

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

**Corporate Plan 2017/18 - 2019/20**

## Foreword by the Leader of the Council

I am pleased to present this update to Harlow Council's Corporate Plan: Working Together for Harlow 2017-2020. This plan outlines the Council's vision and priorities to drive improvement over the next three years and what we have already achieved in meeting them.

The Council has had a number of notable successes, including regenerating the Town Park, driving forward the delivery of the Enterprise Zone, modernising thousands of Council homes, and continuing to promote the Living Wage.

A new company has been set up by Harlow Council to provide a range of environmental services and property maintenance. Services for council housing repairs, street cleaning, grass cutting and pest control will be provided by HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd.

The announcement that Public Health England's national Science Hub will start moving to Harlow in 2019 is recognition of the fantastic potential of Harlow, and will strengthen Harlow's reputation as a centre for science and bring thousands of high quality jobs to Harlow.

It was in 1947 that Harlow first became a new town which gave people the opportunity to live and work in a bright, vibrant and welcoming place. This year it is Harlow's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and we will proudly celebrate the town's history, its community spirit and its diversity and look ahead to the next 70 years where more history will be made and new opportunities for people will continue to be created.

We are, however, living in unprecedented times, with the resources available to the Council under increasing pressure. The Council has already had substantial cuts to its external funding and this will continue.

We will continue to robustly make the case for investment in Harlow on much needed infrastructure, including road, rail and health facilities. This includes the proposed new junction 7a for the M11 that would create access to the motorway from the north of the town.

It is more important than ever that the Council is open and transparent about the decisions it needs to make and that it is driven by a set of values and priorities that have fairness and equality at the heart of everything it does. This enables everyone to participate and take advantage of the many great things that Harlow has to offer.

## **A Fairer Harlow, A Harlow to be Proud of**

Working with the whole community of Harlow, including Government, the Voluntary Sector, Businesses, Faith Groups and others, the Council wants to achieve the following:

- Reducing inequality and supporting all Harlow's citizens to reach their full potential, actively contribute and benefit from all that Harlow has to offer.
- Harlow to be a great place to grow up, with children 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.
- To develop opportunities for learning beyond school age, providing a mix of further and higher education suited to the needs of residents and employers.
- Harlow to be an excellent place to do business, with the right infrastructure and with a highly skilled workforce that meets the needs and expectations of existing and potential employers in the town and provides employment opportunities for Harlow people that pay a decent wage.
- Harlow residents to have 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.
- Harlow to be a great place to grow older with people living happy, healthy and independent lives.
- Harlow to have great community spirit, with people actively participating in sustainable communities, taking pride in Harlow, its environment and its people.
- All of the neighbourhoods in the town to be desirable places to live with homes appropriate for people of different needs and resources and at different points in their lives, attractive and well-kept buildings and open spaces, good roads, parking and public transport and with people being and feeling safe and secure.
- People to get along, including with people from different backgrounds.
- Projecting local pride in Harlow onto a regional and national stage to promote Harlow as a great place to live, shop, work, visit and do business.
- Harlow to have high quality community cultural and sporting events, attractions, and facilities for residents and visitors to experience, with a range of places for visitors to stay.

To achieve these outcomes we have identified five priorities for the next five years:

- **More and better housing** - tackling the housing need of Harlow residents, both in quantity, affordability, range and quality.
- **Regeneration and a thriving economy** - regenerating Harlow and supporting a thriving economy that benefits all the people of Harlow. Working with our partners in local and national Government, the community and the private sector to create an infrastructure that is appropriate for sustainable growth.
- **Wellbeing and social inclusion** - working with partners to support people living happy healthy lives, and getting along with one another.
- **A clean and green environment** - an attractive, clean, green and sustainable environment to be enjoyed by all.
- **Successful children and young people** - engaging young people and actively promoting opportunities for all, in education, in employment and in the community.

These priorities will be embedded within the emerging Harlow Local Plan and will inform the vision and strategic objectives relating to policies and proposals for growth and regeneration across the district. In this respect the Local Plan will be a spatial expression of the Corporate Plan. The Local Plan will shape Harlow over the next 15 years ensuring the efficient use of land and securing future development which is sustainable and delivers what our communities want to see.

All underpinned by sound leadership, management of resources and governance.

Despite the challenges, I am convinced that by working together we can make a positive and visible difference, and ensure a bright future for Harlow.

Councillor Jon Clempner, Leader of the Council

## Harlow today

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

Harlow will mark its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with events and celebrations in 2017. Harlow is an enterprising and compact New Town in West-Essex at the centre of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Corridor. It is made up of self-contained local neighbourhoods with a variety of shopping hatches and employment areas. Harlow is home to Harlow College, The University Centre Harlow and the Sir Charles Kao University Technical College. Harlow also has a 51 hectare Enterprise Zone (EZ), which is one of the 48 sites across the U.K selected by Government to provide a platform for economic growth and deliver benefits for business. The Enterprise Zone 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.

Further development to the town will include Public Health England's (PHE) laboratories moving to a new integrated hub in Harlow. The hub, which will include PHE's headquarters, will provide the expert science to ensure that the U.K is better protected against key threats such as pandemic flu and international threats like Ebola. It will be fully operational by 2024 with the first facilities opening in 2019. Up to 2,500 jobs will be on the site with many more involved in construction and the supply chain.

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 has the second highest level of council housing in Essex. The Council has prioritised investment in this area to ensure decent homes for all.

Harlow has a variety of green spaces such as parks, marshes, nature reserves and wildlife sites.

- The Town Park has 164 acres with scenic landscapes, riverside walks, sculptures, adventure playground, skate park, an outdoor paddling pool and Pets Corner. Following a regeneration and restoration project it has been awarded its first ever Green Flag award in 2016.
- Harlow Marshes nature reserve provides a range of wetland habitats that can be accessed along marked paths and boardwalks.
- Parndon Wood Nature Reserve has been recorded as a woodland for at least 900 years and is officially one of the finest parks in the country, with its sought after Green Flag award retained in 2016 for the eighth consecutive year.
- Thirty Four allotment sites. All sites have water provided and are enclosed by secure hedges and fences.

## **A young population**

Harlow has a young population with those aged under 10 accounting for 14.8 per cent of the population. The average for local authorities in England and Wales is 12.4 per cent. The average age of people in Harlow is 37.4 years.

Harlow is, for the first time, above the indicated England average for early years children showing a Good Level of Development (GLD) and only a single percentage point below the Essex average: With Harlow at 71%, Essex at 72% and England at 69%. Harlow has seen a performance rise of 32.5% since 2013.

## **A diverse population**

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 from Eastern Europe, Africa and South-Asia.

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. Housing in Harlow is predominantly privately owned at just under 69 percent, while social housing makes up just over 31 per cent.

## **An enterprising place**

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. For the years 2010 to 2016 Harlow had a higher rate of growth in the number of business enterprises compared to the rest of Great Britain. (33% for Harlow compared to 22% for Great Britain).

However, there are variations in different parts of Harlow. On average household incomes of residents are just under 10 per cent lower than Harlow 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.

## Financial context

The Council has an annual net General Fund expenditure of £11 million and is the landlord for over 9,500 properties and over 2,300 leasehold properties at a gross cost of nearly £60 million and currently delivers an annual capital investment programme of nearly £20 million.

The services it provides affect the lives of everybody living in, working in or visiting Harlow and as part of its transformation over the last ten years, and in response to the financial challenges it has faced, the Council has achieved significant financial savings totaling £19.2m in its General Fund over that period.

The Council has achieved all of this whilst managing to protect front line services with partnership working and with the voluntary and private sectors being used wherever possible to maintain access to services.

