

# **Harlow Council: Working Together for Harlow**

Corporate Plan 2014/15 - 2016/17

## 1.0 Foreword by the Leader of the Council

- 1.1 I am pleased to present Harlow Council's Corporate Plan: Working Together for Harlow 2014-2017. This plan outlines the Council's vision and priorities to drive improvement over the next three years. It will ensure we continue to work co-operatively with the community to deliver high quality services that people value and need. The plan builds on our many successes in recent years and outlines how we can all make a difference in the town in the coming years.
- 1.2 As we all know the public sector, and Councils in particular, have been subject to major funding cuts. You will see in section three of this plan the extent of these cuts. As a result, the nature of local government and the way in which we must do things is changing; no Council can continue to do what it has traditionally done in the face of such cuts.
- 1.3 Despite this sustained reduction in funding, however, we have sought to protect front line services and to improve our efficiency through sound leadership, management of resources and good governance. We are committed to doing all that we can to protect the services we provide to the community. As a community leader we will lobby Government and others on behalf of Harlow to get the funding required to support residents and businesses.
- 1.4 Underpinned by the principles of community leadership and sound resource management we will be able to work together to deliver the following five priorities for the residents, businesses and visitors of Harlow:
- i. **More and better housing**
    - All neighbourhoods to be desirable places to **live** with homes appropriate for people at different points in their lives, attractive and well-kept buildings and open spaces, good roads and public transport and a comprehensive range of community events and facilities.
  - ii. **Regeneration and a thriving economy**
    - Harlow to be an excellent place to **do business** with a highly skilled workforce that meets the needs and expectations of existing and potential employers in the town and a successful Enterprise Zone.
    - High quality **cultural and sporting** events and attractions for residents and visitors to experience, with a range of places for visitors to stay.
    - Working with our partners in local and national government, the community and the private sector to lobby for **infrastructure** that is appropriate for **sustainable growth**.
    - Projecting **local Pride in Harlow** onto a regional and national stage to promote Harlow as a great place to live, work, shop and do business.

### iii. Wellbeing and social inclusion

- Local people having good **health and wellbeing** with the Council playing a leading role in tackling the underlying root causes of poor health and the issues that affect wellbeing.
- Supporting a decent **living wage** for workers in Harlow.
- Harlow to be a great place to **grow older** with people living happy, healthy and independent lives.

### iv. A clean and green environment

- Harlow to be kept **clean and litter free** with well-maintained green spaces.
- Harlow to be a great place to live with people feeling **safe and secure** and where people from different backgrounds get on well.
- Harlow to have a great community spirit, with people actively participating in **local democracy**, taking pride in Harlow, its environment and its communities.

### v. Successful children and young people

- Harlow to be a great place to **grow up** with children and young people getting the best start in life, being healthy, being ready to learn as they start school, enjoying school, and achieving their academic and social potential.
- **Children and young people** should have access to a range of activities to enable them to make a positive contribution to their communities and to realise their potential and talent.
- Harlow as a **University Town** with people learning beyond school age and improving their opportunities for employment as well as having access to a range of high quality educational and vocational opportunities.

1.5 I have already said that the nature of local government is changing. We are going to have to get used to delivering services with less money whilst implementing major changes in areas like welfare reform. Inevitably, this means service reductions have been necessary and services will increasingly come under financial pressure in the future.

1.6 The Council's job is no longer simply to provide services. We have to live within our means and, given the on-going reductions in Government funding we will do as much as we can within the resources available to continue to be an effective community leader and provider and commissioner of services for the community of Harlow.

1.7 This Corporate Plan identifies the Council's commitment to working with the community of Harlow and the private and voluntary sectors to achieve our priorities and make Harlow an even better and more enjoyable place to live, work and visit.

**Cllr Mark Wilkinson, Leader of the Council**

## **2.0 Harlow today**

### **2.1 An urban and green new town mixing high-quality, varied housing types for all incomes, owners and tenants**

2.2 Harlow is an enterprising and compact new town in West-Essex. It is made up of suburban communities as well as shopping hatches and industrial and distribution centres. It is home to a University Technical College and a 51 hectare Enterprise Zone (EZ). It is one of only 24 sites in the country selected by Government to provide a platform for economic growth and deliver benefits for business. The EZ investment will be used to develop a new Life Sciences Med-tech Innovation Centre; building on the town's pioneering traditions and bringing jobs to the area.

