

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

IMPROVEMENT DOCUMENT

in response to the

**COMPREHENSIVE
PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

And

**IMPROVEMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IDeA)
PEER REVIEW**

February 2003

SUMMARY

Since LB Harrow received its corporate assessment inspection in the Spring of 2002, there have been many changes in the corporate management of the organisation. These have happened because Members have recognised that despite the many examples of good service delivery in Harrow, a great number of which have received national acknowledgement, there are other areas where the Council needs to improve the services it delivers to people of Harrow. All of the corporate issues addressed in this improvement plan do so because they help support the changes and improvements being made in front line services as part of the New Harrow Project.

Specific service improvement plans do not form part of this plan but exist as service focussed documents to be read in conjunction with this plan.

This improvement plan has been widely debated by members and officers and was adopted by the Council at its Cabinet meeting in December 2002.

There are 9 priorities within the plan, each with a set of specific tasks. These are summarised below: -

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| ▪ Improving services for local citizens:- | To improve service quality on a consistent basis via the implementation of the New Harrow Project, the principal recommendations of external inspections etc |
| ▪ Council's Leadership Role & Change Agenda:- | To strengthen corporate roles, develop project management, address risk management and develop as a learning organisation. |
| ▪ Strategic Planning:- | Prioritising Service delivery in line with corporate priorities, develop a corporate performance management system, develop an ICT strategy. |
| ▪ Financial Strategy:- | Develop medium term financial strategy, delegation of budgets and training of budget managers. |
| ▪ Role of Elected Members:- | Focus on strategic decision-making, review of scrutiny, increased member |

involvement in Best Value.

- Reviewing Local Partnerships:- Development of LSP, development and implementation of community plan.
- Customer Service Approach:- Community engagement roles, revised consultation processes, implementation of First Contact Best Value review
- Internal and External Communication:- Corporate communications strategy for both internal and external communication.
- Human Resources Strategy:- Development of effective motivated and well-trained workforce equipped to work in a changed organisation.

Responsibility for implementing the improvement plan lies with the Cabinet and the Executive Directors' Team. Each priority area has a lead Chief Officer and a designated Portfolio holder. Implementation will be monitored on a regular basis. The plan also indicates what external assistance will be utilised to support the achievement of these priorities.

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1 BACKGROUND

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) has been carried out on all single tier and county councils. It is intended to help local councils to improve the services they deliver to local people. The overall score for each Authority is based on, firstly, an assessment of how well the Council is run and, secondly, on how its core services perform. These core services are: Education, Social Services, Housing, Environment, Libraries and Leisure, Benefits, and Use of Resources.

The assessment of Harrow's core services is based upon inspection reports and performance data that have been presented to Members in previous reports. Examples include: Best Value inspections by the Audit Commission, the school improvement inspection by OFSTED, performance data in the Best Value Performance Plan, and inspections by the Social Services' Inspectorate.

The Corporate Assessment of how well the Council is run is a new development. This Improvement Plan concentrates on the corporate part of the CPA, rather than attempting to replicate in detail the many other plans already drawn up following inspections of individual core services.

In preparation for the Corporate Assessment within the CPA, the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA) carried out a peer review at Harrow's invitation at the end of May 2002. The national programme of peer reviews is intended to help authorities to assess their current achievements and their capacity to change. The basis for the assessment is a specially constructed benchmark of the ideal, fully effective authority. It focuses on the three key organisational themes of leadership, democratic and community engagement, and performance management.

The review is seen as the beginning of an ongoing change process to be taken forward by the Authority through an improvement plan to address the areas where the review team recommends action. The IDeA will monitor the plan's implementation with six-monthly visits during the following year. The first of these visits is expected early in 2003.

Shortly after the IDeA report was completed in July 2002, the Corporate Assessment of Harrow was carried out by the Audit Commission. The Corporate Assessment covers a similar range of questions to those encompassed in the IDeA review. In the light of the overlap in the scope and findings of the two reports, this Improvement Plan brings together the recommendations of IDeA and the Audit Commission. In addition, the

Improvement Plan is the over-arching document for all services, which have contributed to the overall CPA.

All the assessments should also be set within the context of the New Harrow Project, which was launched at the Council meeting in May 2002. This initiative is based upon proposals to move to a more citizen-focussed, area-based organisation. Its rationale can be traced to self-assessment of the Council's functioning, which is consistent with the findings, and recommendations of the IDeA and the Audit Commission. The implementation of this Improvement Plan is therefore closely aligned with the introduction of the New Harrow Project, which is already underway, and the Council's vision and strategic corporate priorities as agreed by the Council in May 2002.

