

CABINET MINUTES

18 OCTOBER 2011

Chairman: * Councillor Bill Stephenson

Councillors:

* Bob Currie	* Graham Henson
* Margaret Davine	* Thaya Idaikkadar
* Keith Ferry	* Phillip O'Dell
* Brian Gate	* David Perry
* Mitzi Green	

In attendance: Barry Macleod-Cullinane Minute 277
(Councillors) Paul Osborn Minute 277

* Denotes Member present

274. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 13 – Quality in Adult Social Care – Quality Assurance Report 2010/11 and Harrow's Local Account

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane declared a personal interest in that part of the report related to matters when he had been a Portfolio Holder and a Cabinet Member. He would remain in the room to listen to the debate on the matter.

Agenda Item 14 – Proposals following Adult Care Services Consultation

Councillors Chris and Janet Mote declared personal interests in that a relative was in receipt of adult social care. They would remain in the room to listen to the debate on the item.

Agenda Item 16 – Pride in Harrow – Acting Together – Neighbourhood Champions

During consideration of this item, Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, declared a personal interest and stated that, together with Councillor Paul Osborn, he had previously voted for the establishment of the Neighbourhood Champions Scheme. He would remain in the room to listen to the debate.

Agenda Item 19 – Third Sector Investment Plan 2012/15

Councillor Paul Osborn declared a personal interest in that he street collected for MENCAP. He would remain in the room to listen to the debate on the matter.

275. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2011, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

276. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

277. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that the following public questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Moni Bhachu

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: “If the Cabinet votes tonight to introduce the new Mental Health eligibility criteria for the Discretionary Freedom Pass, has the Council assessed what the resulting social care impact will be on the hundreds of people who are likely to lose their Discretionary Pass?”

Answer: Thank you very much for the question.

As part of the consultation process, the Council compiled a full equality impact assessment on the implications of the proposals which we will be considering. This assessment was carried out with members of the consultation steering group as well as a specialised sub-group, the Social Care Action Group (SCAG), and involved representatives from the CAB, HAD, MIND, Age Concern.

I would like to emphasise that Discretionary Freedom Passes are for those who have serious disabilities, and

after a lot of discussion and debate, SCAG has drawn up a set of eligibility criteria which is going to be considered by Cabinet this evening, which I am sure, in my belief and I think in their belief, ensures that anybody with a serious disability will still be eligible for a Discretionary Freedom Pass.

Feedback from the consultation and sample results from customer analysis were taken into account, and initial proposals were amended or redrafted. We believe that we have listened and changed our proposals accordingly. For example, the effective date for the cancellations for those existing Discretionary Freedom Passes who will no longer qualify under the new policy, the people you are talking about, we have now put back the date from which their pass will be cancelled, from 1 April 2012 to 2013. That will give them an extra year to adjust and find alternative travel solutions or funding.

We have also increased the proposed lower trip band for Taxi Cards from 26 to 52 trips. Originally 26 was being consulted on. This is to ensure that young disabled or older residents do not suffer disproportionately.

We are very aware of the social impact of our proposals and have done all we can to mitigate their effects within the difficult financial circumstances we are facing.

Supplemental Question: In order to prevent further confusion between the National Disabled Freedom Pass and Discretionary Freedom Pass, will the Council commit to ensure that when an applicant requests an assessment form for the Freedom Pass, a member of staff will explain the difference in the criteria between the 2 passes?

Supplemental Answer: I would hope that could be done and I hope that the forms explain that clearly. We will be monitoring how these proposals work. If the forms have been looked at by all the main organisations and, even if we have changed them since we have introduced them, we are willing to look at them again.

2.

Questioner: Lalita Gokani

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: "If the Cabinet votes tonight to adopt new Mental Health

eligibility criteria for the Discretionary Freedom Pass, what planning has been undertaken to ensure that both Council and contractor staff are trained to implement the new criteria and assessment form?”

Answer: Thank you very much for that question.

A training programme has been developed to brief and train all staff involved as well as the Mobility Contractor. We have already published a policy document on existing criteria and a procedural guide for staff on existing eligibility criteria and this will now be updated to cater for any new policies which we adopt.

We appreciate the damage that badly implemented policies can cause, as we have seen from the past, and will ensure that training and guidance are used to ensure the best possible service delivery for our residents.

We will of course, as I have mentioned already, monitor and review progress along with our Partners and make any changes necessary if the training materials and things are not satisfactory.

Supplemental Question: For people with mental health problems applying for the National Disabled Freedom Pass, obtaining the medical evidence can be extremely difficult and often takes a long time.

What action is the Council taking to overcome these problems so that the Harrow residents can benefit from their legal entitlement?

Supplemental Answer: (provided by an officer at the invitation of the Leader) We will obviously take that into consideration. We will not, for example, just send out one reminder if we need further evidence. The process will be lenient and we will try to get the documentary evidence even if it takes a little bit longer than the prescribed time.

Cllr Stephenson: And again, if there are any difficulties please let us know and we will try and do our best to sort those out because we want the process to be as smooth and painless as possible.

3.

Questioner: Amarinder Vadera, 9 Harley Road, Harrow HA1 4XF

Asked of: Councillor Margaret Davine, Portfolio Holder for Adult

Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

Question: “If the Cabinet votes tonight to adopt the Draft Contributions Policy and to implement it from 1 April 2012, how will the Council ensure that all financial assessments for people with mental health problems will be conducted by Council staff fully trained in mental health awareness and that those affected will be provided with clear, concise information in advance of an assessment so that they can make informed choices?”

Answer: The Council has, for many years, carried out financial assessments on vulnerable people including those with mental health problems. The financial assessments can be supported in a number of ways for instance, by peoples’ carers and their advocates. So they can use that.

If a client has any concerns with their financial assessment, they can discuss this with the team and ultimately they do have the right of appeal, which has always been the case. We will carry on doing that if we decide to implement the Contributions Policy this evening.

Supplemental Question: Has the application to the Transformation and New Initiatives Fund been approved for the extra staffing capacity to conduct the additional assessments for people with mental health problems for implementation of the draft Contributions Policy by 1 April 2012 and if it has not been approved, when will it be?

Supplemental Answer: The outcomes of the Fund have not yet been announced but, I have been assured that I will have an extra resource from the Council in order to carry out the work in the time that we need to do so. There will be no backdating and it is in the recommendations we will be taking with the Contributions Policy.