2.3 Harlow retains many of the features, art, cultural and leisure facilities which made it so popular in the post-war years. It has also retained a large proportion of social housing and is the third highest proportion of council housing in the country. The Council has prioritised investment in this area to ensure decent homes for all.

### **2.4 A young population**

2.5 Harlow has a young population with those aged under-10 accounting for over 13 per cent of the population. Excluding London Boroughs – this represents the 19<sup>th</sup> highest rate in England and Wales respectively.

2.6 Harlow is a great place to bring up children but the picture in Harlow concerning school performance is mixed. There has been a general rise in results in both primary and secondary schools, tracking national improvements, but performance varies enormously from school to school. Harlow Council's Scrutiny Committee Review of Educational Attainment found that on average, only 54 per cent of Harlow children were assessed as being 'school ready' at age five against 63 per cent nationally. The Council is working with the County Council and its partners in education to address this.

### **2.7 A diverse population**

2.8 Harlow has a more diverse population than ten years ago. Around 16 per cent of the population are from black or minority ethnic groups many of whom are economic migrants from Eastern Europe, Africa and South-Asia. Harlow remains a place where people have positive relationships.

2.9 The success of Harlow, its proximity to London and the issues brought about by the national economy and welfare reform have created its own unique

housing pressures. The vast majority of those moving to Harlow rent privately and the amount of private renting has more than doubled in the past decade.

## **2.10 An enterprising place**

2.11 Despite the tough economic climate, Harlow has remained a competitive location for business and growth and is well equipped and situated to support economic growth across West-Essex.

2.12 However, there are variations in different parts of Harlow. Household incomes of residents are 11 per cent lower than workplace wages and there are pockets of deprivation, notably around the centre and south-west of Harlow. As Harlow continues to become more business orientated in coming years, a key opportunity is to use the regeneration of deprived areas to create employment opportunities and reinvigorate communities. The Council will need to continue to work with community groups and other organisations to tackle local problems and improve the lives of residents.

### 3.0 Financial context

3.1 The Council is a significant organisation with a net revenue expenditure of nearly £22 million. It is a major landlord with over 17,000 homes for rent and over 2,000 leasehold properties. The services it provides affect the lives of everybody living in, working in or visiting Harlow.

3.2 As part of its transformation over the last nine years, and in response to the financial challenges it has faced, the Council has achieved significant financial savings totalling £18.5 million. During this time front line services have been protected and partnership working with the voluntary and private sectors has maintained access to services.

3.3 This financial achievement is illustrated in the table below:

	'05/06 £'000	'06/07 £'000	'07/08 £'000	'08/09 £'000	'09/10 £000	'10/11 £'000	'11/12 £'000	'12/13 £'000	'13/14 £'000
Total in year savings	2,534	1,110	2,415	3,260	2,183	1,479	2,107	1,906	1,502
Cumulative Savings	2,534	3,644	6,059	9,319	11,502	12,981	15,088	16,994	<b>18,496</b>
Annual Budget (NET)	13,900	14,862	15,268	15,557	15,969	16,042	13,532	12,744	12,444
Annual savings as a % of Annual Budget (NET)	18.23	7.47	15.82	20.96	13.67	9.22	15.57	14.96	12.07

3.4 The Council has also made significant savings over the last nine years for its Housing Revenue Account. Again this has been achieved whilst improving the standard of housing, maintaining access to services and indeed performance has been improved.

3.5 The Council has seen a 35 per cent reduction in its Government funding for the General Fund in the period 2011/12 and 2013/14 and will face more cuts of 14.2 per cent in 2014/15 and a further 16.4 per cent in 2015/16. In response to further austerity, the Council has a three year financial strategy setting out how it will balance the books. Over the next three years the Council is proposing further savings of around £4.5 million.