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment is an annual process and this plan is seen, therefore, as a major contributor to driving forward the Council's performance for future assessments.

2 RAISING PERFORMANCE: KEY MESSAGES FROM THE REVIEWS

The overall CPA is based on a large number of aggregated scores for the corporate assessment and for core services, many of which indicate positive judgements about the Authority.

In the IDeA review and the Corporate Assessment, comments about Harrow's performance include references to: 'good examples of partnership working.....a competent, committed staff.....Harrow has responded well to the demands of new government initiatives and requirements.....strong commitment to protecting front-line services' and many other examples.

There are also, however, several significant areas for further development which form the basis of this Improvement Plan. This overall judgement is perhaps best summarised in the IDeA statement that 'Harrow is basically a sound Council with the ability to achieve a lot more'.

The IDeA report contains a list of priority issues and also many specific recommendations. These encompass some proposals for improving how the Council operates and its culture, which are summarised below. In addition, many of the recommendations can be translated into specific tasks, which form the main part of this Improvement Plan (*Section 4*).

These tasks can be grouped in a number of ways as many of the areas are closely interrelated. Cross-referencing is included for some of the more significant links. For the purposes of this plan, the recommendations have been grouped under the following nine priorities and are in priority order:

- * Improving Services for Local Citizens
- * The Council's Leadership Role and the Change Agenda
- * Strategic Planning
- * Financial Strategy
- * Role of Elected Members
- * Renewing Local Partnership(s)
- * Customer Focussed Approaches
- * Internal and External Communication
- * Human Resources Strategy

Within *Section 4* of the plan, the scope of each priority is outlined. The nine priorities encompass all of the recommendations in the IDeA review. The Corporate Assessment report also contains a series of recommendations, many of which overlap with those from IDeA, and these

have been included within the nine priorities.

The first priority theme, Improving Services for Local Citizens, has been included in order to bring within this plan the other improvement plans, which are currently being implemented following inspections of the core services. Full details of these can be found within the individual service-related plans.

For many of the recommendations, progress has already been made since the reviews. Examples include planning towards the long-term financial strategy, holding of a Portfolio Holders' away-day, developing the Local Strategic Partnership and the completion of the Best Value First Contact review, the allocation of approximately £1m in the 2003/4 budget to start the rebuild of the Council's ICT Strategy and business processes.

Key messages about how the Council operates

The IDeA review and the Corporate Performance Assessment have identified a number of issues about how the Council functions which need to influence many or all aspects of future operation rather than being linked to specific tasks in this Improvement Plan. There is an identified need for the Council to determine what sort of organisation it aims to be and then to develop a strategy to achieve its objectives.

Specifically the messages from the reviews include:

1. The need to obtain cross-party consensus on 85% of the Council's objectives, agree them and then enable officers to take them forward.
2. The importance of developing cross-party good-will so that political differences do not prevent the needs of Harrow's residents coming first, with a focus on services which address the requirements of local communities.
3. The need for strategic direction by the Cabinet for the next four years with clear, decisive and sustained political leadership and ownership.
4. A recommendation not to stifle innovation by over-prescription and not being afraid to challenge the status quo. Reasonable risk-taking is acceptable.
5. The importance of building on the willingness to change, which IDeA and the Audit Commission highlighted from

interviews with Members, staff and partners, in order to make sure that the aspirations are delivered.

3 FORMAT OF THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The main part of this plan in *Section 4* is structured around the nine priorities referred to above. Each one is also associated with at least one of the nine **IDeA categories of support**, which is shown under the title of each priority in *Section 4* of this Plan. The **scope** of each priority represents a summary of the IDeA and Corporate Assessment recommendations. The **tasks** listed under each theme are at a high level, i.e. the major activities, which need to be carried out. Behind each of these tasks there will be more detailed actions, which the accountable officers will need to put in place within the stated time-scales. In the light of the changes in the structure of the directorates, **accountability** is assigned under each theme to the Chief Executive or Executive Directors in the new structure. These chief officers will identify which officers take direct responsibility for each listed task.

There is recognition that the agenda set by IDeA, the Corporate Assessment and the other inspections is a substantial one, some of which will need to be implemented over a period of several years, especially with regard to some of the recommendations which involve cultural change within the organisation. The tasks listed in *Section 4* concentrate on those to be carried out by the end of 2003; others are listed for further development thereafter. Towards the end of 2003, after reviewing progress on this plan (see below), Members will need to determine whether to draw up a second phase of this Improvement Plan or to build any outstanding areas for development into other Council planning processes.

The resources needed for the Plan, as set out in *Section 5* are a reflection of the growth items in the 2003-04 budget and are still subject to prioritisation by Members. The resources may therefore change.