Cllr Stephenson: As the Portfolio Holder responsible, I can reassure you that is the case.

4.

Questioner: Raksha Pandya

Asked of: Councillor Margaret Davine, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

Question: Does the Council's Adult Social Care budget balance for next financial year 2012 - 2013?

Answer: Overall the Council's budget has a funding gap over the next 3 years of approximately £30 million and, in that sense, no department yet has a balanced budget for 2012/13 because we are all currently working to finalise our budgets.

In Adult Social Care, we are working to ensure that savings are identified to balance the budget and we will do all we can to ensure that services are protected as we set next year's budgets. We have already identified about £2 million efficiency savings and we are not planning to cut any services.

Supplemental Question: You will see that there are many people here tonight who want a fair deal for mental health from the Council, so I just wanted to say a big thank you to people for turning up.

It has been confirmed in previous Cabinet meetings that £2.4 million is to be transferred from the NHS under the S256 Agreement, which will be ring-fenced by Harrow Council for Adult Social Care in 2012/2013 budget. Can the Council guarantee these additional resources will be used to meet vulnerable social care service user needs above the 2011/2012 baseline budget and can you confirm what specifically these additional funds will be spent on?

Supplemental Answer: I certainly can confirm that everything that is in the Adult Social Care budget will be used to support vulnerable people but I cannot give any detail as we are currently building the budget.

278. Councillor Questions

RESOLVED: To note the following Councillor Questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Bob Currie, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: "According to Inside Housing Magazine, Harrow Council declared after the London riots that it will not pursue the eviction from Council housing of tenants convicted of rioting or looting. Can you confirm if this is the Council's policy and, if so, why it has been adopted?"

Answer: Unfortunately, Inside Housing misrepresented us in

saying we would not pursue the eviction from Council housing of tenants convicted of riots and looting. We actually said that any case that came to light would have to be considered on the individual circumstances of the case. Our full response to Inside Housing was as follows:

"Like all London Boroughs, Harrow was appalled by the riots and takes its responsibility to keep neighbourhoods safe very seriously, however we believe that all cases need to be considered on their own, individual merit.

We have a responsibility to protect other members of the community by effectively tackling Anti Social Behaviour and other breaches of tenancy, but we also have a responsibility to help sustain tenancies and support more vulnerable members of the community.

We therefore have quite a balancing act to tackle any type of Anti Social Behaviour and eviction is not always the most appropriate remedy for communities, for the families or for the public purse."

The present Tenancy Agreement does not allow us to evict tenants or members of their households for causing nuisance or being convicted of an arrestable offence unless it is committed in or near the tenant's property. As we were fortunate not to have riots in Harrow there are no current legal grounds of seeking possession for any convictions relating to criminal activity outside of Harrow.

Supplemental Question: Given the fact that there are still hundreds of rioters who are yet to be identified and brought to book, can you assure us that, if and when they are brought to book, that you will be taking steps to remove them from the properties if they are convicted, rather than allow them to remain in those properties to the detriment of those hundreds of thousands of people on our waiting lists who are law abiding and are being denied a place by rioters?

Supplemental Answer: As stated, if it comes to Court and it's questionable and the Court agree it, yes we would follow the Court procedures.

2.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Bob Currie, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: “Are there any plans for Harrow to follow the example of Westminster Council in prioritising employed residents and families on the Council's housing waiting list?”

Answer: Our Allocations Policy is currently under review and being rewritten. Whilst it is for Cabinet to decide the final Policy, one of the changes being consulted on with residents is giving greater priority to households who are employed (on lower incomes) and those who make a contribution to the community. The details have yet to be finalised.

A supplemental question asked was refused by the Leader, as it did not arise directly out of the original question or reply.

3.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Bob Currie, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: “What principle is guiding this administration's Rent Strategy when it comes to setting Council rents in 2012-13 and beyond, especially given the changes to the HRA financial regime?”

Answer: The Rent Strategy that was agreed in February 2011 was based on the need to bring our income and expenditure streams into balance and I am pleased to say that this will be achieved by April 2012.

The other principle is that we have to bear in mind the need to achieve a rent convergence by 2015 which we are well on the way to achieving. We discussed what principles should guide our reviews of Rental Strategy at the last TLCF and residents were keen to look to try to maximise incomes by not penalising those who cannot afford to pay and still keep the differential with Housing Associations. Clearly we do not know exactly what we will get from the HRA reforms but we will continue to consult tenants on what they think is fair and any changes will be considered by this Cabinet in December.

Supplemental Question: In light of your comments about helping those who cannot afford to pay rent and given the fact that we are in a recession, that inflation is galloping ahead and the HRA reforms will lead to extra monies coming into the HRA account because we will not be having to subsidise other parts of the country; what steps are you taking to cap rent rises and, in fact, freeze rents this coming year

just as the government is enabling this Council to freeze Council Tax?

Supplemental Answer: We will not be looking at freezing rents this year. We need to set out a Strategy within Housing which will be a 3-year programme. The main issue with the 3-year programme is the income as the government is going to stop subsidies to housing.

4.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: "Why is it proposed for both Fairer Contribution to Care and Meals on Wheels to raise charges in line with the Council's inflation level instead of the actual cost of the services to the Council?"

Answer: In a way, I think I really ought to ask you that question because if I remember, we are following the practice of the previous administration who first introduced an annual inflation increase for Meals on Wheels based on the council inflation level, so maybe you can answer why it is, but I will try and help you.

As part of the annual budget setting process the Council reviews and uplifts charges in line with inflation. The Fairer Contribution to Care and the Meals on Wheels services are made up of various components, each of which will have a variety of inflationary uplifts. Therefore, in an attempt to increase charges in an equitable way, an increase is recommended in line with uplifts across the Council, as is already our current practice.

It has also been noted that those individuals consulted were keen to limit the amount of annual price increases for this service. As a previous speaker said, inflation is galloping away under this government, maybe you want to have it at 5% for those. We think this is a fair and proper way of doing it and it is in line with what we have done previously.

Supplemental Question: Given that the recommendation has that the Portfolio Holder and the Director should be looking at reducing the cost to the Council of Meals on Wheels. If they are successful in that, should that not fairly be passed onto the service users rather than the service users having

an increase, even though the Council has less cost?

Supplemental Answer: You are rather anticipating the debate on Meals on Wheels. Obviously as we saw from the previous time when the previous administration put up Meals on Wheels costs, there is a fall away of the people who use them.