3.6 This means that despite the achievements and progress the Council has made it will have very difficult choices to make to ensure that it meets its statutory duty of setting a balanced budget where expenditure meets income.#

3.7 Financial information, including the Council's budgets, sources of income, and the budget gaps projected by the Council are is contained within the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy. This can be found on the Council's website. #

## 4.0 The Council's approach to change

4.1 The Council has adopted principles that promote and support the close working relationships it has with the town's residents and organisations. They also state the commitment of Councillors and staff to deliver high quality and effective services. The Council will therefore focus on:

- *Influencing others*
- *Performing in partnership with the Community*
- *Supporting people and business*

### *Influencing others*

4.2 As a major sub-regional centre, Harlow's success is important for communities across a wide area. With its fantastic connections to London, Cambridge and Stansted Airport, Harlow has huge potential to be a major driver for economic growth. The Council will seek to ensure that these challenges and opportunities are recognised in positive ways through the resource allocations and investment decisions of others.

4.3 The Council will raise Harlow's profile throughout the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area nationally and internationally to attract businesses to invest in the town. It will work in partnership with the LEP, the West Essex Alliance and local businesses to ensure that this profile is improved.

4.4 As a member of the Living Wage Foundation, the Council will work with employers to help ensure that the residents of Harlow get a fair deal with their local employer.

### *Performing in partnership with the Community*

4.5 The Council continues to work alongside community and voluntary groups and residents to shape and deliver services. The Council's inclusive approach enables residents' voices to be heard and valued and ensures that Council services reflect local views.

4.6 Despite a reduction in its funding, the Council will strive to continue to protect those front line services that residents' most value. The Council will work with the community to ensure that needs are identified and understood and that service provision and commissioning is focused on those in greatest need.

### *Supporting people and business*

4.7 The Council has built strong relationships with businesses to encourage them to stay in Harlow and it continues to work to attract new businesses also. It will work to support local residents in equipping themselves to secure the jobs that are created.

4.8 The Council will be doing its bit to make Harlow an even better and more enjoyable place to live, work and visit. It cannot do it all by itself and it will be seeking help and support from its partners and from the community itself. As the Council's strapline for its logo states we'll be 'Working Together for Harlow'.

## 5.0 Delivering the Plan

5.1 Provided below are details of how Harlow Council's priorities will be pursued to achieve.

5.2 The Council will measure its aim of **improving Harlow for residents, businesses and visitors** against five key performance indicators:

1. The level of resident satisfaction with Harlow as a place to live.
2. The level of resident satisfaction with the way Harlow Council runs things.
3. Whether residents agree that Harlow Council provides value for money.
4. How well informed residents are about local public services provided directly or indirectly by Harlow Council.
5. The level of satisfaction from the business community that Harlow is a good place to invest.

5.3 The regularly reports on its performance and achievements on the Council's website, [www.harlow.gov.uk/performance](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/performance)

## 6.0 Council values

6.1 The Council strives to be an organisation where people make things happen and promote excellence, good customer service and continuous improvement. We want to ensure that all staff are consistently aware of how their role contributes to the achievement of corporate priorities, are clear about what is expected, and share the Council's values. The Council is committed to promoting equality, challenging discrimination and developing community cohesion.

*The Council's values are:*

<b>Integrity</b>	Clear, meaningful and honest two way communication with staff, customers and partners.
<b>Value People</b>	Treating everyone fairly, equally and with mutual respect. Investing in staff, recognising individual and team contributions to achieve success.
<b>Inspirational</b>	Support and encourage accountability, creativity and innovation amongst our staff, key stakeholders and partners.

## 7.0 Harlow Council priorities

### 7.1 More and better housing

#### 7.1.A Our goals for the next three years:

##### 1. *More Housing for Harlow:*

- Provide evidence to support the need for urban extensions and future infrastructure requirements in Harlow through the technical documentation supporting the Local Development Plan.
- Use Council owned land, where appropriate (subject to planning consent), such as under-used garage sites to support the development of increased housing opportunities.
- Implement a programme of Council house building.
- Support the development of Harlow's design guides which provide design guidance to developers to encourage them to provide high quality design.