The tasks set out in this plan have been selected as being achievable within the first year. It will be important both to monitor whether they are completed as planned and to evaluate whether they are making a difference. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements will be set in place both for the whole plan and also as specified under each of the themes. Whilst progress on some areas is likely to make a difference within the first year, some of the outcomes of the Plan will take longer to achieve.

The **monitoring** of progress towards the tasks in the whole plan will be carried out at meetings of Directors and Heads of Service (or similar meetings within the new Council senior management structure) on a monthly basis and reported to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis. A Portfolio Holder has been designated as responsible for each of the key themes. Each report to Cabinet will also be considered at the following meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This arrangement will be reviewed at the end of the first year. In addition, for some of the themes, there will be additional monitoring arrangements as specified in *Section 4*.

The overall **evaluation** of this plan will be through:

- (1) The Council's Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) stretch targets
- (2) The LPSA basket of indicators to assess cost effectiveness
- (3) The Comprehensive Performance Assessment basket of performance indicators
- (4) Feedback from an annual MORI Survey
- (5) Local performance indicators relating to outcomes from the New Harrow Project.

Full details of these outcomes and the specific targets to be achieved will be attached as appendices to the final version of this Plan. Initial evaluation against these targets will be at the end of 2003 and then at intervals agreed by Members.

In addition, some of the key themes include specific outcomes related to implementation of the listed tasks.

The overall evaluation of progress will be through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in future years, with Harrow setting a target of being a 'good' authority by 2006.

4 IMPROVEMENT PLAN

<p>PRIORITY AREA 1</p> <p>IMPROVING SERVICES FOR LOCAL CITIZENS</p>	<p>CHIEF OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Executive Director, People First</i> * <i>Executive Director, Urban Living</i>
<p><i>Idea category: Improving Services</i></p>	<p>Designated Portfolio Holder(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Education and Lifelong Learning</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Social Services</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Environment & Transport</i>

SCOPE This priority encompasses the principal recommendations which have come from OfSTED, SSI and Audit Commission inspections of services currently located within the Education Services, Environmental Services and Social Services directorates.

The Corporate Assessment Teams identified that Harrow delivers ‘sound frontline services’ but the picture was mixed and performance was not improving consistently’.

Service performance was overall described as average.

This priority seeks to improve service quality overall and is the key objective of the New Harrow Project.

Cross-reference: The change agenda(2)
Strategic Planning-Performance Management (3)

WHAT WILL CHANGE

The tasks set out below are part of the whole organisation change process – the New Harrow Project – which has the objective of fundamentally improving service quality in Harrow on a consistent basis. The pilot project in South Harrow is testing out the proposed area based service delivery model and will be robustly evaluated to determine its success and roll out across the borough.

Service departments are developing and implementing detailed action plans in response to the reports, from OfSTED, SSI, Audit Commission etc.

TASKS	DATES
Establish the New Harrow Project, including the area delivery model pilot and subsequent extension to other areas following evaluation of the pilot. Joint working with the Primary Care Trust (e.g. through a LIFT proposal) and other partners to be included.	Area pilot implemented in November 2002, for evaluation in May 2003 and next area from July 2003.
Put in place action plans for all recent external inspections and ensure that progress on the plans is regularly reported to Members. Implement a process for tracking progress against all such inspections (to be attached as an appendix of the final version of this Improvement Plan).	Action Plans for all inspections, which contributed to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment to be agreed by the end of March 2003. Process for tracking external inspections to be in place from February 2003.

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT END OF 2003

Extension during 2004 and 2005 of the area model to all parts of Harrow.

MONITORING

Monitoring of progress on the New Harrow Project is carried out by Members at meetings of the all party New Harrow Project Panel, currently chaired by Councillor Foulds.

A procedure for reporting on and signing off improvement plans from external inspections is being introduced across all directorates.

MONITORING RECORDS

June 2003

September 2003

December 2003

March 2004

EVALUATION

The New Harrow Project pilot has its own performance indicators, which will be reported to Members in order to determine the next phase.

Progress following core service inspections will be against the targets set out in the specific improvement plan resulting from each inspection. In addition all core services will contribute significantly to the corporate baskets of indicators listed on *page 10* which will be reported by officers to Members on an annual basis.

ENABLING THE PRIORITY

Harrow's external auditors Deloitte Touche will be reviewing progress against our improvement plans in September and October 2003.

The Audit Commission will assist with an independent view of the Council's evaluation of the South Harrow pilot in May 2003 and will also assist in evaluating the work of the People First Directorates in 2004/5. The housing Inspectorate will be undertaking a review of the Best Value project 'Your home your needs' in November 03.

