
REPORT OF CABINET

MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2009

Chairman: * Councillor David Ashton

Councillors: * Marilyn Ashton * Jean Lammiman
* Miss Christine Bednell * Barry Macleod-Cullinane
* Tony Ferrari * Paul Osborn
* Susan Hall * Mrs Anjana Patel

* Denotes Member present

[Note: Councillors Nana Asante, Graham Henson and Bill Stephenson also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 705 below.]

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION I - Revised Policies for Finance and Procurement

Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director Finance, which set out the revisions made, inter alia, to the following key strategy and policy governance documents: Contract Procedure Rules, Corporate Anti-Fraud Policy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Code of Corporate Governance. The Corporate Director stated that the changes placed an emphasis on sustainability and incorporated government regulations. Training would be provided.

The Leader of the Council emphasised the 'shop local' initiative, which formed part of the changes to the Contract Procedure Rules

Cabinet endorsed the revised documents and delegated authority to the Corporate Director Finance to make minor changes to the documents before submitting these to Council for adoption.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Contract Procedure Rules, Anti-Fraud Policy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Code of Corporate Governance be adopted.

Reason for Recommendation: To adhere to the requirements of the Council's Constitution following Cabinet's input to the revised suite of governance documents maintained by the Corporate Director Finance.

(See also Minute 710).

PART II - MINUTES701. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
7. Public Questions	Councillor Nana Asante	The Member declared a personal interest in that she was a member of the African Community. She would remain in the room whilst the questions were answered.
8. Councillor Questions	Councillor Graham Henson	The Member declared a personal interest in that he was an employee of the Post Office Counters Limited. He would remain in the room to ask his question and to receive the reply.
12. Future Organisation of Welldon Park First School and Welldon Park Middle School	Councillor John Nickolay	The Member declared a personal interest in that he was a governor of Welldon Park First and Welldon Park Middle Schools. He would remain in the room to listen to the debate and whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

702. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2009, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

703. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

704. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following public questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Jennifer Joseph (not present at the meeting)

Asked of: Councillor Jean Lammiman, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: "Is it not in the residents interests to be consulted as to the available funding for Black History Month (BHM)?"

Answer: The Black History Month is an important issue to me. During my year as Mayor, I attended many Black History Month (BHM) functions and pledged absolute support to the community in Harrow.

This is my response to Questions 1-7 and 10.

The Council supports and respects the celebration of all communities in Harrow. One of the Council's Corporate Priorities is to build strong communities by providing support to a range of events that reflects both the ethnic and faith diversity in the borough.

The Council has demonstrated its support of BHM over many years and continues to do so.

The funding available for BHM is communicated through the BHM Forum, which manages the organisation of events for the community. This Forum sets up a funding sub-group that makes decisions on the allocation of the funding to groups who apply to run events against a set of criteria, which are agreed with the Forum. The sum is not advertised as it is for the use of the Forum.

The Council set a budget of £5,000 for BHM this year (2009). This is five times as much as that for any other single community event but no meetings of the Forum took place and no approach for funding was made. The emails sent by the Council offering help with promotion apparently did not arrive, owing to an IT failure. I am sorry that this occurred but the Council had no knowledge of this failure until late October 2009.

Nevertheless, the Council responded positively to individual requests for support, such as for room hire for an event on 19 October 2009 and a contribution to the exhibition at Gayton Library. In addition, publicity was provided through Harrow People and the Council's on-line Faith, Community and Cultural Events calendar.

Despite an extremely difficult financial climate in 2007 when the Council was faced with making tough decisions about the funding of many services, the Council continued to support BHM with a budget of £5,000. Support to community activities comes in cash and kind from a range of Council services across the Council's Directorates and under a range of policies. Therefore, no overarching formal equality impact assessment was undertaken. The Council's approach to the delivery of community events relies heavily on working in partnership and, as a result, these events are only successful when community organisations take an active role in securing additional funding or providing in-kind support.

