

# Harrow Council Corporate Plan 2007 - 10

## **Harrow: Cosmopolitan, Confident, Cohesive**

This version of the Corporate Plan has been approved by Cabinet but is still subject to amendment and improvement pending consideration by full Council on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2007



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## Foreword – by the Leader of the Council

This plan looks forward with confidence at the ambitious set of priorities on which we intend to make progress in this year (2007/08) and looks back with considerable pride at some of our achievements in our first year in office.

Our strong partnering relationships are critical to what we have achieved and what we plan to achieve going forward. We continue to work successfully with the Police, The Primary Care Trust, the business community, higher and further education and the voluntary and community sector to deliver our shared commitments in the Sustainable Community Plan, which is the long term vision for Harrow as a borough.

Despite a difficult financial climate we have continued to achieve some notable successes and provide some very high quality services. We have made our Cabinet more accountable to our residents and have run a programme of Open Meetings to listen to questions and your concerns. Our Prosperity Action Teams allow us directly to address local priorities, quickly. Our Contact Centre and One Stop Shop improved the way in which the Council receives and responds to enquiries. Our Libraries Service achieved the joint highest score in London against the Library

Association's standards. Our schools' examination results continue to be outstanding and amongst the best in the capital. Our Benefits Service maintained its maximum 4 star rating. Addressing residents' fear of crime has been one of our key priorities and, with the Police, we have launched safer neighbourhood teams across the Borough, and our own Borough Beat scheme, on which Harrow leads London, to put more officers on the beat. We have also increased the number of Third Party Reporting sites for reporting crimes.

Looking forward, the difficult financial climate will be with us for some time. We have updated our long-term vision for the Council, at the same time as being clear on our short and medium term priorities. Our vision is to 'be recognised as one of the best London Councils by 2012 in a Borough that is cosmopolitan, confident and cohesive.

The most distinctive feature of Harrow is the diversity of our community. A majority of residents are from a minority ethnic background and the Borough is the most religiously diverse in England. The particular needs of our communities are at the heart of our planning for this year and beyond. We aim to celebrate what we have in common and capitalise on our diversity. We are preparing a Community

Development Strategy which will show how the Council can help communities identify and work towards local improvement. We continue to work to improve Access Harrow. Improving the satisfaction of our customers is our top priority this year. We will continue to increase levels of recycling across the Borough. We are looking to build 6 new children's centres and have secured funding for our new Borough wide sixth form collegiate. We are looking to begin work on performance, exhibition and library space at Gayton Road. Our work on the town centre gets under way with a £3m investment programme over the next 3 years. We also have projects to reduce congestion such as work on Petts Hill bridge and reopening Wealdstone High Street.

Going into 2007/08, there are a number of good reasons for optimism. The Council's financial position, although still of concern, is being steadily brought under control, and a new Chief Executive has been appointed who took up his duties in April. The combination of increasing managerial capacity and financial certainty suggests that, although there is still much work to be done, the conditions have been created for substantially improved service performance in the coming months and years.

# The Corporate Plan

This Corporate Plan sets out the Council's high level priorities and targets for the coming years. The Plan contains

- the Council's vision, which is a long-term statement about the borough;
- a set of corporate priorities for the next three years listing, what the council considers to be most important; and
- flagship actions for 2007-2008 which cover each corporate priority

The flagship actions are the key activities for the Council in the coming year. They are practical examples of what our vision and corporate priorities mean, and against which the Council is happy to be judged. Numerous additional actions will be included in the Corporate Improvement Programme. The flagship actions are simply those that will be more visible to residents.

More detail about the Council's plans can be found in the Corporate Improvement Programme, which will be adopted in July this year. This contains a wider range of actions designed to move services forward and to respond to the specific comments made in our recent inspection reports. In addition, each of the Council's directorates, and teams within directorates, has produced their own plan, giving more detail about what it proposes to do in 2007/08. These plans contain targets for performance, many of which relate to Best Value Performance Indicators – measures of performance maintained by every local authority and which can be used as a guide to compare performance between authorities.

# Vision and Corporate Priorities

The Council's vision is:

To be recognised as one of the best London Councils by 2012, in a borough that is cosmopolitan, confident and cohesive.