##### 2. *Better Housing for Harlow:*

- Publish a five year Housing Investment Programme (HIP) and invest £25 million annually in improvements to ensure decent homes targets are met and improve housing conditions.
- Implement a programme of energy efficiency initiatives tackling high energy use dwellings with low thermal efficiency.
- Tackle fuel poverty by providing advice and support on energy use and the installation of energy efficiency initiatives such as smart meters, insulation, and external cladding.
- Target raising Housing standards in Private Sector Housing by reviewing additional licensing of Households in Multiple Occupation (HMO's).

##### 3. *Improve Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction:*

- Provide opportunities for tenant and leaseholder representatives to have their say on service improvement activities.
- Review and consult on the 'Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy' in response to national and local priorities and implement it.
- Ensure that housing works programmes are communicated in advance and monitoring arrangements improved.
- Ensure tenants and leaseholders have opportunities to choose, be consulted by and receive feedback from, their representatives when seeking to influence and be involved, in the management of their homes.

##### 4. *Reduce Homelessness:*

- Improved services and choices for those in housing need, and increase promotion of wider housing options and use of the private sector.
- Implement a new Allocations Policy Implement in response to national and local

housing need priorities.

- Publish a Tenancy Strategy making best use of housing stock and providing support and targeted assistance for tenants living in Council accommodation.
- Tackle homelessness by implementing the Homelessness Strategy and working in partnership with agencies to develop the Harlow Homelessness Partnership, (HHP) targeting resources and joint working.
- Continue to provide additional help and support to those residents impacted by the Governments Welfare Reform programme,

### **7.1.B Case Study: Changing lives – modernising and building new Council homes**

More than 1,500 home improvements have been completed as part of Harlow Council's modern homes programme.

The £22 million programme funded by rents and grants is part of a five-year £100 million investment by Harlow Council – the biggest ever investment in modernising Council homes in the town.

Since July 2013 the Council has completed over 1,200 improvements like: modernising kitchens and bathrooms, replacing doors and windows, installing new energy efficient heating systems, completing electrical rewires and installing new fuse boxes. In addition, electrical inspection condition reports and repairs have been carried out in 546 Council homes and the external walls of 302 Council homes have been insulated.

The Thomson Family who had their kitchen replaced, said: “Our kitchen is now both neat and tidy, which is important for a better standard of living. Our property feels like home now.”

As well as improving existing homes Harlow Council has unveiled plans for a £1.8 million house building programme which will see the first new Council homes being built in the town for almost 25 years.

The programme will initially see 14 new two and three-bedroom houses constructed on disused or under-used garage sites as early as summer 2014.

The Council has also bought its first ever house on the open market as it begins a small programme of buying two and three bedroom houses to rent to local families.

## 7.2 2.Regeneration and a thriving economy

### 7.2.A Our goals for the next three years:

#### 1. *Lead on the delivery of the Enterprise Zone:*

- Work with landowners to secure developers and occupiers.
- Take forward the creation of the Anglia Ruskin MedTech Campus.
- To improve the public realm at Templefields.
- Take forward the EZ Skills Plan to support the development of a skilled workforce.

#### 2. *Deliver neighbourhood regeneration and Priority Estate schemes:*

- Complete the delivery of new homes and shops at Clifton Hatch, and complete new homes at Carters Mead. Take forward redevelopment of new homes, retail outlets and a health centre as a prelude to redevelopment of Prentice Place.
- To commence regeneration of the Briars, Copshall Close and Aylets Field in order to deliver a variety of new homes.
- Deliver Pathfinder project which will see the delivery of Council build affordable new homes and take forward plans to develop unused garage sites in the town for housing.
- Develop a master plan for the regeneration of Staple Tye and start on site with the provision of a new health centre.
- Develop a master plan for the regeneration of Northbrooks.

#### 3. *Work with Essex County Council to deliver transport infrastructure:*

- To build the case and continue to lobby for a new junction 7a on the M11.
- Work with Essex County Council to ensure road infrastructure improvements required for the Enterprise Zone are delivered.
- Work with Essex County Council to implement the plans for the improvement of Clock Tower roundabout.

