

Harrow Strategic Partnership Board

Wednesday 6 April 2005

Potential Funding for Partnership Priorities

Purpose of the Report

This report makes the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP) Board aware of the second generation of Local Public Service Agreements (LPSA 2G).

The (HSP) Board is asked to:

1. Consider the options below, noting that the **strengthening communities option** as Harrow's priority area for improvement is being recommended by the Council.
2. Comment on the process that is being intended to engage HSP members and stakeholders.

Special Note to the HSP Board

The council was made aware on 23 March, subsequent to this paper being presented to the HSP Executive, that the Government is no longer progressing with LPSAs. This means that areas like Harrow who are in tranche will no longer be able to secure an LPSA.

Harrow can now bid to express interest in securing a pilot Local Area Agreement (LAA) but unlike the LPSA, it is not automatic that we will secure a LAA. It is the government's intention that LAAs will put the engagement of community groups and the voluntary sector at the heart of the process of agreeing local priorities.

The importance of partnership working through the HSP is as integral to LAAs as it was to LPSA 2G.

1. Introduction

In 2005/6, the council and its partners will need to prepare and agree its proposals for LPSA 2G targets for 2006/7 – 2008/9. This will be a project led by the Policy & Partnership Service in the Organisational Performance Directorate. The purpose of this report is to seek views and guidance as to which local priority areas might form the basis of our next LPSA targets.

2. Background

The 2nd generation of local public service agreements differs from the first in 3 key ways:

1. Targets will be more locally based;
2. Targets will be firmly partnership based;
3. Central government will be more involved (as partners).

A continuing feature of LPSA 2G will be pump-priming grants at the outset to help get the improvements underway and rewards allocated for achieving challenging outcomes that have a clear impact on people's lives locally. The division of the reward grant among the targets will be discussed as part of the negotiations. The presumption is that there will be about a dozen targets, or small groups of targets, and that the reward grant will be divided equally among them.

Although there was some disappointment with the freedoms and flexibilities agenda in round one LPSAs, the government has reaffirmed its commitment to freedoms and flexibilities for LPSA 2G. Harrow will use negotiations to secure these wherever these may be helpful.

Both central and local governments have placed great emphasis on delivering better public services. At the heart of the second generation of LPSAs will be an agreement between the council, its partners and government about priorities for improving public services locally. **Partner and public involvement, therefore, is seen as being important in determining priorities for the second generation of LPSAs.**

In parallel to LPSA 2G, it is worth noting that the government has also published its proposals for Local Area Agreements (LAAs). LAAs seek to build a new, more flexible and responsive relationship between central and local government and ultimately the residents in an area. Working through Local Strategic Partnerships, LAAs will draw together the plethora of funding streams currently available. Overtime, LPSAs will become an integral part of LAAs. At the moment, the specific grants covered by LAAs mean that this is only an attractive route for Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. At this point in time, however, an LPSA is the most attractive funding vehicle for Harrow.

In selecting locally based targets, the LPSA 2G guidance states that councils will need to take a broader view of the services provided to residents in their area. These should extend beyond those services that we provide ourselves as a council.

Our objective when scoping our targets should be to show that we have reached a shared consensus for our priorities for improvement locally. The Harrow Strategic

Partnership (HSP) will be the forum where we will engage partners on Harrow's priorities for improvement. In choosing priority areas for improvement, the authority will need to assure itself that it can reliably measure the improvements in outcomes.

In addition, we need to offer a scale of 'stretch' in performance that is sufficiently substantial to justify the grants linked to achievement. Three options are considered. They have been selected from our new corporate priorities where the particular emphasis is partnership support.

3. Options

Although not formally a requirement, given the benefits for local residents, we would strongly recommend that Harrow be part of the LPSA 2G. All three options are taken from the council's own priorities for improvement with the third around improving user's experience of the quality of services they receive. The three options proposed are:

- Impact through partnership working
- Strengthening communities
- Valuing Harrow's customers (Improving public satisfaction levels)

Each of these options is discussed below in more detail. To assist in the selection process, the main 'pros and cons' under each option are included in tabular format for ease of reference.

3.1 The 'Impact through partnership working' theme appears an obvious one because it encompasses the focus on partnership working, being encouraged under LPSA 2G.

Priorities for improvement should be underpinned by evidence. Clearly, the most recent Vitality Profile analysis provides much of this evidence, which in turn, has the consensus of the HSP who have accordingly adopted the following as priority areas for action:

1. Anti Social Behaviour
2. Property Crime
3. Robbery and Violence
4. Business & Economy
5. Circulatory Disease
6. Exclusions
7. Fear of Crime
8. Housing Condition
9. Housing Need (including the appropriate type of housing)
10. Low Birth Weight (however, further work will need to be completed to understand related factors such as teenage pregnancy, breastfeeding and antenatal care).
11. Tuberculosis and Sexual Health
12. Low Incomes:
 - a) Poverty and Older People
 - b) Low Incomes and Children
13. Public Transport
14. Street Scene
15. Information technology skills

These areas will be further developed over the next month as part Community Strategy Action Planning.