The SSI, Housing Inspectorate, Standards and Efficiency Unit, Dfes and OfSTED will be working with the Council to ensure implementation of the various action plans.

<p>PRIORITY 2</p> <p>COUNCIL'S LEADERSHIP ROLE AND THE CHANGE AGENDA</p>	<p>CHIEF OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Chief Executive</i> * Executive Director, Organisational Development
<p><i>Idea category: Organisational Change</i></p>	<p>Designated Portfolio Holder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Strategy & External Affairs</i>

<p>SCOPE</p>	<p>This priority covers the need to strengthen the corporate role of the Council so that Members and officers can provide leadership to the organisation in the drive for excellence, promoting cross-service and corporate approaches at all levels. There is a need for commitment and ownership to the change agenda, with the freeing up of staff for this and adequate resourcing, e.g. for Best Value. Systems of project management should be put in place, incorporating risk management awareness and opportunities to develop the Council as a learning organisation.</p> <p>Cross-reference: Consultation Strategy (7) Internal & External Communication (8)</p>
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<p>WHAT WILL CHANGE</p> <p>The Council will have a new management structure designed to provide Leadership and drive innovation, excellence and service improvement. The structure is designed to strengthen the corporate role of the council and provide leadership and direction for the change agenda, Best Value, Project Management etc.</p> <p>The project management system will provide a structure ensuring that the Organisational changes required are managed consistently and delivered and Implemented effectively.</p>

<p>TASKS</p>	<p>DATES</p>
<p>Set clear overarching vision and values, with priorities and needs, including resourcing.</p>	<p>Start by April 2003 for completion by end of July 2003</p>

<p>Establish system of structured project management and evaluation, encompassing risk management assessment/contingency arrangements and with integral attention to resourcing requirements.</p>	<p>Currently underway through a group devising project management process for Harrow. For completion by end of March 2003.</p> <p>System to be launched by end April 2003.</p>
<p>Appoint new senior management team and develop the directorate structure</p>	<p>External recruitment for unfilled executive director posts begun in November 2002. Two remaining Executive Director posts filled with post holders starting 28 April 2003. Acting S151 post established.</p>
<p>Put in place an organisational change agreement with UNISON and the teacher trade unions.</p>	<p>Process currently underway, with two parts agreed at the Employers' Consultative Forum. Other major parts to be concluded by end of May 2003.</p>

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT END OF 2003

Ongoing support for, and communication with, staff throughout the whole change process.

MONITORING RECORDS

June 2003

September 2003

December 2003

March 2004

MONITORING

See page 7

EVALUATION

See page 8

ENABLING THE PRIORTIES

Harrow's external auditors Deloitte Touche will be assessing how the new management structure has been implemented in September and October 2003.

An external consultant will be working with the Council to facilitate the development of the overarching vision and values and the associated roll out programme.

External trainers will be utilised to roll out the project management system following its launch in April 2003.

The follow-up visits of the Peer Review Team – IDeA will assess progress against this priority and all other priorities set out below.

<p>PRIORITY 3</p> <p>STRATEGIC PLANNING</p>	<p>CHIEF OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Chief Executive</i> * <i>Executive Director, Organisational Development</i> * <i>Executive Director, Business Connections</i>
<p><i>IDeA categories: Governance & Political Management, Performance Management, E-Government</i></p>	<p>Designated Portfolio Holder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Finance and Human Resources</i>

<p>SCOPE</p>	<p>This priority covers recommendations relating to the importance of prioritising service delivery in line with corporate priorities, on a longer-term basis, and related to resources.</p> <p>There is a need for a corporate performance management system as a management tool, with co-ordinated collation of performance indicators to identify progress towards strategic priorities and for future planning.</p> <p>An Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy, covering all Council Services, needs to be developed with planning for the upgrading of systems and infrastructure.</p> <p>Cross reference: Leadership and change agenda (2)</p>
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<p>WHAT WILL CHANGE</p> <p>The budget for 2003/4 contains almost £1million to start the rebuild of the Council's ICT and business process. The MTBS enhances investment by a further £1 million in each of the next 3 years. This investment will allow the development of the priorities from the First Contact review, IT requirements in departments and investment infrastructure.</p> <p>The development of a corporate performance management system will enable the Council to run and improve services by using both national and local PI's to track and drive improvement and allocation of resources.</p>

