

Harlow Council

Corporate Plan 2011 - 2015/16

*Promoting Freedom, Enterprise
and Responsibility*



Harlow
Council
Working together for Harlow

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Foreword



Harlow Council supports Big Society and small Government. The Council should not seek to direct society, but should create a place of opportunity that supports

people and enterprise. The Council must be compassionate and work to support communities to achieve their aspirations.

Where it is possible for the private and voluntary sectors to run services more economically, efficiently and effectively than Harlow Council then I support the Council becoming an enabler of service provision and not a provider of services.

Whilst all Councils will have to make significant savings in response to the Coalition Government's funding decisions I have a personal commitment to fairness in this process. I want to be certain that we understand how the Council's future saving proposals, decisions and priorities impact on the most vulnerable in society.

Those residents in most need should be considered first – that is the fundamental principal of a compassionate Council. The Council will seek to work in partnership with others to ensure that their needs are met.

Harlow has a lot of potential as a place for living, working, doing business and recreation. Regenerating the town remains the Council's top priority. It is up to all of us to understand the major culture shift we must achieve in order to realise the town's potential. Harlow Council supports the enhancement of individual and community aspiration, personal and organisational enterprise and wealth creation.

By empowering residents to find higher reward employment communities will be able to invest in their home and their future.

We need to grow our town and channel investment into our homes, infrastructure and leisure provision in a way that is sustainable economically and environmentally.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and the Council will encourage them to grow and invest in their enterprise.

We will strive to attract new investment and to support existing major employers.

We know that the Council cannot achieve all of these aspirations on its own and some difficult choices need to be made. My pledge is to provide the leadership that the community needs to achieve the things that are important to us all; perceptions about the town, realising the town's potential, creating a sustainable environment, a safe community, a healthy community and an enterprising community.

With the town's new status as a sculpture town, proposals are being developed for a new theatre and activities to support the arts. The Council will be helping Harlow to become a stronger cultural hub. The new Leisurezone will stimulate even greater achievements by Harlow's sportsmen and women, as well as encourage healthier lifestyles.

A community based on balancing the environment and enterprise will lead to a Harlow developing further as a vibrant and confident community.

The importance of this vision and these priorities assumes even greater proportions as the changes to the economy impact on the town and the Council, but we have confidence that Harlow will meet these challenges.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Andrew Johnson
Leader of the Council

Introduction

What is the Corporate Plan?

The Plan sets out the vision, objectives and priorities for Harlow Council up to the financial year 2015/16. The Plan identifies the achievements made in 2010/11 contributing to the realisation of the Council's vision and objectives. The Corporate Plan also sets out what the Council plans to do in the context of the challenges faced by local government in responding to the Country's budget deficit. This is a medium term rolling plan which is updated annually to take account of changes within Harlow, the region and nationally.

The Council works within a complex array of plans and strategies all of which link together to show what plans the Council and other agencies have to improve Harlow. The diagram below shows the key documents and whether they are Harlow Council's documents, partnership documents or documents that operate at a bigger geographical level.



What does the Plan aim to achieve?

The Plan is a formal document capturing the Council's aspirations, priorities and how its performance is to be judged. It enables Councillors to hold managers and employees to account and to measure progress against the delivery of the Council's overall vision for the Town and Council. A summary version is published in **Harlow Times** to inform residents and other stakeholders about what the Council is setting out to do.

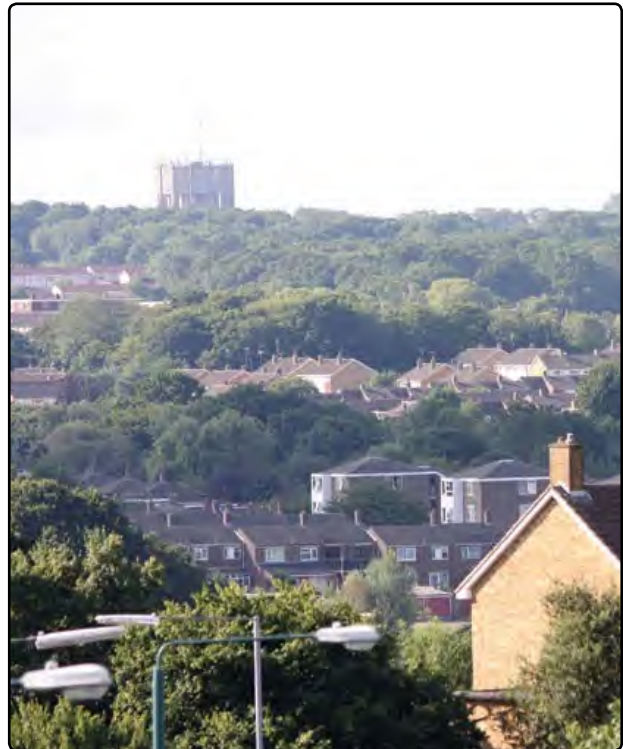
Vision and Priorities

Understanding the Town

(see Appendix 2)

Harlow, with a current estimated population of 80,600 has an ambition to be a key centre for development and change and is moving forward to achieve this. It is developing the positive characteristics of a city – in the level of its aspiration, the quality and range of facilities it aims to offer, and the role it will play in relation to the wider sub-region, the county of Essex and the Eastern region.

Major regeneration schemes have been completed and others are well underway. Education is also stepping up a gear with improving educational attainment, skills acquisition and with plans for a new Anglia Ruskin University presence in the town.



Harlow Council is responding to changing economic conditions and supporting businesses and people affected by the recession. Like many towns, Harlow's unemployment levels have been affected by the recession.

A vision from the people of Harlow

The Local Strategic Partnership (Harlow 2020), in which the Council is a key partner, has developed a vision for the Town through its Sustainable Community Strategy:

Harlow 2020 wants Harlow to be:

A clean, safe, sustainable and healthy town with good educational prospects for its citizens, a variety of homes and jobs to meet local needs, and a range of sporting, leisure and cultural opportunities contributing to a higher quality of life. To achieve this vision we want everyone to see that Harlow is . . .

Great for **ECONOMIC PROSPERITY** by:

- Developing a dynamic economic base, by retaining existing businesses in the area and attracting new investment.
- Continuing to regenerate the Town Centre.
- Training a flexible and skilled workforce to meet employers' needs.



Great for **EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS** by:

- Raising aspirations and achieving local recognition of measurable progress across all phases of learning.
- Securing the best possible educational staff, facilities and resources for the local community.



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- Developing a strategy which enables all sections of the community to be involved in, and have access to, lifelong learning.

Great for **FREE TIME** by:

- Coordinating all our facilities and activities, so that everyone can take part in sport & leisure
- Championing and supporting cultural opportunities that meet local needs and aspirations.
- Enhancing our open spaces and improving the way they are used, to meet the needs and aspirations of local people.
- Ensuring volunteering is valued and encouraged.
- Maximising the benefits to Harlow of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.



Great for **HEALTH AND WELLBEING** by:

- Reducing the proportion of adults in Harlow who smoke.
- Reducing obesity.
- Improving sexual health.
- Finding new ways of helping people with illness or disability to lead the kind of life they choose.



Great for **HOMES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS** by:

- Increasing the supply of good quality decent affordable housing.
- Reducing waste and maximising recycling.
- Improving the local neighbourhood street scene and enhancing the green environment.



Great for **TRANSPORT** by:

- Developing and implementing initiatives that help to make Harlow a safe and convenient place to travel around and visit.
- Ensuring that reliable public transport is accessible to all sections of the Harlow community.
- Ensuring that Harlow is able to exploit fully its geographical position in relation to major regional economic developments by developing transport networks in our area.



Great for **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE** by:

- Developing activities specifically for young people to promote healthy lifestyles, encourage involvement with the local community and positive behaviour.
- Improving access to services run by groups of organisations working together, focusing on meeting children and young people's needs.
- Providing support and advice to raise children and young people's aspirations and their involvement in learning and work.



Great for **COMMUNITY SAFETY** by:

- Preventing and reducing crime. Particularly:
 - o the fear of crime
 - o the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse
 - o anti-social behaviour
 - o incidents of hate crimes
 - o incidents of domestic violence.



