APPENDIX 1

Measuring up: Harrow Council's Use of Performance Information

Update on implementation of final (phase 2) Scrutiny review report – July 2012

Overall principles recommended for adoption by Cabinet

- **Performance information and data is the start of the conversation**. Both Members and officers must be active rather than passive users of information. Councillors should be more demanding of data and officers should consider what they are trying to demonstrate and how best to present it.
- **Managing performance with <u>data</u> rather than with too many indicators**. Given that there is less national pressure to monitor specific performance indicators the Council should shift its focus to identifying indicators that are locally useful and making better use of data to understand performance and support decision-making.
- **To make more data public**. By doing so the Council can improve transparency and accountability as well as encouraging others to share data by leading the way.
- **A positive performance management culture**. This is one that is not 'red adverse'. Improvement is much more than just measuring. The improvement cycle encompasses leading, setting priorities, planning, measuring impact, learning and revising. It is continuous and iterative – making things better step-by-step. Scrutiny has a constructive role to play in supporting such processes.

Response agreed by Cabinet

The abolition of the National Indicator Set has not resulted in the scale of reduction in central government requirements for data that was originally anticipated. However, the opportunity has been taken to revise performance measures across the Council to focus more on local priorities and this objective will continue. The recommended principles are accepted and officers will work with Executive and Scrutiny members to put them into effect in the ongoing development of the Council's performance framework and the implementation of the recommendations below. Release of more data is of course subject to any legal considerations.

Update at July 2012:

The 2011/12 Corporate Scorecard included more local performance indicators than in previous years. However a significant number of National Indicators have been retained where they have been felt to be useful and/or where Inspectorates have indicated that they still want them to be collected. The London Councils' LAPS benchmarking data also uses National Indicators (and the older BVPIs) as the definitions are widely understood by councils and this ensures a consistent approach.

The 2011/12 Corporate Scorecard has been retained into 2012/13 with only minor changes in anticipation of a more extensive review when the work to develop a greater outcomes approach has been completed.

Specific recommendations

Recommendation	Response ***Update***
BEST PRACTICE **For Cabinet:** A) We recommend that steps be taken to improve the timeliness of the performance reporting processes. By this we mean:	
i. The speed at which Improvement Boards take place at the end of the quarter. This includes, but is not limited to, streamlining the performance approach, for example by greater or more effective use of IT or by automating processes.	Recommendation accepted in principle. There are a wide range of contributions to the management information which is presented to Improvement Boards, some of which take longer to produce than others. For Quarter 1 2011/12, the pace was forced to allow earlier meetings but some information was partial, for instance sickness absence data was missing and financial data was for two months of the quarter. The possibilities for enabling earlier meetings will be assessed in conjunction with recommendation R). This will include the potential for increased use of IT, although there could be a cost and some of the causes of delay would not be addressed by IT: for example, complex indicators that require additional processing or validation, those that rely on external sources such as partners. The aim will be a balance between speed and accuracy. ***Update at July 2012*** Although the aim for Quarter 1 2012/13 was to arrange all Improvement Boards for the last week in July, this has not been possible due to diary commitments and some will not

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	take place until the end of August or early September. Improvement Boards for Quarters 2 and 3 have yet to be scheduled and will be a better test of the balance between earlier and full submission of data. The Improvement Board Guidance has been reviewed to remove unnecessary duplication and streamline the process as far as possible without further resources.
ii. The speed at which information reaches Scrutiny – the Executive and Scrutiny, in partnership, should examine the way in which potential barriers for information sharing could be overcome, for example by allowing the scrutiny process to overlap more with Executive review or by moving away from an approach that treats all information the same, regardless of the level of sensitivity.	Performance and Scrutiny staff will discuss and provide options for consideration by Executive and Scrutiny members by end January 2012. ***Update at July 2012*** A new process has been agreed for the issue of Corporate Scorecard information to the Chair and Vice-Chairman of Performance and Finance Sub-Committee (P&F) and Scrutiny leads as soon as practicable after Improvement Boards. The P&F briefings are now fixed so as to enable consideration of this information at the earliest opportunity and in time for any urgent comments to be fed through to Corporate Strategic Board in time to influence the Strategic Performance Report to Cabinet, where appropriate. To enable this, it has been necessary to decouple the briefing meeting from the agenda setting process for P&F in some cycles. Timetabling remains a challenge.
B) We recommend that the format in which performance information reaches the public domain be reviewed and improved. While we agree that publishing a public scorecard is laudable, we believe that the Corporate Scorecard should be published online separately, as well as forming part of the	The Strategic Performance Report is published on the web in its own right as well as in the Cabinet agenda and, over the last couple of years, the aim has been to make the Report more accessible to a general readership. However, a review will be carried out of how performance information is