This financial achievement is illustrated in the table below:

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total in year savings	2,415	3,260	2,183	1,479	2,107	1,906	1,502	1,534	1,264	1,527
Cumulative Savings	2,415	5,675	7,858	9,337	11,444	13,350	14,852	16,386	17,650	19,177
Annual Budget (NET)	15,268	15,557	15,969	16,042	13,532	12,744	12,444	11,801	10,804	10,500
Annual savings as a % of Annual Budget (NET)	15.82	20.96	13.67	9.22	15.57	14.96	12.07	13.00	11.70	14.54

The Council has also made significant savings over the same period in its Housing Revenue Account. Again this has been achieved whilst improving the standard of housing to meet Government Decency standards, maintaining access to services and in fact performance has been improved.

The Council will have seen a 70 per cent reduction in its Government funding for the General Fund over the review period 2010 to 2020. Based upon the figures released as part of the Government's four year funding deal there will be a year on year reduction of 15.2 per cent or £630,000 from 2016/17 to 2017/18. 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 £1.4m

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

## Working together for Harlow

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
- Equality and Fairness
- Openness and Transparency

### Influencing others

As a major sub-regional centre, Harlow's success is important for communities across a wide area. With its unique 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.

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, the London Stansted Cambridge consortium (LSCC) and local businesses to ensure that this profile is improved. Harlow Council will be working in partnership with Epping Forest and East Herts District Councils to deliver the new Garden Town. The new Garden Town will be called Harlow and Gilston and will be a development of more than 10,000 homes.

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

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.

Despite a significant 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**

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.

The Council will be working hard to make Harlow an even better and more enjoyable place to live, work and visit. It cannot do this all by itself and it will be seeking help and support from its partners and from the community.

As the Council's strapline for its logo states, we will be 'Working Together for Harlow'.

## **Equality and fairness**

We recognise that certain groups in society are still more likely to suffer from unfair treatment and discrimination. We therefore continue to strive to eliminate all forms of unfair treatment and discrimination, and are committed to the continued development of a working culture in which fair treatment of all is the norm.

We believe in openness, honesty and integrity; in responsibility and accountability; in mutual trust and respect, and in valuing diversity in our role both as an employer and as a public service provider.

## **Openness and transparency**

The Council believes that it has nothing to lose and everything to gain by being open about what it does, how it spends its money and how well it is performing.

We aim to be open with customers, employees and other stakeholders and show them that we operate and use our resources fairly, efficiently and effectively.

Openness and transparency are key ingredients to build accountability and trust. We are committed to demonstrating this openness and transparency in the way we operate our business and how we communicate with the public.

## Delivering the Corporate Plan

The Council will measure its aim of 'Working Together for Harlow' by **improving Harlow for residents, businesses and visitors** against four key performance indicators:

- The level of resident satisfaction with Harlow as a place to live.
- The level of resident satisfaction with the way Harlow Council runs things.
- Whether residents agree that Harlow Council provides value for money.
- How well informed residents are about local public services provided directly or indirectly by Harlow Council.

Service planning processes set out key milestones that are regularly monitored and help ensure it delivers its objectives.

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

## Council values

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.

## Harlow Council Priorities

### More and better housing

*“Housing remains a top priority for me and the Administration.*

*The Housing and Planning Act 2016 has brought significant changes to the provision and management of affordable housing that will change social housing in England. In particular the centrally set rent levels, the sale of high value voids (or financial equivalent) to pay for housing associations right to buy and the re-definition of secure tenancies will impose significant and additional pressures together with uncertainty around current housing allocation policy priorities.*

*There is expected to be fewer resources for priorities, and I have begun to anticipate the impact, implications and opportunities that arise from this new legislation by assessing the financial impact on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, consulting with Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives, and raising awareness of the expected changes. It is a difficult and challenging financial environment that the Council is having to manage, and it is necessary to both reflect the lower overall investment that can be afforded and to ensure that appropriate resource levels are directed towards local priorities. The Council will continue to work towards making more housing available in Harlow, with a wider choice of housing types which are genuinely affordable and by helping to improve the choices for those in housing need, as well as improving health and wellbeing by improving housing conditions.*

*The ongoing challenges are:*

- *Implementing the expected changes from the Housing and Planning Act (2016) and Neighbourhood Planning Bill, and planning for further changes to make the 30 year HRA Business Plan sustainable.*
- *Redeveloping The Briars, Copshall Close and Aylets Field (BCA) Estates and implementing the Housing Investment Programme (HIP), investing in the priorities for maintaining the Council’s housing stock.*
- *Continuing to make the best use of the Council’s stock, tackling local priorities, and prioritising energy efficiency schemes that can make a difference in tackling fuel poverty.*
- *Continuing to raise the awareness of the ongoing Welfare Reform changes, working with local agencies providing support and budget advice to residents so they can fully understand their choices.*

*Tackling housing need in all its forms is my key priority, and I shall work towards:*

- *Making more housing available in Harlow, with a wider choice of housing types which are genuinely affordable.*
- *Tackling the growing need for supported housing.*
- *Helping to improve the choices for those in housing need.*
- *Improving health and wellbeing by improving housing conditions.”*

## **Our goals for the next three years:**

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

- Work with our partners to provide evidence to support the need to develop high quality housing in the Harlow Local Plan and future infrastructure requirements in Harlow.
- More housing available in Harlow, with a wider choice of housing types which are affordable.
- Continue to increase the range and type of supported housing.
- Developing options for building more housing and Council housing taking advantage of funding initiatives and new organisational opportunities.

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

- Provide high quality housing stock, with all Council homes in the town meeting Modern Homes standards. Publish an annual Housing Investment Programme (HIP) and continue to invest in improvements to housing conditions.
- Implement a programme of energy efficiency which tackles fuel poverty and high energy use dwellings that have low thermal efficiency.
- Continue to 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).
- Work towards improving choices for those in housing need.
- Provide effective tenancy enforcement and support, tackling health and wellbeing.

### **3. Improve tenant and leaseholder engagement:**

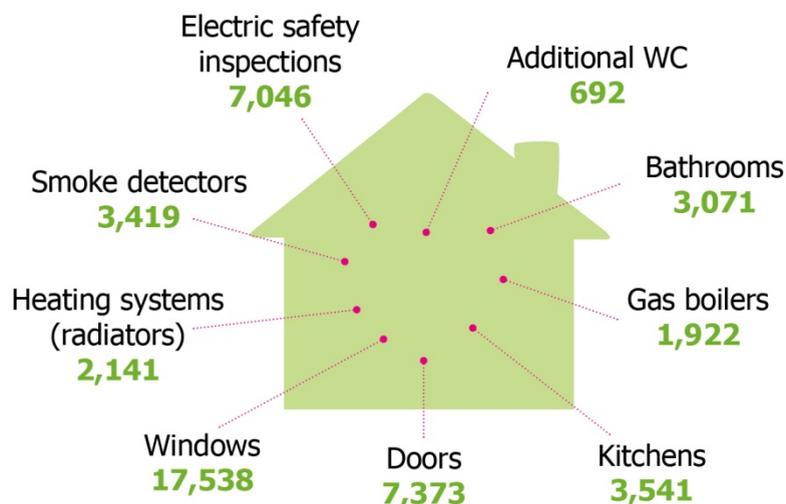
- Encourage and facilitate effective tenant and leaseholder engagement.
- Continuing to implement the revised Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy in response to national and local priorities and applying it to increase representation and widen engagement, ensuring that tenant and leaseholder representatives influence policy and shape priorities.
- Ensuring Housing Works Programmes are communicated in advance and monitoring arrangements improved.
- Ensure tenants and leaseholders have opportunities to choose, be consulted and receive feedback from their representatives, when seeking to influence and be involved, in the management of their homes.

#### 4. Reduce homelessness:

- 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.
- Increase promotion of wider housing options and use of the private sector.
- Continue to review the Allocations Policy in response to national and local housing need priorities.
- Publish a revised Tenancy Strategy making best use of the Council's housing and providing support and targeted assistance for tenants living in Council accommodation.
- Continue to provide additional help and advice to those residents impacted by the Government's Welfare Reform Programme so that they are fully aware of their options.