#### 4. *Preparing for Growth*

- Continue our fast-track approach to assist developers.
- Develop a forward plan for improving Harlow's transport infrastructure in the context of the Town's potential growth.
- Build relationships with developers and landowners which will assist with the sustainable growth of Harlow.

#### 5. *Support improvements to the Town Centre:*

- Consider new policy and alternative options for the future of the Town Centre.
- To work with landowners and developers to bring forward initiatives to revitalise the Town Centre.
- Promote the Town Centre to traders and shoppers, and further improve the public realm.
- Review Town Centre Planning and Licensing policies.

#### 6. *Support the economic development of Harlow:*

- Produce an Economic Development Strategy for Harlow in order to influence the plans, strategies and resource allocations of others including engagement and support for WEA, LSCC, ECC, SELEP and Central Government.
- Work with employers and education providers to increase the range and level of skills in the town.
- Build strong relationships with businesses to promote business support services and innovation through growth sector forums and direct business engagement
- Support inward investment by encouraging the retaining employers in Harlow and attracting new business to protect and create jobs.

#### **Glossary**

- SELEP (South East Local Enterprise Partnership) - SELEP brings together key leaders from business, local government, further and higher education in order to create the most enterprising economy in England.
- WEA (West Essex Alliance) - The West Essex Alliance exists to improve the economic prosperity and opportunity and provides a voice for business to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.
- LSCC (London, Stansted, Cambridge Consortium) - The consortium was formed to organise and promote a clear economic area, with strong inter-connections; commuting to work, clusters of industries and supply chains.
- ECC (Essex County Council)

#### **7.2.B Case Study: Council welcomes £12.75m investment boost for Enterprise Zone**

Harlow's Enterprise Zone – Enterprise West Essex @ Harlow – was one of only 24 sites in the country to be selected by Government. The 51 hectare Enterprise Zone is on two sites at London Road and Templefields North East.

Harlow Council and its partners have identified key projects where investment is needed to generate private sector investment and job creation in the Harlow Enterprise Zone. The £12.75 million investment will be used to develop a new Life Sciences Medtech Innovation Centre alongside the existing Nortel Campus at the London Road site. The investment could also support enabling infrastructure and site preparation works at London Road to enable 22,000 square metres of high grade office space.

The Enterprise Zone in Harlow will focus on businesses from the Health and Allied Industries, Advanced Manufacturing and Information Communication Technology sectors and has the potential to create up to 5,000 jobs. These jobs will provide excellent opportunities for future graduates of Harlow's University Technical College.

## 7.3 Wellbeing and social inclusion

### 7.3.A Our goals for the next three years:

1. *Achieve the key ambitions of the Harlow Wellbeing Strategy*
  - Address seven key issues identified within the Community Wellbeing Strategy:
    - i. Smoking, drug and alcohol abuse
    - ii. Mental health
    - iii. Employment opportunities
    - iv. Peaceful neighbourhoods free from anti-social behaviour
    - v. Homelessness
    - vi. Children to start school ready to learn and improving educational attainment
    - vii. Older people maintaining independence and being treated with dignity
  - Attempt to address causes of social exclusion and health deprivation where the Council can have an influence.
2. *Promote social inclusion through the Harlow Fairness and Diversity Partnership*
  - Undertake work to enable an understanding of the nature, extent causes and impact of inequality in Harlow
  - Promote fairness and equality of opportunity, and tackle unfairness and inequality
  - Celebrate diversity and the contributions that all Harlow's communities make to the town
  - Encourage social inclusion, community cohesion, a sense of citizenship and pride in Harlow
  - Lobby on behalf of Harlow residents for a 'living wage'
3. *Continue to manage the impact of welfare reform and other pressures.*
  - Assess the impact of welfare reform and other pressures on specific communities and to develop strategies to reduce inequalities where appropriate.
4. *Work with partners to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.*
  - Review partnership arrangements in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour and ensure robust partnership arrangements with the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
  - Develop a prioritised action plan to combat anti-social behaviour and environmental crime, to prioritise resources and to manage public expectations when funding for Community Safety Partnerships is reduced.
  - Work in partnership on the Integrated Offender Management and Community Payback Schemes.
  - Work in partnership to challenge perceptions about the extent of crime and anti-social behaviour in Harlow and to raise awareness of the fact that Harlow is a safe place to live.
5. *Develop a partnership approach to the provision of Discretionary services.*
  - To ensure the sustainability of valued services while reducing the Council's costs.