The Council supports this vision and is committed to contributing to its delivery. The vision is currently being reviewed by the Harlow 2020 partnership with a new vision to be included in a revised Sustainable Community Strategy for 2011 onwards.

The Local Development Framework

The town's vision will be implemented in part through the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF Core Strategy will be informed and driven by local communities and partners. It will help develop the spatial vision for the Town for the next fifteen to twenty years.

The East of England Plan had required 16,000 dwellings to be built in the Harlow area between 2001 and 2021 including extensions to the town in both East Hertfordshire and Epping Forest Districts. The Coalition Government recently indicated, however, its intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies as set out in the Localism Bill.

Consequently Harlow Council and partner Council's; East Hertfordshire and Epping Forest District now have an opportunity to ensure that the emerging Local Development Framework meets the long term aspirations of the Council and is based on local need and circumstances.

This is being achieved by co-ordinated partnership approach to deliver the growth requirements for the Harlow area and in conjunction with Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils. The emerging LDF strategy will be linked to this Corporate Plan.

For more information on Harlow Council's LDF – please visit www.harlow.gov.uk/LDF



A vision for Harlow Council

Understanding the Council

(see Appendix 3)



Harlow Council was rated as “Good” in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2007 and as a Council that is performing well in its 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment. In 2010 the Audit Commission gave assurance that the Council had satisfactory arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Council has many strengths but recognises that the role of local government is shifting. Changes in the strategic and financial context of the public sector, as well as the increasing expectations of communities are placing public services under increasing pressure.

Harlow faces an unparalleled opportunity to renew, reinvigorate and support both aspiration and opportunity to achieve further economic success and to attract people to both live and work here. The goal is to position Harlow as the place to choose for a better way of life and as a smarter place to do business.

The cornerstones of the Council’s aims are for Harlow to be:

- o A place of aspiration and a university town.
- o A prime business location and gateway to Europe.
- o A cultural hub.
- o A sub-regional centre and retail destination.

The vision for the Council is to be an organisation that facilitates the creation of opportunities for local people and supports those who need help to fulfil their potential alongside the goal of offering value for money. It will pursue this through its roles as:

A Strategic Council by focusing on community leadership and working with partners to prioritise and commission public services that provide value for money. It will do this within the context of the Big Society and Sustainable Community Strategy. It will only provide services directly where its service provision is at least comparable to the quality and value for money offered by other options.

A democratically accountable and transparent Council. It will retain accountability even when responsibility for service delivery may lie elsewhere; prioritising resources based on fairness and commissioning services that deliver priorities with clearly specified outcomes and outputs.

A **community leader** inspiring and empowering residents, businesses and partners to succeed in terms of employment, enterprise, health and learning. It will be an effective advocate for Harlow and for its future potential.

A **partner** contributing to the economic prosperity and social cohesion of the town and continually striving to improve the delivery of services by continuing the things that work and changing the things that do not.



Volunteers from Rainbow Services at the Civic Centre.

The Council, in partnership with others, will provide the leadership necessary to support the on-going evolution of a stable community with rising expectations and heightened aspirations. The Council will work tirelessly to reduce dependency by encouraging people who are able to sustain themselves. It will also, where necessary, support the vulnerable and those in need to play their part in achieving these common goals through its policy of fairness in allocating scarce resources.

The Council recognises the impact that the economy is having both on the town and the Council itself. It will work with residents, businesses and partners to minimise the recession's negative impact and capitalise on its opportunities, positioning Harlow for recovery, supporting enterprise and employment. It is committed to achieving value for money in its own operations, driving out inefficiencies and working in partnership where this will reduce costs without damaging service quality.

Harlow Council's Values

The Council is committed to being a learning organisation that is customer focused and performance orientated; an organisation where people make things happen and promote excellence, good customer service and continuous improvement. Its values are:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Integrity | Clear, meaningful and honest two way communication with staff, customers and partners. |
| Value People | Treating everyone fairly, equally and with mutual respect. Investing in staff, recognising individual and team contributions to achieve success. |
| Inspirational | Supporting and encouraging accountability, creativity and innovation amongst its staff, key stakeholders and partners. |

The behaviours that the Council seeks to engender are:

- Fairness
- A sense of belonging
- Genuine engagement
- Staff empowerment
- Working together
- Innovation and a dynamic learning culture
- Recognising and valuing individual and team contributions



Council officers enjoying an after work Zumba fitness class.

Council Resources (See Appendix 4)

The Medium Term Financial Strategy was prepared against a background of continuing change and uncertainty in global and economic factors and falling central Government support affecting the Council's finances.

The financial position of local government as a whole is faced with a significant reduction in Revenue Support Grant from 2011/12. The MTFs, however, will continue to be developed to support, and be driven by, the priorities contained in the Corporate Plan.

Against this background it is also acknowledged that ongoing unidentified incremental efficiency savings are unsustainable following the removal of £4.3 million of efficiency savings over the past five years.

How the Council works (See Appendix 5)

Harlow Council is made up of 33 Councillors, elected for a four-year term with one-third retiring every three years in four (the fourth year being reserved for County Council elections). Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their Ward. The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community, including those who did not vote for them. As at 1 February 2011, Harlow Council had 16 Conservative, 4 Liberal Democrat and 11 Labour Councillors. There were two vacancies.

The Council's Priorities

In supporting and contributing to the achievement of the Harlow Community Strategy the Council has developed a complimentary set of priorities which are detailed below along with detailed action plans for each priority (see Appendix 1).

Regenerating the Town

The Council will work with partners to continue the transformation of the Town Centre, the regeneration of the town's neighbourhoods and to secure the ongoing investment necessary in physical infrastructure.

This, together with work to improve the image of the town will encourage investment and create employment opportunities and a vibrant retail and leisure offer. The Council

will work to improve the skills of Harlow's residents, helping to enable greater opportunity towards higher reward jobs and increasing the economic wellbeing of the community.

Supported by policies and proposals set out in the emerging Local Development Framework, regenerating the town remains the Council's top priority.



Promoting enterprise

The Council will seek to support local people in seizing opportunities to start businesses and to grow them successfully. It will work through the West Essex Alliance (and Kent, Great Essex & East Sussex Local Enterprise Partnership) to support existing local businesses to tackle barriers to growth, protect local jobs and encouraging a mixture of businesses to invest in Harlow.

Promoting a clean, green, healthy and safe environment

A cleaner environment will be pursued through delivering major improvements to the town's street scene, better rubbish collection, tackling fly tipping and clearing graffiti promptly.

By promoting green schemes like heating and insulation improvements carbon emissions can be cut, energy bills reduced and employment supported. Policies in the LDF will be introduced to enable the Council to require higher standards in new developments to achieve these objectives.

The Council will continue to work with others for a healthier community through tackling issues such as obesity, teenage conceptions and smoking.

We will continue to work for a safer community through building on our successful partnership working with the Police and others in preventing and tackling crime and taking tough action on those who commit anti-social behaviour.

Tackling housing need and improving housing choice

The Council aims to raise people's aspirations for higher quality/higher reward employment and for access to a greater choice in the type, tenure and quality of housing through an economically viable regeneration and development programme. The Council will work with the private sector and registered social landlords to pursue this aim as well as seeking to improve its own housing stock.



Prentice Place regeneration

During the current recession the Council will seek to help home owners in financial difficulties through access to Government support schemes designed to help home owners maintain ownership of their property. We will continue to work towards satisfying housing need, achieving the Decent Homes Standard for Council housing and giving residents advice and support in relation to different housing options.

The Council will continue to consult with residents about the provision of new homes in the town. We will also ensure that future decisions about the Council's housing stock and the provision of new social housing are informed by consultation and made in the best interests of the town.

Developing good citizenship through promoting aspiration and enabling responsibility

We will work with partners to ensure that vulnerable families get access to the help and where possible become self-sufficient.

To achieve the Council's vision of a vibrant and confident Harlow with strong communities the Council will work with individuals and the community to encourage:



Café Youth

- **Personal responsibility** – enabling individuals of all abilities to take the opportunity to develop the skills, the resources and the confidence to take control of their lives and live independently.
- **Civic responsibility** – encouraging communities within neighbourhoods to shape their own destinies, challenge anti-social behaviour and improve quality of life.
- **Corporate responsibility** – promoting enterprise and business, particularly those willing to start their own businesses, emphasising the responsibilities of business to care for the environment and improve the well-being of the communities within which they come into contact.
- **Cultural responsibility** – harnessing culture to increase residents' aspirations and pride in the town, acknowledging and promoting the role of the arts as an essential part of Harlow's history and future development, particularly community based arts, and promoting the further development of the town's status as a Sculpture Town.