In relation to the activity in schools, Council officers have:

- 1) alerted schools to BHM dates and reminded them about previously supplied materials, for example, a curriculum pack containing resources linked to different areas of the curriculum;
- 2) made available a database of people willing to work in the schools;
- 3) provided a keynote presentation to all schools about the Black community's contribution to the development of Britain and the world.

As well as supporting BHM in this way, the Council's Achievement and Inclusion Service supports the development of effective teaching of Black History across the curriculum and across the year through planned training and effective use of the resource materials referred to above.

The Council has no plans to reduce the budget for BHM. I made this known at a recent meeting with one of the leaders from the Black community.

A planning meeting of the Forum has been organised for Thursday 10 December 2009 to look at ways that Black History events can be delivered during the remainder of 2009 by making use of the remaining budget and to begin planning for 2010. As Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, I will chair the meeting which will be held in the Council Chamber from 6.30 pm - 8.30 pm. Interested parties will be invited to the meeting and all questioners are welcome to attend the meeting.

2.

Questioner: Carolyn Soloman (not present at the meeting)

Asked of: Councillor Jean Lammiman, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: “Has Harrow Council conducted an Equality Impact Assessment on the impact of reducing the Black History Month (BHM) budget by 50% in 2006 when you took control of the Council, when other groups had funding cut by only 10%?”

Answer: See 1 above.

3.

Questioner: Sharon Blagrove (not present at the meeting)

Asked of: Councillor Jean Lammiman, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: “How did Harrow celebrate the Black History Month (BHM) this year?”

Answer: See 1 above.

4.

Questioner: Genevieve Smith (not present at the meeting)

Asked of: Councillor Jean Lammiman, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: “How and where do you publicise Black History Month (BHM)?”

Answer: See 1 above.

5.

Questioner: Jeremy Crook OBE (not present at the meeting)

Asked of: Councillor Jean Lammiman, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: “Will the Council ensure that BHM will continue to be valued and financially supported by the Council and in future ensure that black individuals and groups are effectively involved in developing Black History Month (BHM) plans each year?”

Answer: See 1 above.

6.

Questioner: Simon Jerome

Asked of: Councillor Jean Lammiman, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: “Does allocating funds after the event (October Black History Month - BHM) show the lack of understanding of the need for black History to be celebrated and the lack of respect the council has for the black community in Harrow?”

Answer: See 1 above.

Supplemental Question: I don't think the Councillor's statement answered my question, which is “does the allocation of funds after the event show lack of respect?”

Councillor David Ashton: The Council endeavours to provide a full response to all the questions. Councillor Jean Lammiman was very clear about

the budget made available each year. We want to promote the Black History Month but, it cannot be promoted by a confrontational political approach and the Council would like to work with the Black community in harmony.

7.

Questioner: Marika Panton

Asked of: Councillor Christine Bednell, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
(The question was answered by Councillor Jean Lammiman, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services.)

Question: "As there is no cohesion on how Black History Month (BHM) is celebrated in Harrow schools, what guidance does the Council give its teachers?"

Answer: See 1 above.

8.

Questioner: John Shahbazian

Asked of: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing

Question: "Are there any plans under section 75 to incorporate the commissioning of the 'Confidence For Life' course in Harrow?"

Answer: May I first inform Cabinet that I met with users of the Adults and Housing Services, including Mr Shahbazian, last week and that I will be meeting with carers tomorrow (13 November 2009) about the 'Confidence for Life' course, which is excellent.

The Council is currently reviewing its section 75 commissioning arrangements, which expire in 2010. The Council is examining which services should be commissioned given the limited resources whilst ensuring quality outcomes for the users.

I intend to involve Mr Shahbazian in the review process. The 'Confidence for Life' course is an element that the Council will be looking at seriously as part of its provision and support to those in the community with Mental Health issues.

Supplemental Question: The 'Confidence for Life' course finished yesterday. Does the Council intend to provide a bridging fund to carry it over until the new budget starts?

Supplemental Answer: The Council has sought a meeting with Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust to discuss the funding arrangements for the remainder of the financial year 2009/10.