This vision is supported by more specific aspirations, as follows:-

Our vision must be delivered with the commitment of our staff and partners. Together we will

- V1 Satisfy our customers
- V2 Ensure people feel safe and secure
- V3 Transform our living and working environment
- V4 Protect our Green Belt and Harrow heritage
- V5 Listen to and care for people who need our help
- V6 Value, empower and involve young people
- V7 Promote vibrant cultural and leisure opportunities
- V8 Provide high achieving schools at the centre of community services
- V9 Encourage, promote and retain business
- V10 Sustain a diverse and cohesive community which lives in harmony
- V11 Deliver value for money

Within these aspirations, the Council has adopted the following corporate priorities for the next three years:

1. Increase our level of customer satisfaction
2. Work with our partners to reduce crime and the fear of crime
3. Improve the performance of our environmental services and promote recycling
4. Promote policies that retain Harrow's suburban character
5. Improve care for adults and children who most need our help
6. Expand participation opportunities for Harrow's young people
7. Continue improvement in schools to make education in Harrow even better
8. Increase opportunities for participation in sports and culture
9. Regenerate the town centre, improve district centres and promote new businesses
10. Build on our existing strong and cohesive community
11. Improve the way we work and provide value for money

## **The Council's Plans**

The Council works to a set of plans moving from the strategic to the operational. The highest-level plan is the Sustainable Community Plan, which is developed by Harrow Strategic Partnership and which describes the sort of place Harrow should become by 2020. The highest level of the Council's planning hierarchy is this Corporate Plan which contains the strategic direction in which the Council intends to progress. It is supported by Directorate plans, team plans and individual plans all of which are developed to help progress the Council's vision and its corporate priorities. There is a clear path between the highest-level corporate objectives and every individual's personal plan.

We have also developed a Corporate Improvement Programme which brings together important projects from across all of our services and which will be closely monitored. This programme contains many additional projects that support our corporate priorities.

The Council is adopting the Local Government Association Framework for Excellence, covering nine hallmarks of high-performing councils. We intend these to be implicit in our corporate priorities and an essential step on the road to our overall vision of being one of the best London Councils by 2012.

## Organisation

In February 2007 a new slimmer organisational structure was agreed by the council – with the aim of making the organisation fit for purpose, contributing to the council's savings plan, and enabling the council to achieve its long term strategic vision. The new structure comprises five corporate directorates of:

- Community & Environment Services
- Adults' & Housing Services
- Children's Services
- Finance
- Strategy & Business Support

The Community and Environment Services Directorate has a wide range of responsibilities stretching from Community Development and Libraries to Street Cleansing, Parks Management, Community Safety, Planning and Highways.

The Adults' and Housing Services Directorate provides Adult Social Care services including support for people with physical or sensory impairments, mental health needs or learning disabilities. It also has responsibility for providing homes for homeless households and managing the Council's housing stock.

The Children's Services Directorate provides services for children in care, services to support families, the Youth Service, the Youth Offending Team, Children's Centres, the Local Authority's education functions and Early Years services.

The Finance Directorate is responsible for financial strategy, financial management, procurement, audit, risk management, health and safety, payroll and pensions.

The Strategy and Business Support Directorate undertakes the functions that support the workings of the Council and the Benefits Service as well as Access Harrow, which is improving customer access to Council services.

## Participation

The Council's decisions can be challenged and questioned by both individuals and organisations. Most decisions are made at meetings of the Council and Cabinet, which are open to the press and public. Some of the ways of participation include are:

*Public attendance at meeting.* The time, place and subjects to be discussed are listed in agendas. They are available to press and public a week before meetings and copies are available at all Harrow libraries. Members of the public are also included as members on various panels, scrutiny reviews and pilot schemes.

*Deputations.* Requests can be made to speak before meetings in a deputation. Written notice should be made in advance and requests must be signed by at least 10 people with a local interest.

*Petitions.* These can be presented to councillors, committees or full council.

*Question time at public meetings.* The council, cabinet, every committee and most panels make up to 15 minutes available for the public to ask questions. Questions will either be answered there and then, or in writing within three working days of the meeting. Any Harrow resident or representative of a local organisation may ask a question at a meeting, plus one follow-up question. Questions need to be sent in writing three working days before the relevant meeting.