Providing value for money

The Council will drive out waste from its operational systems seeking always to achieve the delivery of more efficient and effective services that meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors. Where necessary we will take tough decisions about what services will be provided and what it will not do.

As a Strategic Council our focus will be on achieving value for money irrespective of the means of service provision. Whether commissioned from others or delivered directly, service provision in Harlow will be evaluated for its value for money. This does not mean that the cheapest option will always be accepted but decisions will be based on a positive evaluation of the balance different options provide in respect of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Achievements during 2010/11

Regenerating the Town

Harlow Leisurezone was completed and opened to the public in the summer of 2010. This was part of the wider Gateway Partnership which has brought state-of-the art sporting facilities and new housing to Harlow.



Harlow's newly-awarded status as Britain's first Sculpture Town is reflected in its magnificent sculpture collection which is of national significance and features work by internationally-renowned artists such as Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Elisabeth Frink, Lynn Chadwick and Ralph Brown.

The sculptures are on display in public areas across Harlow in keeping with Gibberd's passion for all citizens having free access to works of contemporary art and culture at the heart of the community.

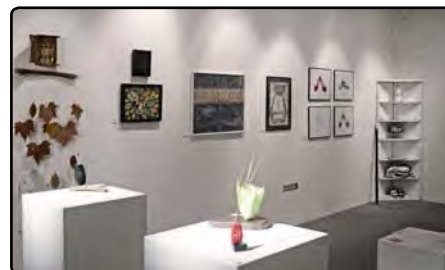


'Safe Hands' Challenge and support project.

The dual carriageway improvements to A414 between M11 and Southern Way roundabout are due to be complete ahead of schedule (planned Feb 2011).

The start of LDF process was launched formally this year by a series of consultation events on the future Issues and options for Harlow. This was the first of a series of formal consultations with Harlow's residents seeking their opinions on the key issues identified in Harlow and their support or suggestions for future regeneration, housing, employment, retail, community and leisure policies to guide future developments in Harlow.

Working in partnership, we have developed studio space for artists within the Town Centre. Gatehouse Arts and Studios provides 25 professional artists with affordable studios and a new community arts space making use of a previously empty shop and office premises in the town centre. The studios will also support the artists' professional development and offer open studio events, workshops and gallery shows



The Council have installed five help points in the Town Centre, to enable residents to access information whilst they are out.

Promoting enterprise



Many local schools took part in a Young Enterprise event held in the Civic Centre last year.

We have hosted a recent workshop to begin reviewing its procurement processes with local business representative organizations – Harlow & District Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Business.

The Council is actively working with several large and smaller employers looking to relocate within town who are seeking to find more appropriate and longer term premises.

The Council is continuing its dialogue with the Health Protection Agency (or successor) with regards to re-location to the Harlow GSK site. HDC hosted a visit and tour of Harlow and its environs for the HPA staff.

Arrangements are underway for the first West Essex Alliance (Sub regional LEP) to take place in January 2011.

GSK – Harlow District Council (HDC) & partners (including JobcentrePlus and EEDA R2R) supported redundant staff from both GSK and related support contractor companies.

The proportion of business's very or fairly satisfied with Harlow as a place to invest has increased from 56.5% in 2009 to 63.0% in 2010.

An inward investment brochure and website has been produced. An agreement to support inward investment to Harlow has been concluded with Essex County Council Invest Essex Team. Harlow is also now profiled on a national inward investment website Locations4Business.

www.harlowbusiness.co.uk, www.locations4business.com

Promoting a clean, green, healthy and safe environment

Our partnership working to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour has led to a reduction in overall crime and significant improvements in particular categories of crime such as criminal damage and vehicle crime.

We have worked in partnership with the probation service on community payback schemes and this has led to a number of community projects that will make the town more attractive being undertaken by offenders.

By working in partnership with other agencies we developed a successful and comprehensive strategy to deal with problems of illegal disposal of trade waste.

We have undertaken a review of the Council's enforcement activities and have restructured staffing teams to provide a more effective response to more serious anti-social behaviour in Council homes.



Parndon Wood Nature Reserve was declared one of the finest parks in the country.

After receiving a sought after Green Flag Award in July Harlow Council have also received the highest level award for Parndon Wood SSSI from Natural England and an encouraging 'Recovering' assessment for Hospital Wood.

The SX Urban Games was delivered at Harlow Skatepark and achieved Inspire Mark status.

The All Ability Challenge took place in 2010 and is now being used as a model to deliver inclusive activities across Essex in 2011.

Harlow's rubbish sent to landfill has decreased by over 4000 Tonnes for the period April to September 2010 compared to the same period last year. This equates to the weight of approximately 1000 Asian elephants!



Tackling housing need and improving housing choice



The Gateway Scheme is bringing approximately 600 new homes to Harlow. As at 31 December 2010, 98 affordable housing units were handed over on the Fifth Avenue site. These were a mixture of houses and flats of different sizes, and also mixed tenure with 81 units being for social rent and 17 units being low cost home ownership.

The Council has strategically targeted empty properties, reducing the number to below 50 (target 2010/11 70 properties).

The Council has assisted 40 households out of homelessness through the Rent Deposit Guarantee scheme since April 2010. This has been aided by a reinvigoration of the homelessness strategy and partnership.

The number of homeless families in temporary accommodation has reduced by a further 13% in the past twelve months.

The Council has taken steps to actively involve residents in improving their local community, completing a number of tenant and leaseholder led works, under our Tenant Initiatives scheme. The sheltered housing service achieved accreditation by Telecare Services Association (TSA) for Sheltered Housing for handling call-outs.

Tenants played a key part in the production and publication of the first Annual Report to Tenants. A complete review of the Housing Register was undertaken which resulted in a 39% reduction in the number of registered applicants, thereby ensuring greater value for money and allowing those in the greatest need to move closer towards getting a Council house.

Regular tenant surveys shows that satisfaction is increasing. Further tenant participation in local forums and resident groups is also on the rise.

Developing good citizenship through promoting aspiration and enabling responsibility

Supporting the Government's Big Society agenda

The Council welcomes the Big Society, and is well placed to become a pilot area. Many of the ideas underpinning the Big Society have been a reality in Harlow for some time and the Council, other public agencies and the community and voluntary sector look forward to working with Harlow's community and with the Government to take the agenda forward.



Launch of the Big Society

The Council has worked with the community and voluntary sector to bring the Big Society agenda to Harlow and have supported the development of a number of Residents' Associations and community forums. The Council has worked with young people to foster good citizenship through its work with the Harlow Youth Council, the Café Youth Project, through Crucial Crew and through its work in schools.

The Council plans additional activities and initiatives to support the Big Society agenda which demonstrate the developing capacity of both the voluntary and public sectors in Harlow to grasp this agenda. Examples include:

Further work with co-operatives, social enterprises and the not-for-profit sector, e.g. a commissioning conference, celebration of/support to social enterprises through Global Enterprise Week

Further opportunities for involvement in decision making, for example by increasing representation on Service Improvement Teams and involving community representatives in the Council's Equalities Group.

Further work with neighbourhoods, rolling out the Neighbourhood Forums and encouraging further transfer of assets to the community sector.

Further work with young people, to develop a business plan for Café Youth to ensure its sustainability and to develop further opportunities for intergenerational activities.

Increasing involvement in voluntary and community activity, promoting the Big Society through the Young Bus, the Big Society Team, the Big Society web site and the Big Society Awards.

Encouraging community involvement through Service Improvement Teams and the Highways Localism Panel.



Recognising those residents of Harlow who have given their lives while on active service since World War II, the Council working with the Royal British Legion and other Service organisations refurbished Netteswell War Memorial and added new memorials.

The Council has led on the Children's Centres Initiative in Harlow, which has led to the development of six Children's Centres across the town.



