



## HARROW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4 October 2004

**(1) Present:**

**Harrow Strategic Partnership Board Members:**

Councillor A T Foulds (Chair)		Harrow Council
Councillor Paddy Lyne	Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group	Harrow Council
Councillor Navin Shah	Leader; Strategic Overview and External Affairs PH	Harrow Council
Mike Coker	Community Linkup	Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Asoke Dutta	Harrow Association of Voluntary Service	Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Kris Fryer	Harrow Citizen's Advice Bureau	Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Janet Smith	MIND in Harrow	Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Professor Keith Phillips	University of Westminster	Higher Education Representative
Raj Saujani	Stanmore College	Further Education Representative

**Apologies were received from:-**

Geoff Rose (Vice-Chair)	Chair, Harrow Primary Care Trust	Harrow Primary Care Trust
Dr Karim Murji	Metropolitan Police Authority	Metropolitan Police Authority

**(2) Also Present as Representatives of the HSP Executive:**

Barbara Field	Principal, Harrow College	Further Education Sector
Julia Mayo	Chief Executive, Harrow Association of Voluntary Service	Voluntary and Community Sector
Andrew Morgan	Chief Executive, Harrow Primary Care Trust	Health Authority Sector

**Apologies were received from:-**

Joyce Markham	Chief Executive	Harrow Council
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**(3) The following Harrow Council Officers attended:-**

Paul Najsarek	Director of Organisational Performance (Organisational Development)	Harrow Council
Anna Robinson	Director of Strategy (Urban Living)	
John Robinson	Director of Corporate Governance	Harrow Council
Bindu Arjoon	Service Manager Policy and Partnership Section	Harrow Council
David Ward	Risk and Insurance Manager	Harrow Council

**ACTION**

**1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chairs 2004-2005:**

The meeting noted that the following appointments for the ensuing year May 2004 to May 2005 had been made at the Joint Meeting of the Harrow Strategic Partnership (Board and Executive) held on 19 May 2004:-

Board Chair:	Councillor Archie Foulds; Leader of Harrow Council
Board Joint Vice-Chairs:	Lord Toby Harris; Metropolitan Police Authority Geoff Rose; Chair, Harrow Primary Care Trust

[Note: Minutes 2, 3 and 14 also refer].

**2. Board Membership:**

The meeting was advised of two changes in membership which had arisen since 19 May.

- (i) Lord Toby Harris was no longer in membership of the Metropolitan Police Authority. The new representative of the MPA to serve on Harrow's Strategic Partnership Board was Dr Karim Murji.
- (ii) Declan O'Farrell was no longer a Non-Executive Director with Metroline plc. Consequently, a vacancy had arisen on the Harrow Strategic Partnership Board for a business sector representative.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the Chair be authorised to write on behalf of the Board to Lord Toby Harris and Declan O'Farrell thanking them both for their contribution to the work of the Harrow Strategic Partnership through their past membership of the Board; BA
- (2) that an appointment to the vacant business sector representative place on the Board be sought as soon as possible. BA

**3. New Appointment as Joint Vice-Chair 2004-2005:**

Further to Minutes 1 and 2 above, the meeting considered the desirability of filling the vacancy which had arisen for the office of a second Vice-Chair of the Board.

Asoke Dutta was duly nominated and seconded to the office and his appointment was unanimously affirmed by the Board.

**AGREED:**

That Asoke Dutta, Harrow Association of Voluntary Service, be appointed a Vice-Chair of the Harrow Strategic Partnership Board for the remainder of the 2004-2005 year.

**4. Minutes:**

The minutes of the Joint Board/Executive Meeting held on 19 May 2004 were formally received and noted.

**5. Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

**Minute 6: HSP Annual Report**

It was agreed to verify whether the intended inclusion of a brief version of the Annual Report in the 'Harrow People' publication had been effected.

BA

**6. Harrow Council's Strategic Review of Grants to Voluntary Organisations:**

The Risk and Insurance Manager, Harrow Council, presented a paper in this matter which had as an appendix the Proposed Strategic Recommendations which were to be submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 14 October 2004. Comments on behalf of the Board were invited, which would also be made known to the Cabinet.

