

HARROW BUSINESS CONSULTATIVE PANEL

15 NOVEMBER 2006

Chairman: * Councillor Manji Kara

Councillors: * Mrinal Choudhury Susan Hall
* Keith Ferry

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**16. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

17. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interests made by Members of the Panel arising from the business transacted at this meeting.

18. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

19. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2006, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

20. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:**(i) **Minute 15 - Economic Regeneration**

A representative of the Business Community presented bankruptcy figures for the Greater London Area, provided by Companies' House. It was reported that there had been an increase in creditor bankruptcies from 553 to 612 in 2005/2006, and an increase in debtor bankruptcies from 1,059 to 1567 in the same period. It was requested that a full set of this information be circulated to Members outside of the meeting.

In response to a Member's query, an officer reported that students had been employed to conduct research as part of the Business Mapping exercise conducted by Harrow in Business

(ii) **Minute 16 - Poor Attendance by Business Representatives**

An officer reported that invitations had been sent out to 300 businesses before the Panel's meeting. It was reported that meetings of the Panel had previously been held in the day, and that evening meetings had been suggested to increase participation, but with limited success. It was suggested that alternate venues outside the Civic Centre be considered for meetings.

A representative of the business community pointed to the traditionally limited success of cold-calling methods such as those used in inviting the attendance of organisations, and suggested a greater emphasis on networking.

It was also suggested that the approach of the Panel's meetings be changed to reflect themes relevant to the business community.

On the question of Business Incubator Development an officer reported that there had been little progress on this scheme since the Panel's last meeting.

RESOLVED: That the above matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2006 be noted.

21. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

22. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

23. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

24. **Harrow Business Against Crime - Update:**

The Panel received a presentation from the Business Crime Reduction Manager, Harrow Business Against Crime (HBAC), who outlined the work and structure of the organisation.

It was stated that the organisation aimed to work with local businesses and police to reduce business crime in the area. HBAC would initially cover the town centre area, before looking to expand.

HBAC would operate by collating information from members in order to identify persistent offenders, who would then be entered onto a database. This information could then be analysed and distributed to members of the scheme, including photographs of offenders. An Exclusion Notice Scheme would also operate, banning certain individuals from members' premises, with the possibility of legal proceedings if breached. Currently, 50 offenders were listed on the database.

The Panel heard that HBAC had approached 127 businesses, of which 11 had opted to become members, and that further interest had been received.

In response to questions, the Panel heard the following:

- HBAC had a required annual budget of £52,000;
- its work was compatible with Harrow's 'Pub-Watch' scheme;
- there would be a review of the scheme in March 2007, with the possibility of expansion after this point, provided that this was judged to be manageable.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted

25. **Harrow Economic Development and Regeneration Review - Update:**

The Panel heard that, since its last meeting, the Harrow Economic Profile had refined and signed off, and that the consultancy firm employed, GHK, had provided a further report entitled 'Towards a revised Economic Regeneration Strategy'.

In addition, it was reported that the Deputy Leader had met with the Director of Planning Services and the Senior Professional responsible for the project, and it had been agreed that a network of the largest businesses and organisations in the Borough would be established. These organisations were to meet on 14 December 2006, the matters arising from which would provide further points for action in the New Year.

It was also stated that the steering group for HEDRR had been widened, to include officers involved in regulatory work, business, and certain agencies such as West London Business.

In response to questions, it was stated that the second report had built upon the first, focusing on specific issues. The Panel heard that issues such as the type and nature of skills available in Harrow and the provision of courses were covered by the report. Members requested that details of the reports be circulated to them outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.25 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MANJI KARA
Chairman