The Family Intervention Project and the Challenge and Support Project, led by the Council, has enabled an effective approach to some of the most vulnerable and anti-social families in the town. Feedback from those supported includes, “An incredible course that everyone should experience and learn from” “Excellent and good for realizing that you are not alone”

Neighbourhood Forums have been piloted in two areas of the town and are now being rolled out across the town in partnership with other agencies.

A Leisure and Cultural Strategy and accompanying Action Plan has been developed in partnership with a range of other organisations.

Harlow’s status as a ‘Sculpture Town’ has been recognised and tourist signs to promote this status secured.

The Council has actively promoted the benefits of Residents Associations and encouraged residents to set up their own groups. As a result there are now 24 Residents Associations formally recognized by the Council.

An active partnership with the Probation Service and Youth Offending team has resulted in a rejuvenation of scenery and street furniture.

The Council works in partnership to provide educational and diversionary activities for young people. In addition we provide support through family intervention projects. The number of young victims of crime has fallen by 25% since 2006-07.



Twenty four full time education (FTE) Learning Mentors operating across 23 schools have been provided. A number operate cross phase supporting transition and undertake a range of tasks including 1:1 support, small group intervention and home school liaison.

Providing value for money

Improving value for money has been consistently pursued and resulted in further efficiency gains being achieved. All services are subject to fundamental service reviews as part of the on-going budget build process. Reductions in expenditure, efficiency gains and additional income generation approximately equivalent of the net General Fund revenue budget requirement for 2011/12 have been achieved.

The Council has monitored the number of 'avoidable contacts' at Contact Harlow and worked to ensure that people get the right information at the first point of contact.

Working with the Business Sector it has raised awareness and promoted the different ways the Council Procurement activities are undertaken e.g. through collaboration, framework agreements, shared services etc. This has enabled small and medium enterprises to access tendering opportunities with the Council in a timely manner.

E-Tendering has been developed and the Council is supporting key partners in its use. Similarly an e-learning toolkit on procurement for the use of all HDC staff.

Robust financial management and scrutiny has ensured that investments are performing better than planned and a large VAT refund has been achieved.



As part of the Future Jobs Fund programme Harlow Council is accountable for providing employment opportunities for 174 young people. The programme will generate over £1million in funding to support employment opportunities across West Essex.

On 4 November 2010 the Council unanimously agreed that in principle the Council will enter into a joint partnership for the Revenues and Benefits service with Uttlesford District Council. The total savings attributable to Harlow Council by the end of 2012/13 are estimated to be around £390,000.

Conclusion

Harlow Council continues to work towards its ambition for Harlow to become a key centre for development and change and is committed to working towards the Town's continued transformation. In light of the significant savings required in response to the Coalition Government's funding decisions, we continue to strive towards providing value for money for our residents and a Big Society approach.

This Corporate Plan provides a detailed route map of how the Council's priorities will be delivered over the next five years. Appendix 1 below provides a detailed Action Plan of how Harlow Council will deliver against its key corporate objectives. This will enable the Council to be held to account and to measure progress against the delivery of the Council's overall vision for the Town to be evaluated.

Appendix 1: 2011/12 – 2015/16 Action Plan

Regenerating the town

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
R1 - To create a vibrant town centre	<p>Procure a development partner for the regeneration of The Market Quarter</p> <p>Work with the Town Centre Partnership to support the development of a sustainable partnership to promote Harlow Town Centre North and provide a range of events and activities</p> <p>Prepare a Supplementary Planning Document for the town centre</p>	<p>Autumn 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Spring 2011</p>	<p>Development Agreement in place</p> <p>Town Centre Partnership able to operate independently following withdrawal of core funding</p> <p>Formal adoption of SPD by Harlow Council</p>	<p>Growth and Regeneration</p> <p>Growth and Regeneration</p> <p>Regulation</p>
R2 - To promote the Image of Harlow	<p>Further develop the 'See Something Different' brand to ensure use by a range of partners</p>	<p>March 2012</p>	<p>Widespread use and recognition of the SSD brand</p>	<p>Growth and Regeneration</p>

*Success indicators will be subject to further agreement of detailed milestones and achievements via the Council's Service Planning process (2011/12)

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
R3 - To improve Harlow's infrastructure, particularly transport	Through the Harlow Stansted Gateway Transport Board (HSGTB), complete work to develop proposals and the business case for a new motorway junction Assess the appropriateness of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to secure future infrastructure provision to support development identified in the LDF	2012/13 Summer 2013	Robust proposal developed and submitted to the HSGTB New motorway junction agreed in principle by March 2013 Preparation and formal adoption of a CIL appropriate to Harlow.	Growth and Regeneration Regulation
R4 - To renew neighbourhoods & neighbourhood centres	Procure a development partner for Aylets Field, the Briars, and Copshall Close Complete the GAF II projects at Clifton Hatch, Prentice Place and Carters Mead Progress retro-fitting** improvements to Barley Croft and Lower Meadow	June 2012 2013/14 2014	Community fully involved in writing the development brief and selecting development partner	Growth and Regeneration Growth and Regeneration Growth and Regeneration
	Facilitate provision of the new health and leisure facilities at Staple Tye and progress the development of the Lister House site To identify the areas in neighbourhoods and the centres and to develop the appropriate policies in the LDF to support future planning applications that deliver the regeneration identified	2012/13 Summer 2013	Preparation and formal adoption of site allocation document.	Growth and Regeneration Regulation

**Retrofitting could mean to add insulation, install energy efficient heating systems, improve roofs, and update windows and lighting. Detail of improvement works TBA.

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
R5 - To work in partnership to identify the most vulnerable families, targeting provision to support parenting, educational attainment and aspirations	Work in partnership with other agencies to develop a sustainability plan to enable the continuation of work carried out under the Family Intervention and Challenge and Support Projects when pump-priming funding ceases	July 2011	There are clear referral pathways in place for support for vulnerable families	Community and Customer Services
R6 - To work in partnership to achieve improved sporting facilities for the town	Begin implementation of the Pitch Regeneration Strategy Action Plan	Work to commence by summer 2011	Improved quality of facilities at playing pitches, as outlined in the Pitch Regeneration Strategy. Increased participation in regular adult sport in Harlow to 23.8% Improvement in satisfaction levels with sport and leisure facilities	Community and Customer Services
R7 - Produce the Local Development Framework to enable the delivery of regeneration, growth and a prosperous community, setting out the vision for the future development of Harlow until 2021	This will set out the spatial planning vision for the town for the next fifteen to twenty years. The key element of this will be the Core Strategy that will define the overarching planning framework, through a set of policies and proposals, to guide and shape development in the town in order to support the Council's wider objectives	Winter 2012	Core Strategy found sound following Examination and adopted by the Council.	Regulation

*Success indicators will be subject to further agreement of detailed milestones and achievements via the Council's Service Planning process (2011/12)

Promoting Enterprise

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
PE 1 - To promote inward investment & business growth and support existing businesses	Support the West Essex Alliance to agree a programme of work that facilitates inward investment across West Essex; and to work with partners to implement that programme Support the chairman of West Essex Alliance in his role as representative of the Kent & Greater Essex Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure that the opportunities and investment needs of West Essex are fully recognised	April 2011 Ongoing	Programme of work agreed Businesses recognise WEA as responding effectively to the challenges that they face Increase the proportion of business's very or fairly satisfied with Harlow as a place to invest to: 67.7% 2011/12 69.0% 2012/13	Growth and Regeneration Growth and Regeneration
PE 2 - To improve Council engagement with small businesses and the Third sector	To develop appropriate LDF policies to support future planning applications that secures inward investment and supports business growth in Harlow	Winter 2012	Core Strategy found to be sound following Examination and adopted by Harlow Council	Regulation
PE 3 - To encourage the development of Co-operatives and Social Enterprises as part of the Big Society Agenda in Harlow	To host a Big Society Conference for small businesses, co-operatives and social enterprises to look at improving opportunities for engagement with the Council To work with the Voluntary Sector Forum and other partners to support the establishment of co-operatives and social enterprises	September 2011 Ongoing	Increase in the number of small businesses, social enterprises and co-operatives that are successful in procurement activity with Harlow Council Increase in the number of co-operatives and social enterprises in Harlow	Community and Customer Services Community and Customer Services Growth and Regeneration

*Success indicators will be subject to further agreement of detailed milestones and achievements via the Council's Service Planning process (2011/12)