We have consulted on that and we are keeping the Meals on Wheels prices uplifted by inflation. We are not going to put them up by anything else.

However, as you will have read in the report, we are thinking about how we can generate income and bring the cost of the service down and it may very well, with inflationary uplifts like this, we will come to an economic convergence.

Our main aim is to protect vulnerable people and provide a Meals on Wheels service which is viable. It is our first priority. The second priority is to do that as cheaply and efficiently as we can but not at the expense of vulnerable people.

5.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: "As you still haven't made up your mind regarding the use of the Transformation and Priority Initiatives Fund, why can you not allocate more of the Fund to provide transitional relief for some of Harrow's most vulnerable residents who will see many of their care charges increase?"

Answer: The Transformation Priority Initiatives Fund will be allocated according to guidelines laid down by Cabinet. There is a bidding process and we are currently considering the bids made by the various Directorates. In some cases seeking further information before any final decisions are made.

The Council has administered charging arrangements for many years and has significant experience in carrying out financial assessments for vulnerable adults. If the Fairer Contributions Policy is agreed, all service users will undergo a review of their care needs and a robust financial assessment. Following completion of

this process, if it is decided that an individual has sufficient income, and only then will they be asked to contribute towards the cost of their care.

In addition to the above processes, Adult Social Care is working closely with the Voluntary Sector Partners to ensure that all users and carers are in receipt of their full benefit entitlement and that is a very important issue. Not everybody claims the full benefits and we want to make sure that everybody does.

Supplemental Question: Do you think it is right that the Council is sitting on a fund of over a million pounds and you are not using it to help transition some of this relief?

It is welcomed that things are not being backdated and that the assessments are being done fast and I think that is a good thing but I do not think it is right to have people having to make these huge increases in one go when we have the finances available to transition that and make it a more gradual increment for our most vulnerable residents.

Supplemental Answer: Again, we have a bidding process and if there are bids along those lines we will consider them seriously.

It is a very difficult situation. We have got lots of other very worthy projects in Invest to Save, which we will be reporting when we have actually assessed all the bids. Again, as has been pointed out, we are looking very carefully at the financial circumstances of each individual. They are properly assessed and they will only be given extra charges if they have got the means to meet that and they have been encouraged to collect their benefits.

6.

Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Margaret Davine, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

Question: Given the importance placed upon helping “to ensure financial sustainability of the service” as one of the reasons for Recommendation 1 (p. 52) to approve the Fairer Contributions Policy, do you share our concerns as to whether sufficient work has been done to independently audit and accurately assess the current and projected level of public health need and expenditure by the PCT prior to the transfer of public health responsibilities to the Council, especially given

Harrow PCT's lamentable track record of gross financial mismanagement, its inability to identify and control costs, and previous cost shunts to the Council?

Answer: First of all, my having stressed the importance upon helping to ensure financial sustainability of the social care system into the future is about making sure we do not have to cut any services.

So we have put in place, with consultation we believe a system where no one will pay for more than the care they receive and no one will pay more than they can afford and that will carry the system forward because it includes all the services they get into the future. So I do not think your question is quite on the spot of that which is how you started it off.

In actual fact, we do have some concerns that the Public Health budget might not be sufficient to do everything we would want in public health and we are concerned about that. We will be using the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which has been refreshed, to see where the needs are and we certainly have been involved in returns to the Department of Health about Public Health expenditure and we are pleased that the Government is going to be, and this gets to the heart of your question, providing the allocation of the Public Health budget on a needs based assessment, so that will be a nationally needs based assessment. No doubt there will be a formula and we will all see what we get.

In actual fact, it will not have any link to the actual financial status of the Primary Care Trust (PCT), except that we are concerned that we have seen the PCT working down their actual provision in general, across the whole of the health area because of their financial problems but we will get the money from the government. We will apply it as well as we can to our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and hopefully, I believe, the local authority is the right place for public health to be and I think we will be able to have a far better system addressing the public health needs of the Borough with it sitting in the Council.

Supplemental Question: I share your concern with the PCT situation and I am happy that you are taking steps to try to mitigate that but have you got enough resources being devoted into this area to ensure that where you say the PCT has been working things down, that they have not got full resources in this area, that we are accurately getting a full picture of the needs that Harrow residents have, particularly in Mental Health so that when Public Health

transfers under this formula system that has been done nationwide, we will have the requisite level of funding for our health needs in Harrow and it is not lower because the PCT has not been carrying its side of the bargain through?

Supplemental Answer: It will not be lower because it will be a slice of the national cake.

It will not now be directly linked to the finances of the PCT, and that was the worry some time ago. Also, when we made the return to the government about the needs of Harrow we did express concern about some things that at the moment were not being fulfilled in the Public Health area and we hope that will help with the amount of the money that we do get.

The following questions were not reached in the time limit of 15 minutes. It was noted that written responses would be provided, and these have been reproduced below:

7.

Questioner: Councillor John Nickolay

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: "Do you have any concerns for Harrow resulting from the likely termination of the Cranford Agreement by the Civil Aviation Authority, as a result of the refusal of the third runway at Heathrow Airport?"

Answer: The Minister for Transport confirmed in September 2010 that the Cranford agreement should end. Harrow has contributed to discussion on this issue, and other aviation related issues to ensure an appropriate response to the current consultation through London Councils.

While it is recognised that Heathrow airport is an important national and regional facility, I am concerned to ensure the operation of the airport should be managed to minimise the impact on residents of West London and Harrow generally. For example through mitigation such as limits to the capacity of the airport.

8.

Questioner: Councillor Kam Chana

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: "The recent parking consultation contained draft/example costs and charges for resident parking permits, but no such examples of charges that would be adopted under the '4 zone' proposal, which is now recommended to Cabinet. Have either these zones or their respective charges been determined yet, and will there be further consultation on rates and locations before the zone system is introduced?"

Answer: No, the rates and locations have not been finalised yet. As stated in the Cabinet report, the aim of the change is to provide a more straightforward and understandable way of dealing with parking, by for example harmonising some permits and adopting a zone approach. The proposals received public support during the recent consultation with 60% of respondents in favour of the change.

The zones will form the basis of setting the charges for parking. There will be a formal statutory consultation on the revised charging structure.

The annual budget setting process will provide further opportunity for comment, in common with the other fees and charges set by the Council. The current charges will remain in place until any new fees and charges have been agreed.

