



HARROW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

27th October 2009

Progress Report from the Harrow Chief Executives Group

Introduction

This report informs the Board of the major items considered by Harrow Chief Executives since June this year.

Key Elements

There have been four meetings of Harrow Chief Executives since the Board's last meeting in May 2009 at which a range of topics have been discussed. The most significant items have formed continuing themes such as the Comprehensive Area Assessment, the Total Place Agenda, issues arising from the Compact, funding for LAA priorities and a revision to Partnership processes. This report focuses on these issues.

In relation to the Comprehensive Area Assessment, (CAA), Harrow Chief Executives have invited Annette Furley the CAA Lead from the Audit Commission to attend their meetings both to explain the requirements and timetable for the process and to gain a better understanding of Harrow's partnership working arrangements. Meetings have also reviewed drafts of the self evaluation which was prepared to correspond to the chapters in the Sustainable Community Strategy and looked at an early draft of the Audit Commission's response. The outcome of the CAA process will be known in December 2009.

Total Place is a Government-driven approach to examining the totality of public sector spending in an area and identifying ways in which outcomes can be improved and for a reduced cost. The Government have initiated 13 pilot studies across the Council including two in London, at Croydon and Lewisham. Harrow Chief Executives recognised the potential of this approach and have supported a local total place work stream.

The work stream comprises a number of elements including identifying the total public spend in Harrow, which amounts to £1.9bn and more in depth investigations into areas of spend where the proportion incurred locally exceeds London averages. These so called "deep dive" investigations are looking at the way in which the public service supports the 100 families that require the most help and the pathways for older people into and out of hospital care. There are also elements looking at the future operating model for Harrow public services which may find efficiencies through combining back office functions, a property

review to think about rationalising the public sector estate and a cross-Council efficiency review examining common functions undertaken by more than one team or department.

Finally, there is work underway to identify how a better partnership can be established with residents to encourage them to take responsibility for aspects of improving the quality of their own and community life. This could encompass health and environmental outcomes.

Harrow Chief Executives have considered two complaints raised under the Compact both of which related to the way in which the Council's grants to voluntary and community organisations process operated. Parts of the complaints were upheld and changes have been instituted in the grants process to reduce the opportunities for similar issues to arise in the future. At the same time, terms of reference for a new organisation to oversee the development and implementation of the Compact have been commissioned and should be completed shortly. An offer of assistance from the Commission for the Compact to embed the Compact within the Partnership organisations and to arrange a mutual disputes resolution process with adjoining boroughs has been gratefully accepted.

An opportunity to fund new work to progress the LAA priorities was identified with up to £200,000 available for this purpose. Harrow Chief Executives asked each Management Group Chair to select one or two indicators that were the highest priorities and in danger of not reaching their stretch target and partnership groups were invited to submit project proposals that addressed these service areas. The proposals have now been considered and funding awarded to progress work connected with promoting independent living and reducing the number of emergency hospital bed days; reducing CO2 emissions; promoting biodiversity; Increasing sports participation; promoting an environment in which the voluntary and community sector can flourish and addressing domestic violence.

Finally, Harrow Chief Executives became concerned that the structure and processes of the partnership were not conducive to producing the very best outcomes. A consultancy, Shared Intelligence, was commissioned to undertake a review of best practice nationally and to facilitate a workshop with both the Harrow Chief Executive's Group and the Chairs of the Management Groups. Amongst other things, the study identified six criteria for successful partnership working including adopting clear priorities, a fit for purpose structure, effective performance management, senior management buy-in, good communications and partnership development opportunities.

Work has been undertaken to define more closely the priorities identified by Harrow Chief Executives - which are Community Cohesion, Climate Change, Public Health, the Recession and the Total Place Transformation Programme - by commissioning baseline reports, action plans and milestones and the

performance management arrangements have been streamlined by bringing Management Group meetings onto the same pattern as Council Improvement Board meetings so that the same data can drive both performance management systems. Management Group Chairs will also be invited to every other Harrow Chief Executives meeting to address performance issues. The performance Management arrangements are set out in on the attached “data river” diagram.

Actions for the HSP Board

The Board are asked to receive the report of activities of Harrow Chief Executives.

Recommendations

That the Board agree to receive the report and agree to receive further regular reports from harrow Chief Executives