The 'Confidence of Life' course and the many services that both organisations provide for people with mental health issues will be discussed at this meeting. I will keep Mr Shahbazian informed of developments and the date for the meeting.

9.

Questioner: Joan Penrose

Asked of: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing

Question: "Why has it taken so long for the Council Commissioners to consider the 'Confidence for Life' course when the outstanding outcomes of the course, both from the perspective of service users and their family carers, have been known since August 2007?"

Answer: In 2007/08, NHS Harrow (Formerly Harrow Primary Care Trust) and Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust agreed to fund a pilot of 'Confidence for Life' course in Harrow. This was run with an agreed evaluation process with participants, including family carers, and those users involved in developing that evaluation. Overall, the outcome was positive.

Nationally, the structure around 'Confidence for Life' has been one about vocational work and the Council will be ensuring that, as it takes the vocational strategy forward with the NHS Harrow, the Confidence for Life is a strand within that work.

However, the Council is aware the 'Confidence of Life' course is not purely about vocational work. It has a wider agenda, which is the well-being agenda. Therefore, the Council is examining how it can dovetail that into personal budgets.

As mentioned in my answer to the previous questioner, the Council is seeking a meeting with Central and the North West London NHS Foundation Trust with to discuss whether or not the 'Confidence for Life' course can be taken forward under the banner of personal budgets in order to attract funding. My understanding is that the course helps reduce some of those intensive interventions at crisis moments resulting, in my view, in an indirect saving for the health authorities.

Currently, mental health patients are under served by personal budgets so the 'Confidence for Life' course would offer an opportunity for Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust and the Council to take the agenda forward and improve services which matched those provided to other user groups.

Supplemental Question: 'Confidence for Life' considers the whole mental health population, not just the most able 50% as possibly being helped to get back to work. Will you take this on board?

Supplemental Answer: Yes, as mentioned in my answer to your question.

I hope that Ms Penrose will be involved in helping develop this aspect. The Council also intends to look beyond and consider the whole being of the person as part of the well-being agenda.

I intend to ensure that personal budgets are used to widen the scope of how services to people who are in quite difficult circumstances are provided.

10.

Questioner: Catherine Opong (not present at the meeting)

Asked of: Councillor Jean Lammiman, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: "Please could you explain why you did not make it clear to members of the black community that there was money available to be used for Black History Month?"

Answer: See 1 above

11.

Questioner: Lady Jean Fulcher, Hon Secretary, Flash Musicals (not present at the meeting)

Asked of: Councillor David Ashton, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnership and Finance

Question: "Can the Council explain how they expect Flash Musicals to pay £25,000 rent without any core funding from the Council?"

Answer: Firstly, I would like to express my appreciation for the work undertaken by the Flash Musicals, which I know is very much appreciated by the community.

Flash Musicals currently occupy premises which are owned by the Council's Housing Revenue Account and statute therefore compels the Council to seek and receive market rent for the asset, thereby preventing the property being let at a subsidised rent. The current rent is £25,000 per annum.

When it became apparent to the Council that an economic rent should be charged for the property, the Council worked very hard to put in place transitional arrangements.

During the course of 2008/09 the Council's Young People Services were able to offer a 'one off' Service Level Agreement of £10,000 and Community Services provided a 'one off' Service Level Agreement of £15,000, which I personally approved. In effect, this guaranteed the first year's rent.

The Council did not stand back and leave Flash Musicals unsupported after setting up the Service Level Agreements. During regular meetings advice was given to Flash Musicals on making applications to grant giving bodies and encouragement provided to sign up to the Council's One-4-One programme to provide the organisation with voluntary administration and possible fundraising support. As it presently stands, I am unaware of Flash Musicals taking up the One-4-One offer.

When the Service Level Agreements were set up, Flash Musicals was advised that in year funding was dependent upon satisfactory performance and Flash Musicals met and surpassed these expectations. No commitment from the Council was given beyond the SLAs for 2008/09, and thereafter Flash Musicals would be treated like any other local voluntary organisation.