9.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor Graham Henson, Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services

Question: "Given that it was an important part of the IT Outsourcing, will you guarantee the Mobile and Flexible Working business case will come to Cabinet in November?"

Officer Response: No.

As you will recall in answer to your question to Cabinet in June, I advised you that this is an exceptionally complex

and also challenging project that will have a profound impact across the whole of the Council and how we relate to our customers, and as such requires careful and detailed planning.

Officers will report to Cabinet when they believe that all relevant investigations and design work have been completed to their, and my, entire satisfaction.

Put simply, there is no need to rush this important piece of work. Better “we rush slowly” and get everything right at the planning stage, thereby ensuring potential pitfalls can be avoided.

Significant initial investment will be required for implementation. I therefore have decided to align with the Council’s commissioning and resource allocation process. The business case will therefore be taken to February Cabinet.

The Mobile & Flexible working project does not form part of the ITO, but is dependent upon and will be aligned to the programme of recent investment which will deliver a robust and resilient ICT infrastructure.

10.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: Under the new system of charging for care provision and with the removal of the £250 cap, what will the average additional cost to service users be, and what will be the largest individual user cost, based on current care needs of service users – assuming they have to make a full contribution?

Answer: Under the existing arrangements, based on the current charging for domiciliary care which is capped at £250 per week, it is possible to provide an indication of the potential implications for these service users.

(provided by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing)

There are currently 1100 (approximately) service users receiving domiciliary care services. Of these there are 14 service users (1.3%) who are in receipt of domiciliary care services where the cost of their care is more than the capped £250 per week. These service users have opted to pay the full cost of their care, rather than go through a financial assessment, but their contributions

are still capped at the £250 per week.

Were the £250 per week cap to be removed, the average contribution they would be required to make would increase to £373 per week with the highest contribution increasing to £523 per week. This of course does assume that following review, their care packages remain unchanged. It may also be the case that if these service users opted to go through a financial assessment then their assessed contribution may be less than the existing £250 per week cap.

279. Forward Plan October 2011 - January 2012

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that:

- the Forward Plan item on the Children's Centre was not considered to be a Key Decision at this stage. It would be Key when a further report was submitted to the December Cabinet;
- the Forward Plan item on Harrow & Wealdstone Area Action Plan item had been deferred;
- agenda item 11, Cabinet Decision Making Protocol and Amendments to the Financial Regulations, was a Key Decision and had not been included on the October Forward Plan. Necessary approvals had been obtained to allow Cabinet to consider the item.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 October 2011 to 31 January 2012.

280. Progress on Scrutiny Projects

RESOLVED: To receive and note the current progress of scrutiny reports.

281. Snow Clearance Challenge Panel - Final Report

Cabinet received a reference on Snow Clearance from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 September 2011.

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that the response report to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Challenge Panel would be submitted to the November 2011 Cabinet meeting by the Corporate Director Community and Environment when a representative of the Challenge Panel would be able to speak on the recommendations.

The Leader added that he would be considering how references and reports from Scrutiny were handled by Cabinet in the future.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

282. Harrow Partnership Board

Cabinet received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which set out a summary of the business considered by the Harrow Partnership Board at its meeting held on 11 October 2011. It was noted that due to the proximity of meetings, the minutes of the Board had not been available for submission to Cabinet.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the report and highlighted the key aspects of the Board's work, such as the Harrow Mutual Support Network and the adoption of a revised Constitution.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

[Call-in does not apply to decisions that have been noted].

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

283. Key Decision - Cabinet Decision Making Protocol and Amendments to the Financial Regulations

Cabinet received a joint report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services and Interim Director of Finance setting out a protocol on which decisions should go to Cabinet and seeking amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations.

The Leader of the Council highlighted the changes being proposed, such as the increase in financial thresholds for Key Decisions, which had received cross-party support, and changes to the Financial Regulations to help strengthen the process for the approval of the Capital Programme and Projects. The Leader added that the inclusion of guidance on the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010 also formed part of the changes to the Financial Regulations. He referred to the cross-party meetings taking place to take a view on items that ought to be submitted to Cabinet.

The Divisional Director, Corporate Finance and Procurement informed Cabinet that the changes to the Financial Regulations included amendments to the Scheme of Delegations and addressed the recommendations of the Capital Investigation Implementation Plan.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council) That

- (1) the Cabinet Decision Making Protocol proposal for the amendment to Key Decision thresholds be agreed and included in the Council's Constitution
- (2) the amended Financial Regulations be agreed and adopted into the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Decision Making Protocol and the amended Financial Regulations be approved.

Reason for Decision: To give clarity and transparency for officers, Members and the public about which matters would go to Cabinet. To update the Financial Regulations to give greater clarity of financial governance.

[Call-in does not apply to a Recommendation to Council].

RESOLVED ITEMS

284. Strategic Performance Report (Q1)

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services introduced a report, which summarised Council and service performance against key measures. The Portfolio Holder added that the Council's performance during the first quarter had been strong and that it had built-on the successes of 2010/11 following the setting of a balanced budget. He highlighted some of the notable achievements and recognised the challenges that the Council faced in going forward.

The Portfolio Holder added that the most recent accolade received had been the prestigious Municipal Journal (MJ) Award, given to the Council, as recognition for being the Best Achieving Council for 2011. The Legal and Governance Service had also been "highly commended" at the MJ Award Ceremony for "Excellence in Legal Services". Access Harrow had retained the Cabinet Office Customer Excellence Standard and also continued to resolve 90% of queries at first contact and that waiting times continued to decrease.

Moreover, the Adults and Housing Directorate was making good progress in developing a Harrow Health and Wellbeing Board by working in conjunction with colleagues in the Health Service, including the General Practitioners (GPs). Harrow's reablement service area, launched in October 2010, had been praised as an 'exemplar of best practice' by the Department of Health in recognition of the difference that this transformed service was making to the lives of vulnerable people. The Council's residential homes had received good reports, which were particularly welcomed in light of the failure of the homes managed by Southern Cross Healthcare. This recognition had given Harrow's community a positive message that they had access to good quality residential care.

The Housing Service had delivered its improvements and that the tenants and residents had been at the 'heart' of these, and their engagement was to be commended. The delivery of the Housing Ambition Plan had continued to improve key areas such as in rent arrears, rent collection and the use of temporary accommodation. Whilst Harrow had experienced a marked increase in the number of families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation, it had not been as significant as the increases experienced by other local authorities. The Portfolio Holder for Housing was proud of the achievements

of staff and, together with the Leader of the Council, congratulated Housing Services for being awarded IIP accreditation at the Silver level.