Promoting a clean, green, healthy & safe environment

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
E1 - Deliver short term transport improvements	Through the preparation of the LDF examine the role of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Planning Contributions to secure additional transport improvements in the town	Summer 2013	Secure appropriate levels of developer contributions to deliver improvements to transport infrastructure	Regulation
E2 - Reduce the Council's energy use	Work with the Carbon Trust to enhance the Energy Action Plan and fully quantify proposed actions to reduce energy usage Implement the energy action plan (30 outcomes covering monitoring & targeting, innovation, awareness, asset improvement) Maximise funding to support housing capital programme and tenant initiatives Develop a programme of replacement boilers	31 March 2011 March 2012 March 2012	Carbon Trust approved action plan in place CO2 reduction of 25% over 5 years 2010/11 – 2014/15 (on 2009 baseline) Number of installations Improved decency rating	Growth and Regeneration Housing Housing
E3 - Improve home energy efficiency to reduce CO2 emissions and combat fuel poverty	Ensure appropriate policies are included within the emerging Core Strategy to ensure future development proposals incorporate measures to reduce carbon emissions	Summer 2013	Adoption and implementation of planning policies in Core Strategy	Regulation

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
E4 - To improve sustainability and achieve the targets set out in the Sustainability Strategy	Review (and revise if required) Sustainability Strategy Ensure that the Council's Sustainability Strategy targets are met	Feb/Mar 11 2012	Sustainability targets met and projects delivered	Growth and Regeneration Growth and Regeneration
E5 - Reduce environmental crime	Work in partnership to implement further initiatives to address the problems of illegal disposal of commercial waste and illegal waste carriers Work in partnership to ensure that Community Payback Schemes are utilised to best advantage to improve the environment in Harlow	March 2012 March 2012	Reduction in incidences of illegal waste disposed (NI 196 to meet Grade 1 performance) Number of Community Payback Schemes that result in an environmental improvement in the town	Community and Customer Services / Regulation Community and Customer Services
E6 - Work in partnership to tackle health inequalities	Development of a 2020 Partnership Strategy to address obesity and other lifestyle-related health problems in Harlow Work in partnership with health improvement partners	October 2011 Dec 11	Short-term: development of a Strategy Medium-long term: reduction in health inequalities, for examples incidences of obesity, smoking-related diseases, teenage pregnancies Ensure appropriate policies and partnerships are in place to refer vulnerable persons to prevent homelessness	Community and Customer Services. Housing

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
E7 – Maintain and improve current performance levels as a result of the waste collection and recycling contract	Review services with an aim to increase recycling performance and satisfaction with the waste and recycling contract	Ongoing	<p>Targets for 2011/12 onwards:</p> <p>BV082ai.05 (32%) Household Waste Recycled</p> <p>BV082aii.05 (8,000) Tonnes Household Waste Recycled</p> <p>BV082bi.05 (14%) household waste composted</p> <p>BV082bii.05 (3,500 tonnes) of household waste composted</p> <p>Improvement in levels of satisfaction with the Council's waste and recycling services</p>	Regulation
E8 - To promote the use wherever practicable of sustainable energy supplies, water conservation and waste	Ensure appropriate policies are included within the emerging Core Strategy to address the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) and other conservation measures	Winter 2012	Adoption and implementation of planning policies in Core Strategy	Regulation

*Success indicators will be subject to further agreement of detailed milestones and achievements via the Council's Service Planning process (2011/12)

Tackling housing need and improving housing choice

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
<p>H1 - Ensure all residents are provided with the full range of housing options, choices, and opportunities available for their situation</p>	<p>Transform the approach to tackling housing need, and develop new methods with partners to improve access and opportunity for decent affordable social and private sector housing</p> <p>Promote sustainable tenancies by providing timely advice and support</p> <p>Develop appropriate policies in emerging Core Strategy to ensure future development proposals provide a range of appropriate housing options</p>	<p>March 2012</p> <p>March 2012</p> <p>Winter 2012</p>	<p>Adoption of identified best practice lettings policies, and homelessness strategy</p> <p>Provide a tenancy support service and adoption of policies including use of external support and agencies</p> <p>Adoption and implementation of planning policies in Core Strategy</p>	<p>Housing</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Regulation</p>
<p>H2 - Increase the total supply and variety of decent affordable housing</p>	<p>Work to secure further investment in housing. Ensuring that Harlow is a high priority for funding</p> <p>Develop appropriate policies in emerging Core Strategy to ensure future development proposals provide appropriate levels of affordable housing</p>	<p>March 2012</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring</p>	<p>Increased funding, supply of decent housing increases</p> <p>Supply of affordable housing in District increases to address deficiencies identified in evidence base</p>	<p>Housing</p> <p>Regulation</p>

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
H3 - Promote high standards of housing in the public and private sector	Ensure continued delivery Decent Homes	2015	Update Decent Homes Delivery Plan	Housing
	Ensure accreditation of supply of private sector housing	Sep 2011	Establishment of a county wide scheme	Housing
	Develop appropriate policies in emerging Core Strategy and guidance in Supplementary Planning Documents to ensure future development proposals provide high standards of design and amenity	Winter 2012	Adoption and implementation of planning policies in Core Strategy	Regulation
H4 - Delivery of new homes as part of the Gateway Project	Ensure the delivery of new homes meets the requirements of the Section 106	March 2012	Minimum of 30% of homes are affordable (social rent or low cost home ownership) and of an appropriate mix of sizes	Growth and Regeneration/ Community and Customer Services
	Ensure delivery of an appropriate mix of sizes and types of tenure in relation to homes on the 5th Avenue and Pool sites	Winter 2012	Supply of mix of tenure and house size increases over the plan period	Regulation

*Success indicators will be subject to further agreement of detailed milestones and achievements via the Council's Service Planning process (2011/12)

Developing good citizenship through promoting aspiration and enabling responsibility

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
C1 - To improve skills	<p>Establish a learning and skills forum for Harlow / West Essex</p> <p>Inform future skills provision at all levels including basic skills, further education, higher education, apprenticeships and work based learning</p> <p>Work with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) to deliver a Harlow Campus, with a full programme of Courses</p> <p>Encourage work between employers and ARU ensuring employers can influence the development of the medium term course offer for the new University Centre at Harlow</p>	<p>Mar 2011</p> <p>2011/12</p> <p>Autumn 2011</p> <p>2011/12</p>	<p>NI 163 – proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least level 2 or higher – target 65.6% for 2011/12</p> <p>NI 164 - proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least level 3 or higher – target 44.5% for 2011/12</p>	Growth and Regeneration
C2 - To develop Harlow as a cultural hub	<p>Work in partnership to implement the Harlow Leisure and Cultural Strategy</p>	Ongoing	Achievement of Action Plan as set out in Harlow Cultural Strategy	Community and Customer Services
C3 – To support personal responsibility	<p>To provide workshops and other related activities in schools and other venues to encourage young people to take personal responsibility and to become involved in social action</p>	Ongoing	Increase in the number of young people actively participating in the Youth Council and visiting Café Youth	Community and Customer Services

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
C4 - Improve the Council's Reputation	<p>Build the reputation of Harlow Council as an organisation for renewing the town</p> <p>Deliver an increase in civic pride and demonstrate value for money</p> <p>Attract resources from regional and national Government through effective communications and public affairs activity</p> <p>Retain good staff and engage employees through proactive internal communications</p>	<p>2011/12</p> <p>2011/12</p> <p>2011/12</p> <p>2011/12</p>	<p>Improvement in the percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live</p> <p>Improvement in the percentage of residents who are very or fairly satisfied with how the local council runs things</p> <p>Improvement in the percentage of residents who strongly or tend to agree that their local council provides value for money</p> <p>Improvement in staff satisfaction informed via staff survey during the life of the Plan</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>Governance</p>
C5 - Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour	<p>Work in partnership with other agencies – particularly the voluntary and community sector – to provide a range of initiatives such as Crucial Crew and Bang Out of Order, designed to reduce anti-social behaviour</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Reduction in recorded incidences of anti-social behaviour. Target setting for 2011 – 2014 in progress</p> <p>Reduction in recorded incidences of criminal damage. Target setting for 2011 – 2014 in progress</p>	<p>Community and Customer Services</p>