Indeed, for the last 2-3 years we worked with Flash Musicals in order to ensure that the organisation was aware of the support available from the Council and when and how applications ought to be made. The administrators of the Grants Panel, Children and Young People's Fund, Positive Activities for Young People and Youth Opportunities Fund have ensured that Flash Musicals had all the relevant information in good time to make a grant application to cover this year but none was received.

I am of the view that over the last 2-3 years Harrow Council has worked appropriately to assist Flash Musicals in moving forward to a more secure financial footing, and would not agree with the suggestion that the Council alone is responsible for the core funding of the organisation.

The importance of Flash Musicals to the borough is accepted and I wish it every success in seeking to develop a broad range of funding streams.

We take our responsibilities seriously but also expect the organisations that we work with to take their role seriously too.

705. **Councillor Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note the following Councillor Questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor Jean Lammiman, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: “In the Forward Plan mention is made of a tender for ‘the procurement of a new Sports and Leisure Contract’ and for Cabinet on Jan 14 to ‘agree a facilities mix’. Can Councillor Lammiman assure me that if the ‘facilities mix’ includes anything more than the current three sports facilities - the Leisure Centre, Hatch End Pool, Bannister Athletic Track - run by Leisure Connection, then there will be the fullest consultation with all appropriate stakeholders including Councillors?”

Answer: Yes, a report to Cabinet on 14 January 2010 is likely to advise Members on the financial and managerial consequences for the mix of facilities and services to be incorporated in the proposed service specification. Once the preferred option has been approved, full consultation with Councillors and Stakeholders will be undertaken, as part of the commissioning process.

Supplemental Question: Would you agree that outsourcing the management of any of our sports and leisure facilities which are not already outsourced such as libraries and the Harrow Arts Centre, would be a major decision which should not be taken without cross-party agreement before the Council elections in less than six months time, without the fullest consultation of stakeholders and partners involved in the particular services? Can you assure me that no final decision will be taken until after the Council elections have taken place?

Supplemental Answer: I agree that it is a major decision and one that should not be entered into lightly. As mentioned in my answer, there will be full consultation on this matter and part of that will be the timing.

2.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Portfolio Holder for Environment Services and Community Safety

Question: “I notice that there is no mention of the 10:10 campaign in the Forward Plan. Does the Council intend to sign up to this campaign?”

Answer: No. The Council is aware of the 10:10 Campaign. For those of you who are not, it encourages individuals and organisations to reduce their carbon use for 2010 to a percentage figure of 10%. This is what the campaign organisers believe is achievable by people and organisations that do not currently do anything in this area.

However, the Council is taking action to reduce energy and fuel use, such as the “switch it off” campaign. The Council uses motion detectors to ensure lights only stay on when they need to be, and of course, it has just renewed its fleet, which will help reduce the Council’s carbon footprint greatly.

We are very happy to encourage people and everyone to reduce their carbon footprint but on the Climate Change Strategy, which was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting in September 2009, the Council committed itself to a challenging but realistic target of reducing its carbon footprint by at least 4%.

This Council is being realistic and upfront with the people of Harrow. The Council will endeavour to do better than the 4% target but, nevertheless, 4% is realistic target for this administration.

Supplemental Question: Is Councillor Hall aware that neighbouring Brent Council has signed up to 10:10 Campaign, as has Harrow’s Agenda 21. Would she agree that it is a pity that Harrow Council cannot match Brent Council nor satisfy the aspirations of Harrow’s Agenda 21 group? Can she provide some assurance to our young people and members of Youth Parliament present that

the Council is serious about cutting carbon emissions?

Supplemental Answer:

The Council could sign up to the 10:10 campaign but it would be very disingenuous when it does not believe that the target can be achieved. However, the Council believes it can reach 4% and will endeavour to improve on this figure.

Brent Council may be coming from an absolute zero position. Harrow Council has been trying to put measures in place for a number of years. The Council has to commit to a target that can be delivered.

The Council has many old buildings that are not easy to make environmentally friendly, so therefore 4% is the realistic figure.

3.