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Cabinet papers. See also Recommendation J/K.	published, taking into account the issues raised by the focus groups and referred to under K) below. This will feed into quarter 1 reporting for 2012/13. ***Update at July 2012*** The Local Information System (LIS) is now on line, though not yet officially launched, and we are currently exploring whether it could be used to enhance the presentation of the Corporate Scorecard online. This has therefore delayed our review of public reporting, which was originally aimed at quarter 1 reporting. With the LIS now in place, we will aim for enhanced public reporting from Q3 2012/13.
C) We recommend that comments from scrutiny on performance issues be incorporated into the Corporate Strategic Board's (CSB) performance morning and reflected in the Strategic Performance Report (SPR), thereby more formally integrating scrutiny into the quarterly performance cycle.	Options for enabling this input will be examined in conjunction with Executive and Scrutiny members as per Recommendation A ii. ***Update at July 2012*** See A.ii.
D) We recommend that the Council's Corporate Leadership Group[1] be renamed and charged with a stronger remit for addressing cross-departmental operational issues.	This recommendation will be addressed in the response to the proposals for the Senior Management Restructure, reported at December Cabinet. ***Update at July 2012*** Two new CLG Operations Boards have been set up, first meeting in June 2012. These will look respectively at internal and external cross-cutting issues and, with membership on

[1] The Corporate Leadership Group is made up of the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors and Divisional Directors, and senior managers who report direct to the Corporate Directors from across the Council.

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	each Board covering each Directorate, the focus is on resolution and problem solving. The CLG itself will now meet quarterly rather than six-weekly.
E) We recommend that there is greater integration of performance and financial reporting to Scrutiny, in a format similar to that received by the Executive.	Agreed in principle and a proposal will be developed by performance and finance staff and discussed with Scrutiny lead members by end January 2012. ***Update at July 2012*** The Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chair's briefing now receives both the Corporate Scorecard and finance report each quarter.
For the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
F) We recommend that the Better Deal for Residents Review consider how effectively the Council's transformation projects incorporate use of performance information and data – thereby providing tools for evidence-based policy making.	***Update at July 2012*** The Better Deal for Residents review considers how effectively the transformation projects are achieving their stated ambitions. Phase one of this review made a number of specific recommendations, which were accepted, about the establishment of accurate baseline information and measurement of outcomes.
G) We recommend that the Scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs review arrangements for monitoring the performance of partners, in particular that of the police and health partners. While partnership scrutiny is already taking place, changes to the policy environment offers opportunities for the development of new approaches.	Scrutiny of health services is well established; however more systematic consideration of financial and service performance information still needs to be developed in order to deliver more proactive scrutiny of health services. With regard to scrutiny of the police and crime, an agreed suite of indicators will be reported to the Community Health

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	and Well Being Leads and the Chair and Vice Chairman of the Performance and Finance sub committee on a quarterly basis and the same suite of indicators will accompany the annual community safety plan when it is considered by the Overview and Scrutiny committee.
H) We recommend that Scrutiny Lead Members adopt a stronger role for their policy area in order to ensure:	
• That Lead Members take a greater responsibility for escalating and sharing of information pertaining to their brief;	The scrutiny leads are timetabling meetings with relevant corporate directors, partners, portfolio holders in order to identify the key policy drivers and priorities for their respective services. This will ensure a more specific focus for scrutiny activity and ensure that the key issues are considered. The scrutiny lead areas have also been rationalised to link them more closely to the council's structure.
• That wherever possible Scrutiny Lead Members attend committee meetings for relevant items where they are not ordinarily a Member;	This is being implemented
• That Lead Members make use of the new Local Information System (LIS) in order to inform the scrutiny process.	This is something which could be included in a corporate member development session – scrutiny no longer runs a separate member development process. See also N below.
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	
For Cabinet	
I) The review group supports the development of the Local Information System (LIS) as a means of making public data more available to residents as part of Harrow's transparency policies. We recommend that the Council should examine how	Agreed. An initial meeting has been held between performance and communications staff and has identified a number of possibilities. Further discussions are required with Access Harrow management to ensure alignment of customer

