

REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	15 July 2010
Subject:	Better Deal for Residents Programme: Shaping Harrow for the Future
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Michael Lockwood, Chief Executive Tom Whiting, Assistant Chief Executive
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report lays out the next steps for the Council's Better Deal for Residents Programme: Shaping Harrow for the Future.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Instruct Officers to undertake such consultation as is appropriate to inform decision-making on the proposals set out in this report;

2. Agree to the further evaluation of proposals 6.1 to 6.41, and such other projects as may be agreed between Corporate Directors and their Portfolio Holders, subject to the development of business cases and to appropriate consultation; and
3. Note that when detailed business cases have been developed and appropriate consultation undertaken, the proposals will be submitted to Cabinet before they are implemented.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To enable the Council to deliver its part of the Sustainable Community Strategy while developing a sound financial platform for the next three years.

Section 2 – Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In July 2009 Cabinet considered the significant funding challenges ahead and agreed to establish a Council wide transformation programme called the ‘Better Deal for Residents Programme.’
- 1.2. This report to Cabinet looks to take the Better Deal for Residents Programme forward but to lay out a vision and to set a direction of travel for services across the Council and partners.
- 1.3. The Better Deal for Residents Programme acknowledged that given the scale of challenges ahead an approach was required to reviewing Council services that was transformational and not incremental. It was recognised that the Council would face some very difficult choices in the medium term.
- 1.4. The Programme has five key workstreams:
 - Cross Council Efficiency Review – to identify opportunities for combining processes across the Council and with partners where there are similarities in process.

- Better Together - Opportunities to engage residents to change their behaviours to improve outcomes and have a positive financial impact.
 - Future Operating Model - To look at the whether there are better ways of providing Council services and whether there is an expanded role that could be played by the voluntary sector.
 - Service Efficiency Programme - Continuing current business process re-engineering with services and ensuring services are efficient and effective, employing best practice techniques for process reengineering and improvement.
 - Place Shaping and Property – Ensure that development meets the needs of all residents and businesses, without compromising the well being of future generations and consolidate the Council’s asset footprint around a number of sites including a new civic centre. This involves providing a blueprint for the development and regeneration of Harrow for the longer term.
- 1.5. The Better Deal for Residents Programme: Shaping Harrow for the Future looks ahead for the next three years and will position the Council to achieve the following vision:
- Being a more efficient and effective organisation that can live within its means
 - Enabling staff to work more effectively and productively
 - Reducing levels of administration and overheads
 - Services realigned to live within our means
 - Joining up and personalising customer service for our residents
 - Improved customer service and providing more joined up services when residents contact the Council
 - More services provided in collaboration with local partners
 - Personalise services and promote independence giving power to residents to decide what services meet their needs
 - Online citizen accounts tailored for individuals
 - Building on the community spirit of residents to be more involved in the future of their Borough
 - Lowest cost channels used to transact with the Council cutting the cost of paper trails
 - Looking after and taking care of the environment

- Supporting neighbours, families and friends with needs

2. Background

Sustainable Community Strategy

- 2.1. The Council's plans build on the Sustainable Community Strategy that was adopted at Council in March 2009. It establishes a vision for Harrow such that by 2020 Harrow will be recognised for:
- Integrated and co-ordinated quality services, which focus on preventing problems and putting users in control, offering access and choice.
 - Environmental, economic and community sustainability.
 - Improving the quality of life, by reducing inequalities, empowering the community voice, promoting respect and being the safest borough in London.