#### What we have achieved so far:

**Better housing for Harlow - modernising Council homes** - Harlow Council's biggest ever investment and transformation of Council homes continues with over 40,600 improvements completed so far in more than 8,200 different homes and a five-year £100 million investment in Council housing renewal, making a real transformation. Works included kitchen, bathroom, window installations, roofing, fencing, communal entrances, high rise windows, bin store replacement, wall finishes, and insulation. The external works programme will focus on roofs, external fascia and works to tower blocks. The Council will continue to prioritise kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, electrical works, windows and doors to maintain the Decent Homes Standard and develop its own Harlow Standard, investing **£25m** in continuing to deliver improvements to its housing stock to improve the living conditions of its tenants and tackle local priorities. Volumes of work achieved to November 2016 are as below:



The Council has prioritised energy efficiency schemes, significantly improved the energy efficiency of the Council's homes to tackle fuel poverty. Work is on-going on the major estate regeneration programme at The Briars, Copshall Close and Aylets Field (BCA). All residents from the first phase have been rehoused and new houses and flats are being constructed.

**Social Housing** - Strong landlord performance in key landlord areas of rent collection, service charge collection, turning round empty properties, and repairing our homes.

**Tackle homelessness** - Continued to implement the revised Homelessness Strategy in conjunction with partners targeting limited resources to priorities.

**Implemented the Government's social mobility scheme to encourage national mobility within social housing providers, increasing choice of housing.**

**Tackling housing need** - The Housing Register continues to grow and the Council continues to work to let our homes in a fair and transparent manner, meeting local priorities.

- Achieved accreditation for our Careline Scheme which offers security to our most vulnerable residents in the town.
- Put more resources into our Tenancy Support Service, recognising this is a growing area but enforcing tenancy conditions fairly where required.
- The Council celebrated for the third year running, our partnership working with Essex County Council and Manorcourt Homecare in providing extra care housing at Sumners Farm Close for the most elderly and vulnerable.

**Improved satisfaction** - A tenant satisfaction survey is carried out bi-ennially by Housing Services. In the last survey in 2014 satisfaction with the overall service was at 74 percent (increased by one percent since 2012) and 74 percent of respondents were satisfied with the quality of their home. A Landlord Survey has recently taken place and the results will be available in early 2017.

### **What we will do next (our objectives for 2017/18):**

- Maintain the Council's investment in its housing assets. Continue the implementation of the Modern Homes Programme directing resources to reduce the energy bills to our tenants and continue to tackle fuel poverty.
- Continue to implement the priorities in the Homelessness Strategy and Tenancy Strategy.
- Work towards increased communication by providing more opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to be involved in their service.
- Consult on our preferred options for housing growth in the Local Plan.
- Commence the planning for the refurbishment of two tower blocks to include external cladding and environmental improvements.
- Commence the replacement of Council owned district heating schemes to increase energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty.

- Commence the feasibility and development of a longer-term programme of new Council house building, making use of the new Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) and any funding opportunities.
- Continue with the estate regeneration programme of The Briars, Copshall Close and Aylets Field (BCA).

### **Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)**

A new company has been set up by Harlow Council to provide a range of property maintenance and environmental services and is on track to commence early in 2017. Services currently delivered by Kier Harlow Ltd for Council housing repairs, street cleaning, grass cutting and pest control will be provided by HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd from 1 Feb 2017.

The move will help towards saving money while also giving the Council flexibility to meet its future financial challenges.

## Regeneration and a thriving economy

***“Harlow New Town was built around principles of sustainable communities, with its green spaces a fundamental part of the design. We remain committed to these principles and of regenerating the town with high quality jobs for local people, and reinvigorating Harlow as a great place to live and work.***

***This renewal has been accelerated with work on the Town Park, building the first Council houses for 25 years in 2015, and the establishment of the Enterprise Zone starting to make significant progress. We have created a Town Centre Regeneration Fund to ensure that it gets the attention it deserves.***

***We will continue to focus on driving forward this regeneration, renewing neighbourhoods, attracting inward investment, providing high quality jobs and lobbying to ensure we have the right infrastructure in place to enable sustainable growth.***

***This year, Harlow’s 70<sup>th</sup> year, the Council will continue with its plans to improve the look and vibrancy of Broad Walk and Market Square to help attract investment. Harlow has a bright future and the Council will play a full and active role in bringing this about.”***

Councillor Tony Durcan – Portfolio holder for Regeneration and Enterprise

### Our goals for the next three years:

#### 1. Lead on the delivery of the Enterprise Zone (EZ):

- Work with landowners and developers to secure occupiers.
- Take forward the creation of a new science park incorporating the Anglia Ruskin University MedTech Campus.
- To improve the environment and infrastructure at Templefields Industrial Estate.

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

- To continue the regeneration of The Briars, Copshall Close and Aylets Field (BCA) housing estates in order to deliver new homes.
- Take forward the regeneration of Prentice Place neighbourhood area.
- Develop a master plan and begin the regeneration of Staple Tye neighbourhood area.
- Bring forward a package of sites to deliver new homes and retail facilities within our neighbourhoods.

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

- To continue to lobby and help to identify a funding package for a new junction 7a on the M11 motorway.

#### 4. Preparing for growth:

- Continue the 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:

- Continue with implementation of the Town Centre Improvement Plan which includes attracting investment and creating opportunities for residents and businesses, restoring pride and promoting the Town Centre.
- Consider new policy and alternative options for the future of the Town Centre.
- To work with landowners, developers and potential investors to bring forward initiatives to revitalise the Town Centre.
- Promote the Town Centre to traders and shoppers, and improve the public realm and the northern end of the Town Centre.
- 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, the OLC, ECC, SELEP and central Government. (see glossary below)
- 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 retention of employers in Harlow and attracting new businesses 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 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).
- **Outer London Commission** - The OLC explores how different parts of outer London can better realise their economic potential, especially its town centres, as well as opportunity and intensification areas and industrial locations.

## What we have achieved so far:

### Lead on the delivery of the Enterprise Zone

**Enterprise Zone (EZ)** – Harlow Council has spearheaded the development of the EZ sites at London Road. At London Road South (now known as Kao Park), the Council's investment in site infrastructure, along with the Homes and Communities Agency, has resulted in a transformation of that site with 120,000 square feet of office space now occupied and work underway on one of the country's largest data centre developments. At London Road North, Harlow Council completed land acquisitions to facilitate the development of a new Science Park. This will create more than 500,000 square feet of high quality space for technology based businesses in the Life Sciences, ICT and Advanced Manufacturing sectors and further develop Harlow's position as a leading business location in the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor.

Achievements include:

- Completion of demolition works (July 2015) and infrastructure works (July 2016) at Kao Park (London Road South).
- Planning consent secured for 320,000 square feet data centre development with construction commenced (Autumn 2016).
- New tenants (Arrow Electronics and Raytheon UK) for Kao Park (Autumn 2016).
- Acquisition of 25 acres to enable the development of a new Science Park.
- Developer selected for London Road North Science Park.
- Construction of the new access road at London Road North.
- Provision of Superfast Broadband to the Templefields Enterprise Zone.

**Medtech Campus** - Harlow is proud to be involved in a ground-breaking partnership that will drive growth and innovation in the UK medical technology sector. The Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) MedTech Campus will provide one of the world's largest health innovation spaces for companies of all sizes - from start-ups and micro, Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to large corporates - with the aim of establishing the UK as a global force in a sector worth £170bn per year. It will have a base at the Harlow Enterprise Zone with development by ARU of a Med Tech Innovation Centre due to open in early 2018.

**Public Health England's (PHE's) Science Hub** - In September 2015 the Chancellor announced that PHE's laboratories at Porton, Wiltshire will move to Harlow and complete the Government's plan to bring all the public health laboratories onto a single integrated campus. The Hub will create a centre of excellence for research, health, improvement and protection and bring together world-renowned scientists working to protect and improve the health of the nation.