Questioner: Councillor Graham Henson

Asked of: Councillor David Ashton, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnership and Finance

Question: "What representation has Harrow Council made regarding: i) the future of Post Office Services in South Harrow, ii) the future of access to Post Offices in London Borough of Harrow (LBH), iii) what work/transactions are the LBH looking at putting through Post Offices?"

Answer: Regarding the first two sub-sets of your question, subsequent to receipt of the two petitions at the meeting of Council, the Chief Executive has written to Adam Crozier, Chief Executive of Royal Mail, advising of the Council's serious concerns in respect of the recent sudden and unexpected closure of South Harrow Post Office, and generally regarding the availability of Post Office services across Harrow.

At the same time, the Chief Executive has requested a high level meeting with the Post Office, which our two MPs will be asked to attend.

I also understand that London Councils is likely to transfer the issuing of Freedom Passes to Post Offices from the present arrangements but at this stage I am not aware of any new transactions that the Post Office, probably across the country, not particularly in Harrow, will be asked to undertake on behalf of the Council.

I will read out the letter, which has been sent to Adam Crozier by the Council's Chief Executive.

At our Council meeting on 29th October 2009, the Authority adopted the following Motion, in relation to the South Harrow Post Office, which reads as follows:

"This Council notes with great concern the recent closure of the South Harrow Post Office in Northolt Road, forcing their customers, including elderly or infirm, to travel to either central Harrow or Northolt to access their services.

Council also notes that when this Post Office was franchised, Post Office Ltd stated that it was to protect the ongoing Post Office Services within South Harrow shopping centre.

Council agrees that the Post Office is a vital service for residents and businesses within their area and any closures will have a major impact on the local business community.

Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to set up an urgent meeting with Post Office Ltd (POL), involving the local ward Councillors, with a view to getting the urgent reinstatement of Post Office services in South Harrow.

Council, further, instructs the Chief Executive to set up follow-up meetings with POL to discuss future Post Office service provision in Harrow, in particular, to ensure the long term protection of current services”.

In accordance with the terms of the Motion, I (Council's Chief Executive) request a meeting with you to discuss future Post Office service provision in Harrow. An officer from my Democratic Services team will be in contact with you to set this up.'

I have also seen recently a letter from Post Office Services Ltd indicating a consultation on Post Offices in the Sudbury Hill area, which is rather worrying. The Council will also respond to it.

Supplemental Question:

The longer the closure of South Harrow Post Office continues, the more difficult it will be to get the customers to go back to South Harrow. The issue is about the transactions Harrow Council can put through the Post Offices when drawing up its budget in the next few months.

Apart from the Freedom Passes, what other services could the Council put through the Post Offices and would the Council's Chief Executive raise this matter with the Chief Executive of Royal Mail Group Limited, Adam Crozier, when he meets with him?

Supplemental Answer:

The difficulty is, that the provision of Council services through the Post Offices works particularly well in rural Post Offices. The first benefit is its closer to residents who otherwise have to travel possibly to a central location or a Civic Centre, and secondly, it is cheaper from the point of view of the local authority because it can make the service, which is otherwise rather more centrally located, spread out across the rural sub-Post Offices.

This arrangements works less well in an urban environment like Harrow because the odds are, if the Council is not careful, it will pass elements of business it carries out and wind up incurring a cost. There will be a charge levied on the Council by the Post Office whilst, at the same time, the Council will continue to incur the cost of providing the service. But certainly, conceptually, I see no reason why when speaking to the Chief Executive of Royal Mail Group Limited, Adam Crozier, the Council cannot raise this matter.

4.

Questioner: Councillor Nana Asante

Asked of: Councillor David Ashton, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnership and Finance

Question: “Can the Leader of the Council confirm that Harrow Council understands the concept of Full Cost Recovery when it deals with the Voluntary and Community Sector?”

Response: The Council certainly understands the concept of full cost recovery. The accounting rules for local government require us to calculate the full cost of our services, including all overheads, so that we can compare our costs with other authorities. Thus for local government, the method for calculation of the full cost of a service is prescribed. Councils have to recover costs through a combination of government grants, council tax, fees and charges and so forth.

