

Harrow Council's Corporate Plan

Standing up for Harrow: Our Priorities for 2011/12

Contents:

Our Vision	3
Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe	4
United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads	7
Supporting and protecting people who are most in need	10
Supporting our Town Centre, our local shopping centres and businesses	13

Vision - “Working Together: Our Harrow, Our Community”

In this document we set out how we will take forward your feedback on our draft vision and priorities which you gave us through our Let's Talk consultation last year. We want to thank you for taking part and telling us your thoughts on what is important to make Harrow a better place. You gave overwhelming support for our suggested vision “**Working Together: Our Harrow, Our Community**”. ‘Working together’ does not mean the same old ‘we ask you a question, and you respond’ approach. It means that in future we will reach out and find new ways of involving you as residents as well as users of services and partners in improving the services you receive.

Let's Talk is the beginning of a new debate about what kind of services can and should be delivered in the future. Given the financial challenges facing us, we cannot continue to provide services in the way we do currently. The status quo is not an option. We want and need your help to shape Harrow for the future, giving you a voice to talk about your concerns and aspirations.

To achieve this, the Council wants to enable you to have the chance to become more active citizens by providing you with information, support and opportunities to contribute to the decision-making process and take a greater part in making Harrow better. We remain ambitious about what we can achieve together, and in support of this, we want to change the way the Council is run. Listening to what local residents want and say, we will reform and modernise Council services whilst at the same time saving money and providing better services.

We are making 2011 the year of the Community Debate and will start to get you, as residents, more involved in the delivery of services and in discussion on how we manage the very difficult decisions we will have to make in the next few years. We may disagree on things, but we feel strongly that you have a right to express your views and we commit ourselves to listen and involve you across all of our activities. We want the debate to mean something to you and be about genuine participation. We want it to allow us to talk with you about the hard choices that we will face. We want to understand how we can help and involve local people to do more for their communities that really matters and makes a difference.

Harrow's strong community spirit is one of its greatest strengths and we want to work together with you to harness this spirit by getting you more involved. Practical examples of the difference that you can make might include a network of support for a parent in a time of crisis, a neighbour who looks out for the elderly person living over the road, or a resident who lets the Council know what they think.

The next pages of this document set out the Council's priorities for 2011/2012. For each of them there are some examples of how we would demonstrate progress against our priorities: our Priority Actions.

Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe

Through “Lets Talk”, you told us these services were amongst those you valued the most. That is why we have put the improvement of street cleanliness and recycling, and the reduction of crime and the fear of crime as priority actions.

We cannot do this on our own. We need your help, for example, to reduce the amount of litter on the streets and to recycle as much household waste as possible. We hope that by giving you the right tools, and in partnership with the police, we can work together to reduce crime and make our communities feel safer.

More than a thousand residents have already signed up as Neighbourhood Champions (see case study on the next page) and we are aiming to have one Neighbourhood Champion in every street. So if you can help please get in touch at (<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/af/an/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=rQne1TEjtWY>). We want to develop the role of Neighbourhood Champions, and will do this by involving existing Champions and the communities they work with; listening to what is working and seeing how we can extend and improve the scheme.

Harrow is already one of the leading boroughs in London for recycling, with almost half of all domestic refuse being recycled. But with your help we can still do more, which will help the environment and save money.

Harrow is a very safe Borough and we want to keep it that way. Harrow Council’s unique scheme to fund Smartwater making it available free of charge to all those households in Harrow who want it, will deter burglary. Smartwater is a property marking system available from the Police. Our Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) play an incredibly important part in dealing with local crime and anti social behaviour as well as giving great reassurance to local residents. We will continue to fight to ensure that we get funding from the Mayor of London for our SNTs. There is still a lot more we can do. For instance, we want to be able to share more services with the police and possibly co-locate with them. We also recognise that active resident involvement and better information from ourselves and the Police is important to making residents not only feel safe but be safer.

Case Study: Pride in Harrow – being a Neighbourhood Champion

Harrow Council is tapping into the area's community spirit by building an army of volunteers keen to make their neighbourhood a clean and safe place to live and work. More than 1,000 local residents have registered an interest in becoming a Neighbourhood Champion and in one ward every single road has a Neighbourhood Champion. We would like this be the case for every ward in Harrow.

From fly tipping to anti-social behaviour and graffiti to burglaries, Neighbourhood Champions are trained on how to report any incidents that happen in their street. They are also kept up to date with issues affecting their area. For example, during the recent bad weather, they received e-mail updates on when rubbish would be collected, and the police are able to let them know about burglaries or other incidents.

There are more than 670 fully trained Neighbourhood Champions from a wide range of backgrounds with more awaiting training.

