

PUBLICATIONS ADVISORY PANEL

12 FEBRUARY 2004

Chair: * Councillor Marie-Louise Nolan

Councillors: * Branch * Jean Lammiman
 * Burchell (2) * Stephenson
 * Knowles

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

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**106. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Harrison

Councillor Burchell

107. **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.

108. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

109. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That, having been circulated, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2003 and the minutes of the special meeting held on 9 December 2003 be taken as read and signed as correct records of those meetings.

110. **Public Questions:**

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

111. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no petitions to be received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

112. **Deputations:**

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

113. **References from Council and Other Committees/Panels:**

A reference was received from the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting of 20 January 2004, arising from that Committee's consideration of a report that reviewed the retention and recruitment of School Governors. It was agreed that the Panel would recommend the establishment of a separate web page and message board for school governors and the promotion of the governors' role on the web site and in Harrow People.

The Chair informed Members of the email network established by the Governors and requested that officers examine the possibility of interactivity between this network and the APLAWS project. Members also considered the possibility of a discussion forum on the web site especially for school governors.

RESOLVED: That (1) a separate web page and message board for schools governors be established;

(2) officers would explore ways of promoting the role of governors on the web site and in Harrow People.

114. **Spring Edition of Harrow People:**

A draft copy of the Spring Edition had not been seen by the Panel prior to the meeting and was therefore not discussed. However, the following items for the next edition of Harrow People were identified: -

- Information on Scrutiny
- The recruitment and retention of Governors
- The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder had requested an item on cycling and walking as an alternative method of transport. It was agreed that this could be linked to the article on the cycling proficiency test.
- Canons High School, Roxeth and Glebe Primary schools.
- Library opening hours on Wednesdays and Roxeth Library's 50th Anniversary.
- Jubilee Programme Update
- International two-day event in May
- Gold and silver anniversaries together in Harrow Museum.
- Harrow Arts Centre 100 years old
- Feature new Directors
- The New Directorates- structure and responsibilities
- List of who to contact in relation to particular issues - environmental health, abandoned cars etc.

115. **Council Noticeboards:**

The Head of Communications explained to the Panel that the issue had been raised due to the lack of a policy regarding community noticeboards. There were no guidelines on fees for advertising on the boards leading to inconsistent charges of the different advertisers. The Council currently had an agreement with Adshel stating that the company could advertise in return for supplying the boards. The contract was due to be renewed in Autumn 2004 and the Head of Communications asked the Members of the Panel to consider the contract and also the use, condition and siting of the boards.

RESOLVED: That (1) the verbal report of the Head of Communications be noted;

(2) the Head of Communications provide Members with a report on the Council noticeboards at the next meeting of the Panel.

116. **Council Website:**

The Communication and Publication Manager informed the Panel that the Council was to launch a new system in March where selected staff could upload information on the web site themselves instead of allocating it to the IT section as had been done previously. However, an adequate checking system would still be used to monitor the uploaded information. The scheme would involve both staff and voluntary organisations and the persons selected for the scheme would undergo relevant training in editorial skills and procedural safeguards. The officer also explained that the APLAWS system had been introduced by several other Councils. Members expressed some concerns regarding the monitoring of information being uploaded by staff within individual departments and whether sufficient checks would be made to ensure consistency of approach and content.

RESOLVED: That (1) the verbal report of the Communication and Publication Manager be noted;

(2) the Communication and Publication Manager provide Members with a report on the development of the Council web site via the APLAWS system.

117. **Area Newsletters:**

The Head of Communications explained that as part of the New Harrow Project, newsletters from different areas of Harrow would be produced and circulated. There were currently nine operational areas which would lead to a production of nine different newsletters sent out every two months in addition to Harrow People. The officer explained that this would be impossible with the current resources and, as an alternative, he would like the Panel to consider the proposal of one newsletter covering three areas and sending out a reduced edition of Harrow People with the area newsletters as inserts. Harrow People would be circulated six times a year with three different newsletters.