The meeting was advised of the context for a strategic review, the defined objectives of the review and the two stages of consultation undertaken, the results of which had greatly influenced the recommended framework. It was emphasised that the new grants strategy was intended to be based on the Council's Community Strategy priorities. It was noted that MORI had facilitated the second stage of the consultation.

Mike Coker offered some criticisms of the consultation with the voluntary sector on the basis that the sector had not been involved in the formulation of the review and the consultation methodology. It was his view that the process had been flawed and the organisations included in the consultation had not necessarily been the appropriate representative bodies. Councillor Shah confirmed that if individual voluntary groups which had not been consulted were identified to the Council this would be addressed.

The meeting also discussed the merit of widening the scope of the Council's strategic review to consider additional "grant" resources which might be available to other Partners, primarily the Primary Care Trust. It was considered that there might well be examples of organisations currently receiving funding from more than one Partner, which process should be rationalised.

Councillor Shah particularly drew attention to the phenomenon of Service Level Agreements as a means of providing funding assistance, which were the subject of an ongoing review by the Council, and requested that other

Partners also review their comparable arrangements.

It was agreed that work should be undertaken to identify the funding currently provided across the Partnership and to develop common or complementary principles and protocols for grant aid to the voluntary sector. This might well be commenced through joint officer discussions, leading to more formal proposals being presented to the Board in due course.

Additionally, external to the formal Partnership, the Members of Harrow Council referred to the review which was taking place within the Association of London Government on the equitable distribution of funds across London through its Grants Committee. This might lead to additional resources becoming available to Harrow organisations.

On the detail of the “Proposed Strategic Recommendations” document, members of the Board raised a number of queries concerning the text:-

**Section 2: Grants Conditions:** it was agreed to reconsider whether some of the conditions might be expressed so as to allow for greater flexibility, lest some elements might prove too daunting for the smaller organisations to achieve compliance.

On a pragmatic issue, the means by which the Council could assist organisations to adopt the required stationery logo upon receipt of grant aid was confirmed.

**Section 3: Emphasis on Certain Organisations and Activities:** it was requested that the origin/justification for the statements in this Section be clarified and provided with a context.

Additionally, the meeting noted that the third bullet point text had been much considered in the draft stages and had assumed this final form by decision of the Grants Advisory Panel. However, it was advised that the Voluntary Sector representatives remained dissatisfied that it was sufficiently comprehensive in breadth and principally, in referring to identified disadvantaged groups, it had not addressed the concept of diversity. It was proposed that the wording might be re-considered by the Cabinet.

**AGREED:**

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|-----|--|-------------------|
| (1) | That the Council’s Strategic Review of Grants to Voluntary Organisations be noted;   | All note          |
| (2) | that the particular comments offered by the Partners on aspects of the Strategy formulation and textual detail be received and advised to the Cabinet (Harrow Council) meeting on 14 October in conjunction with the formal report in this matter; | JP                |
| (3) | that further liaison and discussion take place between the Partners at officer level and formally with a view to establishing common or complementary policies on grant aid to the voluntary sector where this was achievable.                     | All note<br>DW/BN |

**7. Development of the Next Phase of the Harrow Vitality Profiles:**

The Director of Strategy, Urban Living, Harrow Council, gave an oral report on the current position in respect of the development of the Harrow Vitality Profiles. She provided a commentary on the next phases of work being undertaken, particularly in respect of the identified twelve Partnership priorities as profile themes.

This was a prelude to the next formal report on the Vitality Profiles and revised publication. It was confirmed that there was an intention to update most of the Profiles on an annual basis (although data derived from the Census could not be updated in this way) and by this means to monitor relevant trends and establish policy targets.

There was a discussion on the availability of information from the Profiles for the Partner organisations. Given that the development work was on-going and the intention was to produce a printed format in stages, on a loose-leaf file basis to facilitate updated insertions, a more pragmatic dissemination could be achieved by making the Profile work available on CD Rom. A number of the Partner representatives expressed an interest in being provided with a CD Rom. The Director emphasised that more detailed information could be requested for particular themes/purposes. By drilling-down into the Profile data the Council could identify an enormous wealth of detail.

