

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	24 May 2022
Subject:	Resetting the Council's Vision and Priorities: Putting Residents First
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officers:	Sean Harriss, Chief Executive
Portfolio Holder:	Paul Osborn, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategy
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: A New Council Vision – Putting Residents First

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Following the change in Administration, this report sets out the intentions to move to a new vision: Putting Residents First. As part of the suite of reports that are also on the agenda as part of this first Cabinet under the new Administration, this report highlights the change in emphasis and direction of Travel of the Council, and signals that a new Corporate Plan will come forward for endorsement in due course which will encompass all the aspects of the new vision: Putting Residents First.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to instruct Officers to:

1. Prepare a new Corporate Plan to formally change the vision of the Council to 'Putting Residents First';
2. Ensure the new vision underpins ongoing service delivery and all proposals to members for decision,
3. Re-establish the strategic performance framework and quarterly reviews, and
4. Commence work on redesigning the Council logo, in order to create better brand awareness with residents of the Council and its services, at zero or negligible additional cost to the Council and bring back ideas to Cabinet for decision.

Reason: (for recommendations)

To set out the intention to change the Council's Vision, Corporate Priorities and its logo.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report outlines the Council's intention to change its vision and Corporate Priorities, and to commission work to redesign the Council's logo.

2.0 Options considered

- 2.1 To do nothing and rely on the existing policy framework and logo would not suffice as the Administration wishes to change direction from the latest approved Borough Plan (agreed by Council in February 2022). The strategic performance framework was suspended during the pandemic, so as the Council has moved out of the emergency situation it is right that it formally brings back the performance framework.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Council approves a Corporate Plan every year to set the overall policy framework for the Council. Following the local elections of 5th May 2022, and the change of Administration, there is an intention to now change the vision and corporate priorities of the Council. To enable this, the Council would need to approve a new Corporate Plan, so this report sets out the intention to do this under the new vision of 'Putting Residents First'.
- 3.2 This Cabinet agenda also has a number of other reports on it, which signal the intention to change direction on a number of areas, by the commissioning of work to develop either new or different approaches to those specific areas of Council delivery, including planning policy, parking and the possible introduction of a Harrow Card. All of these reports set out a new 'Putting Residents First' approach.
- 3.3 In addition, the Administration also wish to change the Council logo to a more recognisable brand, at zero or negligible additional cost, that will improve resident recognition of the services the Council delivers. The initial plans for this will be to work with education partners to offer students the opportunity to develop a new logo, based on an agreed design brief. This potentially could be a simplified version of the Crest the Council has used in the past.

4.0 Current situation

- 4.1 The Council approved its last Borough Plan (Corporate Plan) in February 2022.

5.0 Why a change is needed

- 5.1 Following the local elections in May 2022, the new Administration have set out that they want to change the vision of the Council to 'Putting Residents First'. In order to do this formally, a new Corporate Plan will need to be developed and approved by Council. Therefore, in order to signal this intention, this report sets out what this means through Appendix 1, and also supports the other reports on this Cabinet agenda by overlaying the intended move to this new vision.

6.0 Proposed action

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Council develops a new Corporate Plan with the overarching vision of 'Putting Residents First'.
- 6.2 It is also proposed that the Council commissions local partners, namely Harrow College and/or the University of Westminster, to support the redesign of the Council's logo by enabling students to do this through a competition. The winner will be able to use the design to add to their overall portfolio of work, whilst the Council will be able to get a new, professionally developed logo, at zero or negligible additional cost to the Council.

7.0 Risk Management Implications

7.1 A full risk management implications assessment will accompany any subsequent Cabinet report on the redeveloped Corporate Plan where appropriate.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications as part of this report.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 The preparations of a new Corporate Plan will be undertaken within current resources.

9.2 The intention to work with partners, such as the local college and university to enable students to support the redesign of the logo will be at a zero-cost, as any logo that is chosen from this process would then provide for a commissioned project within that students' portfolio, which will be of significant benefit when seeking work. There is therefore benefit to all with no costs. The digital roll out of the new logo will also be zero cost, and any roll out physically onto buildings, signage and vehicles would only take place as part of the natural replacement cycle when the new logo is chosen.