The new integrated hub, which will include PHE's headquarters, will provide the expert science to ensure that the UK is better protected against key threats such as pandemic flu and international threats like Ebola. It will be fully operational by 2024 with the first facilities opening in 2019. Up to 2,500 jobs will be on the site with many more involved in construction and the supply chain.

## **Prentice Place**

In 2016 a Cabinet report on the regeneration of Prentice Place neighbourhood area in Potter Street was agreed. Work will now proceed on developing the plans for Prentice Place which include transforming the buildings for retail and residential use and the public areas. Consultation will take place with residents and businesses in the area.

## **Deliver neighbourhood regeneration and Priority Estate schemes**

**Priority Estates** - In 2014 Countryside Properties and Home Group were selected as the developers to regenerate The Briars, Copshall Close and Aylets Field (BCA) housing estates.

The relocation of residents who were living in phase one of the scheme is now complete and Countryside and Home Group have now begun development. The regeneration will take about five years to complete.

## **Deliver the Heritage Lottery Fund Town Park Project**

The Heritage Lottery Funded capital works have been completed. This involved landscaping works across the park including restoring the Water Garden, new planting schemes and the introduction of new paths to improve access across the park.

Refurbishment works were also undertaken to Pets' Corner, Spurriers House and the Bandstand and a new straw bale Learning Centre has been constructed. As a result of these works the park's facilities have been improved for visitors to the park including a new café that is being created on the ground floor of Spurriers House and a new educational room that is available to hire in the Learning Centre.

The capital works have been supported by a wide variety of activities such as a weekly volunteering programme to help maintain and improve the park, educational provision linked both to Pets' Corner and the wider park and achieving Green Flag status for the park for the first time in 2016.

## **Support improvements to the Town Centre**

Harlow Council and Essex County Council continue to look at regeneration options for Harlow Town Centre. The Town Centre has a valuable role as a sub-regional destination. The Council is implementing short, medium and long term improvements to ensure the Town Centre's success in meeting the needs of current and future residents. A Town Centre Action Plan sets out what the Council and key partners will do to improve and regenerate the Town Centre to meet short, medium and long term goals which include:

- Attracting investment and creating opportunities for residents and business.
- Restoring pride and improving the public realm.
- Giving stakeholders a say in working together.
- Promoting Town Centre opportunities to residents, businesses, community groups and visitors.

## **Support the economic growth of Harlow**

The Council has continued to work with Essex County Council, the London, Stansted, Cambridge Consortium (LSCC) and South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to ensure that Harlow's needs are recognised and projects developed and supported to meet those needs. Funding bids were submitted for inclusion to the SELEP Growth Deal 2016.

The Council continues to work pro-actively with the London, Stansted, Cambridge Consortium and hosted the third inquiry session of the LSCC Growth Commission on Competitive Location and Quality of Place early 2016 at Harlow Civic Centre.

Confirmation of the Public Health England (PHE) move to Harlow will be a major attractor to businesses seeking to locate. Ongoing dialogue with PHE will focus on achieving employment opportunities for local people and opportunities for local businesses.

The Council has successfully retendered the Harlow Enterprise Hub ensuring continuity of quality business accommodation and business support and advice services for the town.

The Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Centre will be launched at Harlow College this Spring. The Council supported the College's bid for funding through SELEP, for this much needed facility aligned to local employers skills training needs, and will offer local people and especially young people, greater opportunities to enter employment and progress.

## What we will do next (our objectives for 2017/18):

- The Council will continue with the regeneration of the Briars, Copshall Close and Aylets Field (BCA) estates.
- Continue to implement the Action Plan for Harlow Town Centre to ensure that Harlow Town Centre is a place that everyone can enjoy and be proud of.
- Ensure that Harlow is attractive to business, offering a competitive advantage to give businesses an edge.
- Continue with a programme to deliver neighbourhood regeneration schemes such as Prentice Place and Staple Tye neighbourhood areas.
- A process has been agreed for wider discussion and development of the Economic Development Strategy through the Council's Cabinet Overview and Working Group.
- The Council will continue to work with Essex County Council, contributing to the Greater Essex Infrastructure Framework and the Economic Plan for Essex, ensuring that Harlow's needs and opportunities continue to be raised and addressed. The Council will also contribute to the next version of the SELEP Strategic Economic Plan.
- The Council will launch a new inward investment website 'Harlow Business' at [www.harlowbusiness.co.uk](http://www.harlowbusiness.co.uk) upgrading the existing product which aims to attract and assist new businesses to Harlow.
- The Council will continue to support the M11 Health Enterprise Forum which provides support to the Life Science and Medical Technology sectors in Harlow and the London, Stansted, Cambridge Consortium.
- The Council will deliver a project to encourage local people to consider employment at London Stansted Airport, particularly training and employment opportunities for young people. This will address issues like transport and accessibility, and pre-employment options. The Council will support Jobs Fairs for Stansted Airport in partnership with Stansted Airport and the DWP (Department for Works and Pensions). The Council will support the Harlow College bid to SELEP to deliver a Professional and Technical Skills Training Centre at the airport.
- The Council will continue to support Harlow Chamber of Commerce as a Committee member and will be hosting a joint Business Forum.
- The Council will have three principal objectives for the Enterprise Zone in 2017/18:
  1. Commence construction of the first buildings for the Harlow Science Park at London Road North.
  2. Support the landowner at Kao Park in securing additional tenants for both the office buildings and the data centres.
  3. Ensure the delivery of the new link road at Templefields connecting River Way to Cambridge Road.

## Wellbeing and social inclusion

*“Harlow has a proud history of celebrating its residents and promoting fairness and equality. We will continue to work with partners to ensure that people get on well together, are actively engaged in making Harlow a great place to live and work, and feel proud of our town.*

*Harlow Council continues to do all that it can to tackle domestic abuse. A national initiative providing contact points to help victims of domestic abuse has been launched in Harlow. The Civic Centre is one of a number of local contact points with Council staff at the Civic trained to signpost advice and spot the signs of domestic abuse. Each venue has a safe place where victims can access information and use a phone.*

*The Council has made a commitment to explore options for alternative delivery models for the Playhouse Theatre venue and Pets’ Corner to help secure a long-term future. These services not only benefit those that use them directly, but make Harlow a better place to live, and attract businesses. The Playhouse is currently out to tender and Pets’ Corner is currently exploring options for increased revenue.”*

Councillor Emma Toal – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Youth and Community.

### Our goals for the next three years:

#### 1. Achieve the key ambitions of the Harlow Health and Wellbeing Strategy and associated action plans.

Our priorities are to:

- Address health inequalities.
- To protect the most vulnerable in terms of health, social and emotional inequalities.
- Minimise social exclusion, deprivation and isolation.
- Champion positive mental health for all.
- Reduce the prevalence of lifestyle choices that have a negative impact on health and wellbeing such as smoking.
- Address Winter pressures.
- Assist older people to stay independent at home.
- Increase the number of residents leading physically active lifestyles to reduce the prevalence of illness and diseases associated with physical inactivity.
- Develop community mobilisation in the delivery of Health and Wellbeing.

These priorities will be addressed by working in partnership with key stakeholders to deliver outcomes against the three strategic themes within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The three strategic themes and outcomes are:

- **Early help and start well**  
To ensure that every child from pre-birth to 18 years old in Harlow has the best start in life.

- **Be well, work well and stay well:**  
Encourage residents aged 19 to 65 years old to be physically active and make healthy lifestyle choices that help them to avoid preventable illnesses and diseases associated with negative behaviours and physical inactivity.
- **Age well:**  
Older people aged 65 and over maintaining independence, continue to be physically active, feel safe and valued, have healthy relationships and are treated with dignity.

### **Active Harlow** - The Community Sport and Physical Activity Network

This past 12 months has seen Active Harlow undertake work in partnership with the Chief Culture and Leisure Officers Association, Sport England and Active Essex to improve strategic alignment with the Council and its strategic partners. This developed five shared outcomes that are covered in an Action Plan:

- Improved quality of life
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Reduced health inequalities
- Improved community engagement
- Improved personal choice and control.

