

Leader's Progress Report

April 2009

Audit Commission Overall Judgement

- The Council is improving well according to the Audit Commission Direction of Travel Judgement on the year ended March 2008
- While overall the Council remains a two star authority, every inspected area improved or at least stayed at the same level
- Notable highlights include significantly improved performance in housing, culture and recycling

Audit Commission Service Judgements

- Adult social care services now have promising prospects for improvement
- The capacity to improve services for children and young people is good and management of these services is good.

Audit Commission Performance Judgement

- The rate of improvement in performance indicators has accelerated and is above the national average, with two thirds improving over the last year.
- The use of resources score has improved from 2 to 3 out of four with financial management and value for money also increasing from 2 to 3 out of four

Audit Commission Financial Judgement

- Effective action has reduced costs and increased financial reserves. Value for money is good.
- The Council is realistic and ambitious about outcomes. Decision-making is well-informed and favours prudent, longer-term strategic solutions.
- The Council has now focused its resources, which is enabling it to deliver its priorities

Audit Commission Partnership Judgement

- Governance and leadership are strong.
- Partnerships are getting stronger and are working well to address local needs. For example, teenage pregnancy rates have reduced significantly and a jointly funded police team is a visible presence in the town centre. Levels of crime are low and fear of crime reducing.

Corporate Priorities

- The focus identified by the Audit Commission has been continued by our concise corporate priorities for 2009/10 which are:
 - Deliver cleaner and safer streets;
 - Improve support for vulnerable people; and
 - Build stronger communities

Recent Progress

- Management restructure – new Corporate Directors of Community and Environment and of Place Shaping, new Divisional Directors of Planning and of Partnership Development and Performance have been appointed
- Funding pressures resulting from service demands and the impact of the recession
- Forecast underspend for 2008/09

Recent Progress continued

- HARP Programme has gone live in Planning
- New capacity has been introduced in Access Harrow and work is underway for Housing and Parking Services to be added to the Access Harrow offer
- A Recession Busting group, including partner organisations, has been formed to find ways of helping our residents and businesses in these difficult times

Recent Progress continued

- The Harrow Strategic Partnership has been restructured to improve governance and help bring partners closer together
- Extensive consultation has helped to develop a new Sustainable Community Strategy which is before the Council today
- Preparations for addressing the new Comprehensive Area Assessment have begun

Service Achievements

- 12,000 visitors to Under One Sky
- 3 parks awarded green flag status
- Achievement of 42% Recycling rate
- Average time to complete routine housing repairs down from 16 days to 7
- Completion of the multi-million pound fire reinstatement works at Bentley Wood High School
- Condition of unclassified roads has moved up into upper quartile

Further Service Achievements

- 20 adoptions have been achieved - this is around one fifth of the relevant looked after cohort and is amongst the best in the country
- Looked after children placement stability has been significantly improved and is in the top national band
- 15% of older service users and 28% of younger adults now have personal budgets or direct payments. One in five personal budgets in London are with Harrow residents
- Absence rates from both secondary and primary school remain well above average and are amongst the best nationally.
- The GCSE result for 2008 was not only above average but met a very challenging target set by the dcsf.

2009/2010

- The budget for 2009/10 requires continued discipline over spending but has included investment to meet rising costs in priority services
- More work to mitigate the local impact of the recession will be undertaken
- The Social Care Transformation Programme is expected to bring about service improvements

2009/2010

- The innovation seen in forming the Joint Analysis Group (JAG) is the beginning of more concrete partnership working
- Better and closer working with our partners will over the next 12 months lead to more integrated services, increased value for money and higher standards