Financial Outlook

- 2.2. Nationally the public sector debt and the macroeconomic climate has received much coverage. The Council was able to foresee the funding challenges and difficult choices that would lie ahead and has already drawn up contingency plans.
- 2.3. The Council has already delivered over £45m worth of savings since 2006/07 to close funding gaps and has built its reserves up to over £6m.
- 2.4. The medium term financial outlook for Local Government has deteriorated further and this has significant implications for the Council's medium term position. In the current Medium Term Financial Strategy funding gaps for the next three years are estimated at £16m for 2011/12, £14m for 2012/13 and a similar gap is expected for 2013/14. In total this means that the Council will need to generate savings worth approximately 30% of its current controllable cost base in the next three years.
- 2.5. The financial situation has further deteriorated with the allocation of £1.2bn of in year cuts to Local Government. The situation is not unique to Harrow. The total funding cut for Harrow is £3.95m within 2010/11. This has come about since the Council agreed its budgets in February 2010 and is especially challenging when the Council is already nearing the end of Quarter 1 of the financial year.
- 2.6. Further cuts to Local Government funding were laid out in the budget on June 23rd 2010 although the precise amounts will not be known until this autumn.

- 2.7. The Council can not fall back on reserves to cover in year cuts. Furthermore the Council must be prudent in investing revenue now for future savings.

Residents' Expectations

- 2.8. Overall levels of residents' satisfaction with the Council are still too low. In particular in the latest Reputation Tracker survey that the Council undertakes, 52% Residents are satisfied with the services the Council provides and 23% are dissatisfied. This is an overall net satisfaction figure of 29% and this compares to net satisfaction of 17% in 2007.
- 2.9. The number of residents who believe that the Council offers value for money is 35% with 33% disagreeing. This is a net score of 2% and compares to -14% in 2007. While these figures show improvement overall agreement levels are too low.
- 2.10. National research has been undertaken by Mori and shows that 75% of Residents believe that the current public sector debt can be resolved without any impact on front line services.
- 2.11. Research undertaken in Northamptonshire showed that when residents were asked about which services were most critical to them and should not be cut, these added up to 90% of the Council's spend. This points to significant challenges ahead in consulting with residents and in communicating the Council's plans where it will be difficult to meet residents' expectations of services.

Development and Regeneration of the Borough as a Place to Live

- 2.12. The Local Development Framework (LDF) Draft Core Strategy sets out the long term spatial vision and strategic objectives for the Borough. The draft core strategy has been subject to extensive public consultation. It identifies the central area of Harrow for significant and positive change over the next 15 years and beyond. This area is to be formally recognised in the revised London Plan.
- 2.13. The new Intensification Area offers a significant opportunity for urban renewal and intensification, and will provide the impetus for the rejuvenation of Harrow Town Centre, together with the regeneration of the Wealdstone district centre.
- 2.14. Capacity exists to deliver substantial employment growth through retail, office and hotel development within the town centre. The Wealdstone area provides an ideal opportunity for the development of new industrial and other business use, with much needed additional housing being provided on a number of sites throughout the area.
- 2.15. This new development will be supported with new or enhanced public service facilities, e.g. health centre, leisure centre, cultural facilities and a new integrated public services civic centre.

- 2.16. It is recognised that the current economic difficulties will stretch the delivery period for these much needed new facilities. However, the recession provides the ideal opportunity for long term planning. It is intended to present the Central Harrow Area Action Plan for consultation by the end 2010.
- 2.17. A new Major Developments Panel is also being established at July Cabinet. This will be a cross party Panel with co-opted advisors. The Panel will oversee the development of the Harrow & Wealdstone Intensification Area and individual major development (strategic) sites.
- 2.18. There are some positive signals from the market currently. The Honeypot Lane development is being progressed, with increased two bedroom units and a reduction in studio and one bedroom apartments. There is interest in the Bentley Priory Site and Kodak will bring forward proposals in the current year for consultation.

3. Options Considered

- 3.1. The Council has identified a number of proposals below for which it is looking to identify business cases and on which it will undertake consultation.
- 3.2. In developing these proposals the Council has considered a range of options within each of the workstreams in its Better Deal for Residents Programme.
- 3.3. The Cross Council Efficiency review mapped all of the Councils full time staff to 36 standard business processes to identify opportunities for simplifying, standardising and sharing processes. In doing so the Council has worked with staff to develop a range of options for:
 - Customer Contact
 - Assessments
 - Spans of Control
 - Mobile and Flexible Working
 - General Administration
 - Performance Management
 - Strategy and Research
- 3.4. The Future Operating Model workstream has again worked with staff to develop options for the following service areas:
 - Libraries, Arts and Leisure
 - Parking
 - Public Realm
 - Corporate Services
 - Special Needs Transport