The Council's role is to enable: volunteers can get involved and do as little or as much as they like. The role empowers local people who want to make a difference and it is helping to reinforce the strong community spirit which is alive and well in Harrow.

Our Priority Actions are:

Priority Actions	Measure
Review and extend the Neighbourhood Champions scheme. Portfolio Holder: Phillip O'Dell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 1,500 trained Neighbourhood Champions by March 2012○ 2,000 Neighbourhood Champions recruited by March 2012
Increasing Pride in Harrow by investing in new technology to maintain current street cleansing and grounds maintenance levels at reduced costs. Portfolio Holder: Phillip O'Dell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Investment generates £900,000 a year saving without impacting on service standards○ Increase in satisfaction rates for street cleansing, grounds maintenance etc by 5%
Planting more trees in the borough creating a visible impact and a lasting legacy. Portfolio Holder: Phillip O'Dell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Planting 500 more trees by March 2012

Priority Actions	Measure
<p>Increasing recycling rates.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Phillip O'Dell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 100 additional flats offered recycling achieved by March 2012 ○ Improving Customer satisfaction with the recycling service by 5% ○ Achieving our best ever recycling rate with a peak month exceeding 52%

United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads

One of our principal ambitions is to engage and involve residents more than ever before. The Lets Talk consultation programme on the draft vision and priorities was just the beginning of a new way for us to strengthen our partnership with residents and partners. We genuinely want to hear your views and, in return, we promise to listen, act and feedback ensuring that we involve you in making decisions and designing services.

At present, consultation and engagement activities often start too far into the decision making process. We will change this so we involve you earlier and in a more meaningful way in those decisions and activities that affect you, with a real emphasis on shifting the balance in favour of residents to influence and make decisions.

Over 2,000 people responded to our Let's Talk programme, and we hope more of you will get involved next time. Given the current challenges we all face, the quality of how we relate to you is more important than ever before. As we intend 2011 to be a year of Community Debate, we will be talking to you about our future plans for Harrow and will be launching a further programme of Let's Talk events to listen to and involve you more.

But this is not just about seeking your views. We believe that you, as residents, need to be more greatly involved in how future services are delivered, not just in decisions about how we change the way the Council is run. Harrow already has a high proportion of residents who volunteer in their communities, gaining new skills and friends while helping others. We want to build on this local resourcefulness within our communities. As well as removing barriers to this form of community action, the Council will investigate schemes for encouraging and supporting community activities over the next year.

We will do all we can to support community self help initiatives, voluntary and community sector groups and organisations and individuals who want to improve their area and make a difference locally.

We know that you are busy people, so we will come to you for your thoughts, not expect you to come to us. For instance, we will make better use of technology, recognising that many residents now have access to broadband services at home or in our libraries, and develop more innovative ways to get the views of those residents who rarely contact the Council or have previously found it difficult to get listened to meaningfully.

Case Study: Harrow's Heroes – Recognising how Volunteers make a Real Difference

We have a large number of volunteers in Harrow and we celebrate this through our Harrow's Heroes Awards. In 2010 nominations were received across seven categories including **Young Volunteer of the Year**, **Environmental Volunteer of the Year** and **Community Volunteer of the Year**. A winner from each category was chosen by a panel of judges and then an overall volunteer of the year was chosen from all the nominations received. An individual who voluntarily provides valuable support to the community

Debbie Steers was nominated by the Pinner Hill Tenants and Residents Association and Pinner Police Station for the Community Volunteer of the Year. Debbie sources funding to arrange a whole host of activities from courses in fashion to radio broadcasting. Debbie also runs a weekly youth club, toddler group, and bingo sessions for older residents, as well as arranging day trips to the seaside. Debbie does an incredible job, virtually single-handed, to improve the opportunities and life-chances for people in the local community.

Our Priority Actions are:

Priority Actions	Measure
<p>Improving tenant engagement in the decisions that influence their lives.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Bob Currie</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Roll out a Tenant Consultation charter for housing by April 2011 ○ Increase the number of volunteers actively engaged in developing the housing service by 100 ○ Introduce performance monitoring against resident decided priorities for housing by June 2011
<p>Adult social care users and carers to have a greater level of involvement in the design and assessment of the services they receive.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Margaret Davine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Through consultation and engagement, users will have decided how to measure service quality and effectiveness by March 2012
<p>Ensuring that the community have a greater say in the management/ownership of Council assets and services.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Phillip O'Dell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategy to promote community management/ownership agreed by March 2012 ○ A scheme successfully completed by March 2012