*Success indicators will be subject to further agreement of detailed milestones and achievements via the Council's Service Planning process (2011/12)

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
C6 - Improve access to/ participation in services and decision making for young people	Work with Friends of Harlow Young People to develop services for young people and in particular to develop a sustainability plan for Café Youth	March 2012	A sustainability plan is developed in respect of Café Youth, identifying funding streams for the medium-long term	Community and Customer Services
C7 - Work in partnership to develop high quality leisure, cultural and heritage services for the town	Roll out Neighbourhood Forums across the town	March 2012	A minimum of 10 Neighbourhood Forums held each year	Community and Customer Services
C8 – To develop the 'Big Society' Agenda in Harlow by working in partnership to develop the capacity and confidence of the voluntary and community sector	To work in partnership with the Voluntary Sector Forum and other appropriate bodies to identify how the Council can support the sector To support the development of new and existing Residents' Associations	Ongoing	Increase in the number of services provided by the voluntary and community sector Increase in the number of areas in the town covered by Residents' Associations	Community and Customer Services

*Success indicators will be subject to further agreement of detailed milestones and achievements via the Council's Service Planning process (2011/12)

Providing value for money

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
VFM 1 - To manage the Council's assets effectively	Implement the Asset Management Plan Maximise income collection on rents and service charges	As per the plan Mar 12	Reduction in numbers and levels of debt	Growth and Regeneration Housing
VFM 2 - Continue a programme of value for money reviews	Continue to undertake Value for Money reviews Identify areas of underperformance and take corrective action where necessary Learn from other authorities and adopt best practice for implementing value for money improvements	Sept 2011 Oct 2011 Ongoing	Improved comparative ratings for Harlow's position in internal Value for Money review	Governance Governance and relevant service Governance
VFM 3 – Become a strategic council	Continue to explore shared services agenda Outsource services where it is possible for the private and voluntary sectors to run services more economically	Ongoing	Demonstrable positive results from outsourcing as an option in any relevant service review Demonstrate that considerations for outsourcing have been fully considered as per relevant service reviews	CMT
VFM 4 - Reduce Avoidable Contact with the Council	Monitor enquiries at Contact Harlow to identify avoidable contact and work with services to ensure a 'right first time' approach	Ongoing	Reduction in the number of enquiries that are categorised as avoidable (NI 14) to 13% by 2011/12	Community and Customer Services

*Success indicators will be subject to further agreement of detailed milestones and achievements via the Council's Service Planning process (2011/12)

Objective	Priority actions	Deadline	Success indicators*	Responsible service
VFM 5 – Enhance the Council's scrutiny role	<p>Move to a cabinet and leader system of governance arrangements</p> <p>Ensure that the Council's scrutiny function is appropriately resourced and that recommendations from the Scrutiny Committees are relevant, researched and evidenced based</p> <p>Ensure that the scrutiny process is accessible to the public</p>	<p>May 2011</p> <p>March 2012</p> <p>March 2012</p>	<p>Cabinet and Leader system adopted</p> <p>Scrutiny work (commissions etc) and public questions brought forward to the Council and Committee meetings</p> <p>Improvement in % of residents involved in decisions that affect the local area</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>Governance</p>
VFM 6 - Efficient and effective commissioning and procurement	<p>As part of the Big Society agenda, develop strategies to make it easier for voluntary and community organisations and SMEs to do business with the Council</p>	Ongoing	The number of voluntary and community organisations and SMEs participating in Council procurement activities	Community and Customer Services
VFM 7 - Secure and maintain future service standards for the operation of Parndon Wood Crematory & Crematorium	<p>Procure an appropriate partner organisation to operate the facility</p> <p>(appointment of appropriate partner approved by Executive Committee 13.01.11)</p>	By Quarter 1 (June 2011)	<p>Contract in place together with management agreement and 25 yr lease</p> <p>Investment in building and landscape in Yr. 1 of the contract</p>	Regulation

*Success indicators will be subject to further agreement of detailed milestones and achievements via the Council's Service Planning process (2011/12)

Appendix 2:

Understanding the town

Harlow as a key centre for development and change

Harlow has an ambition to be a key centre for development and change. Learning from the best of the new town legacy and regeneration elsewhere, it is developing the positive characteristics of a city – in the level of its aspiration, the quality and range of facilities it aims to offer, and the role it will play in relation to the wider sub-region, the county of Essex and the Eastern region.



Major regeneration schemes have been completed and others are well underway. Shopping, sporting & leisure facilities have been renewed and transport infrastructure improvements delivered with additional major investment planned. The pioneering new town legacy of Harlow is reflected in new, innovative, award-winning housing design. Education is also stepping up a gear with improving educational attainment, skills acquisition and with plans for a new Anglia Ruskin University presence in the town.

Harlow enjoys a superb strategic location, in close proximity to London, with access to the motorway and rail networks and Stansted airport only 12 miles away. It is therefore no surprise that Harlow has been chosen as a focus for major economic and housing growth and as a centre of regeneration. With a growing sub-regional role, it continues to attract significant government, regional and private sector investment.

Traditionally a centre for manufacturing, the town's economy has diversified with research and development emerging as a major focus with pharmaceuticals and Information Communications Technology strongly represented. Harlow will be seeking to build on this base, and its strong tradition of advanced manufacturing.

About Harlow

Harlow is currently estimated to have a population of 80,600 (ONS Mid-year population estimates 2009), forecast to rise to around 81,600 people by 2012 (Sub national Population Projection). The East of England Plan could see Harlow approximately doubling in size by 2031.



2010 Rainbow Day

Harlow is a multi-cultural community with people from different countries, heritage and backgrounds. Black and ethnic minority groups jointly make up 13% of the town's population. Harlow's largest ethnic groups are white British (87.2%), Asian or Asian British (3%), white other (2.7%) and Black or Black British African (2.2%). 1.8% of the town's population is made up from people of mixed races. Harlow's Irish community counts for 1.3% of the population and the town's Chinese and other ethnic groups count for around 1.8% of the population. (Neighbourhood Statistics 2007).

Sir Frederick Gibberd, Harlow's master planner and chief architect, was passionately committed to the idea that all citizens should be given free access to works of contemporary art, and culture and the arts still play a major role within the town. He designed the town environment with this in mind and as part of this endeavour the newly created Harlow Art Trust acquired works from both established and lesser-known sculptors. Harlow's museum and the Playhouse continue to provide residents with access to theatre, culture and the arts.



James Huckle, 2012 hopeful, with artist Helen Palmer

Sited throughout the town is also a collection of sculptures of national significance. In the main squares and precincts, in numerous public buildings and at several schools, sculptures by artists, both famous and lesser known, are to be found.

Gibberd's masterplan for Harlow was intended to create a place which was sympathetic to natural surroundings and these principles have been upheld in the town's modern plans. Over one-quarter of Harlow consists of green spaces and the town continues to value its parks, open spaces, wildlife and biodiversity; it has recently received green flag status for the Parndon Wood nature reserve.

Harlow's economy

Harlow Council is responding to changing economic conditions and supporting businesses and people affected by the recession. Like many towns, Harlow's unemployment levels have been affected by the recession and Harlow has the fifth highest rate of JSA claimants in the Eastern region at 4.2% (Oct 2010).



Nationally Harlow is not considered to be a deprived town but areas of deprivation do exist, especially when compared within a regional context. In 2007 Harlow was ranked as the 9th most deprived district in the East of England and around half of Harlow's residential areas fall into the top 20% deprived within the region.

Harlow has high proportions of persons employed within manufacturing and retail, distribution, hotels and restaurants and people working in the town earn wages which are amongst the highest,

ASHE 2009); yet in contrast resident wages and incomes are relatively low (£444, rank 37 in East, ASHE 2009) and Harlow residents earn on average 23% less than Harlow's workplace earners.

This gap is something Harlow Council is keen to tackle by working in partnership to provide attractive housing and facilities within the town whilst supporting local people to develop the skills they need to get higher paid jobs locally. This is made more difficult by traditionally low skills amongst Harlow adults with 12.5% of adults having no qualifications (2009) and only 54.2% holding an NVQ2 or higher (2009). Promising education results from Harlow's young people, however, are an encouraging sign for Harlow Council and its partners.



