



HARROW BUSINESS CONSULTATIVE PANEL

**MONDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2005
7.30 PM**

PANEL AGENDA (ADVISORY)

**COMMITTEE ROOMS 1&2,
HARROW CIVIC CENTRE**

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 3)

Chair: Councillor Choudhury

Councillors:

Idaikkadar

**Kara
Myra Michael**

Reserve Members:

1. Bluston
2. Toms
3. Burchell

1. Versallion
2. Vina Mithani
3. Harriss

**Issued by the Democratic Services Section,
Legal Services Department**

**Contact: Laura Kell, Committee Administrator
Tel: 020 8424 1265 E-mail: laura.kell@harrow.gov.uk**

***NOTE FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING:
IF YOU WISH TO DISPOSE OF THIS AGENDA, PLEASE LEAVE IT BEHIND AFTER THE MEETING.
IT WILL BE COLLECTED FOR RECYCLING.***

HARROW COUNCIL

HARROW BUSINESS CONSULTATIVE PANEL

(Formerly NNDR BUSINESS CONSULTATIVE PANEL)

MONDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2005 AT 7.30 PM

COMMITTEE ROOMS 1 & 2, CIVIC CENTRE

1. **Appointment of Chair:**

To note the appointment of Councillor Choudhury at the Cabinet meeting on 19 May 2005 under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 5.1 as Chair of the Advisory Panel for the Municipal Year 2005/2006.

2. **Appointment of Vice-Chair:**

To consider the appointment of a Vice-Chair to the Panel for the Municipal Year 2005/2006.

3. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

- (i) to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
- (ii) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- (iii) after notifying the Chair at the start of the meeting.

4. **Declarations of Interest:**

To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from all Members present.

5. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

To consider whether any of the items listed on the agenda should be considered with the press and public excluded on the grounds that it is thought likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that there would be disclosure of confidential information in breach of an obligation of confidence or of exempt information as defined in the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

6. **Public Representations:**

The Council's Constitution provides for Panel meetings to receive Petitions, Deputations and Public Questions (Committee Procedure Rules 15, 16 and 18).

Enc. 7. **Minutes:** (Pages 1 - 6)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2005, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

Enc. 8. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:** (Pages 7 - 26)
To note the matters arising from the last meeting of the Forum.

9. **Introduction to the Meeting:**

Councillor Sanjay Dighé, Portfolio Holder for Business Connections and Performance, will introduce the meeting.

10. **Harrow's Relationship with the Business Community:**

Presentations

- **Contacts with the Business Community**

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy will be discussing Harrow Council's plans in terms of engagement with its business community, and explaining how the Council can work more effectively as a partner with the business community.

Presentation by the Director of Financial and Business Strategy

- **Business Community Portal**

The Business Community Manager will update local business representatives on the Business Community Portal – an exciting new development in Harrow that will enable businesses to engage and transact with Harrow Council and with each other.

Presentation by the Business Community Manager

- **Visiting Harrow: London's Newest Attraction**

Harrow Council is launching an ambitious new tourism initiative to put Harrow firmly on the map – come and find out all about it.

Presentation by a Tourism Officer

Questions and Answers

- Members of the Business Community are invited to ask questions of the Members of the Council and officers present.

11. **Any Other Business:**

Which the Chair has decided is urgent and cannot otherwise be dealt with.

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**NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATEPAYER
 CONSULTATIVE PANEL**

3 FEBRUARY 2005

Chair: Councillor Choudhury

Councillors: * Burchell (3) * Myra Michael
 * Kara

* Denotes Member present
 (3) Denotes category of Reserve Member

Attendance by NNDR Representatives:-

Susan Hall	-	Chair, Wealdstone Traders' Association
Mr S Parsons	-	Harrow Music
Mr D Greenwood	}	Harrow and Hillingdon Branch, Federation of Small Businesses
Mr R H Morse	}	

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL

PART II - MINUTES

20. **Appointment of Chair:**

RESOLVED: To note the appointment of Councillor Choudhury as Chair of the Panel for the Municipal Year 2004/05.

21. **Appointment of Vice-Chair:**

RESOLVED: To note that no Vice-Chair be appointed to the Panel for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2004/05.

22. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Reserve Member</u>
Councillor Idaikkadar	Councillor Burchell

23. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business transacted at this meeting.

24. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

25. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

[Note: There were a number of matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting; these are included under Minute 28 below]

26. **Public Representations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions, deputations or public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rules 15, 16 and 18 respectively.