### **7.3.B Case Study: Preventing re-offending through the Community Payback Scheme**

Community Payback Schemes involve offenders carrying out unpaid work as part of a Community Sentence. This project was developed in response to a need for the local community to be aware that offenders are paying the community back for the damage a crime has caused. The local media have assisted with promoting the work undertaken by Community Payback projects. The scheme allows offenders to feel that they are included in mainstream society and are able to pay something back to the community.

Harlow Council works with the Probation Service and Youth Offending Team to identify specific projects within the community including removing graffiti, clearing overgrown areas, clearing snow and decorating public places and buildings. These projects have helped visually enhance open spaces in Harlow.

The Council, Probation Service and Youth Offending Team identified that working in partnership would visually enhance the local area where the local authority identifies a need for improvement in the physical environment. Large projects have been undertaken, for example painting, clearing and grouting the local paddling pools ready for young people to use during the summer. Smaller projects such as clearing sheltered housing communal gardens, snow clearing and assisting residents who can no longer maintain their own gardens have also been undertaken.

On-going projects with the Probation Service and Youth Offending Team are:

- Painting of garages, commercial property and street furniture.
- Landscaping and general maintenance in Town Park.
- Litter picking in problem areas.
- Preparing the paddling pools for opening during the summer season.

## 7.4 A clean and green environment

### 7.4.A Our goals for the next three years:

1. *Improve the cleanliness of the town and the maintenance of open spaces.*

- Continue to improve street cleaning and grounds maintenance performance.
- Devise a communications strategy/plan aimed at improving the community's understanding of action taken to protect and improve the environment and increase the shared sense of pride and ownership in Harlow's environment.

2. *Maintain or increase recycling rates from domestic waste.*

- Increase recycling rates for food waste from flat blocks.
- Reinvigorate publicity campaigns on the benefits to all of increasing recycling rates.

3. *Invest in unadopted roads and pavements.*

- Improve the highway inspection regime, to ensure that problems are identified sooner, to minimise trips and slips.

4. *Tackle Town-wide parking problems.*

- Through the 'North Essex Parking Partnership' tackle town wide parking problems to achieve the following:
  - Fewer illegally parked cars meaning fewer accidents, better traffic flow and accessibility.
  - More effective operation of emergency and service vehicles.
  - Improvement of the general environment by providing a more environmentally efficient transport system.
  - Encouragement of sensible and safe parking.
  - Parking provision that is responsive to the public's needs.
- Through the 'North Essex Parking Partnership' review existing and predicted levels of demand for parking, the availability and pricing of existing parking facilities and the nature and extent of on-street parking restrictions.

5. *Regenerate the Town Park.*

- Through the Council's successful bid of £1.83 million Heritage Lottery Funding, improve the awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of Harlow Town Park, restoring and adapting its unique collection of features and styles for today's park users.

#### **7.4.B Case Study: Parndon Wood Nature Reserve officially one of the UK's best**

For the fifth successive year the town's Parndon Wood Nature Reserve has been awarded a prestigious Green Flag, which officially recognises it as one of the best kept green spaces in the country.

Parndon Wood Nature Reserve is among 1,447 parks and green spaces to hold the national award handed out by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy. The award recognises and rewards the best parks and green spaces across the country. A Green Flag flying overhead is a sign to visitors that the space boasts the highest possible standards, is beautifully maintained and has excellent facilities.

The Nature Reserve is maintained by Harlow Council and volunteers with local organisation ECCO managing the Conservation Centre and running community activities as part of a partnership agreement.

A Green Flag is seen as the gold standard for public spaces that are welcoming, safe and well maintained. The award is testament to the hard work of Council officers and the many local volunteers who help maintain the reserve to this standard.