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to reach residents without access to the internet.	contact strategies. A developed proposal will be made to Scrutiny leads by March 2012. ***Update at July 2012*** A number of technological problems have delayed the launch of the LIS; however, the delay time has been used to improve the customer experience in response to feedback from interested testers in the Council and partner agencies. The LIS is now in "soft launch" stage and available on the internet, though not yet through a link from the Council's homepage. An action plan to promote and support the use of the LIS will include working with schools, libraries and community groups to widen access. The full launch is planned for September. Work has not yet started on how to reach residents without access to the internet. This will commence following launch of the LIS and in alignment with customer contact strategies.
J) We recommend that the Council adopt a cost effective approach and use existing communication methods to offer signposts to publicly available data and performance information. This should include links within the Harrow e-newsletter and other publications and could also include social media.	Approach agreed and opportunities will be explored in conjunction with Recommendation I) above. ***Update at July 2012*** As above, this will be explored in conjunction with Recommendation I)
K) We recommend that the following general principles, arising from the focus group, should be reflected in the Council's approach to communicating performance information:	Agreed in principle and, in association with B) above and L), M) and N) below, the options in terms of content and method of publication will be explored to the set timetables and progress will be reported back to Scrutiny leads by January 2012. ***Update at July 2012*** The LIS provides the opportunity for users to "drill down" into

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	more detailed information. Testers felt that initially there was too much information on the LIS so we have simplified the data and some of the terminology to make it more accessible. Users are invited to give their feedback on the site and we will use this to guide future developments. Given that we see the LIS as the long term solution to enabling this recommendation to be delivered effectively, the delay in its launch has therefore had a knock-on effect on meeting this recommendation.
• The Council should provide 'honest' information – not just carefully collected soundbites or what the Council wants residents to hear. • As much information as possible should be made accessible but it should be provided proportionately – i.e. the detail (including raw data) should be accessible for those who need/want it but not universally. Summary information, with signposts to more detail, should be developed. • The Council should provide what is cost effective – the Council should not waste money on providing everyone with detailed information as not everyone wants this (some focus group attendees perceived that the Council committed significant resource to producing detailed publications) but should focus on offering signposts to those wanting it. • The Council should provide contextual information to enable residents to understand what the detail actually means. • Information must be accessible to all – not everyone accesses the Internet – Harrow People, leaflets, notice	.

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boards, public meeting places. • Information provided must be attractive and easy to read and understand, but not too simplistic. • The Council should consider organisational blogs and Twitter to give residents a more real-time insight into how services work and the challenges faced. • The Council must commit to responding to residents who offer an opinion.	
L) We recommend that Directorates should take steps to embed performance reporting alongside service information. For example, performance against bin collections could, for example, be reported alongside or linked to information about bin collection days.	Agreed in principle and to be taken forward with Directorates, initially through the High Performing Harrow group, and progress to be reviewed by Improvement Boards as from Q1 2012/13. ***Update at July 2012*** Discussions will be held with Communications and the web team to explore possibilities for how this can be presented publicly; to be considered in conjunction with M) below. The refresh of Improvement Board guidance is also encouraging directorates to consider reporting performance and service information side by side.
M) We recommend that a sample of performance indicators be included in borough-wide publications such as Harrow People or the Council tax leaflet in order to give residents a flavour of local performance.	To be considered in conjunction with K) and related issues, above. ***Update at July 2012*** The Council Tax leaflet 2012/13 contained information on seven key achievements and summary plans under each Corporate Priority for the next year. It is recognised that more work needs to be done and discussions will be held with