Sometimes fees and charges are based on the concept of full cost recovery for a specific service, although many council services are free at the point of delivery or heavily subsidised.

I recognise that for the Voluntary and Community Sector there are considerable challenges involved with raising funds to cover specific project costs, as well as core running costs and overheads; and some funders are more willing than others to support high profile projects and less willing to cover core costs. There may also be exit costs when projects are completed and secured funding might not cover these. So full cost recovery is even more of an issue during a recession when access to funds is more restricted, and the Council is working with the third sector in this regard.

Supplemental Question:

Thank you for the comprehensive answer but could I ask that if the Council does indeed understand cost recovery and you explained in local government terms what that means, why is it that when the Council is dealing with the community and voluntary sector, it suddenly expects the sector not to recover their costs? It actually breaches the Compact.

For example, Flash Musicals is expected to support Delivering Harrow, it is expected to actually work for 25% of box office when it has costs to recover, especially when the Council is asking for £25,000 rent.

Supplemental Answer:

You indicated that the Council has not met the Compact. As a result, I will not answer the supplementary question but I would like you to put this matter in writing to me and I will respond in writing.

706. **Forward Plan 1 November 2009 - 28 February 2010:**

The Leader of the Council advised that the item on the Third Sector Strategy had been deferred to the December 2009 Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 November 2009 to 28 February 2010.

707. **Progress on Scrutiny Projects:**

RESOLVED: To receive and note the current progress of the scrutiny reports.

708. **Recession Busting Committee:**

Cabinet received a motion on the Recession Busting Committee that was referred from Council meeting held on 29 October 2009.

RESOLVED: That the Motion be received and noted.

709. **Calendar of Meetings 2010/11:**

Cabinet received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services, which set out the proposals for the Council's Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2010/11.

RESOLVED: That the Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2010/11 be approved.

Reason for Decision: To approve the Calendar of Meetings on an annual basis at this time of the year for the succeeding Municipal Year. To facilitate the planning and forward commitments of both Members and officers. To allow the room booking arrangements to be put in place at the earliest opportunity.

710. **Revised Policies for Finance and Procurement:**

Further to Recommendation I, Cabinet also considered the following revised documents: Procurement Strategy, Debt Management Policy and Information Management Policies.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Procurement Strategy, Debt Management Policy and Information Management Policies be endorsed;

(2) the Corporate Director Finance be authorised to make further minor changes to all the documents should these be necessary, including those recommended to Council.

711. **Council Insurance Contracts Tender:**
The Corporate Director Finance introduced the report, which outlined recent developments regarding the cessation of operation by the London Authorities Mutual Limited (LAML) following litigation, and the progress made in placing alternative insurance arrangements.
- On a positive note, the litigation appeared to have had some impact generally. Amendments to the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Bill, which, if enacted, would permit the setting up of Mutuals such as a LAML in the future.
- The Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing were disappointed that an imaginative proposals had been thwarted. Clarification of the law would assist when the Bill was enacted.
- RESOLVED:** That (1) the effect of the outcome of the legal challenge to the London Authorities Mutual Limited be noted;
- (2) the consortium approach to securing long-term insurance cover be noted;
- (3) the Leader of the Council be authorised to award the contract.
- Reason for Decision:** To enable a timely decision to enter into new insurance contracts to be made as soon as the tender results were available.
712. **Key Decision: Future Organisation of Welldon Park First School and Welldon Park Middle School:**
Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Schools and Children's Development, which set out the outcome of the statutory consultation about the future organisation of Welldon Park First and Middle Schools and the recommendations of the governing bodies that the two schools be not amalgamated at present.
- The Leader of the Council updated the reason for not agreeing the amalgamation.
- The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development explained why the amalgamation had been mooted and consulted on in view of the Council's amalgamation policy agreed in October 2007. The majority response from both schools had been against the amalgamation of the two schools for logistic reasons.
- The Schools and Children's Development Director stated that, unusually, the two schools were located on separate sites. She advised that the retention of the two schools was sustainable and was pleased to report that the schools had a close working relationship, which would ensure that the good education standards were maintained.
- RESOLVED:** That (1) the outcome of the statutory consultation and the recommendations of the governing bodies of Welldon Park First and Middle Schools be noted;
- (2) due to compelling and over-riding reasons, Welldon Park First and Middle Schools be not amalgamated at present.
- Reason for Decision:** Amalgamation of the two schools at this time would not bring significant benefits to the education and welfare of the pupils. There was no significant stakeholder support for amalgamation, and the usual economies could not be realised because the two schools were on separate sites.
713. **Key Decision: Roxbourne First School Nursery Class:**
The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development introduced the report, which set out the outcome of the statutory consultation on the proposed establishment of a nursery class at Roxbourne First School from September 2010. The report also included the recommendation of the School's governing body, which was unanimously in favour of establishing a nursery class at the school, and that it had the support of the school community.
- The Portfolio Holder stated that the proposal was to establish a 60-place nursery class for 3-4 year old children at Roxbourne First School from September 2010. Whilst some concerns had been expressed by existing private and voluntary pre-school sector providers that there was capacity in their sector and the proposal would challenge their sustainability, the proposal was not seen as a significant threat. In addition, the birth rate in Harrow was increasing and the proposal would help accommodate the expected demand. She commended the proposal to Cabinet.