Green Flag Award Scheme Manager Paul Todd said: "A Green Flag Award provides national recognition for the hard work and dedication of all the parks managers, staff and volunteers who have helped to create these fantastic places for all to enjoy.

"Quality green spaces are absolutely essential to happy, healthy communities. They are fundamental to our quality of life, whether in cities, towns or villages."

## 7.5 Successful children and young people

### 7.5.A Our goals for the next three years:

#### 1. *Help to improve outcomes for Harlow's children and young people.*

- Implement the findings of the Scrutiny Review of Educational Attainment and in particular to work in partnership to address the issue of low levels of 'school readiness', helping parents and pre-school providers to support Harlow's pre-school children so that they start school with the necessary skills to enable them to be ready to learn.
- Work in partnership to help schools improve and to drive up educational attainment for Harlow's young people. In particular to facilitate the provision of support and training for Reception teachers.
- Work in partnership to support young people post-16 to ensure that there is a range of opportunities that will encourage continued learning.
- Support the development of the new University Technical College, opening in September 2014.

#### 2. *Support young people to be more involved in decision making*

- Enhance the support given to the Youth Council, so that Youth Councillors can be more involved in the Council's decision making processes and act as advocates for young people in Harlow.
- Encourage young people to be involved in community life and in democratic processes.
- Support work to challenge negative perceptions about Harlow's young people and about educational attainment in Harlow.

#### 3. *Support families with complex needs*

- Work with a range of partners to support those families that have the most complex needs to ensure that every child has the best possible start in life and encourage aspiration and achievement.

#### 4. *Supporting Apprenticeships for Young People*

- For new or expanding business, industrial or other employment generating uses in Harlow, provision through planning obligations will be sought for:
  - i. Employment of local people (including the use of apprenticeships)
  - ii. Work related training provision
  - iii. Education opportunities
  - iv. Affordable childcare.
- Enshrine the support for apprenticeships for young people in the revised Local Plan.

## **7.5.B Case Study: Celebrating ten years of Harlow Youth Council**

During 2013 Harlow Youth Council reached an important milestone when it celebrated its tenth anniversary. The Youth Council is a locally elected body of young people that is supported by Harlow Council.

More than 120 young people have stood as Youth Councillors over the past 10 years, including Emma Toal who made the transition to adult Councillor and is now Harlow Council's Portfolio Holder for Youth & Citizenship. The Youth Council has played a big role in championing youth issues in the town. The development of the Skatepark and Café Youth stand out as the big achievements and both projects continue to be a huge success. The Youth Council is closely supported by Harlow Council and it will continue to play its role in giving a voice to young people.

Today the 24-member strong Youth Council hold monthly public meetings at the Civic Centre. Youth Councillors have the ears of local politicians and community leaders who they meet regularly to ensure that young people's issues are heard. The Youth Council's priorities are:

- Education and employment – improving education at school and encouraging more employers to offer apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities for young people.
- Promoting health for young people – encouraging leisure providers to operate concessions and provide free or low-cost activities for young people, and promoting the use of existing cycle tracks.
- Raising the profile of the Youth Council and fundraising – Youth Councillors will be attending many events and organising activities to raise their profile around Harlow and Essex.

## 8.0 Harlow Council principles

### 8.1 Being the Community Leader

#### 8.1.A Our goals for the next three years:

1. *Promote the needs of Harlow.*

- As the democratic governance body for Harlow it will fulfil its community leadership role and represent the interests of the community of Harlow nationally, regionally and locally.
- It will be the leading advocate for Harlow and will seek to influence bodies with decision-making powers that can affect Harlow for the benefit of the community it serves.

2. *Maintain the Council's role as the recognised community leader.*

- Work with local, regional and national partners to ensure that the value that Harlow Council can add to the design of new policies and services is recognised.
- Undertake a number of scrutiny reviews on key issues for Harlow to understand how resources are allocated and how organisations are performing.
- Influence spending decisions of key service providers for the benefit of Harlow so that Harlow receives a level of resources that matches its needs compared to other places in Essex, the region and the country.