TASKS	DATES
Ensure that the Council's vision and values are fully incorporated into, and help determine, the content of service priorities	To be started from April 2003 when the vision and values are completed for incorporation by all directorates by September 2003.
Devise a system of corporate performance management (based on the principles in the Best Value Performance Plan); ensure that this is built into all service plans, it is cascaded into units' planning processes and individual officers' accountabilities, and that it provides data for Members and officers to make informed decisions to achieve the corporate priorities.	To be started in March 2003 and to be completed by September 2003 to inform service planning process for 2004/5.
Establish Business Connections directorate to rebuild business processes, including financing in 2003-04 and in future budgets.	Recruitment process underway, with directorate to begin in May 2003 and to be fully functioning by December 2003.
Develop a framework ICT Strategy before decision making whether to enter into partnership with an external ICT provider to drive forward the change process.	To be started in March 2003. Complete the framework by the end of July 2003
Commence next phase of Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Action Plan, including investment in South Harrow Portal jointly with the Local Strategic Partnership.	Currently underway for implementation by end of 2003.
Agree provision for an ICT investment strategy in the 2003/04 budget to meet priorities, with reductions identified in ongoing costs.	By March 2003 as part of the budget process.

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT END OF 2003

Continuing implementation of ICT Strategy, with a sustainable investment programme over the next 5 years.

MONITORING

See page 7

The Council will also report progress on its IEG Action Plan on an annual basis to Members.

MONITORING RECORD

June 2003

September 2003

December 2003

March 2004

EVALUATION

See Page 8

ENABLING THE PRIORITY

Harrow will draw on the experience of other authorities that have been identified as excellent at performance management. Our external auditors will be reviewing our corporate performance management schemes and will be reviewing the Best Value Performance Indicators and supporting arrangements. We will be working with external partners to develop an ICT framework and will learn from other authorities on their experiences of partnering to deliver ICT improvements.

Our external auditors will be reviewing the processes used to develop the corporate ICT strategy.

<p>PRIORITY 4</p> <p>FINANCIAL STRATEGY</p>	<p>CHIEF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE</p> <p>* <i>Executive Director, Business Connections</i></p>
<p><i>IdeA categories: Finance & Resource Management, Procurement</i></p>	<p>Designated Portfolio Holder</p> <p>☐ <i>Finance and Human Resources</i></p>

SCOPE This priority focuses on recommendations that the Council should have a long-term and medium-term financial strategy. There should be a realignment of the financial strategy, structures and cultures. Budgets should be set in line with corporate priorities and the total income available, with realistic department base budgets. It is recommended that officers should be empowered through delegated responsibility for managing resources.

Cross reference: Strategic Planning (3)

WHAT WILL CHANGE

A medium term financial strategy will enable longer-term service delivery planning, and improvement. The strategy adopted for 2003/4 ensures investment in services to bring out the fundamental quality changes required.

Delegation of budgets with the associated performance management processes will ensure accountability in decision taking.

TASKS	DATES
Appoint a permanent Chief Financial Officer	New interim arrangement to be in place from December 2002, with a permanent appointment by July 2003.
Institute a programme of budget-awareness training amongst all officers who have financial responsibilities including training, improved access to budgetary information and clearly defined and written budgetary accountabilities and levels of delegated authority.	Begin the process in March 2003 with review of financial regulations. Development of a budget management handbook and training programme by September 2003 with training rolled out thereafter

Establish realistic and robust base budgets throughout the Council, with new agreed base budgets or changes in policy where necessary and an in-depth review of Social Services base budgets	Review to be completed by December 2002 with any changes to be agreed by February 2003; in-depth Social Services review from November 2002 to July 2003.
Complete a process for medium-term planning	Formulate initial strategy by February 2003, with a review of this in the light of corporate priorities by September 2003 and a refined strategy by December 2003
Complete the cross-cutting Best Value review of procurement and implement its recommendations, including establishing a procurement team and ensuring the procurement strategy is developed	Best Value report was presented to Cabinet in December, with implementation according to the dates set out in the report

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT END OF 2003

Complete budget training programme by the end of March 2004.
 Confirm medium-term financial strategy.
 Consider longer-term financial management and a risk assessment of the budget.
 Introduce new reporting arrangements under the Local Government Bill.
 Respond to implications of the Prudential Guidelines for Capital Investment.

MONITORING

This will be carried out on a monthly basis by the Chief Financial Officer with Senior Finance manager, with quarterly reports to Cabinet including implementation proposals for approval.

MONITORING RECORDS

June 2003

September 2003

December 2003

March 2004

EVALUATION

Evaluation will be through review of the robustness of the revised base budgets and the medium-term financial strategy and through external assessment by the Audit Commission.

ENABLING THE PRIORITIES

The Council's external auditors will be reviewing the Council's financial planning procedures and will be mapping key financial systems and internal financial controls. There will also be a review of the MTFS.

