

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	15 th February 2007
Subject:	Residents' Information Pack
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Hugh Peart, Director of Legal & Governance Services
Portfolio Holder:	Legal Services and Issues facing Young People
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Report considered by the Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee Appendix B – Reference from the Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report introduces the Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee's report on Residents' Information Packs and seeks Cabinet's guidance on how the issue should be progressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Cabinet is requested to indicate which of the following three ways suggested to progress the matter it wishes to endorse:-

1. To note the report but not progress any of the ideas at present given the Council's financial position; or
2. To request Access Harrow, the Communications Unit and Web Refresh

- Project to consider and implement those ideas which can be effected within anticipated resources and agreed work plans; or
3. Request a further report on the resources required to implement the recommendations of Scrutiny Panel so that final decisions can be made.

REASON:

In accordance with the Overview & Scrutiny Rules, Cabinet must consider reports produced by the Committee or one of its sub-committees. Depending on which of the 3 options outlined above is chosen, Cabinet will need to justify the reason for its decision.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

The report considered by the Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 25th September 2006 is attached at Appendix A and is self-explanatory. It contains a series of recommendations, many of which have significant resource implications.

The report notes the wide variety of services available to Harrow residents, but notes that there is no single source of information about them.

The focus of the Scrutiny Review was to determine whether the Council should provide a single, paper or web-based information service. The Scrutiny Panel recognised that some of the recommendations involved significant expenditure, but advised that this was necessary so that residents could access appropriate services, and build strong communities.

The review made the following recommendations:

- There is a need for a single source of key information about the borough and services available within it, in the form of a web based 'information pack';
- Such a pack should be developed with voluntary groups which should be featured within it, and should take account of those with disabilities, and those for whom English is not their first language;
- The pack should contain information about the NHS, police, education & central government;
- The pack should be developed as part of the Council's strategy for communication with residents;
- Duplication of content with other Council publications should be avoided;
- Local Information should be provided to residents via GIS, and should reflect local needs, and include the transactional details most people need;
- A business plan should be commissioned to examine the possible revenue and costs of the pack;
- Limited advertising to be featured in any hard copy leaflet;
- A two-tier approach should marry hard copy information with web based information;
- The feasibility of providing ward based hard copy information should be explored;

- Hard copy and web based information packs should be resourced & implemented by Access Harrow in consultation with the Communications Team; and
- Any hard copy leaflet should be made available to all residents, and to new residents as they move in.

Way Forward/Options considered

There would seem to be 3 ways forward:

1. To note the report but not progress any of the ideas at present given the Council's financial position; or
2. To request Access Harrow, the Communications Unit and Web Refresh Project to consider and implement those ideas which can be effected within anticipated resources and agreed work plans; or
3. Request a further report on the resources required to implement the recommendations of Scrutiny Panel so that final decisions can be made.

Equalities Impact consideration

Any improvement in the provision of information to residents is likely to have a positive impact in minority communities, provided it is in a format, style and language that is accessible.

Current KPI's and Likely impact of decision on KPI's

There are no current KPIs that directly concern the provision of information to residents. However, residents' perceptions of how well informed they feel about the Council are measured in both the mandatory, three-yearly, Best Value Performance Indicator survey and the Council's own annual Quality of Life survey. There is evidence from social researchers of a link between feeling well informed by the Council and feeling more satisfied with its performance. The latter is measured in BVPI 3 (general satisfaction with services) and a number of service-specific indicators, some of which are used in CPA. Improved information for residents is therefore likely to have an indirect but positive effect on these KPIs.

BVPI 3	2003/04	2006/07
Overall, how well informed do you think your Council keep residents about the services and benefits it provides.	45%	42%
	44%	35%

Community Safety (s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998)

There is a Multi-Agency Forum on Racial Harassment Protocol for the Exchange of Information with Third Party Reporting sites and A Victim Support Pack.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

Chief Finance Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name Myfanwy Barrett.....
		Date: 31 January 2007.....
Monitoring Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name: Hugh Peart.....
		Date: ...31 January 2007

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: Hugh Peart, Director of Legal & Governance Services 020 8424 1287

Background Papers: None

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	NO
2.	Corporate Priorities	NO
3.	Manifesto Pledge Reference Number	N/A