3. *Improve opportunities for Harlow residents to participate in local democracy and decision making*

- Implement the 'Community Engagement Strategy' to ensure that it draws on best practice and provides value for money.
- Support the voluntary and community sector in making funding applications and developing its capacity.
- Work in partnership to develop initiatives and activities to involve people in improving their neighbourhoods.
- Support existing Residents Associations and the development of new ones.

4. *Improve communication with the public.*

- Provide opportunities through public meetings, access to Council meetings, the website, and through Councillor Surgeries for members of the public to express their views on policy issues affecting the town.
- Provide information in a variety of formats setting out the challenges being faced by the Council, what it has achieved and the choices that it faces within the resources that it has available. This includes, where appropriate, details of what it can't do as well as what it intends to do.
- Continue to develop the Council's website so that more services, such as bookings, are available to the public online or through mobile devices.

5. *Increase transparency.*

- Meeting government requirements for open data and transparency publicise details of how much and on what the Council spends its money on and its performance.
- Conduct, as far as is possible within the legal constraints placed upon it, the business of the Council in public.
- Ensure that the Council continues to conduct its business with integrity and in a businesslike manner showing respect for individuals and the Council's Constitution.

6. *Amend the Council's procurement rules to support ethical business in Harlow*

- Update the Council's Procurement Strategy to incorporate recent Council decisions regarding the Living Wage and Black Listing''
- Adopt and implement changes to public sector procurement policies and procedures based on Local, National and European directives.

## 8.2 Sound resource management

### 8.2.A Our goals for the next three years:

#### 1. *Ensure the Council is economic, efficient and effective.*

- Further explore opportunities to deliver corporate services more effectively through partnership working wherever possible.
- Implement systems changes and procedures common to all services across the Council to drive further efficiencies.
- Additionally review the benefits that can be achieved through improved application of new technology in the way the Council conducts its business.
- Review the procurement activity across the Council to ensure that maximum benefit is obtained from its commissioning and purchasing activities.
- Performance Management Framework
  - Financial management
  - Performance management
  - Risk management

#### 2. *Get the best from the resources available.*

- Continue to manage the Council's financial resources responsibly and effectively within the policies in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- Review both its 'Housing' and 'Non-Housing' 'Asset Management Plans' to ensure that resource requirements for the maintenance of the Council's asset portfolio are clearly identified and can be used to help inform future decisions in relation its overall asset holdings.
- Deliver a 'People Resource Plan' which will continue to motivate, trains and develops staff in service delivery. Encourages innovation and ideas to be something employees are happy to share and propose.

## 9.0 Equalities and Fairness

- 9.1 The Council's Constitution sets out how it operates as an organisation, how decisions are made and the procedures that need to be followed to ensure it is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.
- 9.2 Harlow Council is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity, fairness and quality for all in its service provision. These principles underpin the services the Council provides and the opportunities it creates as an employer, partner and service provider. The Council works toward an environment that is based on inclusiveness, where all potential applicants are given equal opportunity to apply for available roles with the Council and all employees can develop their full potential.
- 9.3 In 2011 the Council published its Corporate Equalities Policy, *Putting People First*, which reflects what is enshrined in our constitution and embedded across the culture of the organisation.
- 9.4 *Harlow Fairness and Diversity Partnership*
- The Fairness and Diversity Partnership is independent of the Council, but an integral part of the structure of key partnerships for Harlow. From 2014 it will report to the Council's Cabinet to inform the Cabinet in its policy making.
- 9.5 Independently chaired; the Partnership includes Harlow Councillors and Officers, and representatives from a range of government and non-government organisations including trade unions.
- 9.6 The Council monitors how well it is performing against this objective through a variety of measures including community cohesion and reducing disadvantage. The Council's approach to equalities is embedded in the decisions it makes as an organisation.
- 9.7 Where a new policy, function or activity has an impact on the community, or where a policy, function or activity is changed, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is likely to be undertaken which assesses the proposed changes and asks the following questions:
- Are there differential service outcomes for different communities? If so, what measures will be put in place to re-dress these differences?
  - What will be the impact of the delivery of any proposed new services or functions on satisfaction ratings amongst different groups of residents?
  - How have residents with different needs been consulted on the anticipated impact of this proposal?