Pros and Cons of Impact through partnership working option

Pros	Cons
LPSA 2G has a strong emphasis on partnership working	Some issues are beyond the control of the partners
Each Priority Area shows a good understanding of our locally based socio-economic issues.	Some partners may be/feel excluded
The Priority Areas have been selected by 'shared consensus' and are evidence based	The set of Priority Areas are fragmented and it is hard to get a focus on them. Fragmentation has been a problem with the current set of LPSA targets
The Priority Area set are measurable	

3.2 The '**Strengthening Harrow's Communities**' corporate priority recognises Harrow's diversity is a source of strength and opportunity. As one of the most diverse boroughs in London, this priority is about responding to the needs of the Harrow community, acknowledging Harrow's diversity and meeting Harrow's social and cultural needs now and into the future. To do this effectively, the Council with its partners, wants to bring about improved strategic outcomes in the following areas:

- Ensuring the Council's workforce reflects our community
- Building community cohesion and better relations between communities
- Ensuring that everyone has access to our services
- Becoming better and 'smarter' at the way that we engage with the community
- Employment
- Income
- Delivering appropriate services to people through all life stages
- Safeguarding children.

Each of these areas requires the Council to work with its partners to find successful strategies for improving outcomes for local people. In this respect, Julia Mayo, Chief Executive of HAVS has indicated her support particularly in connection in the area of young people and safeguarding children (see letter attached to this report).

The West London Community Cohesion Pathfinder launched in July 2003 ended in September 2004, although West London work has continued. Its role was to explore the most effective means of addressing community cohesion. As the only pathfinder in the country that involved the public, private and voluntary sectors, an LPSA with its pump priming and reward grant may provide an opportunity for continuing the work of the pathfinder. In this case we could be looking at a 'wide area' target in which the related performance covers areas of two or more LPSA authorities.

The desired strategic outcomes under the strengthening communities option theme closely mirror the central government's national policies around community cohesion. Under an LPSA, a basket of practical measures could be negotiated that would mainstream the process of community cohesion in Harrow.

The Home Office has usefully published a set of ten indicators that it suggests can be used by local authorities to compose a picture of community cohesion in their areas. These have been used with two additions. The indicators are divided into four

groups – one headline indicator and a further 11 that follow the four components of a cohesive community (see Table below). The purpose is to measure the four elements of a cohesive community used in the Home Office’s preferred definition.¹

Table: Community cohesion Indicators and their relationship to the definition of a cohesive community

Indicator		Common vision and sense of belonging	Diversity appreciated	Similar life opportunities	Strong and positive relationships
Code	Text				
CC 01	Headline indicator: % of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together	+	+	+	+
CC 02	% of respondents who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood/locals area/county/England/Wales/Britain	+			
CC 03	Key priorities for improving an area	+			
CC 04	% of adults surveyed who feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area	+			
CC 05	The % of people who feel that local ethnic differences are respected		+		
CC 06	Number of racial incidents recorded by police per 100,000		+		
CC 07	Local Concentration of Deprivation			+	
CC 08	The % of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent			+	
CC 09	The % of unemployed people claiming benefit who have been out of work for more than a year			+	
CC 10	The % of people from different backgrounds who mix with other people from different backgrounds in everyday situations.				+
CC 11	The % of people from BME backgrounds in the local area who have post natal problems			+	
CC 12	The % of activities for young people established in the local area			+	

Some of the indicator data will be available from sources such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation (for CC07) and DES Pupil level Attainment School Census (CC08). Others will require the use of surveys (indicator CC10 for example).

To ensure a high response rate to the survey indicators, a smarter and sharper community engagement process will need to become more prominent. This clearly complements our fourth strategic outcome for strengthening communities in Harrow (see above).

¹ Home Office preferred definition:

- there is common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- the diversity of people’s background and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

Pros and Cons of the Strengthening Communities option

Pros	Cons
The Strengthening Communities theme has a strong emphasis on partnership working	As this could become a 'wide area' target covering of two or more authorities negotiations with the ODPM may be more difficult
Strengthening Communities is a very close match to the shared priority between central and local government "Safer and stronger communities"	3 years of the agreement may not be a long enough period of time to show measurable improvements in this area
Community cohesion, race equality and addressing disadvantage are key outcomes for both central and local government.	Difficulty in evoking a public response
There are some clear overlaps with the HSP Priority Areas and the Strengthening Communities desired outcomes	
The community cohesion indicators are measurable with a strong focus	
Community cohesion is a cross-cutting priority that affects all Harrow's communities	
There are common characteristics between the impact through partnership option and this one.	
The delivery model is more focussed	

The strengthening communities option, with its particular emphasis on community cohesion, will require strong partnership working. In this sense, it is essentially an amalgamation of the first two options. It is also has a very close interconnection to the council's priority of ensuring the Council's workforce reflects our community - an important element of our Workforce and Workforce Development Plans.

3.3 Valuing Harrow's Customers - MORI surveys show that the public remain sceptical about improvements in public services generally. The most recent user satisfaction surveys in Harrow indicate mixed results with users still tending to be dissatisfied in many areas.