Questions were raised concerning the sensitivity of the data and the levels of confidentiality which might apply. The Director confirmed that a legally authorised Confidentiality Agreement regulated the release of information from the Profiles. She was confident that this had also taken account of the Freedom of Information Act provisions. The detail of the recognition afforded in the Agreement to requests for information from the voluntary sector could not be recalled but the Director of Strategy advised that she would report back in that regard via the Director of Organisational Performance.

AR/PN

The meeting also addressed the principle of who directed the target-setting from the use of the Profile information. It was clarified that in effect this was the Partnership itself, the Profiles being complementary to the Partnership priorities. Further to a concern that the voluntary sector might not have an effective input, it was agreed that priorities identified by that sector could be taken into account. The Voluntary Sector Community Forum was proposed as an appropriate conduit for establishing such additional priorities.

The Chief Executive, Harrow PCT, commended the merit of the Vitality Profiles and confirmed the intention to have the newly appointed Director of Public Health at the PCT involved in their development.

The formulation of policy outcomes based on the Profile Information was also debated in the context that various competing priorities for scarce resources were likely to be identified (e.g. land use for residential housing versus commercial premises). It was recognised that following the basic audit of what existed and where, aspirations would emerge, the Local Development Framework would be created and this would require to be

followed by some innovative and imaginative allocation of resources, such as the appropriate re-use of 'brown field' sites. The difficulties of establishing a balance between the competing priorities was however not underestimated.

Councillor Shah confirmed that the Vitality Profiles were already being utilised to inform Council policy directions. He anticipated that the accelerating move to Area based working/services by the Local Authority would identify a series of strategic opportunities for co-operation between the Partners.

**AGREED:**

That the verbal update report on the Harrow Vitality Profile development be received and noted.

**8. Harrow Strategic Partnership Priority Areas:**

The Director of Organisational Performance, Harrow Council, reported to the meeting an update of the work being undertaken by the HSP Executive in the priorities areas agreed at the HSP Summit, May 2004. He drew attention to the documentation in this matter, as presented to the Executive meeting on 7 September. This reflected the attempts to realise the early work arising from the Harrow Vitality Profiles as action points, through liaison with the Partners and researching the availability of funding.

The Board noted the confirmation of the Priority Areas, their underlying principles and the matrix contained within the documentation which had apportioned the on-going work and the priorities according to relative priority and funding availability. This was an on-going exercise as more detailed information was identified. The Director advised that it was hoped to develop "flagship" areas of activity which had the greatest likelihood of securing additional funding e.g. Social Inclusion was emerging as a common theme. By the close of the year it was intended to have formulated performance targets for the Partnership and to report back to the next Board meeting in January 2005.

Asoke Dutta asked which Management Groups were now operating and how they were progressing in the relevant activity areas to take this work forward. The Director acknowledged that whilst some Groups were now established it was proving more difficult with several other prospective Groups. However, the work between the Partners was being progressed regardless of where formal inter-agency Groups were still lacking.

MC/BA

PN

Voluntary Sector representatives confirmed that the submitted document provided a helpful analysis and that some detailed comments would be offered in writing. It was noted that the PCT was already encumbered with an enormous number of service targets, which the Partnership priorities would need to dove-tail with and complement. The concept of a 'flagship' project to raise the public profile of the Harrow Strategic Partnership was welcomed.

PN

In the latter context Mike Coker drew attention to the initiative publicised in a national newspaper to award lottery funds to a meritorious project. He suggested that a certain amount of lobbying/encouragement might secure

support for a Harrow social inclusion project. The Chair suggested that a copy of the newspaper article be circulated to Board Members.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the update on the progress in developing the HSP priority areas of work be received;
- (2) to note the final suite of priorities plus underpinning principles as set out in the report to the Executive;
- (3) to note the assignation of priorities (within the matrix) and to endorse the work being done by the Executive via the Management Groups;
- (4) that it be noted that a further report would be made to the January meeting of the Board;
- (5) to request that the report to the next meeting also provide an update on the formulation of the Management Groups.