Active Harlow will continue to support the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and will drive local delivery, promote physical activity and active living. In excess of 3,000 attendances have been recorded at Active Harlow projects in the past 12 months.

### **2. Work with partners to tackle crime and anti-social behavior**

- 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 (PCC).
- Develop a prioritised action plan to achieve priorities identified in the Safer Harlow Partnership Strategic Assessment, to prioritise resources and to manage public expectations.
- 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.

### **3. Develop a partnership approach to the provision of discretionary services.**

- To ensure the sustainability of valued services while reducing the Council's costs.

### **4. Implement the Action Plan from the Customer Services Review.**

- To improve the way that customers can interact with Harlow Council by further developing the self-serve element of the Council's website. By making the website

fully transactional and available to use on mobile, desktop and tablet devices, this will encourage channel shift from the more traditional methods of face-to-face and telephone enquiries.

- In conjunction to this and in the run up to full cash office closure by September 2018, implement a range of alternative methods of payment that satisfies customer's needs and demands whilst reducing the Council's operating costs.
- This will ensure that the Council can continue to focus its resources on dealing with the most vulnerable customers and those that require extra assistance

### **What we have achieved so far:**

**The Council has recruited a Public Health Improvement Practitioner** in partnership with Epping Forest District Council and Uttlesford District Council funded by Essex County Council.

**The Health and Wellbeing Board for Harlow** has been established with a new strategic approach and framework for delivery, agreed by partners.

**A successful 'Age Well' Group** has formed and agreed an action plan for driving an agenda forward to address inequalities and deliver outcomes against priorities for older people in Harlow. Public Health funding has been allocated to delivering the projects and initiatives that relate to the priorities.

A number of successful projects have included Safe and Social Days, 'Stay Well This Winter' campaign, improving physical health through seated exercises, falls prevention and support for carers.

**Active Harlow** successfully recruited an apprentice to deliver targeted interventions aiming to address physical inactivity. Parkrun regularly attracts over 150 participants, Harlow Sports Awards returned bigger and better to recognise and celebrate the contribution local residents make to sport and physical activity and three 'This Girl Can' Ambassadors have been recruited for Harlow. The ambassadors are advocates for promoting physical activity opportunities to female residents of all ages.

### **Leah Manning Centre**

The Leah Manning Centre continues to provide specialist day care for older people under contract with Essex Social Care and partners. Daytime activities and a wide range of other activities are delivered to support individuals to maximise independence and to gain and maintain skills for everyday living, enabling them to continue to be part of their local community and meet new people in an effort to reduce social isolation and loneliness. A person centered approach is given to support clients and this is delivered through individual support plans.

### **Pets' Corner and The Walled Garden**

The Heritage Lottery Fund has provided a new learning centre at Pets' Corner that is delivering opportunities for work with schools, college providers and land based studies. The Walled Garden has been reinstated to be used as a multi-activity hub where 12 activities/ events are planned to be delivered.

### **The Playhouse Theatre**

The Playhouse will continue to present a programme of high quality theatre, music, comedy, dance and circus arts. The premises provide accommodation for artists, groups and companies to maximise the available resources.

### **Peaceful neighbourhoods free from anti-social behaviour**

The Council has introduced a corporate Anti-social Behaviour Policy introducing the new anti-social behaviour legislation that provides Councils with powers to use the new legislation where necessary.

The work of the **Harlow Independent Advisory Group** is currently contributing to identifying health and social inequalities within Harlow communities. This includes updating the Community Cohesion plan, mapping and understanding the current demographic as well as building upon community partnerships and engaging with new partners to better represent and communicate inequalities and local deprivation. The Independent Advisory Group is currently being newly established to better represent and improve its membership in order for Harlow's diverse community to be fully represented.

**A Public Art Strategy for Harlow** is being developed to provide a vision for future commissioning of public art within the town. The main objective of the strategy is to act as guidance to assist developers by providing an overview of the cultural organisation and provision in Harlow.

### **Supporting Mental Health**

As part of the Council's commitment to mental health, Councillors have appointed a Mental Health Champion to drive this agenda forward. The Council is currently exploring ways to promote positive mental wellbeing for all members of the community.

### **Supporting Mental Health Awareness Week May 2016**

As the theme for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week was relationships, Active Harlow and Harlow Council encouraged residents to form positive relationships through physical activity.

- Active Harlow promoted physical activity opportunities that promote good mental wellbeing such as Active Harlow Social Strollers which is a fortnightly led walk accredited by Walking for Health along with other opportunities such as Parkrun and Walking Football.

### **Battle of the Somme 100 year commemoration service**

Councillors, residents and faith leaders all spoke on the centenary of the beginning of the First World War battle. After two loud bangs sounded which signified the first mines exploding at 7.20am 100 years ago, Col Stephen Foakes TD, DL Regimental President of the Essex Yeomanry, spoke about the Essex Regiment's preparations and actions in the battle. A two-minute silence began at 7.28am, which was the exact time the Battle of the Somme began on 1 July 1916. Part of the ceremony was streamed live on Facebook, so those who were unable to make it could still be a part of the event.

An exhibition on the Battle of the Somme and the 13 people from the Harlow area who died in the battle was shown in the Harvey Centre shopping centre and toured around the town for 141 days which is the length of time the battle lasted.

### **Scamnesty bins placed in Civic and Latton Bush Centres**

Harlow Council supported National Scam Awareness Month (July 2016) by placing sealed Scamnesty bins in the Civic Centre and Latton Bush Centre reception areas. The campaign, 'drop in and drop them in it', encouraged residents to fill them with any mail or printed off emails, which they thought might be a scam. The material was collated by Trading Standards and used to co-ordinate further work regionally, nationally and internationally.

### **Living Wage**

The Council continues to provide a Living Wage for all of its employees:

- In 2013 Harlow Council became the first Council in Essex to become an accredited Living Wage Employer and today the Council is one of nearly 3,000 employers to pay the rate.
- Becoming an accredited Living Wage employer with the Living Wage Foundation means the Council pays its staff at least the voluntary Living Wage rate.
- On 31 October 2016, the new UK Living Wage rate of £8.45 per hour (rising from £8.25) was announced by the Living Wage Foundation.
- Kier Harlow Ltd became a Living Wage Employer in 2014. The new Local Authority Trading Company – HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd, commencing February 2017 – will also pay the voluntary Living Wage Rate. The Council encourages all its suppliers to pay the Living Wage through its procurement processes.
- The Living Wage Foundation rate is set independently and updated annually and is based on the cost of living. It is higher than the Government's national living wage for under 25s of £7.20 per hour, which was introduced in April 2016.

### **Social inclusion and community cohesion**

Harlow Council is mapping its communities and working with its Regeneration Service to develop deprived areas. In addition it is looking at ways to bring people together in order to celebrate difference through the culture of food, art and music. This includes:

- 2016 Harlow Black History Multicultural Festival.
- Harlow Festival 2016.
- Gibberd Gallery exhibitions.
- Harlow Council's annual firework and bonfire night.

**Work with partners to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour** - The Council has worked in partnership to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. Examples include:

- **A week of Community Action** where partners worked together to combat anti-social behaviour in Harlow. Work undertaken included opening void Council garages to locate possible stored stolen goods and identify and appropriately signpost rough sleepers. Properties were also visited and discussion with residents took place in regards to their use of cannabis in premises.
- **Safe and Social events** have been organised to raise safety awareness amongst the elderly in Harlow and also provide an opportunity to socialise.

A successful multi agency campaign was launched to combat problems associated with Halloween and Fireworks. A firework purchasing exercise was carried out by Trading Standards and 100 percent of premises tested passed.

### **Hate Crime Awareness**

An event to encourage the public to report hate crime was held in the Harvey Centre shopping centre as part of National Hate Crime Awareness week October 2016. The week was backed by Essex Police which run a campaign called "Stop the Hate". Members of Harlow's Hate Crime Panel, were on hand to give out information on what is considered as a hate crime and where to report it.

