

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
AND SCRUTINY SUB-
COMMITTEES**

Date of Meeting:	9 th February 2011
Subject:	Corporate Plan
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting, Assistant Chief Executive
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Jerry Miles Tony Ferrari Corporate Effectiveness Lead Members
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Corporate Plan

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the results of the “Lets Talk” public consultation on the Council’s draft vision and priorities and presents the corporate plan, setting the direction for the Council over the coming three years.

Recommendations:

Provide comments to Cabinet on the public response to the Council’s draft vision and priorities and on the corporate plan prepared to reflect that vision and those priorities.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

In October 2010, Cabinet considered the Year Ahead Statement giving a body of evidence about the Council's performance, public standing, resources and a view of the policy terrain facing it in 2011/12 and a report by the Leader of the Council proposing a draft vision and priorities to guide the Council through the coming years.

The draft vision and priorities have been the subject of an extensive and innovatory engagement and consultation process called "Lets Talk" to test the Leader's proposals against public opinion and concerns for the future.

This report brings together the outcomes of "Lets Talk" which were broadly very supportive but proposes an amendment to one of the draft priorities. The report then introduces a corporate plan prepared around the vision and amended priorities. The corporate plan is the Council's highest level strategic document and forms the core of the policy framework and, therefore, needs to be considered by the Council.

"Lets Talk"

The "Lets Talk" process consisted of a number of events and activities to drive engagement in the conversation around the Council's future vision and priorities. These were:

- Five Road shows in district centres and Harrow Town Centre,
- Ten Open days at venues across the Borough,
- A Residents' Panel consultation,
- An online survey,
- A Harrow Strategic Partnership Summit,
- A Facebook page
- Events held with Service Users, e.g. Adult Services users at Millmans Neighbourhood Resource Centre
- A Member pack sent to all Councillors for use at local meetings and ward surgeries

The overall scores of Lets Talk can be evidence in the data below:

- Number of forms completed – 1,385
- Number of forms completed online - 107
- Number of forms handed out - 12,000
- 30,000 handed out via Harrow People
- Number of unique conversations - 700
- Number of friends on Facebook - 78

The quantitative results of the hundreds of conversations and other engagement opportunities have been collated and are presented below.

Let's Talk – Key Quantitative Findings

The quantitative findings are presented from two perspectives: The 1,492 questionnaires completed by Harrow residents (1,385 paper and 107 online) on the Let's Talk comments cards, and the 656 responses received from the Residents Panel.

Although no demographic questions were asked via the comments cards and therefore the results cannot be broken down by age, gender or other factors, this analysis is carried out as part of the Residents Panel feedback as the Panel is a demographically balanced group of 1,200 Harrow residents who are recruited to join the Panel every two to three years. The full results from the comments cards analysis are appended to this report.

Overall the consultation clearly points to residents being most concerned about levels of crime and keeping the streets clean.

- 71% of respondents support the council's draft vision "*Working together: Our Harrow, our community.*" Only 4% actively disagree, with the rest either not stating an answer (11%) or being neutral (14%).
- 92% support the priority of "*Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe*",
- 83% support the priority "*Supporting and protecting people who are most in need*",
- 81% support the priority having a "*United and involved community and being a Council that listens and leads*",
- 71% support the priority "*A Town Centre to be proud of, changing Harrow for the better*",
- This same order is seen when respondents were asked to rank the most important single priority. Half (50%) stated that the single top priority was "*Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe.*"
- Over half (55%) of respondents failed to give an answer to what the council could do better or deliver these priorities better. These were verbatim comments and there was a long list of different ideas. The top responses analysed are to communicate/listen more with residents (6%), reduce council waste (5%), clean streets (4%) and crime/safety (4%).
- When looking in detail at a list of possible environmental and service issues and activities the level of crime and health were rated the most important (both 90%), followed by clean streets (86%).

The Council also undertook a consultation with the Residents Panel as part of Lets Talk asking the identical questions as set out in the comments cards. The summary results are indicated below:

- The Council's draft vision statement enjoys the support of a majority of the population. 73% of respondents to the questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed with the vision and only 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 95% agreed or strongly agreed with keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe and less than 1% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 81% agreed or strongly agreed with having a united and involved community and being a Council that listens and leads and just over 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 80% agreed or strongly agreed with supporting and protecting people who are in most need and just over 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 66% agreed or strongly agreed with a Town Centre to be proud of and changing Harrow for the better and just over 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- The priorities were ranked by respondents with 56% choosing keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe as their top priority, 23% choosing supporting and protecting people who are in most need, 14% choosing having a united and involved community and being a Council that listens and leads. Almost 5% chose a Town Centre to be proud of and changing Harrow for the better as their top priority.