- 3.5. The Better Together workstream worked with Populus and Experian to identify where Residents could improve the effectiveness of public services. This included looking at:
- Physical Activity
 - Changing Tenant Behaviour
 - Anti Social Behaviour
 - Community Assets
 - Neighbourhood Responsibility
 - Responsibility for Care
 - Car Usage
- 3.6. The Place Shaping and Property workstream has worked with local partners to look at over 150 local sites to address opportunities for more joined up service delivery. A review has also been undertaken of all property holdings to identify non core assets.
- 3.7. The Service Efficiency Programme has looked at opportunities for introducing Lean process improvement techniques to involve staff in improving the effectiveness of services. This workstream has also considered a range of options for realigning services within Directorates to enable the Council to work with fewer resources. These opportunities include:
- Joint Procurement of Major Care Contracts across West London
 - Leaseholder Services
 - Range of projects in Adults Services
 - Housing Ambition Plan
 - Resourcing
 - Leaving Care
 - Children's Services Organisation
- 3.8. The Council has reviewed its current IT platforms and their suitability to deliver business transformation and their ability to support the level of efficiency and saving that needs to be delivered. This exercise has examined what IT the Council requires as well as the best approach for delivering an improvement. The conclusion of this exercise is presented to this Cabinet with a recommended option for delivering an improved IT service that will underpin business transformation.

4. Why a change is needed

- 4.1. The analysis of the background information demonstrates that there are four key drivers for the Council in developing proposals as part of its Better Deal for Residents Programme.
- A Sustainable Community Strategy was launched in 2009 which represents the Harrow Strategic Partnership's vision for what it would like to deliver in Harrow.

- Residents believe that the current public sector debt can be resolved without impacting services and levels of satisfaction with Harrow's services are still too low.
 - The future funding outlook and imposition of £3.95m of in year cuts means that the Council will need to save approximately 30% of its controllable cost base in the next 3 years.
- 4.2. The Better Deal for Residents Programme seeks to address these challenges and to minimise the impact this will have on Harrow's residents.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. The Council will launch an overall consultation with residents on its plans. Proposals contained in this report to Cabinet show a direction of travel. Consultation is planned with residents on the overall package of proposals and the difficult choices that the Council faces.
- 5.2. In particular specific consultation will be required with users of Children's and Adults' social care services. Adult services are planning to launch a major consultation with stakeholders in the Autumn. This will describe the financial context for the service over the next few years and consider options for delivering a sustainable service. The consultation will be fully inclusive of all stakeholder and designed to ensure all voices are heard. This process will shape the choices which may then need fuller detailed consultation. A starting point will be a determination from the council to avoid tightening eligibility criteria. Some of the options that will be considered would be users financial contribution for services, entitlement to transport, the future shape of the meals on wheels service. Adults Services will conclude their work reviewing voluntary sector service level agreements.
- 5.3. Any consultation will be sympathetic to the specific needs and circumstances of service users.

6. Recommended Proposal

- 6.1. The Better Deal for Residents Programme has been running for 12 months. The Council has established a vision for how it will transform its services over the medium term. This includes:
- **Being a more efficient and effective organisation that can live within its means**
 - Enabling staff to work more effectively and productively
 - Reducing levels of administration and overheads
 - Services realigned to live within our means

- **Joining up and personalising customer service for our residents**
 - Improved customer service and providing more joined up services when residents contact the Council
 - More services provided in collaboration with local partners
 - Personalise services and promote independence giving power to residents to decide what services meet their needs
 - Online citizen accounts tailored for individuals
 - **Building on the community spirit of residents to be more involved in the future of their Borough**
 - Lowest cost channels used to transact with the Council cutting the cost of paper trails
 - Looking after and taking care of the environment
 - Supporting neighbours, families and friends with needs
- 6.2. The following proposals lay out the initial steps for how this vision will be achieved and will be subject to the development of business cases and further consultation. Authority is also sought to progress such other ideas which meet the objectives of the programme as may be agreed between Corporate Directors and Portfolio Holders
- 6.3. The Council is also looking for its Better Deal for Residents Programme to lead to the spatial development and regeneration of the Borough through the development of proposals around property and place shaping. Critically this will include steps to support the regeneration of the town centre.