The Schools and Children's Development Director stated that there was a need to increase nursery school provision in the borough. In addition, no capital costs were anticipated as a result of the proposal because the nursery class would be located in an existing classroom. The nursery school would also complement the planned Children's Centre at Roxbourne First School.

RESOLVED: That (1) the outcome of the statutory consultation and the recommendation of the Roxbourne First School's governing body be noted;

(2) statutory proposals be published which, if approved, would establish a 60 place nursery class for 3-4 year olds at Roxbourne First School from September 2010;

(3) the statutory proposals were a prescribed alteration to extend the age range of Roxbourne First School to establish a school with an age range of 4 years (Reception) to 7 years (Year 2) with attached nursery class from September 2010.

Reason for Decision: To establish the full Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the School. To provide continuity and secure higher attainment for those children entering the nursery and then being admitted to Roxbourne First School reception classes. To provide continuity which would significantly benefit the majority of children whose second language was English.

714. **Key Decision: Neighbourhood Champions:**

The Divisional Director Environmental Services introduced the report, which proposed a project to develop a network of volunteers called Neighbourhood Champions to enhance contact with the public with a view to improving and promoting the cleaner and safer street work of the Council and the police at a local level. The project would form part of the Council's key priorities of delivering cleaner and safer streets.

The Divisional Director stated that the proposal had received wide coverage in the media. He informed Cabinet that the project, if approved, would be promoted through existing and respected Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, and would build on the existing good relationships between the Council and Harrow Police. It would also help to alert the police on issues concerning criminal activity. Volunteers would be trained and briefed on their roles. The proposal would also benefit the Council's Volunteering Scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment Services and Community Safety stressed that the scheme was not about snooping or spying on residents. Instead it was about the return of old fashioned community spirit, and giving Harrow residents the opportunity to get actively involved in helping to deliver cleaner and safer streets. She offered to explain the merits of the proposal to the media. Cabinet was informed that it was intended to launch the project in January 2010.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the groundbreaking project.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Neighbourhood Champions project be introduced;

(2) a two-phased launch programme with details to be decided by the Portfolio Holder for Environment Services and Community Safety in conjunction with the Corporate Director Community and Environment be agreed.

Reason for Decision: To support community involvement in the work of the Council. To contribute to ensuring cleaner and safer streets.

(See also Minutes 715 and 716)

715. **Key Decision: Safer Harrow - Borough-wide Anti Burglary Project:**

The Divisional Director Environmental Services introduced the report, which proposed a crime reduction campaign to assist in both the detection and deterrence of crime. As part of the campaign, a traceable liquid property-marking product would be made available, free of charge, on request by households in the borough.