The performance of Children's Services remained on track despite the challenges. The new Children's Operating Model would bring Partners together to work more closely with social care teams by January 2012. The Portfolio Holder was pleased to report that work to ensure that schools were supported in their move towards becoming academies had been successfully completed within challenging timescales.

In connection with the disturbances across London and other cities during August, Harrow's Borough Commander had praised the work of the Youth Service and their effort in joint working to ensure that there were no major problems in the borough. As a result, Darra Singh, Chief Executive of Job Centre Plus, who had been appointed to head the official inquiry into the disturbances across England, would be visiting Harrow on 19 October to learn more about Harrow's approach.

In the Community and Environment Directorate, recycling performance remained one of the best in London, with rates expected to exceed those previously achieved as recycling facilities for flats were rolled out. The Portfolio Holder added that the Council had recruited over 1,200 Neighbourhood Champions, which had helped to demonstrate the positive community spirit in Harrow and the pride they had working towards 'United and Involved Communities – a Council that Listens and Leads', which was one of the Council's Priorities. He applauded the excellent work in this area.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the achievements of the Place Shaping Directorate, such as the submission of the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State, the placing of planning performance agreements for the Kodak and Lyon Road sites and the establishment of the Xcite3 Work Club which held weekly workshops to support people to get into work.

The Better Deal for Residents Programme continued to make significant progress and the projects such as the Libraries Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) had made a difference to the services received by residents. The Programme had enabled better service provision without compromising frontline services.

In conclusion, the Portfolio Holder added that whilst recognising the strong performance, the Council was also conscious of the challenges it faced given the difficult funding position and the increased difficulties residents have had to face during the current adverse economic conditions. He commended the report to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and Portfolio Holders continue working with officers to achieve improvement against identified key challenges.

Reason for Decision: To note performance against key measures and to identify and assign corrective action where necessary.

285. Key Decision - Risk Management Update and the Draft Risk Management Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services introduced a report, which provided an annual update of the Council's Risk Management Strategy that had been developed in response to the changing requirements for managing risks in the Council. The report included suggestions from a range of stakeholders, including the Governance Audit and Risk Management Committee, and he thanked them for their contributions.

The Divisional Director Risk, Audit and Fraud outlined the key points of the Strategy, as follows:

- it would help streamline the Risk Register;
- it would concentrate on the Business Critical list;
- it provided clarity on how the Council managed risks and the methods used;
- the roles, responsibilities and ownership of risk management were clearly set out.

It was noted that the role of Cabinet was to support the Council in its responsibilities by reviewing internal policies and arrangements. This included providing an assurance to the Council that the Risk Management Strategy was in line with current guidance and best practice.

RESOLVED: That the risk management position be noted and the Risk Management Strategy, at appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

Reason for Decision: To be aware of the Council's progress in risk management, to comply with the Governance Framework and to ensure that the Council's Risk Management Framework continues to align with best practice.

286. Key Decision - Sustainable Procurement Policy

Cabinet received a report of the Interim Director Finance, which sought approval of the Sustainable Procurement Policy and included the benefits that subsequent implementation would bring to the communities of Harrow.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise referred to the two aspects of procurement, the buying of goods and services and its supply. The element covered in the report related to the latter which covered the Enterprise element of his Portfolio. He added that the Policy would provide a basis for the inclusion of social, economic and environmental sustainability considerations in procurement and supply chain management to help deliver strategic objectives around local community growth and development.

The Portfolio Holder added that the Policy would provide a number of benefits such as:

- Demand management – buying less and buying ‘needs not wants’;
- Achievement of Best Value from spend and not merely Value for Money;
- Stimulating new trading opportunities for local firms and the Third Sector, reducing the environmental impact of Council’s supply chains and promoting local employment and trading.

The Policy would commit the Council to a set of social, economic and environmental actions. The Portfolio Holder congratulated officers on the proposal and commended it to Cabinet.

The Leader of the Council added that the Council had benefited from the learning and experience from implementation of a similar policy by the Greater London Authority (GLA).

RESOLVED: That the Sustainable Procurement Policy be adopted and implemented.

Reason for Decision: To facilitate delivery of the objectives of key Council strategies and policies (for example the Corporate Plan, Sustainable Community Strategy, “Enterprising Harrow” and Climate Change Strategy) through Council procurement. To facilitate the use of social, economic and environmental considerations within Council procurement processes, for example the stimulation of supply chain opportunities for local businesses and Third Sector organisations, the creation of local employment and training opportunities.

287. Quality in Adult Social Care - Quality Assurance Report 2010/2011 and Harrow's Local Account

Cabinet received an information report of the Corporate Director Adults and Housing setting out the main elements of the Adult Services Quality Assurance Report 2010/2011. Quality Assurance was an integral part of developing and delivering high quality services that users and the public wanted. To ensure that the Council was listening and responding effectively to the users and using all of the feedback channels available, his Directorate had established a Board which produced such reports.

The Corporate Director Adults and Housing informed Cabinet that the report set out the annual policy assessment which had been produced given that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) no longer made public reports of this service area. This was a self-assessment of the services provided by his Directorate.

The Corporate Director outlined the positive aspects of the self-assessment, such as the work carried out on reablement and personalisation of care, safeguarding and planned benchmarking, whilst maintaining high professional

standards. Learning and Improving was the key driver. However, there were areas that need further consideration, such as the establishment of effective communication channels in relation to Home Care arrangements.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing explained that great care was being taken to learn from all the feedback received, and she was pleased that all learning was from an initial solid base.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Reason for Decision: To be aware of an overview of the Adult Services Quality Assurance Report 2010/11.

[Call-in does not apply to decisions that have been noted].

288. Key Decision - Proposals following Adult Care Services Consultation

The Portfolio Holder for Adults Social Care, Health and Wellbeing introduced a report, which set out proposals following a major consultation exercise that had given users of Adult Services the opportunity to give their views on proposed changes to services to enable the Council to provide sustainable services within a limited budget. As the largest Council Directorate, Adult Services had to make savings due to cuts in government funding. It was important that any savings made provided safe and efficient services that were of high quality and met the needs of the most vulnerable members of the society.