Nine centres based in Harlow from within the public and voluntary sectors have received specialist training from Essex Police Hate Crime Officers to open as Hate Incident Reporting Centres. The centres, which include the Civic Centre, provide an alternative place to report hate crime and hate incidents, either as a victim or a witness, when people feel uncomfortable reporting directly to the police. The centres will work in partnership with the Police and other partner agencies to provide support and advice on hate crime. Hate Crime ambassadors, which include a number of front-line Council staff, will receive training from Essex Police to equip them with the knowledge and information to recognise a hate incident or hate crime, take an effective report and provide advice and support.

**Domestic Abuse Training** - Harlow Council is committed to increasing awareness of Domestic Violence and/or Abuse, Forced Marriage or Honor Based Abuse and providing guidance for staff. As part of this commitment, new courses have been created for Harlow Council employees to undertake.

### **Network of support set up to help domestic abuse victims**

A new initiative providing contact points to help victims of domestic abuse has been launched in Harlow. Named after Janine Mundy, who was killed by her estranged husband while he was on police bail, the J9 national initiative sees local venues offering confidential help displaying pink J9 stickers in their windows.

Over 175 staff so far from more than 30 public and voluntary organisations in west Essex including the Council and The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust have been trained so they can put victims in touch with professional help.

The initiative is backed and facilitated by domestic abuse charity Safer Places. A sub-group of the Harlow Domestic Abuse Forum including staff from the Council, hospital and Safer Places has led on the roll out of the initiative.

The Civic Centre is a J9 contact point. Council staff have been trained to signpost advice and spot the signs of domestic abuse. Each J9 venue has a safe place where victims can access information and use a phone.

The Safer Harlow Partnership has been providing training to raise awareness and increase understanding of domestic abuse among staff working in the public and voluntary organisations.

### **What we will do next (our objectives for 2017/18):**

- Adopt the Harlow new strategic approach to Health and Wellbeing.
- Develop action plans for the three strategic themes.
- Monitor Health and Wellbeing outcomes and initiatives and report to Cabinet Committee.
- Adopt the 'Live Well' branding.
- Identify options for the Leah Manning Centre and prepare for the Essex tender exercise.
- Actively explore options for delivery models for retained discretionary services such as the Playhouse Theatre and Pets' Corner.
- Stimulate the regeneration of Harlow town centre.
- Promote the town's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary bringing together arts and culture.
- Implement a prioritised action plan to combat anti-social behaviour and environmental crime.
- Implement the Action Plan from the Customer Service Review 2016.

## A clean and green environment

***“The masterplan of Sir Frederick Gibberd took a landscape-led approach to developing Harlow New Town where the compact urban structure was formed around the protection of natural features. Land was saved by concentrating housing development and this was added to the landscape which separated one neighbourhood area from another. This led to the creation of the Green Wedge network, fundamental to Harlow’s unique character.***

***Just under half of the entire land in Harlow is formed of open space – with around one fifth being designated as Green Wedge and one fifth designated as Green Belt. As the Council prepares for the publication of the Draft Local Plan in 2017 such assets will be protected against the threat of unwarranted intrusion and inappropriate development for the benefit of both current and future generations.***

***I know from talking to residents and from previous budget consultations that keeping our streets and public places clean and tidy and looking after our parks and open spaces remain high priorities for Harlow residents. Improvements in street cleaning and maintenance of our green spaces have been sustained.***

***Protection and maintenance of these spaces, of course, comes at a cost and efficiency savings have been reinvested in extra grass cutting and green space management and have made a positive impact. As the Council prepares for the transfer of grounds maintenance and street cleansing from Kier Harlow Ltd to HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd from 1 February 2017, I look forward to continuous improvements in the care of our streets and green spaces.”***

Councillor Danny Purton – Portfolio Holder for Environment

### 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.
- Set out 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.
- Continue to work towards the smooth transition of duties and responsibilities from Kier Harlow Ltd to HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd.

## **2. Minimise domestic waste and maximise reuse and recycling:**

- Work with Essex Waste Management Partnership to deliver communication campaigns to minimise waste volume and maximise reuse and recycling.
- Review available waste and recycling collection and disposal methods and market information to prepare for collection contract replacement in June 2018.
- Prepare and put in place a waste and recycling collection system fit for the future to continue service beyond the current collection contract which expires June 2018.

## **3. Invest in unadopted roads and pavements:**

- To continue with a highway inspection regime that ensures that defects are identified sooner, to minimise trips and slips.
- To review the Highway Strategy to ensure that defects are appropriately risk assessed and prioritised to create budget efficiencies whilst providing a well maintained unadopted highway network.
- The system of inspection and recording will be further enhanced by the ongoing development and use of a hand held Geographical Information System that details the condition at the time of inspection, records any defect and where necessary instigates the necessary follow up works.

## **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.
- Continue to work within the partnership to ensure value for money.

## What we have achieved so far:

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

**Street Scene** - The Kier Harlow Ltd Street Scene Team have achieved ongoing improvements and performance has overall, remained within target this year. The percentage of land affected by fly posting and graffiti continue to compare well with similar areas.

**Average time to remove fly-tips** - The time taken to collect fly-tipping has consistently performed better than the target of 3.5 hours.

**Residual household waste per household** - Harlow is among the best performing areas in the country with regard to the lowest amount of residual (black bag) waste collected per household.

**Communication strategy for optimised waste management to be implemented** - The Council as part of the Essex Waste Management Partnership is supporting a communication campaign targeting waste that can easily be taken out of the residual waste stream like food waste and textiles.

**Maintain or increase recycling rates from domestic waste** - This service has remained effective and the quantity of material collected for recycling has exceeded expectations. The Council has successfully completed the roll-out of its food waste from flats service and the number of subscribers to the discretionary garden waste service continues to increase.

Despite a national trend towards increased residual waste, and a reduced weight of recyclable materials which adversely affects recycling rates, the percentage of waste diverted by recycling or composting has remained close to ambitious targets.

### **Tackle town-wide parking problems**

**Parking** - A series of six consultations with local residents regarding parking issues in their specific parts of the town were carried out in 2015 leading to the implementation of several traffic regulation orders. The Council will continue as a partner in the North Essex Parking Partnership.

### **Helping to Regenerate the Town Park**

During 2015 and into 2016 major refurbishment of Harlow Town Park has been undertaken through a landscaping contract and a capital works contract as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded Project. Under the landscaping contract new planting areas and new paths were created across the park as well as restoring the Water Garden area and extending the rhododendron dell areas. Through the capital works contract, improvements have been made to Pets' Corner (including the erection of a new events barn and a Learning Centre), the bandstand and Spurriers House (to enable the ground floor to be used as a café).

In addition Harlow College students have supported improvements to the park by:

- Constructing bat boxes that have been erected across the park
- Painting the inside of the bandstand
- Laying paving and constructing a series of five raised beds in the Walled Garden

The weekly and monthly Town Park volunteer groups have helped maintain the park by undertaking extensive work across the park including the refurbishment of the sensory garden and the circular garden in Spurriers Core.

The Education and Volunteer Officer has led monthly guided walks and fortnightly health walks which have helped the public appreciate the various features and habitats within the park.

### **Prosecutions for littering**

Three people have been successfully prosecuted by the Council for littering in Harlow. Unacceptable and irresponsible behaviour similar to this is being challenged and the Council is upholding its duty as Community Leader to maintain a clean environment for those who live and visit Harlow.

Littering and dropping cigarette butts is damaging to the environment and makes the town look messy. It also contributes to the annual cost of nearly £2m the Council spends in cleaning up litter and rubbish found on the town's streets and housing estates.

### **Harlow now has two green flags to be proud of**

Harlow Town Park and Parndon Wood Nature Reserve both received Green Flag Awards (the mark of a quality park or green space) in July 2016.