27. **Budget Options 2005/06 for Consultations:**

The Chair welcomed the NNDR Representatives to the meeting, and invited them to express their views on the Council's budget proposals for 2005/06 to Council members. The Chair referred to the document entitled 'Harrow Vitality Profiles', which had been tabled at the meeting, and explained that it provided a portrait of Harrow and its people

in statistics. He also mentioned that Harrow Council gets more NNDR tax back than they pay to the Government.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Council's Director of Financial and Business Strategy provided the Panel with an overview of the Authority's draft budget proposals for 2005/06. In the course of the presentation, the following elements were covered:

- details of expenditure and sources of funding in 2004/05, including an outline of the services provided by the Authority and their cost, and NNDR contributions to the overall funding;
- the recommended increase of £12m (4.9%) on the current net budget, and proposed areas of growth and efficiency savings;
- details of the final settlement, announced at the end of January 2005, in which the government granted approximately £200k more than had been anticipated in the provisional settlement;
- the requirement to passport increases in education funding directly to schools;
- the Council Tax increase of around 1.48%, based on the provisional settlement from the government;
- an overview of the consultation process employed to engage stakeholders, and the survey undertaken with some 250 businesses, specifically on the budget, which had unfortunately elicited a poor response.

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy informed the Panel that Cabinet, at its meeting on 17 February 2005, would be provided with feedback from all the consultations carried out prior to making a recommendation to a meeting of full Council, which would approve the final Budget and set the Council Tax for 2005/06 on 24 February 2005.

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy also briefed the Panel on business-orientated work being carried out by the Council.

The Panel was informed of the basis for the National Non-Domestic Rates (or Business Rates). It was explained that the Non-Domestic Rate, the means by which local businesses contribute to the cost of providing local authority services, was collected by Local Authorities and passed to the Government, which then redistributed the monies to Authorities in line with the financial settlement. The Panel was informed that the rate was calculated by applying a national business multiplier to the rateable value of each business, and that this rateable value might be altered following revaluations to begin in April 2005.

She also explained the potential impact of a new government initiative called the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI), to be introduced from 1 April 2005. The Panel was informed that the initiative aimed to encourage local authorities to foster new business growth in their area and that a grant of £700k should be available to Harrow in 2005/06. She explained that if the initiative was successful, and if Harrow were able to increase business activity, additional money would be available.

In addition, the Panel was informed about a Business Portal that had been developed by the Council, which was a website for local businesses that would increase opportunities for them to work with the Council and allow the Council to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of businesses in Harrow. The Panel was informed that the website contained an e-directory of local businesses, an e-tendering facility that would allow businesses to apply on-line for contracts offered by the Council, information on the services provided by the Council for businesses, and a 'chat room' that would facilitate inter-business communication as well as communication between the Council and businesses. The Panel was advised that the first stage of the development of the Portal had been completed, and that the service would be launched soon. It was also informed that cash provisions had been made to improve or increase the scope of the Portal.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Budget Options and other relevant information be received and noted;

(2) That the timescales for the consultations and determining the Budget for 2005/06 be noted.

28. **Contributions/Comments from NNDR Representatatives:**

Prior to the presentation by the Director of Financial and Business Strategy, NNDR Representatives expressed their disappointment that their questions raised at the Panel's meeting on 5 February 2004 had not yet been addressed by the officers. It was agreed that the Director of Financial and Business Strategy would respond in writing to all the questions set out in the minutes of the last meeting and any additional questions arising from the meeting that afternoon. In addition, it was agreed that additional meetings of this Panel would be held in order to improve dialogue with local businesses, and that a date would be decided at the end of the current meeting. An apology was made that this had not yet happened.

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy provided the following information in response to specific questions asked by the NNDR Representatives concerning the minutes of this previous meeting:

- that the Council was on target to achieving the estimated £370k saving proposed from the NHP restructuring;
- that the review of Consultation with Business Representatives described had unfortunately not yet occurred, and that officers be required to take action on this review;
- that the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive described in the February 2004 minutes had been introduced, and would generate an expected additional income of £700k in 2005/06;

In addition, a Representative submitted to the Panel a list of thirty questions that he had compiled. It was agreed that the Director of Financial and Business Strategy would arrange for written responses to be sent to all Council Members and NNDR Representatives present at the meeting.

Further to the presentation from the Director of Financial and Business Strategy, the contributions, issues and comments set out below were made by NNDR Representatives to which responses were provided by the Director and Members:

Local Authority Business Growth Incentive

NNDR Representatives enquired about how increases in business growth would be measured in the above government incentive. They were informed that growth was measured through increases in the rateable value of local business premises, not through the amount of revenue generated by the business, and that increased rateable values would lead to greater NNDR payments and consequently greater government funding. Representatives were further informed that the Inland Revenue, not the Local Authority, determined the rateable value of premises.

Specific questions relating to the additional amounts of funding that would be received for a defined increase in NNDR contributions could not be answered at that time, as detailed calculations would have been required. At the request of a Representative, the Director of Financial and Business Strategy agreed to provide in writing details of the impact of NNDR contributions falling below the prescribed baseline level for Harrow.