*Councillors' Questions.* A separate period is allocated at Cabinet and Council meetings for Councillors to ask questions. This promotes accountability, and enables Councillors to fulfil their role better without intruding on the time allocated for public questions.

*Planning Applications.* There is a separate procedure for representations by objectors and applicants at meetings of the Planning Committees.

*Independently facilitated 'Question Time'* During 2006, the administration also introduced regular question and answer sessions, at which the public can hold the Cabinet to account for manifesto pledges, and progress towards achieving them. The first of these was arranged in September 2006 as a new initiative to hold the administration to account, and a further three have now been held.

*Prosperity Action Teams (PATs).* These are a new and innovative approach to public involvement. They are based on small groups of wards and led by Elected Members. They have a specific budget to resolve local issues outside of the normal budgeting and planning process. There were originally 10 PATs covering two or three wards each, and their budgets of £15,000 per ward must be spent on capital expenditure. To date, the majority of projects relate to open space improvements. Going forward, these will be ward based.

# Flagship Actions for 2007-2008 by Corporate priority

In each case, flagship actions are related to a specific corporate priority. In addition, they are also linked to the Cabinet Portfolio responsible. The objective is to demonstrate clear accountability to specific portfolio holders and the senior officers with whom they work.

These flagship actions are only part of the broad role and activities carried out by the Directorates, as summarised in the section above on Organisation.

We will carry out each of the following actions-

## 1. Increase our level of customer satisfaction

Ref	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
1.1	<b>Harrow Clicks!</b> (Strategy and Business Support)	The Council's website is being redesigned to make it easier to find information, book services and pay bills
1.2	<b>More contact, more service</b> (Strategy and Business Support)	The Council's contact centre will increase the range of services it can deal with to provide a more comprehensive service
1.3	<b>Affordable Child Care in one third of Harrow Schools</b> (Children's Services)	Initially, 18 school sites will provide affordable childcare before and after school and in school holidays. More will follow in future years
1.4	<b>The wait for the plumber is over</b> (Housing)	Our contractor will make time-specific appointments for inspecting damage and making repairs to the interior of Council houses and flats
1.5	<b>Hi-Tech Care</b> (Adults)	Promotion of independence through assistive technology using sensors discretely placed in people's homes linked to a Helpline service

## 2. Work with our partners to reduce crime and the fear of crime

Ref	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
2.1	<b>IT to ID Benefit cheats</b> (Strategy and Business Support)	New state of the art technology will be introduced to help in our efforts to reduce benefit fraud
2.2	<b>Harrow makes clean sweep</b> (Environment Services)	“Weeks of Action” with our partners, notably the Police, focusing on areas with particular challenges
2.3	<b>Spotlight on Crime and Grime</b> (Environment Services)	Expand monitoring of the borough’s CCTV network to 24 hours a day and create a dedicated environmental crime team to reduce fly-tipping and litter
2.4	<b>Community Pay Back</b> (Environment Services)	Implement the ‘Community Payback’ Scheme in partnership with the Probation Service to deal with environmental blight such as graffiti, fly tipping and overgrown areas
2.5	<b>The Beat goes on</b> (Environment Services)	Expand the Borough Beat initiative where council staff and, potentially, staff of other major local employers, are released to patrol Harrow as Special Constables in order to increase reassurance and provide a visible police presence

## 3 Improve the performance of our environmental services and promote recycling

Ref	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
3.1	<b>Focus on flats</b> (Environment Services)	Become one of the top five London Boroughs for recycling by providing recycling for people who live in flats to help us reach our 40% target by the end of 2008
3.2	<b>Play in the Parks</b> (Environment Services)	Provide new playground facilities and activities for young people and toddlers, in Roxeth Rec; Headstone Rec: and Canons Park
3.3	<b>A new start for Wealdstone</b> (Environment Services)	Open Wealdstone High Street to traffic to assist local businesses and help regeneration

3.4	<b>Blue bins for all</b> (Environment Services)	Give a blue bin to every household that can use one as part of our drive on recycling in a resident friendly way
3.5	<b>Harrow declares “Green is good”</b> (Planning, Development and Enterprise)	Sign the ‘Nottingham Declaration’ regarding controlling emissions, reducing energy use and tackling climate change