In addition to the proposal, the officer presented the Panel with three options to consider on printing and distributing Harrow People. Members were informed that one option was to maintain the relationship with the Harrow Observer, leaving the distribution and printing of the magazine to that newspaper with no additional costs involved. Another option would be to keep the current layout of the magazine and use an independent distributor incurring significant incremental costs. The third option for the Panel to consider would be a restructured Harrow People; a reduced copy of the magazine with an area newsletter included as an insert. The officer further explained to the Panel that the Council had made provisions in the budget for the production of certain statutory documents such as information on recycling, collection of refuse during Christmas and guides to primary schools. This information could be sent out under cover of Harrow People which in return would benefit from the funding set out for the production of this information. This would consequently reduce the costs of producing the magazine.

In the discussion that followed a Member of the Panel commented that some of the information to be sent out was too specific for general distribution. The Chair requested that the production costs of the magazine be more detailed in order to consider the options more carefully. Concerns were also raised that an increased frequency of Harrow People would lead to significant production and distribution capacity problems. The Chair suggested that Members of the Panel be provided with the printing schedule for Harrow People in order to provide officers with their comments well in advance of deadlines.

RESOLVED: That (1) the verbal report of the Head of Communication be noted;

(2) the Head of Communications provide Members of the Panel with a report detailing the three options for changing the format for Harrow People Magazine;

(3) the Communication and Publication Manager provide Members of the Panel with the printing schedule for Harrow People.

118.

Presentation on "Modern.Gov" Software System:

The Panel received a presentation from a member of the Committee Services section of the committee information on the Intranet where all information relating to the Committee Section's work could be viewed. The officer informed the Members about the various search functions available such as searching for Portfolio Holders' Decisions and also explained that the search function related only to items from the Committee Section. This section of the site also displayed merged agendas and minutes from the various Committees and information on Members and their appointments to various Committees. The officer continued to explain how the services provided on the site would enable Members to create their own personal boxes to provide them with information from all Committees in which they had an interest. The Members could also access Part II documents for the Committees to which they had been appointed using a password and could furthermore submit their comments on minutes electronically.

Following the presentation, Members raised concerns that personal details published on the Internet could represent a security issue and it was suggested that positive permission from the Members should be sought prior to any publication of personal details on the Internet. The Democratic and Members Services Manager advised that officers were currently examining how information is held on Internet, especially in terms of how attendance of meetings is recorded, to maintain accuracy and consistency.

Members agreed there was a need for further IT training on Intra/Internet usage and Members requested that the Communication and Publication Manager inquire whether the Panel could participate in the IT workshop organised by the Finance Portfolio Holder to be held shortly.

The Panel thanked the Committee Administrator for her presentation of the "Modern.Gov" Committee system.

RESOLVED: That (1) the presentation of the Committee Administrator be noted;

(2) the Publication and Communication Manager ascertain whether the Panel could attend the IT workshop.

119. **Any Other Business:**(i) Harrow People last edition

The Head of Communications reported that following inaccuracies in the distribution of the last edition of Harrow People containing the budget consultation, the Harrow Observer had been asked to give an account of its distribution. It was reported that the Harrow Observer had carried out its usual checks and redelivered in the areas which had not received Harrow People. The Harrow Observer admitted to delays when using Solus as a distributor, but reported that it was due to an initial incorrect packaging of Harrow People.

Consideration was then given to other issues regarding the last edition.

A Member of the Panel was concerned that other methods of distribution such as through the Royal Mail had not been considered prior to publication.

Another Member commented that the 'Other languages' paragraph on the last page of the consultation form was unclear and ought to be changed.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the leaflet on the New Harrow Project which contained the same article as appeared in Harrow People page 5, the Head of Communications explained that his department had been specifically asked to send out this leaflet by the Leader's office and that Harrow People was at that time already in production leading to the duplication of the information. The Chair requested that Members should receive details of the cost of the leaflet.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report of the Head of Communications be noted and Members would receive details of the cost of the leaflet inserted in Harrow People.

(ii) Agenda 21

The local environmental group had launched a website to promote the environment in Harrow. The Communication and Publication Manager informed the Members that the website had experienced some difficulties and consequently had not been linked to the Harrow Council's web site yet.

(iii) Special meeting

It was agreed that an additional meeting be held to discuss further the Spring Edition of Harrow People; the date for the meeting to be decided after consultation with the Communications Unit.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.05 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MARIE-LOUISE NOLAN
Chair