Priority Actions	Measure
<p>In the run up to the Olympics and Paralympics, re-launching our sports development programme.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Rekha Shah</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Re-launch of sports development, cricket pilot events and activities throughout 2011/12 ○ Aim to increasing the number of people participating in physical activity to 17.5% by March 2012 ○ Celebrate the 'One Year to Go' countdown to the Olympics and Paralympics with a series of events from July 2011
<p>Pride in Harrow: Engaging Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish Active Park User Groups ● Establish 6 Pride in Harrow weeks of action. <p>Portfolio Holder: All Portfolio Holders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3 additional user groups established by March 2012 ○ 6 Community events delivered by March 2012

Supporting and protecting people who are most in need

There was overwhelming support through our Let's Talk consultation that our proposed priority 'Supporting and protecting people who are most in need' is important to you. Although Harrow is a great place to live, there are also many people who are in real need due to, for example, poverty, ill-health, poor housing and many other reasons. Harrow, for example, has a larger proportion of older people than the average for London and older people generally have greater support needs. Our priority will always be to do as much as is humanly possible to support and protect people who are most in need.

Government cuts both to the Council and our partners mean that we will have fewer resources at a time when we expect there to be a greater need for and greater demands on the many services we currently provide. We need to redesign and simplify the way we deliver services in future so it is important that we work closely with our partners to share resources and work closely with residents and service users so that you can be involved in how help can be prioritised to those most in need.

For example, we have had a major re-organisation in the way we care for 'looked after' children. We now have in place a system of super foster carers and are using our freed up residential accommodation as semi-independent living for looked after children to help them become more independent as they leave foster care and have to look after themselves. This re-organisation provides a much better service at the same time as saving money.

We are also aiming radically to restructure our Children's Services to ensure that all staff involved in supporting vulnerable children work together in one place in an integrated, 'one door', approach fully involving all other relevant agencies in this work.

Active residents, either through caring for an elderly relative or friend, or supporting those who need to travel around the borough, are vital for our success in supporting and protecting people who are most in need. The Council owes a great debt of gratitude to all those who make such selfless sacrifice within Harrow and we must never take them for granted. We want to listen to you and other individuals and groups in the community to see how we can continue to support you to do the things which make such a real difference to the lives of so many people.

Case study: Transforming Social Care

Harrow Council is trailblazing a new social care service called 'reablement'. The reablement service provides a single point of contact for people with social care needs to help them regain their independence and retain their dignity, with an emphasis on people re-learning how to do things for themselves rather than having care provided for them. In addition it also saves money both for the hospital and for the Council.

We started the service on 25th October 2010, establishing a dedicated team in one of our Neighbourhood Resource Centres. To date 1,300 people have received the service, and the following are some of the comments received on the new service:

"The help I got was quite amazing, I appreciated the reablement support I received and I am looking forward to full independence."

"Everyone from the whole team was great and the service was wonderful".

Residents can use reablement for a range of services including home care support, equipment for them or their home, or information and advice.

Our Priority Actions are:

Priority Actions	Measure
Improving outcomes for those children and families in greatest need of help. Portfolio Holder: Mitzi Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ All partners to use a common template in making referrals for Social Care by March 2012○ Reduce the number of children with Child Protection Plans by March 2012
Delivering a more personalised service for children and young people and embedding effective early intervention. Portfolio Holder: Mitzi Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ To increase the number of families in control of personalised budgets for their children's' care from 38 to 50
Maintaining our position as a leading London local authority in the allocation of personal budgets for adult service users/carers. Portfolio Holder: Margaret Davine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 45% of service users/carers to be in receipt of a personal budget by March 2012

Priority Actions	Measure
<p>To narrow the gap in education achievement of vulnerable children including at the early years foundation stage.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Brian Gate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All school inspections carried out before 31st March 2012 to result in a Good or Outstanding result for behaviour ○ To hit a target of only 12% absences in our schools for looked after children by March 2012 ○ Narrow the gap at the end of the Early Years Foundation stage to be below 37% in 2011
<p>Bringing all Children's Services into one place to make it a better and more efficient service</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Mitzi Green</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To bring together all intensive intervention services for children and young people under one division by March 2012 ○ To implement the School and Council Partnership proposals for school improvement by September 2011
<p>Speed up making necessary major changes to disabled people's homes.</p> <p>Portfolio Holders: Bob Currie and Margaret Davine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduce the average time taken for major adaptations to 35 weeks by March 2012.
<p>Placing more individuals and families in suitable accommodation by developing the Harrow Lettings Agency 'Help2Let'.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Bob Currie</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deliver 200 lettings through Help2Let by March 2012
<p>Implementing the Council's Reablement Service to improve outcomes for vulnerable adults.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Margaret Davine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 50% of users entering reablement will be sufficiently independent so as not require a social care service at the end of the 6 weeks by March 2012

Supporting our Town Centre, our local shopping centres and businesses

Harrow has a Town Centre and nine local shopping centres. These are vital to Harrow as places to live, work and visit. The Town Centre and its neighbouring areas – the ‘Intensification Area’ - is a vital hub and is recognised as so by the Mayor of London. Its development and regeneration is crucial for the future of Harrow and the Council has set up a Major Development Panel to oversee this work. Having listened to residents through the Lets Talk consultation, it is clear that you wish to give local shopping centres and local businesses much greater prominence which is why we have incorporated these into the priority above.