An NNDR Representative expressed concern that the incentive would make the Council more interested in larger businesses, which had a greater potential for increasing rateable values, and would cause them to neglect, for example, businesses that operated from home. This led into a discussion about the Council's plans to aid the development of small businesses, outlined below.

Developing Businesses

The Panel was informed of the Council's work to encourage the expansion of small businesses, including the Next Step Programme that was aimed to help small businesses find larger premises, work on improving procurement and the Business Portal.

Council Members of the Panel were concerned that many expanding businesses were forced to move out from Harrow, and that the Council was not aware of what premises

the developing business community required. It was identified that the Council needed to engage with businesses more effectively in order to assist them in finding the most appropriate premises.

An NNDR Representative expressed concern that rents were very high, whilst another pointed out that upgrading of properties to offices was a ploy used to drive out small businesses. A Council Member of the Panel offered to provide details of council-owned land that could be used to build business units and he emphasised the need for a dialogue between the Council and small businesses to help identify sites/premises for such businesses.

Council Tax

Having informed the Panel that the draft Council Tax increase would result in a Band D household in Harrow paying £1,049 in Council Tax per year, as well as the GLA precept of £259 as set out in the Mayor's draft budget, the Director of Financial and Business Strategy was asked by an NNDR Representative what proportion of houses within Harrow belonged to Band D, and the proportions that represented the other bands. The Representative was informed that 32.3% (26,780) of houses in Harrow were in Band D, and it was agreed that the proportions in other bands would be provided in writing, including which Local Authority had the highest number of properties in Band D.

A Council Member of the Panel advised that some services provided by or subsidised by the Council operate at higher costs than members of the public would anticipate. It was suggested that the presentation of the draft budget highlight these costs.

Identifying 'Waste'

An NNDR Representative asked the Panel how the Council identified waster. Reference was made to the bollards erected in Wealdstone and ALMO as wasteful ventures. A Council Member of the Panel pointed out that 'waste' was subjective, and that some groups might benefit from a project that others would consider wasteful. The Director of Financial and Business Strategy referred to the efficiency savings made by the Council.

Engaging Businesses in Consultation

An NNDR Representative was critical that there was no evidence of the Council responding to consultation with local businesses. The Director of Financial and Business Strategy informed the Panel that the response rate from surveys sent to 250 businesses within the borough was so low and could not be analysed as it was not considered to be representative. It was agreed that information pertaining to the numbers of responses in previous years be provided in writing, to determine whether responses were declining over the years.

The NNDR Representatives were asked how the Council could improve engagement with businesses. It appeared that 'paper' consultation was unproductive. A Representative suggested that unless more results were seen from the consultations, people would not devote their time to completing surveys and attending meetings. Another Representative also added that the most effective way to engage traders was to contact the Traders' Associations that represented them, rather than organisations such as Harrow in Business and TEC as not all businesses were members of these organisations. The Director agreed to check if the Wealdstone Traders' Association had been consulted. The Chair stated that it was discouraging how few businesses had responded to efforts to make the engagement more constructive.

Procurement

An NNDR Representative expressed concern over the Council's plans to make savings in procurement by establishing better value corporate contracts, suggesting that smaller companies could not compete with the contracts offered by larger companies. The Representative suggested providing the opportunity for smaller businesses to bid as a consortium, and a Council Member of the Panel informed the Representative that the Council would consider bids from consortiums. The NNDR Representatives were informed that the Business Portal would provide an opportunity for local businesses to bid for contracts of varying size.

NNDR Representatives acknowledged that the Council had a duty to ensure that procurement exercises provided value for money and that small businesses would not be able to compete with larger businesses when bidding for contracts. A Representative mentioned that 98% of the business community was made up of small businesses which employed a large number of people, and that their role could not be overlooked.

Small Business Rate Relief

The Panel was informed that any business whose premises were below a certain rateable value (£21,500) had been sent an application form for Rate Relief, and that information relating to Rate Relief was on the Council's website, explanatory notes and bills sent to the business. The NNDR Representatives were also informed that officers would be able to visit groups to provide a presentation on Rate Relief. They were also assured that the Council's computer system was now equipped to deal with the 2005/06 rate bills.

Other Business

In addition, the following questions were asked of officers and Members, and it was agreed that the Director of Financial and Business Strategy would forward responses to the relevant NNDR Representative:

- How much money from the main revenue budget (2004/05) was used to fund the training provided by the Council's Organisational Development Directorate?
- What specific projects would be undertaken in Wealdstone as part of the Capital Investment Programme? It was added that £300k was earmarked for improvements in Wealdstone High Street, and was agreed that the Representative concerned be sent a copy of the Transport Improvement Plan.
- What was the cost of the 'mapping exercise' performed for the Harrow Vitality Profiles?

Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that an extra meeting of the NNDR Consultative Panel would be held on 22 September 2005 at 2.30pm.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 2.30 pm, closed at 4.25 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MRINAL CHOUDHURY
Chair

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Answers To Questions Raised At NNDR Consultative meetings

5 February 2004 Meeting

	Question	
1.	It was agreed that information on the total number of Council employees would be provided in writing.	As at 31 March 2004, the Council's work force numbered 5814
2.	In relation to Wealdstone Town Centre, an NNDR Representative sought details of the Section 106 Agreement and details of the project for which the money would be ring-fenced.	<p>The application was P/3020/03/CFU - reported to Development Control Committee May 2004 - the decision was as follows:</p> <p>1) The proposal is acceptable subject to the completion of a legal agreement within one year (or such period as the Council may determine) of the date of the Committee decision on this application relating to:</p> <p>i) Submission to and approval by the Local Planning Authority of a scheme which:</p> <p>a) Provides a minimum of 71 units of social rented accommodation to current housing corporation scheme design standards (for future management by an RSL)</p> <p>b) Ensures that the affordable housing units are available for occupation in accordance with a building and occupation programme to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of work on the site.</p> <p>All affordable housing units shall be provided in accordance with the definition of affordable housing set out in the deposit version of the replacement Harrow UDP.</p> <p>ii) Developer shall fund all costs of public consultation, analysis, reporting and implementation of an extension and changes to the adjacent Controlled Parking Zone, at any time within 3 years of occupation of the development, if in the Council's opinion, a monitoring period shows unacceptable on-street parking, up to a maximum amount of £10,000 index linked.</p> <p>iii) Development shall not commence until replacement community facilities are available for use to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.</p>

3.	<p>The NNDR Representatives were concerned that concentration of large numbers of affordable housing could lead to an increase in crime in the area (Wealdstone). They were also critical of such developments where there were no provisions made for a children's play area</p>	<p>The ODPM is quite clear in its advice to Local Authorities to create inclusive mixed communities.</p> <p>The provision of play areas is not a requirement within the affordable housing policy (H9) of the Harrow UDP and is principally a matter for applicants. However the Council would be supportive of any proposals as part of large-scale schemes if this could be accommodated.</p>
	Procurement Policy	
4.	<p>In view of the relationship between procurement and the Council's expenditure plans for 2005-06, how has the Council consulted with small and local businesses in preparing for their procurement policy?</p>	<p>The Procurement Team has re structured to include a new post Service Manager (Community Links).</p> <p>A key part of this new role is to work with the local Business Community on workforce issues, diversity, equality and sustainability.</p> <p>The Service Manager will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Look at way of encouraging a diverse and competitive supply market. ○ Deliver a business portal with a number of benefits; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business 2 Business directory ● How to sell to the council – list of procurement opportunities ● List of council services to businesses. <p>The Business Portal has been developed in consultation with a range of local businesses and bodies.</p>
5.	<p>Is the Council satisfied that its procurement policy enables local and small businesses to compete for the Council tenders?</p>	<p>The launch of the Business Portal in March will enable local businesses to view the procurement opportunities.</p> <p>The council will also be reviewing the Procurement Strategy 2004/05</p>
6.	<p>Could the Council supply a copy of their procurement policy?</p>	<p>Document attached (Doc 1)</p>

	Waste & Recycling	
7.	What provision has the Council made to help businesses recycle their waste?	The council only offers the free collection and recycling of paper and glass from businesses in Harrow. There are some conditions relating to the scheme (i.e. minimum volumes, quality, access etc.). These issues are discussed on application, during a site visit.
8.	What % of household waste is recycled in Harrow?	Last year, the council recycled 13.2% of household waste compared to the government's target of 16%. This year we have increased this to just over 18%. Our statutory target for next year is 25.2%.
9.	What % of waste from business premises does the Council estimate is recycled?	The Council does not hold this information as it lies outside of the Council's remit.
10.	What requirement to recycle did the Council insert in any contract relating to the disposal of waste from its own premises?	The council has established office paper recycling at the Civic Centre and the Central Depot (its two largest locations). It will shortly be launching an enhanced scheme, which will replace the current paper sack collection system with communal waste and recycling bins. The traditional desk-side waste bin will no longer be emptied as part of the office cleaning contract. Employees will be required to dispose of their waste into the appropriate communal bin for recycling or disposal.
11.	What does the Council estimate would be the cost to the Council of collecting waste from trade premises?	Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the council is required to arrange for the collection and disposal of waste from traders where it is requested to do so. It is also required to recover from the trader the costs of the collection and disposal of the waste it is asked to collect. The level of charge depends on the amount of waste generated. Traders are free to arrange for the disposal of their waste using private contractors. Of the estimated 5000 businesses in the Borough only 1500 use the council's service. No estimate has been made for the cost of collecting trade waste from all trade premises.
12.	What is the current budget for waste collection from domestic premises?	The budget for 2005/6 is:- Refuse collection – £ 3,385,600 Green box – £ 634,900 Brown bin – £ 633,260
13.	What allowance has the Council made for any penalties under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS)?	The West London Waste Authority (WLWA) is the waste disposal authority for this area of London. The LATS liabilities will be met by that authority (and recovered via the levy and other charges). Action taken to date by Harrow and the other five constituent authorities means that WLWA will not have any liabilities for at least the next two years. WLWA and the six constituent authorities are currently developing a joint Waste Management Strategy that seeks to address these liabilities in the medium to long term.

