

CABINET (SPECIAL)

MINUTES

7 OCTOBER 2010

Chairman: * Councillor Bill Stephenson

Councillors:

* Bob Currie	* Graham Henson
* Margaret Davine	* Thaya Idaikkadar
* Keith Ferry	* Phillip O'Dell
* Brian Gate	* Mrs Rekha Shah
† Mitzi Green	

* Denotes Member present

† Denotes apologies received

60. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made.

RESOLVED ITEMS

61. Council Vision and Priorities

Cabinet considered a report, which set out the proposed Council vision and priorities. The report also set out the programme of community involvement to test the vision and priorities with Harrow residents. Cabinet noted that the intention was to launch the vision and priorities for consultation in the period October to December 2010.

The Leader of the Council clarified that the purpose of this Special meeting was to commence the consultation on the draft vision and priorities immediately. Presenting the report to an earlier or later ordinary meeting would not have been in accordance with the necessary timescale required. The Leader advised that questions had been submitted to this Special meeting but could not be considered due to the relevant Constitutional

provisions. The Leader advised that the questions could be re-submitted to the next ordinary meeting of Cabinet.

The Assistant Chief Executive advised that the proposed vision and priorities would steer the development of Service Improvement Plans for each directorate and also provided details regarding how the consultation would be conducted. The results from the consultation would feed into the Corporate Plan and the discussion of the draft budget as part of the annual business planning cycle. This would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 13 January 2011.

The Leader further reported that the proposals represented a new era for the borough. It was the intention to encourage resident involvement in developing a better borough, especially during a period where difficult decisions were required due to the national economic difficulties.

The Leader explained that the proposed vision was to work together and adopt a principle of 'our Harrow' and 'our community'. This principle was at the core of the Council's values. Within the Council this would mean better working across departments, whilst also involve working with residents and partners such as the Police, NHS, voluntary sector and other groups. The proposed vision would also allow for the celebration of the borough's diversity and contribute towards building community support. Unity was an important aspect of the proposed vision.

The Leader explained that four corporate priorities had been proposed. These included:

- **Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe.**
There was general agreement that this was an important priority and was important to all residents.
- **United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads.**
This was a priority to promote the interests of the whole community in Harrow and was the basis for a 'bottom up' approach in the delivery of services.
- **Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.**
This was a priority which was important to all residents. The Council would assist vulnerable people in need but would also, for example, help unemployed residents in different ways by helping them to find jobs, providing training and empowering them to find employment.
- **A Town Centre to be proud of: changing Harrow for the better.**
This would include Wealdstone, the Kodak Site and District Shopping Centres.

The Leader then reported that a new approach was required in relation to consultation and engagement on the proposed vision and priorities.

Historically residents had expressed dissatisfaction with the Council and their involvement in decisions made.

The Council intended to remedy this. The Council's belief was that residents' and communities' views were important and the Council was determined to be more transparent.

New methods of engagement would involve key pilot activities which included:

- conducting roadshows to allow the Council to have conversations with residents about what is important to them;
- operating Video Booths to receive comments from residents;
- hosting a series of Open Days where residents can provide views;
- requesting that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee seek responses from partners, residents and community groups on the draft vision and priorities and to report their findings to the Executive;
- consulting with residents and specific service users on the Better Deal for Residents Programme;
- encouraging more local Councillors to raise awareness of the engagement programme;
- creating a section on the website called 'Harrow Big Conversation' to allow residents to give views and make suggestions online;
- holding a Summit meeting of the Harrow Strategic Partnership to develop the proposed vision and priorities with partners;
- utilising the Harrow People publication to provide information on the engagement process and to provide feedback after consultation has taken place.

The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges expressed his delight at the proposed vision and priorities. He deemed it to constitute a new start for the Council and believed that there would be more engagement by residents. He encouraged opposition Members to also participate in the process.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the Council would listen to residents and would create a borough which everyone was proud of. He also hoped that democratic processes would also be improved as a result.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft vision and priorities set out in the report of the Leader of the Council titled 'Council's New Vision and Priorities' be approved for consultation;

- (2) the pilot programme of community involvement set out in the report of the Leader of the Council be approved and used to consult on the draft vision and priorities;
- (3) the Year Ahead Statement be noted.

Reason for Decision: To guide the organisation in making decisions on the budget allocation and service delivery.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.17 pm, closed at 6.37 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chairman