#### 4. Promote policies that retain Harrow’s suburban character

Ref	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
4.1	<b>Party for the Park</b> (Environment Services)	Open the refurbished Canons Park, including the restored walled garden, refurbished buildings and the opened up historic views....
4.2	<b>Harrow’s Heritage saved</b> (Planning, Development and Enterprise)	Secure the future of Bentley Priory by issuing supplementary planning guidance
4.3	<b>Framework for the future</b> (Planning, Development and Enterprise)	A vision for Harrow in terms of shaping its future planning will be crystallised

#### 5 Improve care for adults and children who most need our help

Ref	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
5.1	<b>Independence and Choice</b> (Adults)	Modernise our home care services for adults in need so that they have greater control and choice over the way in which services are delivered
5.2	<b>Spreading the parenting word</b> (Children’s Services)	Increase the number of potential adoptive parents by employing a specialist service, Coram Family Services
5.3	<b>Helping to prevent cancer</b> (Children’s Services)	Apply a particular focus on health in the teenage community, working with the Harrow Mayor’s programme
5.4	<b>Abuse is a crime, Break the Silence and Report it</b> (Adults)	Enhance Safeguarding Adult Services using a multi-agency approach to protect the most vulnerable members of our community from abuse, harm or exploitation

## 6. Expand participation opportunities for Harrow's young people

	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
6.1	<b>Community connections</b> (Children's Services)	Ensure that the Careers and Connexions services better meet the needs of our community
6.2	<b>The magnificent seven</b> (Schools and Children's Development)	Develop six Children's Centres to provide a wider range of services to children and their families
6.3	<b>Youth Achievements</b> (Children's Services)	Recognise young people's achievements through the new Youth Achievement Awards

## 7. Continue improvement in schools and make education in Harrow even better

Ref	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
7.1	<b>Challenged children – a focus for Harrow</b> (Children's Services)	Open a second pupil referral unit to provide education for disruptive children at the Teachers' Centre
7.2	<b>Local access to education</b> (Community and Cultural Services)	Open the Kenton Learning Centre providing access to the community education curriculum.

## 8. Increase opportunities for participation in sports and culture

Ref	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
8.1	<b>Byron rebuild begins</b> (Community and Cultural Services)	Sign a contract to build a new Sports & Leisure Centre to replace the existing Byron Centre
8.2	<b>Stars for the Future</b> (Community and Cultural Service)	Plan to open Prince Edwards Playing Fields 'Football Centre of Excellence' in 2008
8.3	<b>Sports on more doorsteps</b> (Community and Cultural Services)	Plan for two further new sports centres

## 9 Regenerate the town centre, improve district centres and promote new businesses

Ref	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
9.1	<b>Designs for the future</b> (Planning, Development and Enterprise)	Improve the town centre with new street furniture and redesigned pedestrian areas
9.2	<b>Foundations for the arts</b> (Planning, Development and Enterprise)	Begin work on the Gayton Road library and performing arts centre
9.3	<b>Harrow furthers Further Education</b> (Planning, Development and Enterprise)	Positively contribute to the successful development of Harrow College

## 10 Build on our existing strong and cohesive community

Ref	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
10.1	<b>Support for Volunteers</b> (Community and Cultural Services)	Transform the way we support the Voluntary Sector through a radical rethink of the whole grants programme
10.2	<b>Meeting your needs</b> (Strategy and Business Support)	Our new Comprehensive Equalities Scheme means we will ensure that each of our services caters for all Harrow's communities
10.3	<b>Community Success</b> (Community and Cultural Services)	Adopt a Community Development Strategy to help communities come together, decide their needs and help to ensure that they are met

## 11 Improve the way we work and provide value for money

Ref	Flagship Headlines	Flagship Details
11.1	<b>Management costs reduced by 10%</b> (Strategy and Business Support)	We have reviewed the Council's structures and have identified ways of reducing management costs by 10%.
11.2	<b>Residents' voice</b> (Strategy and Business Support)	Launch a Harrow residents' panel to increase residents' say
11.3	<b>Next year's budget shortfall covered</b> (Finance)	We will eliminate the shortfall of £6.4m identified in the budget for 2008-09

## Flagship Actions for the future

- Replacing the Borough's street lights
- Extending pre-school after school and school holiday affordable childcare to many more school sites
- Rebuild the railway bridge at Petts Hill to reduce congestion
- Developing 2 further Children's Centres
- Completing the Harrow 6<sup>th</sup> Form Collegiate building programme
- Addressing the budget shortfall for 2009-2010
- Opening a purpose built Young People's Centre in the new Harrow College development
- Opening Neighbourhood Resources Centres at Christchurch Venue, Kenmore Road and Vaughan Road
- Developing a Behaviour for Learning project in all Primary Schools for Children with behaviour difficulties
- Completing the Hatch End anti-flooding project
- Identifying the contribution all services can make to improving the well-being of the over 50's.

