any type of school exclusion by contributing research and analysis and an adjustment in services where needed. This includes the ongoing work with the school-led and school funded working party on exclusions to reduce the rate of permanent exclusions for all groups but especially for boys from black groups.

Using the additional investment we have received, we will deliver the 2019-2024 SEND Strategy, particularly in providing more local provision for children and young people with SEND and, working with experts in local schools, providing continuing professional development and integrating the work in Early Years SEND settings with that in statutory

school age SEND settings to ensure that the child's educational journey is well supported and their parents understand and contribute to these important transitions. This work with schools, early years settings, colleges and with parents and carers that ensure that we are meeting needs and signposting support where needed will remain crucial to our services. We are updating the Local Offer for SEND in conjunction with partners in health and in the community.

All children should have a good start in life in Harrow and we will support schools and early years settings in providing healthy learning environments for children and support vulnerable residents into quality employment and occupations, as well as address disproportionate educational opportunities and attainment gaps in striving that all our schools, colleges and other educational settings are rated as good or outstanding.

Everyone should be able to benefit from lifelong learning, training and enrichment opportunities in Harrow so that all people have the level of qualifications required to meet their employment aspirations.

Celebrating communities and cohesion

Harrow will continue to be a thriving, multicultural borough where we will grow community cohesion through celebrating heritage in the borough and visibly supporting our communities' continued integration and values. The relationships built through our conversations and engagement on responding to the pandemic will continue to be strengthened. We will build upon this successful model of engagement with our communities and broaden out to wider community conversations.

Hate crimes will continue to have no place in Harrow. We will make sure of this by working with Police colleagues to continue monitoring tensions and, where necessary, put in place interventions as required. We will continue to provide third party reporting arrangements for the reporting of hate crime through Stop Hate UK and promote the reporting arrangements, encouraging communities to report hate crime. We will continue our work with frontline staff, schools, colleges and other partner agencies to offer Prevent training and support individuals vulnerable to radicalisation.

Everyone should take individual and collective responsibility for building good relationships within their community and support cohesion. As a council, we will employ a diverse workforce at all levels in the organisation, to help us to understand and relate to the community we serve. We will build on our enhanced engagement and communication methods used during the pandemic to carry on the journey of developing 'trust' throughout communities.

Maintaining low crime and improving community safety

Our Community Safety and Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy will be a key driver in maintaining low levels of crime in the borough and the delivery of community safety across the borough and align with the London Mayor's priorities. We have recently represented Harrow's views on the Mayor's new Police and Crime Plan and will make sure our priorities align together.

As a partnership, Safer Harrow will focus on high volume crimes such as burglary, non-domestic violence with injury, anti-social behaviour and motor vehicle crime. The pandemic has seen the nature of some crimes change and we will continue to tailor approaches to address these most effectively. Addressing fear of crime and supporting victims is also critical.

We will also focus on high harm crimes in youth violence, weapon-based crime, vulnerability and exploitation; modern slavery; domestic and sexual abuse; violence against women and girls; drug and alcohol misuse; and extremism and hate crime. Tackling these will need strong local partnerships between various agencies to ensure the early support and intervention services are in place, the appropriate education and prevention is available, policing and enforcement is robust and support and recovery helps victims of crime.

The new VAWG sub-group has developed an action plan which sets out a local response to violence against women and girls and also links to the Metropolitan Police's action plan. Going forward, the sub-group's focus will be the local delivery of the action plan, devising an internal VAWG strategy and considering ways to enable women and girls from all communities to share or report experiences in safe spaces.

To increase the understanding of what women and girls are thinking and feeling in terms of their safety, we are setting up a listening event. Insight on how this was done in Brent will shape the approach to this work and Harrow Council will work with the Young Harrow Foundation to identify participants who can provide the perspective of young women in the borough.

Everyone in the borough should feel safe within the borough and our town centres throughout the day and at night. Children and young people should be able to grow up safely and without fear of abuse or exploitation.