PRIORITY 5
ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS
<i>IdeA category: Governance & Political Management</i>

CHIEF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
* <i>Chief Executive</i>
Designated Portfolio Holder
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Strategy and External Affairs</i>

SCOPE	<p>This priority includes recommendations about the decision making role of Members, specifically the need to take tough decisions and ones which are linked to resources. Other recommendations relate to Members focussing less on detail and more on policy, being aware of the resource impact of requests for reports and developing their role both by being ambassadors for the Council, championing achievements and being more visible in the local partnerships. Opportunities for new Member induction and development and time out for Cabinet, e.g. by awaydays, are also proposed and the take-up of laptops is to be encouraged. Sessions with senior officers should be used to map out key challenges, agree priorities and aid communication.</p> <p>Greater clarity by Members about the role of Scrutiny, including the different role from that of the Best Value Advisory Panel, is also recommended.</p> <p>Cross reference: Leadership (2) Local Partnerships (6)</p>
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WHAT WILL CHANGE
<p>Focus on the strategic issues facing the Council rather than the detail.</p> <p>A revised role for Scrutiny and greater member involvement in the Best Value Process will be achieved.</p>

TASKS	DATES
Strengthen political leadership, including realigning portfolio holding with new management structure, establishing an all party steering group for the New Harrow Project, putting Cabinet membership of Best Value Advisory Panel in place and ensuring Cabinet overview of inter-agency working on safeguarding.	All party steering group for the New Harrow Project, Best Value membership and Cabinet overview of safeguarding all now in place.

Identify clear and focussed policy priorities and non-priorities as part of the budget process	To be completed by end of February 2003 as a result of budget process.
Identify budget and lead officer(s) for Member development to drive change, especially focussing on Members' strategic roles and responsibilities, including participation in a Local Government Information Unit programme on political leadership	Budget and officer(s) to be identified by end of March 2003, with programme drawn up from May 2003.

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT END OF 2003

Continuing Member development programme

MONITORING

Future monitoring will be through follow-up visits by IDeA on a six-monthly basis and through the further corporate assessments to contribute to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2003 and beyond.

MONITORING RECORDS

June 2003

September 2003

December 2003

March 2004

EVALUATION

Evaluation will be through the Authority's overall performance indicators (see page 8) and the assessment scores on future Comprehensive Performance Assessments.

ENABLING THE PRIORITY

The Council will work with external agencies e.g. IDEA, LGIU, Inlogov, etc to develop and deliver its member's development programmes.

The experience of other authorities in developing their Scrutiny function will be utilised.

PRIORITY 6
RENEWING LOCAL PARTNERSHIP(S)
<i>IDeA categories: Community Engagement, Partnership & Cohesion</i>

CHIEF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
* <i>Executive Director, Business Connections</i>
Designated Portfolio Holder
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Partnership, Best Value and Performance Management</i>

SCOPE	This theme covers recommendations relating to the need to review and re-energise the Harrow Partnership and its Steering Group, with clarification of the role of its sub-groups. There is a need for a new agreed Community Plan with priorities set for future working of the Partnership.
	Cross reference: Strategic Planning (3)

WHAT WILL CHANGE
Harrow's Local Strategic Partnership will enhance engagement with all sectors in Harrow enabling an increased local focus by all partners on the priorities for Harrow's communities.
The community strategy will assist in the delivery of the vision of New Harrow.

TASKS	DATES
Develop the Harrow Partnership into the Local Strategic Partnership for Harrow	Already started for completion by the end of March 2003
Develop, consult and publish the Community Plan	Started in November 2002 for finalisation by September 2003
Rebuild the Drugs Action Team and the Crime & Disorder Reduction Panel to improve focus on crime reduction	Started in October 2002 for finalisation in September 2003.

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT END OF 2003
Development of the Community Strategy

MONITORING

Monitoring by the Strategic Partnerships Team reporting on a regular basis to the LSP Executive.

Milestones will be Partnership Governance Framework, Dec 2002; draft Community Plan, May 2003 for consultation.

MONITORING RECORDS

June 2003

September 2003

December 2003

March 2004

EVALUATION

An external body will be selected to accredit the Local Strategic Partnership at the end of April 2003.

The Community Strategy will set baseline indicators and outcome targets for the priorities in it.

ENABLING THE PRIORITIES

Harrow will work with all its external partners in developing the LSP. It will also utilise external consultants and draw on the experience of other authorities when needed.