Parndon Wood Nature Reserve won its eighth Green Flag in a row. While the Town Park has been awarded its' first ever Green Flag following its major regeneration and restoration project. Completion of the project was celebrated with an event held at the new Learning Centre next to Pets' Corner. Attendees included representatives from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery and Chair of Harlow Council Councillor Edna Stevens.

### **Call to end unauthorised estate agent boards**

The Council has been running a campaign in conjunction with estate agents to bring to an end the competitive nature of putting up extreme numbers of unauthorised advertising boards along the public highway.

Harlow Council wants estate agents to agree to a code of practice which covers where boards can go, how long they can stay up for and who is responsible for taking boards down.

### **Work to help reduce dog harming ticks**

Harlow Council has been undertaking work to prevent Babesiosis, a disease that can have serious implications for dogs. This has involved fencing off the affected area, removing bushes and undergrowth, burning these on site and reducing the length of the grass. The measures and their timing are designed to disrupt the life cycle of ticks by discouraging small animals from the area that act as hosts for these ticks as they develop. Following this work the fence will remain in place to stop dogs accessing the area with further tick monitoring activity planned to review what affect this work has had.

### **What we will do next (our objectives for 2017/18):**

- Re-investment in efficiency savings and performance payments to deliver continued focus on street cleansing activities and improved grounds maintenance.
- More communications to residents of the actions and activities taken to improve the environment.
- Implement a revised highway inspection regime, to ensure that problems are identified sooner, to minimise trips and slips.
- The Council will continue to further its commitment to minimising domestic municipal waste and increasing recycling through the ongoing programme of increasing the collection of food waste from flat blocks for separate biological treatment.

The Council will also continue to promote and enhance residents' participation in wider waste minimisation and recycling issues by working with Essex Waste Management Partnership to deliver a communications campaign emphasising the importance of proper use of the full range of waste and recycling services available.

## Successful children and young people

***“The Council works to support the young people of Harlow in a wide range of ways.***

***We have implemented a school readiness programme to help ensure that children get the best start in life and annually in November the Harlow Educational Progress Awards are held. The awards, organised by Harlow Council through the Harlow Strategic Partnership for Educational Attainment, aim to recognise and reward young people who have made significant progress in their education and recognise the contribution that they have made to their schools and the community.***

***The Council continues to prioritise the improvement of educational outcomes in Harlow and will be working hard toward this goal in 2017-2020.***

***The Youth Council, with whom I have had the opportunity to work with closely this year, offers young people the chance to develop a huge number of skills, interact with the town’s decision makers and have their opinions heard.***

Councillor Emma Toal – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Youth and Community.

### **Our goals for the next three years:**

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

- To continue 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 support young people post-16 to ensure that there is a range of opportunities that will encourage continued learning and allow young people to reach their full potential.

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

- Support 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 throughout education and into adult life.

## 4. Supporting Apprenticeships for young people

- In terms of new or expanding business or other employment generation uses, provision through planning obligations will be sought for:
  - Employment of local people (including the use of apprenticeships).
  - Work related training provision.
  - Education opportunities.
  - Affordable childcare.
- Enshrine the support for apprenticeships for young people in the revised Harlow Local Plan and the Council's Procurement Policy.

## 5. Safeguarding children and young people

The Council takes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people seriously and works continuously with the Essex Safeguarding Children Board and a range of partner agencies, to ensure that effective policies and procedures are in place and so that staff and Councillors receive appropriate training to assist the identification of children at risk of abuse and ensure that robust referrals are made to Children's Social Care when necessary.

## What we have achieved so far:

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

**Educational attainment for Harlow's young people** - The outstanding educational progress and contribution of 84 young people was recognised at the third annual Harlow Educational Progress Awards in November 2016. All 84 young people were nominated by their schools and for the first time this year, Harlow College, for the progress and contributions they have made at different learning stages often overcoming significant challenges to do so.

**Harlow School Readiness Project** - Harlow Council, Essex County Council, Children's Centres and other agencies are working together to address the issue of school readiness in order to help ensure that Harlow children have appropriate opportunities to acquire the skills they need to be ready to learn once they start school. Since the inception of the project there has been a significant rise in the percentage of early years children who have reached a Good Level of Development (GLD). (38.1% 2013 rising to 70.6% 2016).

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

**Youth Council** - Enhanced support to Harlow Youth Council has enabled the introduction of additional trained Essex County Council Youth Workers to work with project groups and ensure that priority work streams can be moved forward effectively.

**Three schools take over Council Chamber for debate** - In June 2016 the Council Chamber hosted its first ever Harlow Primary Schools Council meeting. Pupils from Harlowbury, Fawbert and Barnard and Tanys Dell schools took part in the meeting, which aimed to enhance their understanding of democracy. Each school came up with an idea for a new leisure activity in the town and considered the benefits and the impact it could have on the local area. The schools presented their ideas in the Council Chamber before debating each one and voting for the best idea.

### **Youth Council hosts speed-networking session**

In July 2016 the Harlow Youth Council held a speed-networking session with adult Councillors. The event began by organising the adult Councillors on their own around the room and inviting Youth Councillors to join them for a short introduction to get to know a little bit about each other. The session continued with both the adults and Youth Councillors coming together in one large group and exchanging questions and ideas around how the Council and Councillors serve the residents of Harlow.

Youth Councillors raised issues around the impact of the referendum result to leave the European Union. Issues also raised included employment, housing and the development of Harlow in the future, transport, mental health, community cohesion and future funding for projects.

## **Crucial Crew**

Crucial Crew, the annual event organised by Harlow Council and designed to put local schoolchildren's safety skills to the test, took place in March 2016.

Crucial Crew is led and coordinated by Harlow Council. Organisations which helped to deliver the safety lessons included:

The Essex County Council Road Safety Team (Road Safety), The East of England Ambulance Service (Basic First Aid and Recovery Position), Kier Harlow Ltd (Safety on Construction Sites), Lea Valley Parks (Safety Around Water), Sainsbury's (Safety around Large Goods Vehicles), Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (Fire Safety), Harlow Domestic Abuse Forum (Healthy Relationships) and Essex Police (Online Safety).

## **Supporting Apprenticeships for young people**

**Apprentices** - The Council employs apprentices in a range of service areas from IT to planning. There are currently a total of seven apprentices and the Council is looking to employ more.

## **What we will do next (our objectives for 2017/18):**

- Continue to develop the Youth Council.
- Continue to work with partners to improve the educational attainment of Harlow's young people.
- The Harlow Educational Attainment Awards will continue.
- Continue to support Officers to attend a range of multi-agency partnership meetings that promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all Harlow children.
- Continue to consider employing apprentices when the appropriate opportunities arise.

## Harlow Council principles

### Being the Community Leader

#### 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

- Continue to develop 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, Harlow Council 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. Continue to 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**

- The Council's Procurement Strategy will be further updated to reflect recent legislative changes.
- Continue to adopt and implement further changes to the public sector procurement legislation, policies and procedures.

## What we have achieved so far:

### Promote the needs of Harlow and be recognised as a community leader

#### Lobbying

**Neighbourhood Planning Act** – The Council has lobbied Government to highlight its opposition to the tabled amendment to the Neighbourhood Planning Act. This Act gives powers to the Secretary of State to invite a County Council to produce a Local Plan for a community of a District Council area if the Council, as planning authority, is not making timely progress with its production. Harlow Council also opposes the imposition of any costs of doing so on District Councils.

**M11 Junction 7a** – The Council continues to lobby Government on a range of issues which are key needs for Harlow. This includes the proposed new junction 7a for the M11 that would create access to the motorway from the north of the town.

**Unauthorised Encampments** – The Council will continue to lobby the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, calling for a review into the powers available to local Councils as well as the powers that the police have available to deal with unauthorised encampments.

The Council will be continuing to petition for appropriate changes. The Council has also written to the Government urging them to enforce traveller provision in other parts of the Country and within Essex.