**9. Development of Harrow Strategic Partnership Reference Groups:**

The Service Manager Policy and Partnership, Harrow Council, reported on the development of two Reference Groups, for Community Cohesion and for Older People, as part of the wider Harrow Strategic Partnership structure. It was confirmed that terms of reference had been agreed for both and that they were actively engaged in projects and processes in support of the Partnership's objectives. This had included contributing to the response to the Home Office consultation on the development of the community cohesion and race equality strategy.

The report mentioned the intended development of the reference and reporting back processes between the Board, Executive, Management Groups and Reference Groups.

All to note

Mike Coker drew attention to the complexity and lack of relational clarity in respect of the Partnership and the work of the "Partnership Boards". It was identified that this nomenclature was being used for various groups that had been formed to assist the planning of health services in such areas as Mental Health and Learning Disabilities. The Chief Executive, Harrow PCT, agreed that there was a tendency for confusion and the Partnership should be striving for greater clarity. His approach would include challenging existing groups to justify their continued existence by a demonstrable ability to add value to the Partnership.

All to note  
PN/BA

The Director of Organisational Performance, Harrow Council, referred to the Children's Services area where a similar complexity had been identified. Consequent on this he and the Director of Children Services were currently working on proposals to evaluate how the operational service bodies could relate effectively to the Strategic Partnership. He suggested that the outcome might serve as a relevant model for developing solutions for other services and Partners.

The Chair observed that the Partnership had been pre-occupied to date in

capacity building and in formulating the Community Strategy. There had not been time in which to review the effectiveness of its own structures but this was an aspect which deserved attention.

**AGREED:**

- (1) To note the confirmatory report on the status of the Community Cohesion and Older People Reference Groups;
- (2) to note that there was currently a tendency towards a lack of clarity in the inter-relational working of elements of the Partnership structure and this should be reviewed to ensure that it was effective.

**10. Update on Local Compacts and Codes of Practice: Codes of Practice on Volunteering and Consultation:**

The Chief Executive, Harrow Association of Voluntary Service, presented two documents drawn-up under the auspices of the Harrow Compact, being specifically the proposed final format of a “Code of Practice on Volunteering” and a “Code of Practice on Consultation”. The documents were advised for the information of the Board. They were due to be considered by the next HAVS meeting on 14 October.

It was noted that of the intended five good practice codes, the Communications Protocol had been agreed previously.

All to note

The Board noted that some of the detailed text in the documents presented remained to be completed (e.g. Consultation Code, Actions section text).

**AGREED:**

That the Codes of Practice be formally received and noted.

**11. Final Response to the Home Office Consultation on Race Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy:**

The Service Manager Policy and Partnership presented a paper in this matter which confirmed the context for and extent of the local consultation undertaken further to the Home Office initiative. The deadline for responses to the Home Office had expired in September and a copy of the formal submission sent on behalf of Harrow Strategic Partnership was attached as an appendix to the documentation for this meeting.

The Service Manager emphasised that the submitted response had deliberately been more robust than a simple reply to the posed questions, particularly in regard to the community cohesion issues.

All to note

She also drew attention to the nature of some of the consultation outcomes in which strong opinions had been expressed about Citizenship. There was a preference for developing a common set of citizenship values, rather than being ascribed the status of being “British”. There were objections to a perceived negative media role in its portrayal of ethnic minorities and a wish to have recognised the real contribution to the community being made by recent refugee groups. There was a desire for champions or leaders to represent the ethnic communities.



The Chair referred to the particular initiatives through the auspices of the West London Alliance.

**AGREED:**

That the final, submitted response to the Home Office consultation on a Race Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy formally be noted.

**12. Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2004 and 2005 - Information Item:**

The Director of Organisational Performance, Harrow Council, presented an information report for the Board on the Audit Commission's proposals for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) to which all local authorities were subject. Harrow Council anticipated that its next corporate assessment would take place in the summer of 2005.