Being a more efficient and effective organisation that can live within its means

Enabling staff to work more effectively and productively

- 6.4. Council workers will be expected to be more mobile and flexible in how they work and how they use office space. Investment in technology will enable staff to hot desk more effectively, work from home where appropriate and update records without having to come back into the office.
- 6.5. A consultation will be launched with staff on the future delivery of an improved IT service to underpin the Better Deal for Residents Programme. This will see an upgrade of existing IT infrastructure to support the future delivery of savings and smarter more modern ways of working. The transformation required for mobile and flexible working, general administration and customer contact can not be

delivered from existing IT platforms and therefore a strategic improvement in IT is required. The next steps for IT are subject to a further paper to this Cabinet.

- 6.6. Tiers and levels of management will be brought under tighter control so that managers are managing a larger number of people and there are fewer tiers between Corporate Directors and front line staff.
- 6.7. The Council will put the very latest technology into the hands of the Public Realm staff which will make our streets even cleaner by more efficient mobile working, tracking, route planning and improving links to our residents. Integration between Access Harrow and the Streets and Grounds Maintenance service will be improved. In addition to these technological solutions a change management programme will review and revise current working practices and an organizational redesign will also be undertaken to align with new ways of working. The Council will also undertake an exercise to compare the various options for providing services and giving value for money.

Reducing levels of administration and overheads

- 6.8. A review of administration support at the Council will be undertaken with the aim of reducing spend by creating a new hub and spoke model for administration staff that will also improve the quality of administration support available.
- 6.9. A review will be undertaken to bring together and improve the effectiveness of performance, strategy, research and consultation staff across the Council.
- 6.10. In the mid to long term, plans will be developed for a new 21st century Civic Centre that will be able to contribute towards the regeneration of the town centre. Plans will be developed with local partners to leverage a new Civic Centre as an opportunity to join up services with local residents.

Services realigned to live within our means

- 6.11. Opportunities will be progressed with the West London Alliance of Councils to improve the value for money of home care provider contracts. The West London Councils have been working together to jointly procure home care contracts and to save money, while maintaining standards, through improved negotiation and bulk purchasing. This opportunity is covered in a further item on the agenda for this Cabinet.
- 6.12. A review of Special Needs Transport will be undertaken which may include the development of travel training and volunteering to support the service.

- 6.13. A consultation will be launched on the future levels of funding available to voluntary sector organisations to deliver services on behalf of the Council.
- 6.14. A review will be undertaken of the administration of concessionary travel as this is currently disjointed. This will consider the introduction of a single mobility assessment for customers.
- 6.15. A consultation will be launched on Teenage Placements and will examine options for the type of provision presently in place and plans to meet the changing needs of our older Looked After Children. The next steps for Teenage Placements are subject to a further paper to this Cabinet.
- 6.16. A realignment of children's services will be completed to deliver a new multi agency front desk and redesigned services in support.
- 6.17. Property assets that are no longer core to the business of the Council will be decommissioned and disposed of when favourable market conditions are available.
- 6.18. The Property and Infrastructure service within Community and Environment was created to take on the complete technical construction and maintenance delivery role for the Council's response to the major levels of capital investment available through the Decent Homes, One School Pathfinder, Post 16, Petts Hill, TFL and general Harrow capital programmes. The level of capital works from 2007-9 exceeded £150M. The scale of this work is forecast to decrease significantly, and quickly. All of the programmes are now approaching their end and future short-term capital, whether external or internal, will be severely reduced to the extent that structural change is required. The challenge for Property and Infrastructure over the short to medium term is very different to that 2 – 3 years ago. Reductions in finance within a project delivery based part of the organization, inevitably results in need to reduce staffing levels particularly at a senior management level within the service.
- 6.19. The Council will revive plans for combining the central and Civic Centre libraries into a community hub and also seek to create a local history centre at Headstone Manor. Where possible the Council will develop libraries as community hubs which are open and used longer than at present by a wider range of people. An overall blueprint proposal for Arts, Libraries and Leisure will be developed and brought to a future Cabinet meeting prior to public consultation.
- 6.20. Parking provision by the Council requires continuing evaluation to look at the most efficient ways of service delivery, ways of making it easier for customers to use the service and to pay for parking, for example through the cashless parking which has successfully been introduced elsewhere in London. There are inequalities in the costs of parking across the borough which needs to be taken into account. Parking income provides the very necessary contribution that funds the wider