14.	What is the projected impact of LATS on the Council, and also on its commercial waste collections (which are also included in the allowance calculation)?	<p>The potential financial impacts on the council are very significant. If the council were not to take action to increase the recycling of bio-degradable waste, waste disposal costs could increase by up to £1.5m per year between 2007/8 and 2020/1. The Brown Bin scheme and the work on the joint strategy are designed to avoid these increases. However, avoiding these costs will still require some increased expenditure compared to the current position.</p> <p>The effect of LATS on trade waste collections will result in significant increases in costs and charges. These will start to be felt from April this year. As private sector waste contractors are not subject to LATS, it is probable that there will be a transfer of business from the council to the private sector – particularly for high volume waste producers.</p>
15.	What are the likely effects on future prices?	See above
	Local Strategic Partnerships	
16.	How did the Council decide what representatives of the business community should be members of its LSPs?	<p>At the point of the development of the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP), which is our LSP, the Chief Executive of the local authority made approaches to various business representatives locally. The businesses that responded were Kodak, Harrow in Business and Metroline. In the last few months, the Asian Business Initiative has been invited on the Board in recognition of the number of small businesses in Harrow owned by members of the Asian community. Experience across LSPs has been that it has been difficult to engage the private sector on what is perceived to be a public sector agenda. Harrow Council has been working to address this perception by highlighting the importance of local businesses understanding their community and the local environment in which they operate. We have had some success in this- Agilisys (a leading local consultancy) have agreed to chair one of the Management Groups of the HSP. The issue of Business representation will be further considered at the second HSP Summit in May 2005.</p>
17.	Is it satisfied that micro- and small businesses are adequately represented?	Harrow in Business and the Asian Business Initiative both represent the issues faced by micro and small businesses.

	Local Government Act (England & Wales) 2003	
18.	What plans has the Council to use the trading powers provided by it under the 2003 Act?	The Council has no plans to use the new trading powers at present because the possibilities have not been explored.
19.	Can they confirm that the Council has no plans to use these powers?	Confirmed
20.	Can they confirm that the Council would not be willing to use these powers to compete against local businesses?	Confirmed
	Business Improvement Districts (BID)	
21.	What plans, if any, has any department of the Council to initiate a Business Improvement District?	No further plans for Harrow Town Centre or any other areas in the borough following initial discussions with businesses in 2003 (see below)
22.	Has the Council been involved in discussions with any other bodies with regard to the establishment of a BID?	<p>In the summer of 2003, 50 businesses from varying sectors in Harrow town centre were sent a questionnaire asking whether they would support a BID that would cover St Ann's Road (including the 2 shopping centres), College Road and parts of Station Road.</p> <p>Of the 6 replies, only 2 businesses supported the idea. The results were reported to a meeting of the Harrow Town Centre Forum (a partnership of Harrow Council and stakeholders) held on 20 November 2003, where it was agreed no further action be taken to establish a BID in this location.</p>

	Council Employees' Pension Schemes	
23.	<p>Employees are contributing a fixed 6% of salary to the final salary scheme. What figure is the Council contributing and how does this compare with its contribution 10 years and 5 years ago, both as a percentage of salary and as a total amount met from the Council's budget?</p>	<p>Currently pension scheme regulations allow for two employee contribution rates; 5% (previous manual workers with protection rights) and 6% officers.</p> <p>The current (i.e. 2004/2005) employer contribution rate is 13%. Based on employer contributions paid on salary payments up to and including 28th February 2005, the projected figure for 2004/2005 is £9.4m</p> <p>Please find attached graph showing employer contribution rates (Doc 2).</p>
	Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR)	
24.	<p>What action has it taken to inform local businesses of the SBRR?</p>	<p>Harrow has sent an application form to all ratepayers who appear to meet the criteria. Additionally, the information will be contained with the explanatory notes for the Business rates bill and will be added to the Council Business Rates web site.</p>
25.	<p>What plans has it further to inform those who qualify for the relief?</p>	<p>An annual application form will be sent to all businesses that already receive small business relief. Additionally, arrangements will be put in place to advise new occupiers of the relief in order to ensure that they receive a timely application form.</p>
26.	<p>Is the Council computer system equipped to deal with the 2005/06 rates bills?</p>	<p>At the time of the meeting the system software was being tested although this has since been concluded and issues arising addressed with our software supplier. Billing will therefore occur during March as planned.</p>