The Director confirmed that the Council had the ambition to achieve a formal CPA rating of "GOOD" by 2005/06. He also drew attention to the change of emphasis in the revised CPA framework to favour partnership issues and working. The corollary would be that the Council would be seeking to build on the existing co-operative partnership relationships and to request the collaboration of the Partners.

The Chair underlined that Local Strategic Partnerships were now moving centre-stage in the CPA focus and a great deal of activity would arise in this arena.

All to note

Asoke Dutta asked whether it might be helpful and prudent if the Partnership Board Members were to be included in a test assessment, to increase their effectiveness in contributing to the formal CPA processes in due course.

The Chair observed that IDEA had been retained by the Council to assist its CPA preparations on the last occasion and it might be of merit to renew that contact for these sorts of purpose.

The Director of Organisational Performance additionally clarified that the OFSTED Joint Area Review of Children's Activities, which had been a separate assessment regime, was in future to become an integral part of the CPA. This was drawn to the particular attention of those Partners who had a role in relation to children's services.

**AGREED:**

- (1) To note the strong focus in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2005 on partnership working and therefore the role of the work being developed in the Harrow Strategic Partnership's priority areas;
- (2) to note the importance of the Community Strategy as a key tool locally to evidence the added value of partnership working.

**13. Proposed Closure of Local Post Offices:**

Under the provisions of agenda item 12 (Any Other Urgent Business), Councillor Navin Shah tabled a draft resolution for the Board's consideration the purpose of which was to express opposition to the Post Office's proposals to close nine of its Post Office branches within the London Borough of Harrow.

The meeting was advised of the recent public meeting held to discuss the issues with Post Office representatives, within the period of consultation, and of the objections and concerns which had been expressed on behalf of local communities.

A discussion took place on the criteria to which the Post Office was having regard on commercial grounds, contrasted with the public service which would be withdrawn from communities and the actual hardship to which this might give rise. Board Members identified some of the initiatives which were under consideration in other areas to provide Post Office branches with an extended social role such as to justify their retention. It was suggested that the proposed resolution might benefit from referring to these.

Councillor Shah also indicated that points now raised in discussion could effectively be added to the Council's formal submission document to the Post Office.

The meeting agreed to adopt the resolution.

**AGREED:**

That the following resolution be now adopted:-

**“Proposed Closure of Local Post Offices”**

The Board Members of the Harrow Strategic Partnership are seriously concerned by the Post Office's (POL) proposal to close nine post offices in the Borough of Harrow.

This Partnership deplures the fact that:

- The consultation period has been too brief to allow adequate consultation with regular customers
- The closures will disproportionately affect the elderly, people with disabilities and those without access to transport by car
- It will create unnecessary pressure at remaining post offices
- The closures will threaten nearby businesses by removing passing trade and have an impact upon the vibrancy of localities

The Partnership supports the community's opposition to the closures and demands the removal of the threat of closure on the grounds that the social impact outweighs any possible commercial benefit to POL. Further the

Partnership recommends that existing Post Offices be upgraded to provide services that are relevant to local needs thereby ensuring their increased use with local residents.”

**14. Chair of the Board:**

Councillor Foulds advised the Board that this would be his last meeting given that his resignation as Leader of Harrow Council would be made formally to the Council Meeting on 21 October 2004. The new Leader of the Council as then appointed would become the replacement representative on the Board.

Councillor Foulds expressed his delight in having worked with the Partner colleagues on the Harrow Strategic Partnership since its inception.

In response, Board Members expressed their appreciation of Councillor Foulds.

**AGREED:**

That the Board formally record its sincere appreciation of the contribution to and leadership of the Harrow Strategic Partnership provided by Councillor Foulds, Leader of Harrow Council, in his role as Chair of the Partnership Board.

**15. Date of Next Meeting:**

It was noted that this would be held on Thursday 27 January 2005.

[Note: The Meeting, having commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 8.10 pm]

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