transport and concessionary transport programmes of the Council. The environmental effects of vehicle movements will play an increasing part of future planning for transportation and parking. The Council will seek to encourage regular turnover of parking spaces in all district centres.

- 6.21. A review will be undertaken of the future levels of all council departments, who fund voluntary and community organisations. This will create difficult choices as the reduction in funds available to the council is reflected in future funding levels to the sector. The Council will seek to reduce its contribution to the London Council's grant scheme. The Council recognises the importance of clarity to the sector during these difficult times. The Chair of the Grants Advisory Panel has been asked to review arrangements for grants and service level agreements managed through the GAP and prepare a report for the Portfolio Holder to consider. In particular the Council will consider moving to a competitive commissioning based approach for larger service level agreements which will last for up to four years once awarded. This will mean in future the Council focuses commissioning on those community based services which most closely align with council priorities. The Council will carry out an impact assessment of any proposals and will meet its Compact obligations in terms of consultation before going forward with any changes.

Joining up and personalising customer service for our residents

Improved customer service and providing more joined up services when residents contact the Council

- 6.22. Remaining customer contact activity from the public that is not part of Access Harrow will be migrated into Access Harrow. This will be done alongside the development of a new golden numbers strategy. Working on existing technical platforms this will enable the Council to join up its services to residents when they make contact so as to resolve multiple service issues through a single contact. There will be further migration of contact onto the internet and a deepening of activity through the Council's contact channels that will allow more queries to be resolved at the first point of contact.
- 6.23. Assessment activity that is currently dispersed across the Council will be more effectively coordinated so that there is improved sharing of data and reduced contact to gather data from residents. The Council will use the information it has gathered more effectively to make life easier for families.
- 6.24. A Housing Ambition Programme will be delivered with the aim of improving the service so that by 2012 residents believe they have one of the best services in London. This Programme is covered in a further item on the agenda for this Cabinet.
- 6.25. A review of Leaseholder services will be completed using Lean process improvement techniques.

- 6.26. The Council will look to develop a new 'Commitment to Business' to demonstrate the standards of service that local business can expect to receive from the Council.

More services provided in collaboration with local partners

- 6.27. A new reablement and intermediate care service will be launched to help adults and older people have the confidence and skills to live independently rather than going back into hospital or going into residential accommodation, where this can be achieved. It will also reduce the levels of home care that service users need to receive. Reablement services will also be offered where appropriate to potential users of social care services when they first contact the Council.
- 6.28. Opportunities will be developed with local partners to join up service delivery locations with the Council that will provide more integrated services to local residents.
- 6.29. An analysis of the families with the most complex needs in the Borough will be undertaken to identify opportunities for improved join up of services.

Personalise services and promote independence giving power to residents to decide what services meet their needs

- 6.30. Adult services are planning to launch a major consultation with stakeholders in the Autumn. This will describe the financial context for the service over the next few years and consider options for delivering a sustainable service. The consultation will be fully inclusive of all stakeholder and designed to ensure all voices are heard. This process will shape the choices which may then need fuller detailed consultation. A starting point will be a determination from the council to avoid tightening eligibility criteria. Some of the options that will be considered would be users financial contribution for services, entitlement to transport, the future shape of the meals on wheels service. Adults Services will conclude their work reviewing voluntary sector service level agreements.
- 6.31. The Council will continue to roll out personalised budgets to users of Adult care services and to carers.