The Portfolio Holder outlined the journey that had ensued with the stakeholders during the consultation process and she thanked them for their hard work, explained how feedback received had been considered and the manner in which the recommendation had been arrived at. All aspects of the process had involved joint working with the stakeholders.

The Portfolio Holder introduced Alan Warn and Maureen McGrath, Service Users, to address the meeting. Maureen McGrath stated that, whilst the users she represented understood the need for changes, they did not support the majority of the proposals set out in the report. She added that it had been a long journey and one which she had enjoyed participating in. Alan Warn informed Cabinet that he was a service user at Millman's Resource Centre in Pinner. During this journey, a number of meetings had been held providing him with a vast amount of knowledge. He identified with the extent of the situation faced and that he had had a clear view of what had taken place during this journey.

The Leader of the Council thanked Maureen and Alan for their contributions, and acknowledged the presence of a number of service users at the meeting. The Leader explained that the first three aspects of the report, Contributions to Care, Eligibility to Adult Social Care Transport and Meals on Wheels would be introduced by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, whilst he would lead on the fourth and final aspect of the report, namely Concessionary Travel.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing informed Cabinet that the consultation exercise had been far reaching and that the proposals had been revised following receipt of the feedback from residents/users. Of particular note in this regard was the changes made to the proposals for the Meal on Wheels service, as the feedback had shown concerns around the taking away of the service in its entirety or putting up prices considerably. The Council had listened to these fears as a result of which various changes had been included in the recommendations.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the Fairer Contributions Policy would allow the Council to take forward the service in a balanced way and she commended the Policy to Cabinet. She explained the various recommendations contained under the umbrella heading of Contributions to Care, including funding for the implementation of the Fairer Contributions Policy transitional programme between November 2011 and March 2012 of £200,000 from the Transformation and Priority Initiatives Fund. It was also intended to review the Corporate Debt Policy to ensure that it was appropriate for Adult Care. A Communication Plan was also needed to ensure that all service users were made aware of the various proposals. Various groups would assist the Council with the introduction of the Policy and help monitor its effectiveness and pick up on any unforeseen issues, as part of a Steering Group.

In relation to the 'Eligibility to Adult Social Care Transport' proposals, the Portfolio Holder referred to the recommendations and highlighted that, whilst the issue of safeguarding was high on the agenda, experience had shown that those that travelled on their own were thrilled that they were able to do so. The Portfolio Holder added that it was intended to tighten up the processes in relation to Adult Social Care Transport for the benefit of those in need, put transitional arrangements in place to ensure that all existing service users continued to receive the service until March 2012 when revised arrangements would come into place and that all new service users would be required to make a contribution towards the cost of their care, subject to ability to pay. She stressed that no one would be required to pay for their care unless they could afford it. Again, a Communications Plan would be developed to ensure that the users understood how the assessments would be carried out for access to Adult Social Care Transport.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the provision of Meals on Wheels and the Council's desire to make the service cost-effective. The consultation exercise had also included a special survey, which had involved personal visits by the Portfolio Holder and the Leader of the Council, of those who used the meals on Wheels Service. The outcome had shown how valued the service was, and that, whilst annual inflationary charges would apply, she commended Option C – a no increase in the price of meals for 2011/12 - to Cabinet.

The Corporate Director Adults and Housing reported that the feedback from the consultation exercise had been built into the proposals, which had been revised as a result to mitigate impact on users thereby prioritising those with the greatest needs. The Corporate Director explained why the current Contributions Policy needed revising and stated that Cabinet needed to take into account the feedback from the community, have regard to the

benchmarking carried out and compare Harrow with the changes that other boroughs were making. Proposals in the report were based on best practice and that detailed Equality Impact Assessments had been carried out on all the proposals. A variety of stakeholders and members of the Steering Group had engaged with the process, impact assessments had been tracked and regularly reviewed, and that the report before Cabinet had been 'signed up to' by the Steering Group and did not merely represent the views of officers.

At this stage of the meeting, Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 were considered and agreed by Cabinet, including Option 3 in regard to the Meals on Wheels Service.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Portfolio Holder and officers for their work in delivering this report. He referred to the outstanding recommendation in relation to Concessionary Travel – the National Disabled Freedom Pass Review Outcome, Discretionary Freedom Pass and Establishing Levels of Entitlement for Multiple Services. The Leader explained how each of these areas worked and who they applied to. He added that the current situation was chaotic with assessments carried out in different places within the Council. Moreover, the assessments were inconsistent, led to duplication of work and there were huge disparities.

As a result, the Finance Directorate had been asked to review this area with a view to make the system simpler by introducing a single application form and assessment. However, other issues had also arisen and it was felt timely to use the consultation process being carried out in the Adult Care area, as many of the same people needed to be consulted. The benefits of using the consultation process were immense, resulting in a number of proposals coming forward.

The Leader added that it was proposed to levy a charge for the replacement of a lost/damaged Freedom Pass, which mirrored the charge that the Transport for London levied for the replacement of Oyster Cards. He explained the reasons behind the new Band Levels in relation to the various travel passes. Discussions on the eligibility criteria had also taken place at the Steering Group and consultations had shown that these needed reviewing. In order to ensure fairness and no disadvantage, it was being proposed that the transfer of National Disabled Freedom Passes did not come into effect until March 2013.

The Divisional Director Collections and Housing Benefits reported that the proposals had come from the Steering Group and MIND in Harrow. The criteria would also protect up to 700 Mental Health Users and safeguard the vulnerable.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) in relation to Contributions to Care,
 - (i) the Fairer Contributions Policy, as annexed at Appendix A to the report, be approved;

- (ii) the funding of the Adult Care Services consultation process of £117k from the Corporate Contingency Budget be approved;
- (iii) the funding for the implementation of the Fairer Contributions Policy transitional programme between November 2011- March 2012 of £200k from the Corporate Transformation and Priority Initiatives Fund, be approved;
- (iv) the transitional programme between November 2011 - March 2012 with contributions be approved, subject to financial assessment for existing service users, effective from 1st April 2012, as set out in paragraph 10.15 of the report;
- (v) contributions for new service users, subject to financial assessment, be implemented immediately following agreement to their new support plan, be agreed;
- (vi) the Corporate Director Adults and Housing, in consultation with the Corporate Director Finance and Portfolio Holders for Finance and Business Transformation and Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, be authorised to review the corporate debt collection policy to ensure it is appropriate for Adult Care debt collection;
- (vii) the Corporate Director Adults and Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, be authorised to develop a Communication Plan that ensures all service users are made aware of the content of the new Fairer Contributions Policy.