<p>PRIORITY 7</p> <p>CUSTOMER FOCUSED APPROACH</p>	<p>CHIEF OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Executive Director, Business Connections</i> * <i>Executive Director, Organisational Development</i>
<p><i>IDeA categories: Community Engagement, Partnership & Cohesion, Improving Services</i></p>	<p>Designated Portfolio Holder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Finance and Human Resources</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Planning, Development and Housing</i>

<p>SCOPE</p>	<p>This priority encompasses recommendations relating to the Council becoming a more customer-focussed organisation, developing a strategy for regular community engagement which includes the involvement of young people and different approaches for different ethnic minority groups and sub-groups. Recommendations include the need to accelerate the Best Value First Contact review and to give impetus to e-government. There are also cross-references to the change agenda, to the role of Members in explaining and selling decisions and to the updating of the Council's communications strategy. The Council is recommended to ensure it provides feedback on the outcome of consultation.</p> <p>Cross-reference: Change agenda (2) Role of Members (5) Communications Strategy (8)</p>
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<p>WHAT WILL CHANGE</p> <p>The Council is perceived as a more customer focused organisation and its customer satisfaction rating improves.</p> <p>Implementation of First Contact review will enable improved access and availability of the Council's services.</p>

TASKS	DATES
<p>Implement Service Improvement recommendations from the Best Value First Contact review. Obtain agreement on the Fundamental Step Change options in the review and begin planning the way forward.</p>	<p>Work currently under way & to complete actions in accordance with the BV Improvement Plan as agreed by Cabinet in December 2003.</p>

Identify what the Council currently does to engage with the community, review strengths and weaknesses, agree the elements of a good community engagement strategy and decide upon which activities to cease, which to do differently and which to introduce.	To be started from April 2003 after the Business Connections directorate is established, with a report on proposals by the end of December 2003
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AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT END OF 2003
Publish an agreed community engagement strategy

MONITORING
Progress on the First Contact recommendations will be reported to the Best Value Advisory Panel and will be measured against the mile-stones set out in the First Contact report.

MONITORING RECORDS
June 2003
September 2003
December 2003
March 2004

EVALUATION
A customer survey was included in the Best Value First Contact report. This will be repeated three years after the original survey to evaluate progress.

ENABLING THE PRIORITY

The Council will work with a range of external organisations to assist in the development and implementation of the First Contact review e.g. other authorities, private sector providers etc.

The Audit Commission will be undertaking a ‘stepped’ review of the First Contact review beginning in February 2003 and continuing over the next 2 years.

<p>PRIORITY 8</p> <p>INTERNAL & EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION</p> <p><i>IDeA categories: Community Engagement, People Management & Development, Improving Services</i></p>	<p>CHIEF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE</p> <p>* <i>Executive Director, Business Connections</i></p> <p>Responsible Portfolio Holder</p> <p>□ <i>Strategy and External Affairs</i></p>
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<p>SCOPE</p>	<p>This priority brings together two sets of recommendations in the reviews relating both to internal communication within the Council and the wider external communications. Internally, there is a need for celebrating success, sharing good practice and innovation between the Council's service units and maximising use of the intranet to keep Members and staff up to date on policies. Externally, the reviews recommend accelerating the Best Value First Contact review, updating the Communication Strategy and enhancing the Council's relationship with the local press.</p> <p>Cross-reference: ICT Strategy (3) Customer-focussed approach (7)</p>
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<p>WHAT WILL CHANGE</p>	<p>Employees and the community will have a high degree knowledge about what the Council's doing and what it is planning to do. Within the Council members, staff and Trade Union's will feel part of a two way communication process. Externally feed back loops will enable continuous service improvement.</p>
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TASKS	DATES
Complete a new Council Communication Strategy, taking account of the New Harrow Project	Already started, for completion by the end of March 2003
Organise media training programme for Members and senior officers	Planning started in November 2002 for introduction by April 2003
See Best Value First Contact on previous page	

Expand intranet, especially for internal communication, and service information.	Review of Intranet began March 2003 for completion April 2003, with recommendation for future direction & usage.
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AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT END OF 2003
 Developing neighbourhood communication across each area of the Borough.

MONITORING
 The Communication Unit will report progress to the Publication Board on a quarterly basis.

MONITORING RECORDS
June 2003
September 2003
December 2003
March 2004

EVALUATION
 In the pilot South Harrow area of the New Harrow Project, baseline assessment of the local citizens' views have been gathered. There will be follow-up surveys to evaluate progress.

ENABLING THE PRIORITY

Harrow will be working with external providers to develop and deliver media training for members and senior officers.

Best practice in other organisations with regard to delivering effective communications will be utilised.