Improved self serve with online citizen accounts tailored for individuals

- 6.32. Online citizen accounts will be developed to give all residents a personalised log in to Council services where they will be able to receive information, check balances and make transactions.
- 6.33. We will introduce self service into all of our libraries to make it quicker and easier to borrow, renew or return books. We will consider whether

arts, libraries, and leisure provision could best be provided through a community based trust.

Building on the community spirit of residents to be more involved in the future of their Borough

Lowest cost channels used to transact with the Council cutting the cost of paper trails

6.34. The Council will make it easier for residents to adopt the lowest cost ways of transacting with the Council, accessing services over the internet and paying by direct debit.

Looking after and taking care of the environment

- 6.35. Residents will be given greater opportunities to contribute to an improved environment through improved levels of recycling.
- 6.36. Residents will be encouraged to amend their lifestyles in such a way as to improve the environment eg by not dropping litter and by being less reliant on car usage.
- 6.37. Opportunities for residents to be involved in volunteering to help look after local assets eg Harrow's parks and open spaces will be explored
- 6.38. Residents will have the opportunity for taking greater levels of neighbourhood responsibility eg through Neighbourhood Champions.
- 6.39. A new scheme will be launched to encourage housing tenants to take greater levels of responsibility for the condition in which properties are left when they become void.

Supporting neighbours, families and friends with needs

- 6.40. Furthermore the role of local residents in helping look after and support the most vulnerable in society may be developed.
- 6.41. New models for supporting Special Needs Transport will be developed which will support more independent travel for current users. Opportunities for alternative models for escorting service users will also be assessed.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. The March Cabinet agreed a virement of £0.2m from the creditors control account to the Transformation Programme in respect of specialist fees and specialist advice. In addition the Revenue and Capital Outturn report 2009/10 at the June Cabinet recommended the allocation of £0.5m to the Transformation Programme from the 2009/10 underspend.

- 7.2. It should be noted that some aspects of the Transformation Programme are likely to require revenue investment in the current financial year in addition to the funding referred to above. It will be important to maximise savings in the current year in order to fund this investment.

8. Performance Issues

- 8.1. The Better Deal for Residents Programme has been shaped in order to enable the Council to achieve its ambitions in the Sustainable Community Strategy as well as to balance its financial position in the medium term.
- 8.2. In many cases it is expected that these changes will improve the performance of Council services and deliver an improved experience for service users.
- 8.3. It is expected that there will be performance implications for some Council services and these will be reported to Cabinet when individual decisions are brought for implementation.

9. Environmental Impact

- 9.1. There will be benefits to the environment from a number of the proposals set out in this paper. A number of options that have emerged from the Better Together workstream will look at how the Council can increase recycling and reduce litter, and will look at approaches for getting residents to make a greater contribution to the future of the Borough.
- 9.2. The Programme includes improvements to route planning for streets staff and this will reduce distances travelled and cut emissions. Proposals are also included for Special Needs Transport which over time would see fewer miles travelled.
- 9.3. The Council has laid out a direction for moving to a smaller more modern civic centre site. This would reduce levels of energy consumption by the Council's own offices.
- 9.4. Proposals from the programme that go ahead to implementation will be subject to Cabinet decisions and the environmental impact of specific proposals will be considered.

10. Risk Management Implications

An overall risk register has been developed for the programme.

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? Yes

11. Equalities Impact

11.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment will need to be conducted for each major proposal and business case identified during this Programme.

11.2. There are no current equalities implications of the Programme.

12. Corporate Priorities

The Programme has been developed to enable the Council to meet all of its corporate priorities.

- Deliver cleaner and safer streets
- Improve support for vulnerable people
- Build stronger communities

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jennifer Hydari.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 23 June 2010		
Name: Hugh Peart	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring Officer
Date: 25 June 2010		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Tom Whiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assistant Chief Executive
Date: 1 July 2010		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: John Edwards.



Divisional Director
(Environmental
Services)

Date: 2 July 2010

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Tom Whiting, Assistant Chief Executive 0208 420 9484

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

*(for completion by Democratic
Services staff only)*