We will develop a detailed plan for the Town Centre. For each of the local shopping centres we will seek to ensure that any new development builds on their existing character and distinctiveness. The development and implementation of all of these plans will involve working with local councillors, communities and traders as well as with potential developers.

A key part of improving our shopping centres, and in particular the Town Centre, is to work closely with Transport for London to enhance the quality and capacity of public transport. Disabled access to Harrow-on-the-Hill and Stanmore stations is a key priority.

Our local shopping centres are at the heart of our communities. They need to be attractive and well planned with good access by public transport and with adequate and affordable car parking. In particular, we need to be able to attract visitors from outside Harrow to our Town Centre. This will mean that we need to provide more leisure facilities in order to attract more visitors in the evenings and at weekends. Our aim is to make the Town Centre a vibrant and exciting place which not only offers a day out at the shops but a real experience of the fantastic diversity of Harrow.

We want you to help us shape the Town Centre and local shopping centres. This year there will be an opportunity for you to tell us what you would like Harrow Town Centre to look like in the future and we hope that you will take part.

Case Study: Supporting residents in hard times

The Xcite project supports workless parents and those with a low household income (less than £26,000 p.a.). In 8 months, Xcite had recruited 350 clients and supported over 80 parents into work. The project established a steering group comprising the council, Jobcentreplus, Registered Social Landlords, and community groups. It has delivered help through Access Harrow, Children's Centres, housing estates, and through community groups. Word of mouth was a big catalyst in helping to recruit clients. Once the first few parents secured work, others came to the project.

Staff have used a variety of ways to engage and enthuse clients, from motivation and confidence building workshops, running Fit for Work sessions (Boxercise and Salsacise) to lift clients out of lethargy, and constant 1 to 1 support. This has been allied with professional job search support in CV writing, interview technique, completing application forms, and speculative approaches to employers.

The project has run job fairs for local companies, and placed clients in customised training leading directly to work with Marks and Spencer. It has been proactive in working with businesses in the town centre and district shopping centres to source vacancies for clients. The construction training initiative element of Xcite has been operating since 2009 and been successful in helping 40 residents into work and 10 young people into apprenticeships on housing developments in Harrow.

Case Study: Supporting local businesses

Harrow Council's meet the Buyer Events organised with Supply London and Business to Business, gave small local companies the opportunity to meet the buyers from major companies operating in Harrow, and to learn how to secure contracts with the public sector. Major buyers attending included Higgins, Kier, Red Active (Media Group), Enterprise Mouchel, RNOH, Bakkouwer, Racal Acoustic, Catalyst, and Wilmot Dixon.

100% of buyers said they had achieved their main purpose in attending the event and 93% of suppliers said they felt they had a chance of getting resulting business from the event.

Clothing Express is an example of a Harrow company employing local residents which secured a contract to supply clothing to the council as a result of the council's proactive work to boost local procurement.

Our Priority Actions are:

Priority Actions	Measure
<p>Developing a clear vision to guide the future growth and regeneration of Harrow Town Centre.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Keith Ferry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consult the Community on strategic options for the Town Centre and the Kodak site as part of the Area Action Plan for the heart of Harrow by April 2011 ○ Prepare an area wide master plan for the town centre as part of the Area Action Plan for consultation in November 2011 ○ Lobby for funding to improve Harrow-on-the-Hill station and improve accessibility to Stanmore station
<p>Working with the community to seek funding for restoring Headstone Manor Tithe Barn to create a major heritage centre.</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Rekha Shah</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submit a Heritage Lottery funding bid to improve Headstone Manor and outbuildings by June 2011
<p>Developing our libraries as Community Hubs</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Rekha Shah</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer other public and community services the opportunity to operate from our Libraries by March 2012, ○ Establish two 'Friends of a Library' groups by March 2012 ○ Implementation of WiFi hotspots in our libraries
<p>Supporting our local shopping centres, including a commitment to Fair Trade across the borough</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Keith Ferry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish Shopping Centre Partnerships for at least two local shopping centres by March 2012, bringing an increased number of shoppers and reducing empty shops ○ Establish Harrow as a Fair Trade Borough by March 2012