## Harrow's achievements – reflections on 2006/07

### Council

In looking at the Council's future plans, it is often valuable to understand what has been achieved in the recent past. This context helps to assess whether the Council's future plans are realistic and whether the trend supports the projected improvement. The following pages show what was achieved last year.

- **Stabilisation of the financial position.** The new administration inherited an overspend of £3m in 2005-06, and reserves that had reduced to £1.8m. In addition, a very challenging budget, including the need to save £10m, had been set for 2006-07. By June 2006, however, it was clear that a further £9m needed to be saved. A Savings Plan was put in place to achieve this, as well as enhanced monitoring arrangements. The outturn at the end of the financial year was in line with budget. The budget set for 2007-2008 has a very a substantially reduced level of risk.

Five strategic savings projects were undertaken, relating to: organisational structure; land and property; service delivery; finance; and value for money. The results were built into the council's budgets and plans. Due to the future funding gap created by new and unavoidable pressures, and the need for balance between service delivery and council tax levels, further actions now underway include:

- A review of organisational arrangements and management structure
  - A rolling programme of fundamental service reviews over the next three years
  - A number of statutory consultations relating to social care delivery
- **Overall performance indicator (PI) profile.** The Audit Commission Direction of Travel Assessment from January 2007 draws together performance information that is relevant to improvement. Key findings about Harrow's performance were:
    - 63 per cent of our PIs are improving, compared with 67 per cent which is the average for Single Tier councils.



- Harrow has made some improvements in its key priorities. Overall, nearly two-thirds of key performance indicators have improved, with strong performance maintained in attainment at GCSE level, and further improvement in recycling levels. Partnership working has helped to deliver regeneration benefits in town centres and to reduce fear of crime. Improvement is less consistent in core services such as adults' social care and street cleaning. Financial standing is weak and this is impacting on the Council's ability to deliver priorities such as environmental services.
- The Council provides adequate value for money and there is now an appropriate focus on achieving greater financial stability. The Council continues to refine its performance management framework and is using partnerships with the private sector to improve areas such as customer access, use of information and communications technology. As well as rebuilding its finances effectively, the Council needs to now increase the pace of improvement across all key services so that quality services are delivered.
- **Corporate Assessment and Joint Area Review.** In autumn 2006, the Audit Commission undertook a Corporate Assessment (CA) of the Council and, at the same time, there was a Joint Area Review (JAR) of the service provided for young people by the Council and its Partners. The outcomes of these reviews were, for CPA, an overall final score of 2 (adequate performance) and, for the Joint Area Review, a good outcome, and a council score of 2. These scores mean we retain our score of 2 and are Improving Adequately.
- **MORI survey findings 2006.** The June and July 2006 MORI Survey followed a very similar survey conducted in 2005. The underlying message was that the council, having improved its service delivery and public satisfaction ratings, has consolidated those improved levels. Whilst a number of indicators showed a small one or two point decline, and some a one or two point increase, these are within sampling error margins. Particular highlights are
  - The headline figure for being very or fairly satisfied with life in Harrow is 69%, compared to 67% in 2005.
  - The service which the public thought most needed improving was Road and Pavement repairs while crime, which was previously thought be most in need of improvement, attracted nine percentage points less support, suggesting that crime reduction and visible local policing was reducing the fear of crime.