PRIORITY 9
HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY
<i>IDeA categories: People Management and Development</i>

CHIEF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE
* <i>Executive Director, Organisational Development</i>
Designated Portfolio Holder
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance and Human Resources

SCOPE	<p>This priority involves aligning the Human Resources Strategy with other changes through the New Harrow Project and through other recommendations in this plan. It includes the development of staff skills for innovating, challenging the status quo and responding to change; promoting a corporate drive for excellence e.g. through Investors in People or charter-marks; the use of staff surveys with feedback; the overhauling of current measures to reduce sickness levels.</p> <p>Cross-reference: All other themes</p>
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WHAT WILL CHANGE
<p>The Council will have an effective, motivated and well trained workforce, that is supported by HR policies and practices designed to reinforce the changes required by NHP.</p> <p>There will be reduced sickness absence across the authority.</p>

TASKS	DATES
Commission bi-annual staff attitude survey	Initial survey to be undertaken in 2003-04 and, thereafter, every 2 years.
Programme of measures to address sickness absence	Currently underway, with report to Cabinet in December 2002 proposing programme of actions to begin March 2003.
Review current management competencies and management development programme.	Review to be instigated from April 2003, based on vision and values referred to in Key Priority 2

Develop Human Resources Strategy incorporating vision and values (Key Priority 2) and the need to bring about organisational change as part of the New Harrow Project	Begin in April 2003 with completion by September 2003
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AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT END OF 2003
 Audit 6 key policies and then re-write in light of new organisation. Key policies are those for Recruitment and Retention, Grievance, Disciplinary Procedure, Performance Management, Absence, and Training & Development.

MONITORING
 The Organisational Development directorate will report progress on a quarterly basis to the Employees' Consultative Forum.

MONITORING RECORDS
June 2003
September 2003
December 2003
March 2004

EVALUATION
 Specific evaluation of this key theme will be through the Best Value Performance Indicators relating to sickness absence, % of senior managers who are women, leavers, retirements and workforce composition.

ENABLING THE PRIORITY
 The Council will draw on Best Practice in both public and private sectors. It will work with CIPD, SOCPO, IDeA and the Employers' Organisation and the learning & Skills Council, to develop and implement it's HR strategies and the associated HR policies and practices. It will utilise external consultants, training providers & academic institutions to implement & deliver its training programmes.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The resources in the Action Plan are a reflection of the growth items in the 2003-04 budget and are still subject to prioritisation by Members. The resources may therefore change.

	REVENUE								CAPITAL				Other e.g. Grants, LPSA				How will it be met?
	02-03		03-04		04-05		05-06		02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	
	One off £000	Ongoing £000	One off £000	Ongoing £000	One off £000	Ongoing £000	One off £000	Ongoing £000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Improved services for local citizens through the New Harrow Project	701			4,220		7,910		8,965	300	2,000	2,000	2,000					Reprioritisation and growth
Procurement			37	205		205		205		350			90	37			*Initial funding from reserves
Implementation of top management structure changes			1,430			230		230									Growth

*First call on targeted savings of 750k to be to restore reserves, second call to fund them on a permanent basis, third call is to increase reserves and/or reduce budgets.

The resources in the Action Plan are a reflection of the growth items in the 2003-04 budget and are still subject to prioritisation by Members. The resources may therefore change.

	REVENUE								CAPITAL				Other e.g. Grants, LPSA				How will it be met?
	02-03		03-04		04-05		05-06		02-03 £'000	03-04 £'000	04-05 £'000	05-06 £'000	02-03 £000	03-04 £000	04-05 £000	05-06 £000	
	One off £000	Ongo ing £000	One off £000	Ongo ing £000	One off £000	Ongo ing £000	One off £000	Ongo ing £000									
ICT Strategy Infrastructure, including First Contact implementation				1,090		2,180		2,180						400			Growth E-Gov. grant
Quality Performance review group within Children and Families Service set-up				100		100		100									Growth
Scrutiny support				45		45		45									Growth
Local Public Service Agreement				646		1,260		1,260	60	2,090			237	601			Growth
School reorganisation debate project team, as result of OFSTD inspection				125		125		125									Growth
Elected Member training				20		20		20									10k already in base budget; 10k growth

The resources in the Action Plan are a reflection of the growth items in the 2003-04 budget and are still subject to prioritisation by Members. The resources may therefore change.

	REVENUE								CAPITAL				Other e.g. Grants, LPSA				How will it be met?
	02-03		03-04		04-05		05-06		02-03 £'000	03-04 £'000	04-05 £'000	05-06 £'000	02-03 £000	03-04 £000	04-05 £000	05-06 £000	
	<i>One off £000</i>	<i>Ongoin g £000</i>	<i>One off £000</i>	<i>Ongoin g £000</i>	<i>One off £000</i>	<i>Ongoing £000</i>	<i>One off £000</i>	<i>Ongoin g £000</i>									
Sickness Absence																	

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