People tend to be satisfied when their perceptions of the service they have received match their expectations. When the service falls short of expectations they tend to be dissatisfied. Clearly, **'Improving public satisfaction levels'** has a certain unpredictability because it is not totally in the control of public services.

More recent research commissioned by the LGA has looked at the key drivers of public satisfaction. The research identifies a series of common factors that have the strongest impact on people's overall levels of satisfaction with their local authority.

The seven top drivers of satisfaction identified in this research are ranked as follows (where "perceived quality of services" is the strongest driver of overall satisfaction and "positive experiences of contact with staff", the weakest):

1. Perceived quality of services
2. Perceived value for money
3. Local area/deprivation/diversity
4. Media coverage

5. Direct communication/ engagement
6. Street cleaning/livability
7. Positive experiences of contact with staff

Pros and Cons of the Improving Public Satisfaction Levels option

Pros	Cons
Improving public satisfaction levels will impact on the council's CPA score from 2005 and beyond	Government departments may not support the practice of measuring public satisfaction as it is still developing
Supports the First Contact initiative	There may be difficulties in engaging all the potential partners.
Generally, this is a bottom-line area for public services	Drivers of public satisfaction for the police or the health sector may be different to those for local government
	A complex set of issues underpin a council's reputation and public satisfaction levels with many not in the council's control
	Research shows there is a link between the perception of national government public satisfaction levels with local government
	Some issues, such as media coverage, will be hard to measure objectively

Under this option, our LPSA would be targeted towards making improvement in 1-7 above. However in this option, there may be an issue in making this a partnership agenda rather than primarily a council one.

4. Partner and Member Engagement

For the second generation of LPSA, the government wants authorities to place a greater effort to concert the activities of partners locally, both within and beyond local government, in support of tackling those priorities for improvement. The HSP will be the main vehicle for involving partners in the development, negotiation, and delivery of the LPSA 2G.

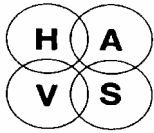
Once the HSP Executive has given a steer on the priority areas for improvement, we will brief the HSP Board on 6 April. We will also work with relevant officers from other directorates and partners on further developing our priority areas for improvement. After this, we will consult HSP members again at the HSP Summit of 18 May as well as with the council's portfolio holders before finally submitting our priority areas for improvement to ODPM on 27 May 2005. It should be noted that the Harrow Association of Voluntary Service (HAVS) has already expressed a strong interest in the LPSA 2G (paper attached from HAVS' Chief Executive).

Once ODPM, Harrow Council and the rest of the HSP are satisfied with the priority areas for improvement, formal negotiations on the indicators measuring outcomes, the performance to be rewarded, and how the government will work in partnership to help achieve the outcomes will commence. At this stage we will continue to work

closely with council officers, elected members and partners in determining stretching indicators, reward, and the freedoms and flexibilities to be requested from government. This stage of the process is expected to take 27 weeks. After this stage, we will seek final approval from the HSP and the council's Cabinet.

March 2005

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Voluntary & Community Sector involvement in Local Public Service Agreements

Having read the requirements of the second generation of the Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) it is clear that the involvement of local partners, including the voluntary and community sector is vital for the acceptance and success of any proposals. Although this can be done partially through the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum and the HSP, HAVS is very willing to take a lead on this. I believe that this would be positive in terms of any proposals that Harrow Council was to put together as it shows active partnership working.

I would propose that one of the indicators should relate to community engagement. As you will be aware, Bindu's unit has already started work on a community engagement strategy and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee are reviewing this area. I am directly involved in the latter through the co-chairing scrutiny working group. We have made good progress on starting to map and encourage community engagement within the borough and I am confident that we will be able to develop performance indicators to measure improvement.

HAVS has received feedback over recent times, as I am sure the council has, that individuals within the sector feel ill prepared to engage with public bodies either in meetings or representing the sector at a more strategic level. The interim measures could be around the number of people attending training in this field, the number of people engaged in forums such as the voluntary and community sector forum and the community engagement meetings, participation in boards such as the Mental Health Partnership Board run by PCT and wider bodies such as the POP panel. The final indicator could be based on the suggested Audit Commission indicators identified in the council's draft Community Engagement Strategy as well as the quality of life indicators being developed as part of the HSP Scorecard.

We could further refine the indicators in terms of young people's participation, especially with the work done by the Children's Fund in this area. This again would support the Children and Young People's inclusion strategy currently under development

We could also look at ways of encouraging voluntary and community sector representation in areas such as safeguarding children's board, at present there is very little interest in this sector. I suspect this is partly due to lack of resources but

also lack of confidence and skills within the sector to engage at a strategic level in this way.

There is a precedent for this in the Havering experience. One of their indicators was “to improve community empowerment, equality and capacity building in the voluntary and community sector. “This was the basis of their local PSA.

Obviously this planning is at an early stage, however I just wanted to formally indicate that HAVS is very interested in being actively involved in the LPSA and would be happy to lead in this area if this is considered appropriate.

Julia Mayo
17.02.05