- 49% are very or fairly satisfied with the way the council runs things, compared with 54% in 2005 but a further survey undertaken in October and November reduced the total satisfied or very satisfied with the way that the Council runs things to 42%
  - Other high priorities include levels of traffic congestion, clean streets and health services.
- **Business Transformation Partnership (BTP).** The BTP was set up with a leading private sector partner, Capita. It has delivered key changes to customer contact; finance; HR; procurement and management information processes backed by world class SAP IT systems. Harrow staff have benefited from secondments and training to ensure that skills transfer takes place. The BTP's three initial projects relating to Access Harrow – Customer Relationship Management; Enterprise Resource Planning, and Management Information Systems were all delivered on time and to budget.
  - **Value for Money findings.** Harrow Council performs well given how much it spends on its services. We deliver above average value for money in planning, education, housing and cultural services and average value for money in environmental and social services. We have an innovative value for money framework and have recently undertaken a rigorous review of our value for money performance – 85% of our VFM indicators perform above the London average. In a recent independently run study we compared ourselves against all London Boroughs and nearest neighbours and set a more stringent target by comparing to nearest neighbours with a score of 3 for VFM.
  - **Community Plan.** Harrow's earlier Community Strategy has now been developed into the updated Sustainable Community Plan, which was published in November 2006. The Community Plan contains a Vision for Harrow in 2020 (see earlier), and has clear short, medium and long-term priorities, with the short-term priorities being expressed through the Local Area Agreement.
  - **Emergency Planning.** The Council's Major Incident Plan is up to date, and a full test day, Exercise Adelaide, was held in June 2006.

## Adults' and Housing Services

**Joint Community Equipment Service.** The council and the PCT now run a joint Community Equipment Service, with a pooled budget, to provide for urgent equipment needs.

**Smart House.** Harrow has led the way in delivering Telecare to older people. Two groups of vulnerable service users were identified – those with dementia and those who need fall prevention. The council demonstrates the technology to older people at a 'smart house'. A 24 hour helpline is provided which generates approximately 700 calls per day.

**Improved Assessments.** The joint development of a single assessment format between the Council and the Health Service has been expanded so that, from 1st April 2007, it will include potential clients of Adult Mental Health Services. In addition, our performance on both the time from contact to the beginning of assessments and from contact to the completion of assessments has significantly improved and is now comfortably above target.

**Consultations and Service Changes.** Large scale consultations were conducted about several changes in services, including the form of meals on wheels, charges for services and the future of certain Day Centres.

**Tenants' Compact** – A new agreement has been signed with Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations (HFTRA) that will increase the opportunity for tenants and residents to influence the service they receive.

**Tenancy Agreement** – A new agreement, written in plain English, has been introduced that sets out the rights and responsibilities of the Council, as Landlord, and its tenants, that will ensure an effective basis for management of the Council housing stock.

**Leaseholder Support Group** – A Leaseholder Support Group has been formed that enables leaseholders issues to be raised and discussed to ensure that their investment in their homes is enhanced.

## Children's Services

**Honeypot Lane.** A new state-of-the-art Children's Home was opened at 304 Honeypot Lane, Stanmore in February 2007. It has the capacity to provide a home for up to 7 young people, including one with a disability, who are unable to live with their own families and are "looked after" by Harrow Council. The aim was to design a building that met all the requirements of children's home regulations and national minimum care standards, yet was as far as possible from the institutional feel of the old children's home, Haslam House, it replaced. Children and Young People's views were at the heart of the design via a series of consultation events. The new home has a range of innovative features including en-suite facilities.

**Children's Centres.** Three Children's Centres have been established, and these provide a good range of integrated services to help parents keep their children healthy, and are models of good inter-agency collaboration.

**Alexandra Avenue Clinic.** Harrow has benefited from the Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) with a new clinic opening at Alexandra Avenue in August 2006. This is a joint initiative with the PCT and houses social services and health together with an emphasis on supporting children and their families.

**Clinic in a Box.** Harrow's Clinic in a Box is now provided by the Family Planning Service to improve young people's confidence in addressing sexual health issues. This is a weekly clinical outreach service set up in schools, a college, a young parents' group and the Youth Offending Team (YOT). The service at the YOT is an interagency clinic with a health advisor from specialist and family planning mainstream services. Targeted work also takes place with unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers and children looked after.

**Breastfeeding Cafes.** The Harrow Breast Feeding Strategy Group has led initiatives such as breastfeeding cafés; children's centres are a focal point for a 'peer support' programme in which local mothers provide both antenatal and postnatal support to new mothers. This initiative focuses particularly on BME groups, where infant mortality rates are higher.

### **Community and Environment Services**

**Libraries.** The libraries enquiry service was ranked first amongst nine west and central London library authorities that were assessed for customer care, for the accuracy of answers and the enquiry techniques used by staff.