The Divisional Director commended to Cabinet the practical approach to reducing crime and stated that the proposal would be delivered in partnership with Harrow's Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs). There would be a focus on areas which suffered from increased levels of crime. The next stage was to go through a procurement process.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment Services and Community Safety was proud of this proposal, which was unique in London. She highlighted the negative impact of burglary

and the damage it caused to people. The proposal would assist residents of Harrow and help to increase confidence in the police and the Council.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the proposal, which when linked to the project on Neighbourhood Champions would help make the borough a better place and help deter crime.

RESOLVED: That (1) a project for the “one-off” distribution of a traceable property marking product to be made available on request to all households in Harrow, free of charge through a defined roll out programme;

(2) the procurement of a suitable product, with the award of the contract be agreed at a future Cabinet meeting;

(3) the programme for the roll out of the product be decided by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety in conjunction with the Corporate Director Community and Environment, with priority being given to areas where there was a greatest impact on perceptions of levels of crime;

(4) evaluation of the project to be through the Safer Harrow Partnership.

Reason for Decision: To support the reduction and detection of crime, particularly burglary, and provide the assurance of community safety through the Safer Harrow Partnership.

(See also Minute 714)

716. **Harrow Youth Parliament:**

During the course of the meeting, the Leader of the Council welcomed members of the Harrow Youth Parliament to the meeting and invited them to address Cabinet on the work being carried out by the Youth Parliament.

Representatives of the Harrow Youth Parliament described the purpose of the Parliament and their achievements to date, details of which were set out in a paper circulated to Cabinet at the meeting. Of particular note were:

- four of their members represented Harrow at the UK Parliament which was an achievement to be applauded;
- Harrow Youth Parliament was in dialogue with a number of organisations, including the local NHS about the recent services changes;
- the production of the Harrow Children and Young People’s Plan 2009/11;
- a Be Healthy Sub-Group which had marketed free smoothie drinks at events to help promote a ‘five-a-day’ culture into the diets of young people;
- the work being carried out with the Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator;
- the desire to introduce sport based activities on the lead up to the 2012 Olympic Games in London;
- the launch of the anti-bullying coalition which aimed to bring together all organisations tackling bullying in Harrow. The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board had met with the Youth Offending Team to discuss how bullying could be reduced;
- a drive to involve young people from all walks of life to join Harrow Youth Parliament.

The Harrow Youth Parliament asked Cabinet to continue supporting them on the work being carried out and sought advice on an idea for a Harrow Youth Concession Card, which would be targeted at 11-18 year olds. The card related to the Council’s ‘shop local’ campaign.

The Leader of the Council complimented and thanked members of the Youth Parliament for their presentation. He stated that the proposed concession card which the Council had considered was a challenge but, welcomed the incorporation of youth concession within the proposal.

A number of the Portfolio Holders applauded the work being carried out by the Harrow Youth Parliament and commended the various challenges that were being addressed, particularly bullying which could seriously hamper the lives of young people. Whilst knife crime was not an issue for Harrow, it was important that a dialogue with the people of Harrow was ongoing to ensure that Harrow did not suffer from this type of crime. The Youth Parliament members were also encouraged to get involved in the proposed Neighbourhood Champions initiative.

The Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing suggested that the Youth Parliament might want to look at the lives of young people in Harrow who were also carers, and provide them with support. The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise invited and encouraged the Youth Parliament to contribute in a planning document, the Local Development Framework (LDF), which would help place shape Harrow in the future.

In her capacity as a former Mayor, the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, encouraged the Youth Parliament to take the Youth Mayor initiative forward. She mentioned the work being carried out by the Council's cross party 'Championing Harrow towards 2012' initiative.

The Corporate Director Children's Services stated that it was a pleasure to work with the Youth Parliament and thanked Cabinet for welcoming them.

The Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services supported the Youth Parliament's initiatives. The Leader of the Council suggested bi-monthly meetings with him commencing January 2010.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Harrow Youth Parliament be commended for their work;

(2) bi-monthly meetings be held between the Leader of the Council and representatives of the Harrow Youth Parliament.

(See also Minute 714)

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.47 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR DAVID ASHTON
Chairman