Artist impression of the new Passmores school

Harlow's long term trend for academic attainment at Primary and Secondary school is a positive one. From Key Stage 2 to GCSE Harlow pupils are showing steady improvements. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that schools which historically attained very low grades are now closing the gap on the highest attaining schools. Harlow schools have also shown significant improvement in GCSE results between 1995 and 2009.

The price of housing in Harlow remains low cost compared to the region. The average cost of a home in Harlow is £161,807 compared to £212,716 for Essex (May 09). The average resident wage in Harlow is also comparatively low at £22,140 (ASHE 2009) which means that residents would need to raise 7.4 times the average wage in order to purchase a home.

Harlow still retains a high proportion of social housing at 33%, and the demand for social housing is significant with 2,421 people on the housing needs register. Private rented sector although having increased is still relatively small and costly.

Sustainable Harlow

Harlow Council sees sustainability as 'meeting the community's immediate needs without compromising the ability to meet its future needs in respect of the environment, economy, employment, health, housing, governance and social well-being'.

Harlow Council understands that to enable a sustainable future, the built and natural environment needs to be valued and protected and that locally it must contribute towards wider ambitions to tackle climate change.



On average, the total amount of carbon consumed in industrial, commercial, road and domestic use as a rate of population in Harlow has reduced during the years 2005 and 2007 from 7.5 tonnes of carbon in 2005 to 7 tonnes of carbon per person in 2007. This rate is around average when compared nationally, but amongst the highest when compared to other Essex districts.

The health and social wellbeing of Harlow's residents is also important. Harlow has a high proportion of people with long-term health problems, particularly people with respiratory diseases, and hospital admission rates are high. The Harlow Local Strategic Partnership (Harlow 2020) has also identified obesity, smoking and teenage pregnancy as areas it wants to focus on improving.

Within the Sub Region there are significant variations in health outcomes. At 79 years, life expectancy in Harlow is below the Essex average but is higher than the national level. There are substantial differences between men (77.9 years) and women (82.9 years) and a five year gap between different localities in Harlow.

The Safer Harlow Partnership is a partnership of organisations and groups working together to reduce crime, disorder and the misuse of drugs in the town. The Partnership has been successful in year on year reductions in crime* for the past 5 years. The Partnership is keen to assure the public that Harlow is a safe place to live, and also realise that it needs to do more to address areas where it has not performed so well.

BCS Crime: consists of Common Assault (incl. on a PC), Criminal Damage (excl. 59), Domestic burglary (incl. attempts), Robbery of personal property, Theft from a vehicle (incl. attempts), Theft from person, Theft or unauthorised taking of cycle, Theft or unauthorised taking of vehicle (incl. attempts), Vehicle Crime (All), Vehicle interference, Woundings (serious or other)

Appendix 3:

Understanding the Council

Harlow Council was rated as “Good” in its Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2007 and as a Council that is performing well in the latest Comprehensive Area Assessment (2009).

In 2010 the Audit Commission gave assurance that the Council had satisfactory arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Council has many strengths but recognises that the role of local government is shifting and that the projected changes in the strategic and financial context of the public sector as a whole as well as the increasing expectations of the communities served are placing public services under increasing pressure.

Looking forward

2010/11 – 2014/15 has seen Harlow Council and its partners seek new ways of working together which will enable closer partnership working and enhanced collective ability to respond to the needs and aspirations of people in Harlow.

This will mean being:

A strategic rather than operational Council focused on community leadership and working with partners to prioritise and commission public services within the context of the Sustainable Community Strategy. Focusing on what is required for Harlow rather than delivering services itself unless it can illustrate that its service provision is at least comparable to the value for money offered by other service provision options.

A democratically accountable Council where accountability remains with the Council even though responsibility for service delivery may lie elsewhere. Prioritising resources and commissioning services based upon those priorities with clearly specified outputs and outcomes.

A Council providing value for money where irrespective of the means of service provision the Council will still seek to ensure that the services that it provides or commissions represent value for money. This does not mean that the cheapest cost option will always be accepted but decisions will be based upon a positive evaluation of the balance different options provide in respect of fairness, economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

A council that fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Harlow continues to be the community leader and advocate for Harlow but will discharge duties where appropriate.

A council that works in partnership and holds others to account for their investment and performance in or affecting Harlow. Where the role of Councillor is not limited to the service provision portfolio of the Council but enables Councillors to hold other organisations to account. We will ensure that Harlow is getting consistent prioritisation and resource investment to meet the needs of local communities.

A place shaping council which works with partners to continue to shape Harlow for current and future generations including continuing to transform the town centre, regenerate of our neighbourhoods, and invest in infrastructure, improve our green spaces and cultural offer. This, together with work to improve the image of the town will encourage investment and create employment, opportunity and a vibrant retail offer. We will work to improve the skills of Harlow's residents, and to enable them to access high quality jobs, thereby increasing the economic wellbeing of the community.

There has been a significant emphasis on partnership working and recognising and realising the opportunities to work with other councils, other public sector organisations, the private sector and the voluntary sector. If the Council is to be influential nationally, regionally and sub-regionally it also needs to be proactive and to ensure that it is represented at key forums by members and officers.

Appendix 4:

Resource Availability

Public sector resources are reducing. The Council will continue to respond pro-actively to local and national influences including the recession.

In terms of the General Fund, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provides the parameters for the Council's revenue spending and capital investment plans over a rolling 5-year period and is agreed by Council each year.

The MTFS was prepared against a background of continuing change and uncertainty in global and economic factors and falling central Government support affecting the Council's finances. The financial position of local government is causing concern within the sector as a whole with significant reduction in Revenue Support Grant from 2011/12. More importantly the MTFS will continue to be developed to support, and be driven by, the priorities contained in the Corporate Plan.

Against this background it is also acknowledged that ongoing unidentified incremental efficiency savings are unsustainable following the removal of £4.3M of efficiency savings over the past five years.

The MTFS included a five year financial forecast for the General Fund Budget, and reflected the following changes in key assumptions underpinning the financial forecasts from the MTFS approved in February 2009.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

February 2010 Assumption		Proposed Change
Costs		
Pay inflation	Reduce to 1.0% for 2010/11 only 2.5% per annum	No Increase in 2011/12 or 2012/13 1.5% thereafter.
General inflation	Average 2.2% p.a.	Only applied where contractually/ statutorily required.
Staff vacancy savings target	4% p.a.	Reduced to 2% based on 2010/11 experience and economic climate.
Pension Fund triennial revaluation March 2010	£200k p.a. added to base budget from 2011/12	Changed to reflect the Actuarial recommendations.
Redundancy costs	Increase to £250k p.a. from 2010/11	Additional £50k per annum added in light of CSR announcements.
Income		
Fees & charges	Average increase 3% p.a.	Prices to be increased (incorporating VAT Changes) Income budgets to remain at 2010/11 levels.
Council Tax increase (for financial planning purposes only)	0% p.a.	No change.
Investment interest rates	2010/11 0.9% 2011/12 0.9%	No Change. 0.75%

Taking into account the proposed changes in the key assumptions, the latest forecasts for the period 2012/13 to 2015/16 are set out in the following table. The figures will be subject to ongoing amendment as factors continue to change e.g. in respect of the current economic climate.

	12/13 £'000	13/14 £'000	14/15 £'000	15/06 £'000
Efficiencies	201	101	101	101
Gap	1,712	738	295	558
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total Gap	1,913	839	396	659
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Net budget requirement (Before Savings)	14,931	13,632	12,973	13,056
Forecast level of year end reserves	1,326	1,326	1,326	1,326
Minimum level per MTFS	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300

The gap in the table above is based on, for illustrative or calculation purposes only, a nil Council Tax increase. The Council's MTFS states that the Council Tax increase shall be no greater than RPIX, subject to amendment where circumstances dictate. Under the current Local Government finance, proposals the Council will receive direct government support if it freezes its Council Tax for 2011/12.

Based on the current approved minimum level of reserves, there is very little flexibility for further use of reserves on a one-off or ongoing basis.

In terms of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) there are key uncertainties identified in the latest MTFS including regarding possible future Government Housing Finance reform.