The table below gives an overall summary of the results from both the returned Comments cards and the Residents Panel elements of Let's Talk:

Table 1: Comparative results of Comments Cards Analysis and Residents Panel on Support of Draft Vision and Priorities

Support for:	Returned Comments Cards (Agree or Strongly Agree)	Residents Panel (Agree or Strongly Agree)
Draft Vision		
Working together: Our Harrow, our community	71%	73%
Draft Priorities		
Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe	92%	95%
Supporting and protecting people who are most in need	83%	80%
United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads	81%	81%
A Town Centre to be proud of, changing Harrow for the better	71%	66%

Qualitative Analysis

As part of the consultation, a significant number of qualitative comments were received both through the individual comments cards, the unique conversations with residents through such events as the Roadshows, Open Days and local meetings (over 700 unique conversations were recorded with residents as part of Let's Talk) and through the successful Harrow Strategic Partnership Summit (The HSP Board considered and endorsed the Summit findings at its meeting on the 14th December). The Council is currently analysing the qualitative messages as part of the strategy to feedback to residents the results of Let's Talk through such channels as Harrow People. However early indications suggest strong support for the Council listening more to residents to act on their behalf.

Proposed Vision and Priorities

The Proposed vision for formal adoption through the Corporate plan is:

Working together: Our Harrow, our community

Given the fourth draft priority received support but not to the same levels as the other priorities this will be changed to make it more explicit in its reference to both the town centre and local shopping centres. Accordingly, the draft priority has been amended in the Corporate Plan which is attached to this report. The four proposed priorities for formal adoption through the Corporate Plan are therefore:

Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe

Supporting and protecting people who are most in need

United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads

Supporting our town centre, our local shopping centres and businesses

Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan sets out the direction of the Council's policy and priorities in high level strategic terms specifically for the coming year and more generally for the ensuing two years. It mirrors the budget, setting out the main priorities which have influenced the proposed allocation of the resources available to the Council.

This corporate plan is a forward-looking, public facing document, much shorter and more accessible than those produced in recent years. It will be supplemented in early summer by an Annual Report commenting on the Council's performance in 2010/2011.

Financial Implications

The financial implications of the proposed vision and priorities are set out in the Cabinet budget paper on 10 February 2011 which has been circulated to all Members of the Council and can be viewed on the Council's website.

Performance Issues

The draft Corporate Plan proposes priorities for the coming years. The current suite of performance indicators is based on the National Indicator Set which is, itself, being abolished. A new National Framework of Indicators is awaited and will form the basis of a new performance indicator suite. However work is underway to develop a new set of more locally orientated measures which the Council expects to better reflect the expectations of residents and therefore help the Council to better measure the performance of key services. This work will be completed by the end of the financial year support the development of a new Corporate Scorecard which will measure progress and performance against the new Council priorities.

Environmental Impact

Actions proposed to progress the draft vision and priorities will each be subject to an environmental impact where appropriate.

Risk Management Implications

Risks included on corporate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? No

Risk	Mitigating Factors
Changes in Government policies, priorities, legislative or financial regimes affecting local government	Policy horizon scanning and networking to get as early indication of changes as possible to enable reconsideration to take place if necessary
Insufficient resources to progress priorities	In the coming year, the budget reflects the priorities in the corporate plan. The impact of funding changes in future may necessitate review of these priorities
Changing public expectations	The priorities have been endorsed by an extensive engagement process. Engagement will continue about a range of issues of concern to residents which will enable other or changing public priorities to be presented to Cabinet for consideration

Delays in delivery	The progress against the priorities and targets will be monitored through the quarterly performance reporting system to alert Members and Managers to any delivery issues to ensure remedial action can be taken
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Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? Yes

The Equality Impact Assessment concluded that there were no adverse impacts on equality. The Equality Impact Assessment will be published on the Council's website.

Corporate Priorities

This report proposes new priorities for adoption.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mike Howes, Service Manager, Policy and Partnerships Ext. 5637

Background Papers:

Lets Talk Results

Year Ahead Statement