**Under One Sky Festival.** Harrow Council's largest festival was held in July 2006 for the second consecutive year. In total 62 local community organisations, 12 primary schools and 195 artists put on 67 events and activities. Nearly 8,000 people participated.

**Beacon Centre at Rayners Lane.** A new £2.7m community centre was opened as part of the overall redevelopment of the Rayners Lane estate. The facilities include a sports hall, meeting/function rooms, an IT suite, and hot desk facilities. Harrow College will be running practical courses from this new venue, including catering, retail, horticulture and business skills.

**Stepping up the Ladder.** This pan-London project is led by Harrow. It will help 250 employed and unemployed BME women into supervisory and management jobs focusing on a number of key sectors including health and social care, tourism and leisure, retail and construction, where there is significant under-representation of this group. It works via a pan-London support and dissemination network of employers and providers.

**Recycling.** The Council is well on the way to meeting the tough Government target of 40% waste recycling by 2010. The introduction of the Blue Bin has given rise to increases in recycling tonnages compared with last year. Since October 2006, the teams have worked assiduously to resolve the brown bin contamination issue. A detailed action plan was drawn up and implemented, resulting in a significant turn-around in reducing rejected loads to 5% in May and, consequently, increasing tonnages accepted for composting. This, combined with increased blue bin tonnage, has resulted in a reduction in the amount of waste sent to landfill.

The percentage of waste recycled in 2006/7 was 27.7%. The predicted rate for 2007/8 is forecasted to be approximately 35% - allowing for the reduction in Brown Bin contamination and an anticipated increase in recycled tonnage.

**Town Centre.** Following approval of the Town Centre Development Strategy, consultants have now been appointed to shape and implement the Strategy. There is a capital budget of more than £3m to support the town centre and its public realm in the next three years.

**Rayners Lane Home Zones.** The achievement of the 2002 vision for social regeneration of the Rayners Lane Estate is well on its way. Home Zones are being created, which is where road space is shared between drivers of vehicles and other road users, with the wider needs of residents (including walkers, cyclists and children) in mind.

**William Ellis playing fields.** The council is currently working with the 'I Foundation' on plans to build the first Hindu School in Britain. Subject to necessary planning consent, this could be located on the William Ellis playing fields, which would also have the effect of improving the playing fields and their facilities.

**Gayton Road.** The Council is at an advanced stage of negotiation to provide a performance, exhibition and library facility on Gayton Road.

**Borough Beat.** The Council and Harrow Police have worked together to introduce the Borough Beat programme, the first of its kind in the UK. This scheme trains council staff as Police Special Constables, and has already been copied by five more London authorities.

**Canons Park.** Following receipt of a grant of more than £900,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, works have restored listed buildings and renovated formal gardens. Work has included new tree planting, access improvements, preparation of a nature conservation management plan, opening up of historic views, and providing a park keeper and security staff cover. One of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams has been located in the park.

**Petts Hill.** Effective partnership working led by the Council means that a new rail bridge is to be installed over one of Harrow's busiest traffic routes. A 100 year old bridge is a major bottleneck and is to be replaced with a wider bridge, following negotiation by Harrow and Ealing Council's, Network Rail, TfL and local residents.

**Third Party Reporting.** This is a major new initiative to encourage people to report race hate crime to a trusted member of the community on behalf of the Police, and was launched in July 2006. It is recognised as national best practice. Third Party Reporting sites address concerns for people who are uncomfortable talking to the Police.

**Community TV.** The Safer Harrow Community TV network is London's first dedicated TV network broadcasting community safety information directly to local people through plasma screens located at ten sites across the borough.

Broadcasts include missing person's appeals and road closures, and potentially vital local information in the event of major incidents.

## **Strategy and Business Support**

**'Question Time.'** During 2006 the administration introduced regular question and answer sessions, at which the public can hold the Cabinet to account for manifesto pledges, and progress towards achieving them. The first of these was held in September 2006. Three more have been held since.

**Prosperity Action Teams (PATs).** These have been introduced as a new and innovative approach to public involvement. They are based on single or small groups of wards and led by Elected Members. They have a specific relatively small capital budget to resolve local issues outside of the normal budgeting and planning process.