10.0 Council Priorities

10.1 As this report sets out the intention to change the Council vision and priorities, a new set of Corporate Priorities will come to Cabinet and Council for endorsement in due course as part of a new Corporate Plan.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Dawn Calvert

Signed by the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 17th May 2022

Statutory Officer: Hugh Peart

Signed by the Monitoring Officer

Date: 17th May 2022

Chief Officer: Sean Harriss
Signed off by the Chief Executive

Date: 16th May 2022

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Alex Dewsnap, alex.dewsnap@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Appendix 1: A New Council Vision – Putting Residents First

Putting Residents First

Following the Local Election result, the Council intends to change its vision to ‘Put Residents First’ through a refreshed Corporate Plan. This means that all actions and service delivery will be anchored to this new vision, whether it be handling customer enquiries, cleaning the streets or new initiatives; everything should be able to show that residents are at the heart of the way we do things. The following five pledges are good examples of what this new vision of ‘Putting Residents First’ will mean for the Council and for residents:

- Review of Regeneration Priorities and Plans;
- One-hour Free Parking;
- Fly-tipping and street cleaning, with free bulky waste collections;
- Enforcement – Houses of Multiple Occupation, Beds in Sheds and Planning;
- Treat residents and business as valued customers.

Regeneration

The Council has a critical role in place shaping, ensuring that the homes built meet the needs of current and future communities, whilst making sure that in such developments the infrastructure built supports the need of residents and the community. With the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership, and the key sites in the borough targeted for development there is a clear opportunity to ensure that community need is met by building the right homes in the right places. The nature of development is also incredibly important to our residents, which is why we are also bringing to this Cabinet meeting a report setting out the proposal to review the Council’s planning policies, so that residents’ needs and concerns become central to the way development will be carried out in the future.

Parking

Although there is a need to recognise the importance of shifting to more sustainable modes of transport, the use of the car is still an important need for residents. One-hour free parking will not only support residents going about their daily business, but also support our district shopping centres allowing residents to conveniently go to and from local shops, keeping the Harrow Pound in Harrow. Again, a report at this Cabinet meeting proposes to start the development of a proposal for how one-hour free parking can be enabled in the borough.

The Harrow Card

Other Councils have successfully implemented a residents’ card, which offers local discounts (including parking), helping to incentivise residents to spend their hard-earned down time (and money) in Harrow, be it shopping, eating in restaurants, or using the many leisure facilities in the borough. Again, as part of this Cabinet meeting it is proposed to instruct officers to develop a business case to consider bringing such a card into Harrow, and in doing so shape the offers and deals around the needs of our residents.

Flytipping, bulky waste, street cleaning

The state of the place is one of the most important things to our residents. We want people to step out from their front doors and feel pride in the cleanliness of their neighbourhood, with clean streets and no unsightly fly tips. We want to support those residents that want to do the right thing with services that allow quick and efficient removal of waste or ease of access to our Waste and Recycling Centre. For those few that want to fly tip and break the rules, which also includes people coming to Harrow and dumping rubbish, we will improve our enforcement approach and make examples of those we successfully prosecute.

Treat residents and business as valued customers

Over the coming months we will set out more of our specific priorities and plans to put residents first through a refreshed Corporate Plan, and treating them and all our many and diverse businesses as valued customers. We will ensure that we reduce bureaucracy, make processes simple and straight forward, and when we say we will do something we will do it quickly and to the requisite quality. We will also treat our voluntary and community sector partners in the same way, again ensuring we make the interactions as seamless as possible, be that leasing out one of our buildings, or the payment of grants.

A key priority is to create a positive customer experience when dealing with the Council, and improve its responsiveness to residents, businesses and other partners.

We are also proposing to carry out a review of our logo, so that residents get better recognition of the high-quality services the Council delivers. We intend to ask partners to help with this so that any changes are at zero extra cost to residents.

For many residents, their interactions with the Council are through the services provided by the Place Directorate like our parks and open spaces, refuse collection and the cleanliness of our streets. However, our most vulnerable residents are supported by the People's Directorate through such areas as Adults and Children's Social Care and Children with Special Needs. It is important that we also treat these more vulnerable residents with the care and respect they need and deserve and recognise that as a Council the majority of our spend goes towards delivering high quality services to these cohorts of residents.

Value for Money

It is important that residents feel that the Council offers good value for money, especially with the current challenges around cost of living. In Putting Residents First, ensuring that every pound the Council spends adds value is vital, so that inefficiencies can be reduced and the experience of residents is enhanced, be that through better use of digital technology or changes to service delivery methodologies. Where there is a need to lobby the Government for a better deal for residents, again, the Council will lead this, so that residents ultimately gain from such actions.

Next Steps

In due course a new Corporate Plan will be put to Cabinet and Council to replace the current Borough Plan and its priorities, but for now all new plans, initiatives and services should start to align and support 'Putting Residents First'.