3 February 2005 Meeting

	From Previous Minutes	
27.	How much of the £400k proposed for refurbishment works to the Civic Centre had been spent (with reference to 2003/2004)?	£351k was spent for refurbishment works to Civic Centre in the year 2003/2004.
28.	Have the savings on the NHP restructure of £370k and sickness absence of £200k been achieved?	The Council is on track to deliver the savings from the restructure and improved absence management.
29.	Was there a fair competition basis for the joint initiatives between businesses and the Council, as described in Minute 19, <u>Council Tax</u> (5 Feb 04)?	The Council does compete with local business in some areas such as trade refuse collection. However, the Council seeks to contribute to the growth of the local business community through regeneration schemes, providing premises, development of the portal, effective procurement and other initiatives.
30.	Was there any improvement to the shortfall in recycling income described, and what were the proposals for collecting recyclable waste from businesses?	The adjustment to the recycling income reflected a long-term change in prices for the materials recovered. There will therefore be no long-term improvement to this situation. There have been minor improvements due to an increase in the amount of material being recovered. The council arranges the free collection of paper and glass from businesses subject to undertakings of proper segregation and minimum quantities.

	From Previous Minutes	
31.	What progress had been made on discussions regarding Controlled Parking Zones in residential areas and how has CPZ income been applied?	<p>The programme of CPZ is continuously reviewed and is subject to extensive consultation between the Council and residents. Requests for new CPZs and amendments to existing schemes are reported to the Traffic & Road Safety Advisory Panel of Council members. The panel makes recommendations to Cabinet on the detailed programme each year, in the light of the funding available within Harrow's capital programme and also the programme funded by Transport for London (TfL). New schemes and amendments are subject to consultation with residents before implementation.</p> <p>See attached summary (Doc 3) of the parking account for 2003-2004, which shows how the income from parking is utilised. This does not separate CPZs from other parking but it does indicate how the income from penalty charge notices and on – street parking has been utilised.</p>
	From Previous Minutes	
32.	The Director of Financial and Business Strategy agreed to provide in writing details of the impact of NNDR payments falling below the prescribed baseline for Harrow. (LABGI)	<p>The baseline for Harrow for the new Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) is an increase in business rates of 0.7% per year. If we achieve the baseline less 1.4% (i.e. a reduction of 0.7%) we will receive no funding.</p> <p>For every £1 of business rates which takes us above the 0.7% reduction (the minimum), we retain 70% up to a ceiling. For 05/06 the ceiling is £1.4m. The budget includes an assumption that we will receive extra funding of £700k in 2005/06.</p>
33.	Additional amounts of funding that would be received for a defined increase in NNDR contributions.	See above
34.	Which LA has the highest proportion in Band D?	Not able to obtain this information.

	From Previous Minutes	
35.	How many responses were received in the previous 5 years to surveys sent to local businesses (of responses in 2005)? Is the response rate declining?	There hasn't been any survey/consultation with local businesses recently but a major exercise is planned this year for a business mapping exercise and consultation.
36.	Had Wealdstone Traders' Association been consulted (re surveys sent to businesses and the business portal in particular)?	Not directly but we will ensure the Association is consulted in future
37.	How much money from the main revenue budget (04/05) was used to fund the training provided by the Council's Organisational Development Directorate?	<p>OD funding for training and development can be broken down as follows:</p> <p>Salaries £246k Course Fees £106k Facilities, Transport & Supplies £37k Council support services £88k</p> <p>Gross cost to Council £477k Less external funding £46k</p> <p>Net cost to Council £411k</p>
38.	What specific projects would be undertaken in Wealdstone as part of the Capital Investment Programme? It was added that £300k was earmarked for improvements in Wealdstone High Street, and was agreed that the Representative concerned be sent a copy of the Transport Improvement Plan (requested by Susan Hall).	<p>Details attached (Doc 4)</p> <p>Copy of Transport Improvement Plan to be forwarded directly to the representative concerned.</p>
39.	What was the cost of the 'mapping exercise performed for the Harrow Vitality Profiles?	The total cost was £99,000 of which £20,000 was funded from revenue budgets and £79,000 was funded from a capital grant from Local Government On Line

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HARROW COUNCIL

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

1. Procurement encompasses every aspect of the purchasing process from determining the needs for works, services and supplies, to helping achieve the Council's key policies and objectives. Procurement is therefore defined as the whole process of acquisition from third parties and covers goods, services and construction projects. This process spans the whole life cycle from the initial concept and definition of business needs, through to the end of the useful life of an asset or end of services contract
2. A crosscutting Best Value review of the procurement function at Harrow in 2001-2002 recommended an Improvement Plan and a Corporate Strategy.
3. The Corporate Management Team endorsed these recommendations as part of the Council's commitment to deliver Best Value.