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	Communications to explore what further information could be provided and how.
N) We recommend that further work should be undertaken to analyse the information needs of Councillors in their ward role. It may be that Members' access to the Local Information System will address this going forward, but an annual pack of information for ward councillors might be a useful development. For example, councillors could be provided with a detailed spatial map of their ward, for example, on election, in order to support their understanding of their constituents and their needs.	Agreed and will be taken forward as part of the development of the Local Information System strategy. Ward profiles will be developed by June 2012. ***Update at July 2012*** Draft ward profiles have been loaded into the LIS based on the information which Members have previously received in static ward profiles.. LIS information is updated regularly throughout the year as it becomes available. There is a need to work with Members on developing the profiles to meet their needs and Scrutiny members are asked whether they are interested in taking part in a focus group for this purpose.
TECHNOLOGY AND DATA PRESENTATION **For Cabinet** O) We recommend that the Harrow Local Information System (LIS) be linked into other sources – for example the London datastore[2] in order to increase the profile of Harrow's information.	Agreed - Officers are in contact with London Datastore to take this forward. ***Update at July 2012*** Officers are in contact with the London Datastore and are looking at how the LIS could be enhanced through links, with a view to implementation at quarter 3. Data from government sources (eg ONS) is included for all London Boroughs for comparison.

[2] http://data.london.gov.uk/

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P) In keeping with the new *Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency,*[3] we recommend that the Council adopt the following three key principles when publishing data:	Recommended that Cabinet adopt the principles listed, subject to the limitations of resources. The full implications of the Code of Recommended Practice are still being assessed. Meanwhile current practice aligns to these principles as below:
• responding to public demand;	The Council's Publication Scheme is maintained to provide access to classes of information. Individual information requests are handled using dedicated software, which has the potential to add the results to the website, effectively expanding on the Publication Scheme. This facility is under development.
• releasing data in open formats available for re-use;	Data published under transparency expectations is now provided as CSV[4] files as well as PDF[5]. As more data is made available this convention will be maintained.
• releasing data in a timely way.	The Council aims always to comply with Freedom of Information timescales. With other data, the Council will aim to release it as soon as practical and appropriate. ***Update at July 2012*** No further update

[3] CLG (September 2011), *Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency*. Available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/transparencycode
[4] Comma Separated Variable or Comma Separated Value – a file format that is not dependent on particular software to read it, and such that the data can be imported into spreadsheet or database programs for analysis
[5] Portable Document Format – a type of file that is not machine-dependant and for which free readers are readily available, to view or print the contents. Does not lend itself easily, however, to further analysis of data contained in the file.

Recommendation	Response ***Update***
Q) We recommend that there needs to be greater ownership of the role that good information plays in ensuring good customer service. For example, that a standard approach be set up to allow Access Harrow to report areas where the website is in need of updating.	We will investigate with colleagues in Access Harrow and update leads on progress by January 2012. ***Update at July 2012*** Work is in progress with Access Harrow on the extent and quality of reporting from the CRM system but there remains work to do on this recommendation and proposals will be developed over the next quarter.
R) We recommend that Members and officers also need to be more demanding consumers of data, asking, and if necessary insisting, that data is presented in a way that gives them as complete a picture as possible, making interpretation as straightforward as possible. Information in reports and at Improvement Boards should be relevant, of high quality and presented well.	Supported. Presentation, especially for Improvement Boards, has been improved over a period of time. An overhaul of documentation for Improvement Boards was carried out at quarter 1, 2010/11 and a further review will be conducted for quarter 1, 2012/13, i.e. with the benefit of two years' experience. ***Update at July 2012*** A review was carried out earlier this year and the Improvement Board guidance revised accordingly. Within this guidance a greater emphasis is placed on the insight drawn from the data in each Directorate.
S) We recommend that all service transformation projects consider how services can become more data-rich and how this intelligence can be used to improve services and performance reporting.	Linked to recommendation L). We will explore how the Business Case process could incorporate this objective and report back to Scrutiny leads by January 2012. ***Update at July 2012*** From Quarter 1 2012/13 the CSB performance morning will encompass performance, project and finance reporting. (This approach was piloted at Quarter 4 with performance and

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	project reporting) Discussions have taken place with the Business Transformation team to ensure that appropriate performance indicators are in place to monitor post-project outcomes.
For the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
T) We recommend that the Performance and Finance scrutiny sub-committee review the Corporate Finance scorecard with the Director of Finance. This was a recommendation for this review group in our phase 1 report but given the different emphasis of the phase 2 project plan we did not undertake this exercise.	*[See comments under Best Practice above]* ***Update at July 2012*** Meeting subsequently held with interim Corporate Director of Finance and Assistant Chief Executive.
U) We recommend that the Performance and Finance scrutiny sub-committee receive a report at its February 2012 meeting on customer contact information in order to explore how this information might help to inform scrutiny activity.	***Update at July 2012*** Report provided as indicated.