

Action Sheet HBCP 2 Feb 2006

Minute Number	Action Required	To be carried out by	Completion Date	Comments from the Chair
18.	<p>A representative queried parking fines which were being levied on delivery vehicles, and pointed out the high cost of appeal. It was asked what proportion of the Council's funding came from such fines. The Director of Financial and Business strategy responded that she was unaware of precise figures, but offered to research the query and inform the representative in due course.</p> <p>The Council only records parking fine income from Vans and income specifically related to delivery vans is not recorded separately. However, delivery vehicles that are complying with waiting and loading restrictions, i.e. genuinely loading/unloading at locations and times permitted, should not incur parking penalties.</p> <p>The total income from parking fines is £ 58m a year, which represents 11.4% of the gross budget.</p>	Director of Financial and Business Strategy	As soon as possible	
18.	<p>The Panel discussed the Business Improvements Districts (BIDS) scheme, which would allow the Council to levy a separate charge to spend on local issues. Officers explained that projects under this scheme had previously been attempted in Harrow, but with limited support. A representative suggested that officers look to Westminster for a positive example of such a scheme, a suggestion which officers offered to look into.</p> <p>A BID does not have to be local authority lead and in the majority of cases where these operate, the proposers have been local businesses. Should a formal group of businesses get together with a view to proposing a BID, then the authority would help with technical support by providing lists of names, properties and rateable values so an evaluation could take place.</p> <p>However, considering Harrow's low rateable value base, the authority does not believe that a BID would be viable without charging an unduly large levy to raise a viable amount to be spent in the locality. For example, most other BID's in place have won their ballots on the basis that the initial levy is 1p in the pound; in effect charging a business with a rateable value of £10,000 a BID charge of £100 per year.</p> <p>The total rateable value for the 4,900 properties in the borough is approximately £117,500,000. If a group of businesses wished to set up a BID, assuming 300 local businesses participated, pro rata this would provide approximately</p>	Director of Financial and Business Strategy	As soon as possible	

	<p>7,250,000 in rateable value on which a levy could be raised. Assuming a levy of 1p, this potentially would raise approximately £73,000 gross in levy. After deducting running costs etc, this would leave little to spend locally.</p> <p>The above example clearly illustrates why the authority will not lead a BID. There is no reason why local businesses can not lead a BID themselves, but a voluntary contribution agreement between local businesses in the same locality, where businesses agree on priorities, the level of voluntary contributions each is prepared to make and then on how to spend the money, might be a more effective way of investing funds to be spent for the good of local businesses.</p>			
18.	<p>A representative queried what proportion of houses of Harrow received public sector support. The Director of Financial and Business Strategy offered to give a written response, but stated that the budget for housing benefits was a separate government grant.</p> <p>Approx 1 in 6 Households receive help towards their rent and Council Tax</p>	Director of Financial and Business Strategy	As soon as possible	
19. (i)	<p>A representative raised concerns relating to business crime, stating that offences such as fraud were costing businesses in Harrow more than offences such as theft, and asked that the council consult local businesses on this issue. An officer noted the representative's concerns, and acknowledged that a consultation might be desirable. The Harrow Business Against Crime (HBAC) initiative is planned to go live on 1 April 2006. Following appointment of a Business Information Manager there will be a formal launch during May/June to raise awareness of HBAC and consult businesses.</p>	Ian Pearce, Crime Reduction Manager	May/June 2006.	
19. (ii)	<p>We are in the process of recruiting the Business Information Manager to manage and co-ordinate the HBAC initiative. The launch of the HBAC scheme is programmed to take place May/June time - the launch will provide an ideal opportunity to consult businesses re their issues/concerns.</p> <p>A representative asked whether the radio systems outlined above had reached Wealdstone. In response, an officer stated that currently the scheme was focused on the town centre, but that it was a new initiative and so should be given time to extend to other wards. <i>The Chair has asked that the scale and timeframe of this expansion be specified more closely, and that panel members be informed accordingly.</i></p> <p>There is currently no radio link provision in Wealdstone. Following implementation of HBAC scheme in the Town Centre the intention is to expand to Wealdstone and other main shopping centres in the Borough. Timescales for this yet to be set.</p>	Ian Pearce, Crime Reduction Manager	As soon as possible.	Point (ii) added at the request of the Chair.