Reason for Decision: To introduce a fairer system in that service users are asked to make a contribution towards the overall cost of their care package based on their ability to pay. To protect the quality and ensure financial sustainability of the service. To achieve an estimated full year savings in the region of £500k if all the proposals were agreed.

- (2) in relation to Eligibility to Adult Social Care Transport,
 - (i) the Corporate Director Adults and Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, be authorised to determine criteria, based on the Fairer Contributions Policy, for eligibility to community transport based on the needs of the individual and maximising mobility options;
 - (ii) the cost of community transport be incorporated into the Resource Allocation System and ring-fenced;
 - (iii) transitional arrangements be implemented to ensure that all existing service users continue to receive the service until 31 March 2012 at which time those, whose care need assessment has determined they would not be eligible, would no longer receive the service;

- (iv) all new service users who, through their care need assessment are determined to be eligible for the service, be required to make a contribution towards the cost of their care immediately, subject to their financial assessment;
- (v) the Corporate Director Adults and Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, be authorised to develop a Communication Plan that ensures users understand how the assessments would be carried out for access to Adult Social Care Transport.

Reason for Decision: The introduction of an eligibility criteria based on need would ensure that people who have unmet needs would be able to access transport. To help ensure financial sustainability of the service. To note that those assessed in eligible need would still be supported. To achieve approximately £350k revenue savings in a full year.

(3) in relation to Meals on Wheels,

- (i) the Corporate Director Adults and Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, be authorised to continue to investigate ways of reducing the cost of the service and generate income, whilst maintaining the quality of the meals;
- (ii) Option C, as set out in paragraph 12.34 of the report, which ensures no increase in the price of meals for 2011/12, be agreed;.
- (iii) an annual inflation factor uplift on meal prices based on the Council's inflation rates be agreed, as a part of the overall budget setting process;
- (iv) the Corporate Director Adults and Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, be authorised to develop a Communication Plan that ensures all service users are made aware of any changes made to the delivery of services and/or prices.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the service was sustainable and continued to contribute to safeguarding vulnerable people. To ensure added value on prevention and safeguarding.

(4) in relation to Concessionary Travel,

- (i) **National Disabled Freedom Pass Review Outcome:** National Disabled Freedom Passes, which did not qualify for the statutory scheme under the recent Audit review, be transferred to Discretionary Freedom Passes and re-assessed against the

new Discretionary Freedom Pass Policy cancelling any that did not qualify by 31 March 2013;

- (ii) **Discretionary Freedom Pass:**
the new Discretionary Freedom Pass criteria, as set out in paragraphs 13.46 and 13.47 of the report, be adopted and implemented immediately for new applications and existing recipients be reviewed, with a view to effecting cancellations by 31 March 2013 for those not meeting the new criteria;
- (iii) **Establishing levels of entitlement for multiple services:**
new entitlement band levels and other conditions, as set out below, be adopted with effect from 1 April 2012:

Band A	Applicants who hold either a Freedom Pass or a Blue Badge or both, would be entitled to a Taxicard with a maximum allocation of 52 trips annually.
Band B	Applicants who did not hold a Freedom Pass or Blue Badge would be entitled to a Taxicard with a maximum allocation of 104 trips annually.
	Applicants who hold a Discretionary Freedom Pass would not be entitled to a Taxicard.

Current Discretionary Freedom Pass / Taxicard holders who had already been assessed and had qualified for both concessions be offered the choice of which one they wished to retain and the unwanted concession be cancelled by 31 March 2012.

- (iv) a charge of £10 be made, with effect from 1 April 2012, for the replacement of a lost or damaged Freedom Pass.

Reason for Decision: To reduce overall cost and restrict future cost growth. To protect the most vulnerable. To note that if all the proposals are agreed the overall savings would be £309,000 in a full year.

289. Children's Centre Consultation Report

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services introduced the report, which set out the results of the consultation on the Children's Centre that took place between May and August 2011. The consultation was carried out to examine how the Centres could ensure that valuable services for families with young children could continue whilst making savings of £1.2 million. This research focused on establishing how Children Centres were used, their value to parents, including residents' views on how the Centres could continue to function efficiently in the future.

The Portfolio Holder stated that this was an interim report and that a further report would be submitted to Cabinet in December 2011. She added that 596 responses had been received, which was unusually high. The Divisional Director Early Years, Childcare and Parent reported that, in addition of the written responses, six Focus Groups had been held, as part of the consultation process; an overwhelming majority valued the Children's Centres and the expertise of staff was appreciated. Parents had articulated the benefits Children's Centres provided and were seen as a vital ingredient and support to early intervention.

The Leader of the Council stated that he looked forward to the outcome of the consultation exercise.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Consultation Report be noted;
- (2) the development of an operating model for Harrow Children's Centres, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, be approved and a report submitted back to Cabinet for consideration.

Reason for Decision: To allow proposals to be developed in order to support the sustainability of Children's Centre services in Harrow.

290. Key Decision - Pride in Harrow - Acting Together Neighbourhood Champions

Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Community and Environment, which reflected on the successful launch of the Neighbourhood Champions Scheme, provided information on the key themes and conclusions of a conference of the Neighbourhood Champions, and suggested areas for development of the Scheme as part of the Council's Engagement and Involvement Strategy, Pride in Harrow.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety stated that he was proud of the number of people that had volunteered and applauded those who had made the Scheme a resounding success. The Portfolio Holder added that the Scheme had originally been agreed in 2009 and that in 2011 there were 787 trained Neighbourhood Champions. It had also attracted a further 300 people expressing an interest in joining the Scheme. He stated that new recruits would not be given the option to retain their anonymity, but that previous recruits who wished to retain their anonymity would be respected.

It was noted that the Public Realm and Community Safety would remain as the core remits of the Neighbourhood Champions but that some had suggested that the role be expanded to supporting the vulnerable.

The Portfolio Holder was pleased with the make-up of the Neighbourhood Champions, which was diverse and that there was a common desire to make the borough a better place. He looked forward to the day when there was a

Neighbourhood Champion in every street in the borough, and commended the report to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the successful launch and progress of the Neighbourhood Champions Scheme be noted;
- (2) anonymity not be offered to future volunteers on the Scheme;
- (3) the Corporate Director Community and Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety, be authorised to develop the Scheme incorporating reporting and involvement on a wider range of issues.