**Princess Alexandra Hospital** – The Council, working in partnership with the Hospital Trust and the District Councils of Broxbourne, East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest and Uttlesford, is playing a leading role in lobbying the Government and the Clinical Commissioning Group in order to:

- Address the short, medium and longer term revenue and capital funding requirements of the hospital.
- Develop a longer term plan to secure financially sustainable, appropriate and sufficient access to health services for the communities served by the hospital.
- Clarify the longer term future role of the hospital and its role within the health economy of Essex and Hertfordshire.
- Support the hospital in reducing demand for its services through improving access to primary health care services and preventing ill-health.
- Achieve more economic, efficient and effective integration of health and social care.

The Council is committed to support the improvement of the hospital after the Trust was rated as “inadequate” in 2016 by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

As part of the Local Development Plan process the Council, working with its partners, will seek to identify an alternative site for the development of a new hospital to serve the Harlow community.

**Infrastructure** – The Council will continue to make representations for investment in infrastructure to meet the current and future needs of the Harlow community.

The Council will promote and work in partnership to seek to achieve:

- Four tracking of the West Anglia Main Line.
- Extension of Crossrail 2 to Harlow.
- M11 motorway Junction 7A.
- Town Centre regeneration.
- Relocation of the Princess Alexandra Hospital to meet the needs of a growing population and increasing demand and to free up land for development.
- Re-focusing of the New Homes Bonus to encourage areas where the housing market is not functioning as successfully as others.
- The retention of 100% of Business Rates in areas committed to a joint investment plan in enabling infrastructure to improve the economic performance of their areas.

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

**VCS grants** – The Council gave a total of £131,000 in partnership grants to voluntary and community organisations in the district for the period 2016/17.

**Electoral Register** – Continue to encourage a high proportion of eligible electors to be included on the Electoral Register.

**Improve communication with the public** – The Council's website places an emphasis on extending the range of services that customers can use to self-serve. This adds convenient ways for residents to interact with the Council and find essential information, complementing the existing face-to-face and telephone services available. From April 2015 to March 2016 there were 521,120 visits to the Council's website compared with the previous year of 415,512 visits, an increase of 25 per cent.

The full range of services available to residents online is continually expanding. Customers can pay Council bills, book a wide range of services and report fraud or environmental issues such as fly-tipping as well as applying for services such as benefits, allotments and housing.

Between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 just under £5.3 million was taken via the internet in payments and £11 million on the automated phone system. In the same period the previous year, £4.3 million was taken via the internet and £9.9 million was taken respectively. These methods of payment are becoming increasingly popular.

**Transparency agenda** - The Council has been working to ensure that details are published in line with the 2015 Code of Transparency. The Council is regularly publishing the required information on its website on the Open Data webpage.

**The Council's procurement rules** - Through the review of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 the Council's Procurement Strategy and aspirations have been updated regarding the promotion of ethical behavior, Fair Trade, the Living Wage, Black Listing and more recently the Modern Slavery Act.

## **What we will do next (our objectives for 2017/18):**

- Continue to lobby Essex County Council and the Government for key infrastructure improvements for Harlow including M11 junction 7a.
- Actively explore how the Council can improve openness and transparency, and improve resident engagement.
- Continue to lobby the Government to relocate the Princess Alexandra Hospital in order to meet the needs of a growing population and increasing demand.
- Continue to lobby the Government in regards to Harlow Council keeping control of its Local Plan.

## Sound resource management

### 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.
- Continue to ensure that financial decisions are made with long term sustainability in mind.
- Implement systems changes and procedures common to all services across the Council to drive further efficiencies.
- 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.

#### 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 and financial constraints.
- Complement the Council's asset management plans by undertaking a full non housing asset stock condition survey 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 to its overall asset holdings.
- Implement the Customer Service Strategy to improve customer contact channels and develop customer interaction to achieve a range of benefits that will ensure the future needs of both customers and the Council are met.

## What we have achieved so far:

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

**Modern ICT** - The Council approved a new ICT Strategy in December 2014. The action plan associated with the strategy is being delivered to ensure that there are robust and relevant ICT systems available to all services to enhance and improve service delivery to the Council's customers. The Strategy will be reviewed during 2017 to reflect work completed and to revisit objectives for future years.

As well as new working practices that have been introduced, the Council is continuing to look at new and alternative technologies in the workplace. Options for interaction with customers through mediums such as tablets and smart phones are being explored and implemented in order to offer a greater number of options to access Council services.

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

**People Resource Plan** - The People Resource Plan looks forward to the 2018-19 financial year and sets the strategy the Council wishes to adopt in ensuring the workforce of the Council are ready and able to drive forward and achieve the Council's vision and priorities as laid out in the Corporate Plan.

### **Data matching with other local Councils to cut Council Tax Fraud**

The Council has entered into a data sharing agreement with all local Councils in the county, including Essex County Council, as well as the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and Essex Police as part of its commitment to identifying fraud and error in its Council Tax base.

### **Budget protects services despite national funding cuts**

To help protect services in 2016/2017 and save £1.1 million Harlow Council's share of Council Tax increased by 9p a week for the average Band C Council Tax bill. Around £1.4 million of savings will be made and extra income raised.

Although the Council is responsible for collecting the overall Council Tax bill, only £17 of every £100 collected is kept by Harlow Council.

## **Budget Headlines 2016/2017**

- Spending protected on parks, playgrounds, grass cutting, street cleaning, tackling anti-social behaviour and regeneration.
- Spending also protected on pavement and road repairs (those maintained by Harlow Council) and waste and recycling collections which every home uses.
- No cuts to the Playhouse Theatre, paddling pools, Pets' Corner, bonfire and fireworks night, the Community Safety Team and Harlow Youth Council.
- No cuts or impact on the Skate Park or the Council-run Leah Manning Centre.
- Council-owned car park charges frozen for the third year running and no change to one-hour free parking.
- No compulsory redundancies.
- No increases in Councillor allowances.

There are no plans for services to be closed or major cuts that will impact on residents and businesses as part of the Council's budget for 2017/18. This is despite tackling unprecedented cuts in the Council's grant funding from the Government in recent years.

## **What we will do next (our objectives for 2017/18):**

- Continue to roll out innovative technologies to improve efficiency.
- Begin to influence and shape the future technology investment requirements of the Council in line with the ICT Strategy.
- Continue to seek new and innovative ways to secure alternative sources of funding to meet projected budget shortfalls and protect services wherever possible.

## Equalities and Fairness

- 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.
- The Council is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity, fairness and equality 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.
- In 2011 the Council published its Corporate Equalities Policy, Putting People First, which reflects what is enshrined in its constitution and embedded across the culture of the organisation.
- The Council is reviewing and updating its Corporate Equalities Policy.
- The Council monitors how well it is performing in equalities and fairness 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.
- Where a change in policy, function or activity has a major impact on the community, the Council may use an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to assess the proposed changes. An EIA asks the following questions:
  - Are there different service outcomes for different communities?
  - If so, what measures will be put in place to redress 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?

### Consultations

The Council ran a community consultation from August 2016 to October 2016 on how the Local Council Tax (LCTS) scheme is funded. Decisions about how to fund the LCTS scheme include varying the maximum level of help given under the scheme, as well as considering alternative funding options such as reducing spending on other services, or increasing the Council Tax overall. The scheme provides help to around 8,400 households.

Other service consultations ranging from car parking to leaseholder satisfaction and website use have taken place or are taking place throughout 2016/2017 and are normally available on the Council's website at the time the consultation is run.

### The 2018 Boundary Review

The Commission published the initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the Eastern region on 13 September 2016. The Eastern region has been allocated 57 constituencies, a reduction of one from the current number.

## What we will do next (our objectives for 2017/18):

- Continue to ensure that the Council's procurement policy reflects its values of Fairness and Equality.
- Continue to ensure that Officers and Councillors receive appropriate Equalities training.
- Ensure that the e-learning course is rolled out to all Officers and Councillors.
- Review and update the Corporate Equalities Policy for the next three years.
- Develop a Corporate Equalities Action Plan in consultation with representatives of people with protected characteristics.