Financial projections for the HRA over the 5-year period 2011-12 to 2015-16 are set out as follows:

	2011/12 £M	2012/13 £M	2013/14 £M	2014/15 £M	2015/16 £M
Expenditure	45.6	49.0	52.1	55.1	58.3
Income	46.6	48.7	51.7	53.1	55.4
Bal b/f	2.3	2.9	2.6	2.2	0.2
Surplus / (Deficit)	0.6	(-) 0.3	(-) 0.4	(-) 2.0	(-) 2.9
Bal c/f	2.9	2.6	2.2	0.2	(-) 2.7

Uncertainty over resources in the current economic climate means that the Council must continue to be cautious regarding the level of resources available to fund capital projects. In the Non Housing Capital Programme, since mid 2008, capital investment has been confined mainly to essential health and safety works, contractually committed work and to statutory items. Even this has resulted in a need to borrow against the General Fund. By 31 March 2012 borrowing will increase to about £2.3M. The Council's policy is to repay this amount as soon as possible from earmarked assets set aside for disposal. The Non Housing capital Programme currently shows a shortfall in resources from 2011/12 onwards.

























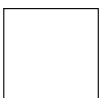


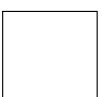





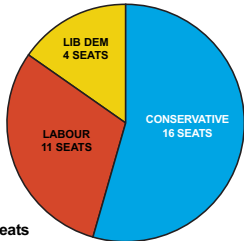
The Housing Capital Programme is more buoyant having specific allowances granted by Government to the advancement of the Decent Homes Programme, although the overall shortage of resources is expected to delay the achievement of the Decent Homes Standard until 2015. The Council has entered into Prudential Borrowing supported by the HRA and it is expected that whilst the account remains sustainable this policy can continue.

Appendix 5:

How the Council works



Do you know your Councillor?

<p>BUSH FAIR</p>  <p>Councillor Chris Millington Liberal Democrat</p> <p>201 Pennymead CM20 3JE 864777 chris.millington@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Manny Doku Labour</p> <p>56 Great Brays CM18 6DN 306569 emmanuel.doku@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Helen Hart Labour</p> <p>17C High Street CM17 0DN 418362 helen.hart@harlow.gov.uk</p>	<p>CHURCH LANGLEY</p>  <p>Councillor Andrew Johnson Conservative</p> <p>78 Mallards Rise CM17 9PL 865673 andrew.johnson@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Simon Carter Conservative</p> <p>71 Mark Hall Moors CM20 2NF 429443 simon.carter@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Tony Hall Conservative</p> <p>Fullers End Kingsdon Lane CM17 9AB 445897 tony.hall@harlow.gov.uk</p>	<p>GREAT PARNDON</p>  <p>Councillor Patrick McClamon Conservative</p> <p>7 London Road CM17 0DE 441702 patrick.mcclamon@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Eddie Johnson Conservative</p> <p>47 Old Orchard CM18 6YQ 07850 907260 eddie.johnson@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Joshua Jolles Conservative</p> <p>c/o Harlow Council Civic Centre CM20 1WG 432242 joshua.jolles@harlow.gov.uk</p>
<p>HARLOW COMMON</p>  <p>Councillor Mark Wilkinson Labour</p> <p>56 Sakins Croft CM18 7BP 07866 433991 mark.wilkinson@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Clive Souter Conservative</p> <p>227 Longbanks CM18 7PB 452773 clive.souter@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Margaret Hulcoop Labour</p> <p>330 Carters Mead CM17 9HA 452252 maggie.hulcoop@harlow.gov.uk</p>	<p>LITTLE PARNDON & HARE STREET</p>  <p>Councillor Jean Clark Labour</p> <p>4 Rushmead Villas CM20 2QE 423474 jean.clark@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Shona Johnson Conservative</p> <p>78 Mallards Rise CM17 9PL 865673 shona.johnson@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Tony Durcan Labour</p> <p>329 Rundells CM18 7HN 414357 anthony.durcan@harlow.gov.uk</p>	<p>MARK HALL</p>  <p>Councillor Lesley Rideout Liberal Democrat</p> <p>The Hawthorns Monkwick Road CM20 3NU 437541 lesley.rideout@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Nick Macy Liberal Democrat</p> <p>26 Riverside Court CM20 2AD 426798 nicholas.macy@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Paul Sztumpf Labour</p> <p>1 Wetherly Close Harlow CM17 0JZ 07789200694 paul.sztumpf@harlow.gov.uk</p>
<p>NETTESWELL</p>  <p>Councillor Edna Stevens Labour</p> <p>210 Fullers Mead CM17 9AX 324183 edna.stevens@ntlworld.com</p>  <p>Councillor Mark Gough Conservative</p> <p>Windward 62 Giebelands CM20 2PB 421796 mark.gough@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Mike Danvers Labour</p> <p>65 Tunmeade CM20 3HN 425934 mike.danvers@harlow.gov.uk</p>	<p>OLD HARLOW</p>  <p>Councillor Sue Livings Conservative</p> <p>15 Seeleys CM17 0AD 422339 sue.livings@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Muriel Jolles Conservative</p> <p>c/o Harlow Council Civic Centre CM20 1WG 432242 muriel.jolles@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Michael Garnett Conservative</p> <p>Brookhouse 10 Wyldwood Close CM17 0JD 437401 michael.garnett@harlow.gov.uk</p>	<p>STAPLE TYE</p>  <p>Seat vacant until next Election on 5 May 2011</p>  <p>Councillor John Strachan Liberal Democrat</p> <p>182 The Briars CM18 7JJ 323856 07941 829965 john.strachan@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Guy Mitchinson Conservative</p> <p>145 Joyners Field CM18 7QA 422562 guy.mitchinson@essexcc.gov.uk</p>
<p>SUMNERS & KINGSMOOR</p>  <p>Seat vacant until next Election on 5 May 2011</p>  <p>Councillor Russell Perrin Conservative</p> <p>c/o Harlow Council Civic Centre CM20 1WG 07850 907238 russell.perrin@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Nick Churchill Conservative</p> <p>215 Brockles Mead CM19 4QA 621094 nick.churchill@harlow.gov.uk</p>	<p>TODDBROOK</p>  <p>Councillor Bob Davis Labour</p> <p>45 Foldcroft CM20 1SE 319117 bob.davis@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Joel Charles Conservative</p> <p>86 Jocelyns CM17 0BU 07850 907264 joel.charles@harlow.gov.uk</p>  <p>Councillor Rod Truan Labour</p> <p>17C High Street CM17 0DN 418362 rod.truan@harlow.gov.uk</p>	<p>POLITICAL MAKE-UP</p>  <p>2 vacant seats</p>

Next election takes place 5 May 2011

Harlow Council is made up of 33 Councillors, elected for a four-year term with one-third retiring every three years in four. Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their Ward. The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community, including those who did not vote for them.

As at 1 February 2011, Harlow Council had 16 Conservative, 4 Liberal Democrat and 11 Labour Councillors. There were two vacancies.

All Councillors meet together as the Council. Meetings of the Council are normally open to the public. Here Councillors decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget each year. The Council appoints committees to undertake functions on its behalf and provides the means by which those committees can subsequently be held to account for the decisions they make.

It is also an opportunity for the public to raise issues and ask questions in accordance with the public participation arrangements on matters relating to the Council or the District.

Most day-to-day decisions are taken by the Executive Committee which is supported by five Policy Working Groups.

Other committees include the Audit Committee and two committees, which carry out a number of regulatory functions, being the Planning Committee and the Licensing Committee.

Councillors have to agree to follow a code of conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties. The Standards Committee provides training and advises them on the code of conduct.

There is one Scrutiny Committee that supports the work of the Executive Committee and the Council as a whole. This allows citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public inquiries into matters of local concern. These can lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Executive Committee and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

The Scrutiny Committee also monitors the decisions of the Executive Committee. It can 'call-in' a decision which has been made by the Executive Committee but not yet implemented. This enables it to consider whether the decision is appropriate. It may recommend that the Executive Committee or Full Council reconsider the decision. It may also be consulted by the Executive Committee on forthcoming decisions and the development of policy.

Full Council resolved on 4 November 2010 that the Leader and Cabinet system of governance will be implemented after local government elections in May 2011.

The Council's officers give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of its services. Some officers have a specific duty to ensure that the Council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely. The chart below shows the management structure of the Council.

Management Structure

Harlow Council