**Joint Team.** Harrow Council and the Pension Service have embraced opportunities offered by the Joint Team to promote financial inclusion and tackle over-indebtedness of elderly residents in Harrow. One home visit takes place from a visiting officer who gathers information and passes it to a range of other agencies. This is a simple but original concept, which has improved social inclusion. The council helped older and vulnerable residents share an extra £1.5m benefit, and the work has been submitted for Beacon status.

**Access Harrow.** The Access Harrow project has created a new customer-focused one stop shop and contact centre. The process affected over 100 staff and has been recognised by both staff and trade unions as being well managed.

**Benefits Team of the Year.** The Council's benefits team has maintained its assessment as a four star service by the Audit Commission.

## **Organisational Focus**

In December 2006 Harrow launched its Strategy for People 2006 – 2009. Its purpose is to provide the vision, direction and actions necessary to allow our workforce to manage and deliver our services and prepare for the challenges in the future. It has also been developed in response to the conditions of the pay and workforce strategy set out by the DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government). The following are the main strategic areas for action, and these

are designed to make sure our values are promoted within our organisation, and with those who work in partnership with us.

The way Council Members and officers work with each other, our customers and our partners is crucial to our success. Our values, which guide how we work as **one council**, are:

- **Pride** – everyone is proud to work for us, celebrates our successes and avoids blaming
- **Participation** – we are non-hierarchical, so our actions and decisions result from engaging our communities, customers and staff
- **Performance** – we are focused on achieving the highest levels of performance to serve our customers
- **Positive work** – we communicate openly and work to create a positive working and learning environment. We encourage innovation and risk-taking
- **Partnership** – we are honest and build trust in our relationships
- **Personal accountability** - we take responsibility for our actions and behaviour

## Risk Register

Harrow Council has a formal risk management process that it uses to manage opportunities and risks effectively. These are systematically identified and managed to ensure that objectives are met, and services to the community are improved. The risk management process used is in line with recommended best practice and involves the identification, analysis, prioritisation and monitoring of risks.



The council has identified its key strategic risks. A risk register and action plans are in place which are reviewed regularly. Detailed risk registers and action plans for each directorate have been developed, and all service plans include a risk register.

The Strategic Risk Register sits alongside the Corporate Plan, and highlights risks that may affect the ability of Harrow Council to achieve its corporate objectives. Risks are mitigated through the action plans in each service plan and through the Council's governance and assurance framework.

### **Statement on Contracts**

The Council is aware of and certifies that, where applicable, it has complied with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts and has followed the Government (DCLG, formerly ODPM) statutory guidance on 'Best Value and Performance Improvement: Handling of workforce matters in contracting.'

**HARROW COUNCIL**  
**REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY 2007-2008**

	2006-2007 Approved Budget £000	2007-2008 Original Budget £000
<b>Local Demand - Borough Services</b>		
Corporate	4,153	4,643
Business Development	15,901	13,934
Chief Executive's Office	1,340	1,320
People First	108,359	108,419
Urban Living	54,987	51,728
Pay and Price Inflation		6,446
<b>Total Directorate Budgets</b>	<b>184,740</b>	<b>186,490</b>
Capital Financing adjustments	(30,334)	(26,488)
Interest on Balances	(4,588)	(4,688)
<b>Total – Baseline</b>	<b>149,818</b>	<b>155,314</b>
Capitalisation	(1,440)	(1,240)
Contribution to Balances	0	1,000
RSG Amending report	208	0
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>148,586</b>	<b>155,074</b>
Contribution re Collection Fund Deficit b/f	364	350

National Non-Domestic rate (NNDR)	(49,417)	(51,676)
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(9,539)	(8,673)
<b>Local Demand on Collection Fund</b>	<b>89,994</b>	<b>95,075</b>
<b>Funds / Balances</b>		
Balances Brought Forward	1,839	1,839
Adjustment to Balances	0	1,000
Balances Carried Forward	<b>1,839</b>	<b>2,839</b>
<b>Council Tax for Band D Equivalent</b>		
Harrow (£)	<b>1,067.19</b>	<b>1,119.50</b>
<u>Increase</u>		
Harrow (%)	<b>2.49%</b>	<b>4.90%</b>
<b>Taxbase</b>	<b>84,326</b>	<b>84,926</b>