OBJECTIVES

The Council will:

4. Develop the management of procurement with Partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors:
 - contributing to the strategic aims of the Council.
 - realising economies of scale (process and unit costs).
 - establishing long term "partnerships" where appropriate.
5. Implement a three year Improvement Plan that:
 - enables continuous improvement of procurement, strategy and organisational development.
 - secures efficiency and cost gains.
 - ensures quality in the provision of supplies.
6. Consider sustainability as an important procurement criteria in service delivery. This will include social, economical and environmental issues.
7. Take a long term strategic view in respect of its procurement requirements, including the potential for innovative funding.
8. Where the Council has a choice between making goods or performing a service itself, the in-house source will generally be treated in the same way as external suppliers. In deciding between in-house provision and external provision full account will be taken of all relevant factors, not just cost, as part of an overarching options appraisal and feasibility study. Such factors will for example include: capacity; access to funding, technology and specialist staff resources; previous record of performance; and an appropriate outcome in on-going comparative or benchmarking exercises.

The Council will ensure:

9. The strategy is carried out in accordance with Council Standing Orders/Contract Procedures Rules, Financial Regulations and other policies, and compliance with UK and European laws.
10. That delivery of the strategy is monitored by the Corporate Management Team, Scrutiny Team and Cabinet.

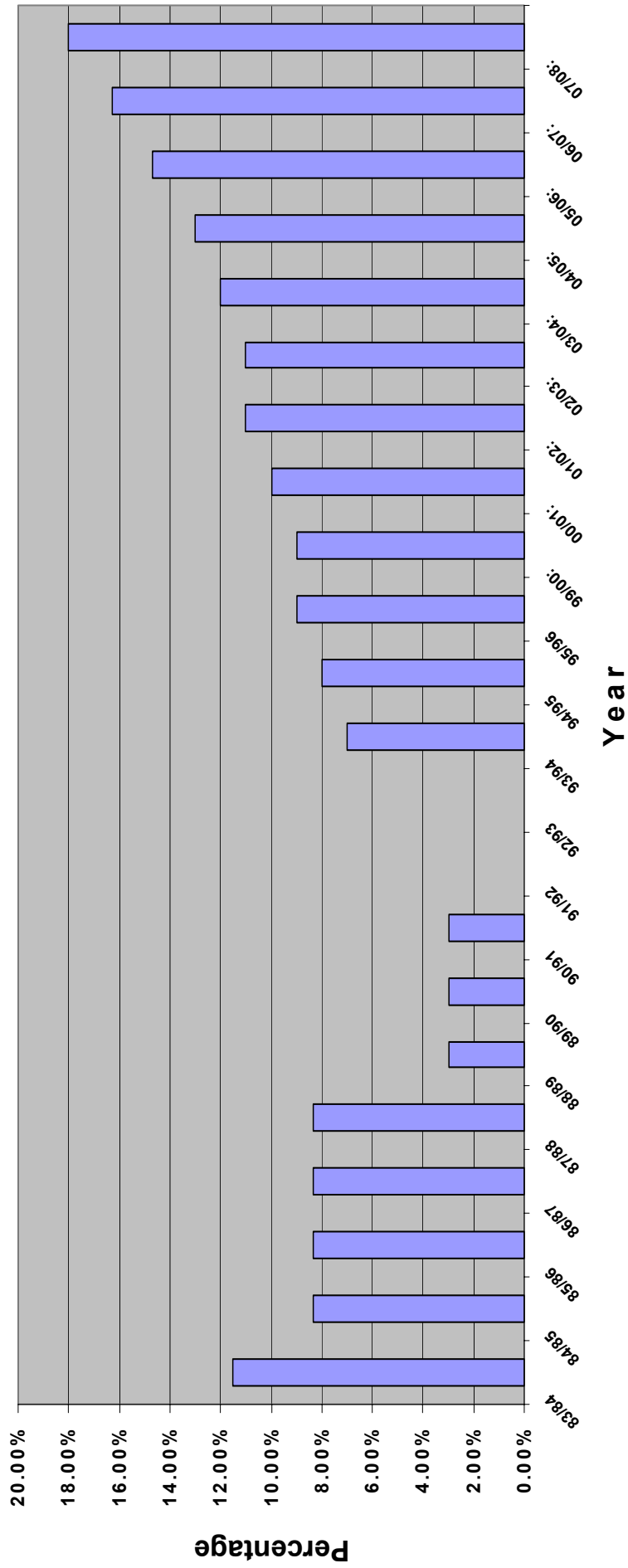
IMPLEMENTATION

The Council will:

11. Implement efficient and effective arrangements for the procurement function including:
 - Organisation and management structure.
 - Process management and its cost.
 - Consultation with customers, partners, suppliers and Council departments.
12. Implement a review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to facilitate efficient procurement including:
 - Tendering procedures.
 - Contract management.
 - Delegations.
13. Develop corporate Procurement Guidelines and Standards to ensure value for money through the use of best practice techniques, to include whole life costings.
14. Implement training and evaluate its outcome, both in terms of procurement skills and corporate culture.
15. Recognise sustainability as an important procurement criteria on:
 - Service delivery.
 - Social issues.
 - Impact on the local economy.
 - Continuing whole life costs.
16. Explore alternative ways of efficiently procuring supplies, services and works.
17. Evaluate and implement systems, including Information Technology, for the procurement function that:
 - achieve cost efficiency and effectiveness.
 - provide robust and timely management information.
18. Implement and maintain efficient and effective performance measures to include comparison with “best in class” organisations.

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Employer Contributions



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Parking Account

	2003-2004	2002-2003
	£000	£000
Income	-3,786	-3,306
Expenditure	1,446	1,375
Total Surplus for year	-2,340	-1,931
Use of Surplus		
Installation costs of Controlled Parking Zones	0	154
Design and implementation of traffic management schemes	1,374	1,123
Concessionary Fares	966	654
	2,340	1,931

Source 2003-2004 Statement of Accounts

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LIST OF ITEMS BEING DEVELOPED FOR WEALDSTONE HIGH STREET

1. Short term parking. Specifically, extra on street bays in Headstone Drive by examining removal of double yellow lines near post office.
2. Improvements to junction Headstone Drive/Cecil Road/Ellen Web way so as to improve traffic flow, but specifically, to allow car visitors travelling from Kodak vicinity to return direct without having to travel the wrong way along the length of Ellen Web Way merely to find somewhere beyond Ellen WW's junction with the High Street to make their return journey westwards.
3. Examine proposals for the introduction of, access to and short term parking in the High Street
4. Promotion of Peel House Multi Storey Car Park. Following the introduction of the first hour free and the loss of surface parking in Grant Road and Canning Road to residential development, what other promotion could benefit traders & shoppers.
5. Enforcement of highway obstruction by traders.
6. Improve Peel Road pedestrianised section and make it more user friendly with low level planting and reduced height walls.
7. Better car park signage to Peel Road Multi Storey.
8. Planters to be replaced in the High Street.
9. Anchor shops/draw traders to be encouraged to locate in the High Street.
10. Traffic travelling south be allowed to turn right at the Bridge (road parallel to the rail station) onto George Gange Way.
11. Traffic to be allowed right turns either way at the junction of the High Street with Ellen Web way/Masons Avenue just north of the railway station.
12. Vitality analysis needed for the retail core.
13. Workshop to discuss traffic issues, being a sub group of WRAP .4th November working party amplified point 155 above as:
14. Traffic is allowed in one direction (northwards) up the High Street.
15. Traffic is re-introduced into Headstone drive to cross the High Street and turn left (south) or go direct to Peel Multi Storey.
16. Very short-term parking introduced to one side of High Street.
17. Four disabled bays to be introduced at the rear of Premier House was challenged by members who prefer to see disabled bays at the north end of the High Street to access Iceland, Boots, Woolworths.
18. Inadequate signage as to the locations and sizes of car parks in the area.
19. Removal of pedestrian guard rails in central retail area following a risk assessment
20. Crime Audit of the area be carried out and particular reference be paid to youths around the Church in the High Street.
21. Realignment of cameras in the High St.
22. Access to Peel House MSCP and the surface parking off Gladstone Way could be improved by re-introducing two way traffic into Gladstone Way.
23. Goods vehicles leaving Masons Avenue turn left onto the Bridge at the junction Masons Ave with High Street and drag their rear wheels over the footpath as the turn radius is too tight. Could the footpath/road highway line be realigned?
24. Goods vehicles at the junction of the Bridge and George Gange Way that wish to turn left onto George Gange Way to travel north find the turn hard to negotiate as the radius is too tight and they repeatedly damage the pedestrian guard rail. Could the turn radius be made less sharp?
25. Introduce a yellow box junction and right turn lane buses only travelling south into the High Street in front of Woolworths to better align buses queuing to turn right which can block traffic as they wait to make the Turn.

26. Synchronise the lights at the junction mentioned in point 25 above with the lights at Lockett Road to smooth traffic flowing in this section of the High Street.
27. Assist Police to relocate to the Nat West building on the High Street
28. Let second floor of Wealdstone Centre to user that will add value to the High Street
29. Improve the shopping experience by removing all the 'control' signs, rusty unattractive barriers, etc and replace with themed signage, place names etc, that create a Wealdstone identity
30. Introduce coloured pedestrian trail with crossing point from the streets on the Byron Park side of George Gange Way to the High Street encourage pedestrian footfall