Reason for Decision: The Neighbourhood Champions Scheme provided a valued volunteer arrangement for involvement and community action between the Council, Police and Community Partners. The Neighbourhood Champions have identified improvements that could benefit the community of Harrow further.

291. Key Decision - Parking and Permit Charges Review and Way Forward

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety introduced the report, which recommended the introduction of a parking management and enforcement regime suitable for a forward looking Council facing current environmental and economic situation following a borough-wide consultation into the structure of parking and permit charges.

The Portfolio Holder informed Cabinet that the current scheme was difficult to understand with differences in charges. This had been borne out by the number of petitions submitted to the Council and correspondence received. As a result, officers had undertaken a review of both the on-street and off-street parking and consulted the public on the structure of parking and permit charges was undertaken in June - July 2011. The consultation had also considered issues around methods of payment for parking, including peak hour charges. However, residents did not support the proposal of different charges for resident parking permits based on emissions produced by a vehicle.

Cabinet was informed that the consultation results showed support for having four different cost rates for on-street parking zones across the borough and support for four different cost rates for car parks across the borough. There was also support for an option to pay by using credit and debit cards and by telephone for which officers would draw up proposals. A single charge for Business Permits was also mentioned. Additionally, improved criteria for eligibility for disabled parking bays would be developed to ensure that inappropriate applications were reduced. It was intended to provide spaces for families with children. Additionally, charges in some car parks where no charge was currently levied might be introduced.

It was also essential that Harrow's shopping centres remained viable and sustainable. Support would be enhanced by the provision of 'parking charge holidays', as supporting the Town Centre, local shopping centres and businesses was a key Council priority.

In summing up, the Portfolio Holder stated that in order to implement the agreed change to both on-street and off-street parking charges, a full statutory consultation on the revised structure of parking charging would be required. People will be allowed to make objections to this consultation during a 21 day period.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the new structural format for Parking and Permit Charges, based on the Parking and Permit Charges Consultation, be agreed;
- (2) officers prepare options for introducing credit/debit card payment for parking borough-wide;
- (3) the Parking Management and Enforcement Plan, which reflected these changes as well as enabling the provision of doctor parking permits and revised eligibility for disabled parking bays, be approved;
- (4) the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety be authorised to make minor changes to the Parking Management and Enforcement Plan in order to reflect future working practice changes;
- (5) it be noted that detailed parking and permit costs would be presented at the budget setting meeting(s).

Reason for Decision: A new structure for charging for both parking and permits would enable the borough to simplify parking and permit charges; provide increased transparency as to how all charges were set; and, better support the local economic conditions. The revised Parking Management and Enforcement Plan will enable the borough to better manage parking and enforcement and ensure that the operational management of enforcement is brought into line with the revised Transport Local Implementation Plan (LIP).

292. Key Decision - Energy Purchasing Strategy for 2012/16

Cabinet received a report of the Corporate Director Community and Environment, which proposed future arrangements for the purchasing of energy across the Council estate, including the schools.

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts informed Cabinet that the proposed Energy Purchasing Strategy would ensure that the Council obtained its energy supplies at a competitive price. He added that the existing contract with LASER, a central purchasing organisation, was due to expire shortly and commended the proposal, as it would give the Council access to the wholesale energy market and enjoyment of buying energy as part of a large consortium.

The Portfolio Holder added that the London Energy Project (LEP) had recommended LASER as one of the two Best Value providers; the other being the Government Procurement Service (GPS). A study conducted by the Cabinet Office had shown that the performance of both LASER and GPS was comparable and was significantly better than that achieved by other public sector providers. In addition, benchmarking exercises had been carried out to ensure that Harrow was not disadvantaged, and that 23 of the London boroughs used the LASER framework.

The Portfolio Holder commended the report on the basis that it provided the best procurement deal that the Council could achieve.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) LASER be appointed for the procurement of energy for all Council properties for the period October 2012 - September 2016;
- (2) the Corporate Director Community and Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts, be authorised to take all necessary actions to formalise the appointment.

Reason for Decision: The Council had previously agreed to purchase all gas and electricity centrally to ensure value for money. The current arrangement with LASER (a central purchasing organisation) expires on 30 September 2012. In renewing this arrangement, it now ensures that LASER can purchase energy over the next 12 months in advance of anticipated price rises thereby ensuring that the costs are as low as possible.

293. Key Decision - Third Sector Investment Plan 2012/15

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services introduced the report, which set out a strategic approach to the support provided by the Council to the Third Sector in Harrow.

If approved, the Third Sector Investment Plan would, in due course, replace the current Main Grants Programme and offer of accommodation. The Plan would ensure that Council resources were distributed to the Third Sector in a manner that aligned them to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities and statutory duties, thereby strengthening the joint working arrangements between the Council and the Third Sector for the benefit of Harrow residents.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the move towards a Commissioning Model had been shaped with the involvement of the Community and Voluntary Sector through a series of workshops. A phased introduction of the Commissioning Model was being proposed during 2012/13, which had also received cross-party support. If approved, the pilot would help support full implementation of all Commissioning in 2013/14.

The Portfolio Holder mentioned that throughout the entire process, he had continued to ask questions of officers in relation to the Council's equalities duties in relation to the proposal. In addition, he had received equalities training. Moreover, a detailed Equality Impact Assessment had been carried

out in relation to the proposals before Cabinet, which he had read and understood. The Equality Impact Assessments would continue to be added as the Council moved forward in this regard.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Third Sector Investment Plan 2012/15 be approved;
- (2) the transition from the Main Grants Funding Programme, to a phased implementation of Commissioning Services and small grants for the distribution of Main Grants Funding, as described in Option 2 (paragraph 2.2.2) of the report and the proposed timetable for the delivery of the 2012/13 Main Grants Programme, be approved;
- (3) the Corporate Director Community and Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, be authorised to identify service priorities, develop service specifications, tender arrangements and the commissioning/small grants budget, as described in Option 2 (paragraph 2.2.2) of the report;
- (4) the Corporate Director Community and Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, be authorised to progress proposals for widening access to accommodation for the Third Sector in Harrow, as outlined in paragraphs 2.2.3 and 2.2.6 of the report.

Reason for Decision: To implement a more strategic Council approach to supporting the Third Sector that supports the delivery of Corporate Priorities and statutory duties.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.25 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chairman