

## PUBLICATIONS ADVISORY PANEL (SPECIAL)

9 DECEMBER 2003

Chair: \* Councillor Marie-Louise Nolan

Councillors: \* Branch \* Knowles  
 \* Foulds (1) \* Jean Lammiman  
 \* Harrison

\* Denotes Member present  
 (1) Denotes category of Reserve Member

96. **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 Lent	Councillor Foulds

97. **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.

98. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

99. **Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** That the signing of the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2003 be deferred until printed in the next Council Bound Minute Volume.

100. **Public Questions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were put at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15.

101. **Petitions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 13.

102. **Deputations:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14.

103. **Winter Edition of Harrow People: Budget Consultation Document:**

The Panel received the Budget Consultation Document, which outlined Council Tax rates, options for growth and options for savings. The Head of Communications advised that the consultation document would be distributed to Harrow Residents and Harrow Libraries, included as an insert in the Winter Edition of Harrow People, after the Cabinet meeting on 13 January 2004. Members of the public would then have until 8 February 2004 to respond. It was envisaged that the consultation document would enable the public to understand how Council Tax rates are set and to have an opportunity to air their views on how to set the rate for 2004-2005.

The Head of Communications advised that the consultation document, which was circulated to Members prior to the meeting, was still in draft form in terms of design. Consideration was then given to each page of the consultation document. The Panel noted minor changes to content, layout and design. Major changes were discussed as set out below: -

**Front Cover:** A Member of the Panel queried whether the Greater London Assembly (GLA) precept figure, which is set by the Mayor of London and approved by the GLA, included figures for policing. In response, the Head of Communications advised that all figures quoted in the consultation document currently exclude the GLA precept and that the police figure would be included in this. Following discussion, the Panel agreed that

the consultation document be amended to explicitly set out what would be included in the GLA precept, as it had done so in previous years.

In response to a query from a Member, the Head of Communications confirmed that the GLA would not be consulting individual taxpayers in Greater London in relation to the GLA precept.

**Page Two:** The Head of Communications advised that the final design would include a picture of a pair of scissors and a dotted line between pages two and three, which would indicate to members of the public that they had to fill in, detach and return page three. A Member of the Panel felt that the layout of the page looked untidy and requested that the boxes be spaced out more and that the edges of the boxes be changed to bold or a darker colour. The Head of Communications advised that this effect could be created by increasing the font size, which would enhance the space between the boxes.

Another Member commented that the colour coding of the options on page 2 needed to be consistent with that on page 3 and requested that this be changed in order to prevent any confusion. The Panel discussed the different growth and savings options and a Member of the Panel queried why there was not a growth / savings option that would amount to 0% increase, from which the public could choose. It was agreed that this was a matter for Cabinet to decide.

A Member of the Panel commented that the running total tool was helpful and that the consultation document was both comprehensive and logical. Members discussed the different ways in which the public could respond to the consultation document and it was agreed that details of the Council's phone line be inserted alongside the Council's web site throughout the document.

**Page Three:** The Head of Communications informed Members that the missing text at the bottom of the page was due to the photocopier and not the formatting of the consultation document. A Member of the Panel requested that the term 'greening and cleaning' be replaced with 'clean and green' to be consistent with the message of the New Harrow Project. It was also agreed that a hanging indent be inserted into the left hand column to separate the lettering from the text.

The Panel also agreed that the titles of the options be consistent, as it was noted that on page two Option B was 'Improve Disability Services' whereas on page three Option B was 'Improving Disability Services'. A Member of the Panel requested that the Head of Communications check whether 're-phase' was one word or a hyphenated word.

**Back Cover:** In response to a query from a Member, the Head of Communications advised that the community languages looked blurred as this was a copy of a copy and that it would be much clearer in the final version. Members were informed that the seven languages displayed were the main community languages spoken in the Borough.

The Panel discussed whether there should be a space for members of the public to write their names and addresses. It was agreed that, in terms of design, there was no room for this and that the Council was unable to acknowledge and respond to each comment individually, which members of the public may expect if they are willing to give their personal details.

A Member of the Panel requested that the following sentence be added to the consultation document: "If you would like a copy of the consultation document, please feel free to contact the Council by telephoning 020 8... .. or print a copy of it online at [www.harrow.gov.uk](http://www.harrow.gov.uk)". The Panel felt that this was required should members of the public wish to keep a copy of their calculations on page 3. It was further agreed that the Panel would be advised of what the telephone operators / voicemail would state on the phone line once this information had been made available by the Executive Director (Business Connections). Members felt that it was important for the Panel to have a say in how the Council presents itself.

The Panel discussed the process by which members of the public could access the consultation document online. A Member of the Panel was concerned that last year there was not an opportunity to say 'neither' in relation to the spending and savings options or to skip the comments box section with no default imposed.

A Member of the Panel requested that the text above the comments box be made more engaging and user-friendly, for example to read "the Council would welcome your comments. Please feel free to add these in the space provided below". Members of the

Panel requested to be sent information relating to the total cost of the consultation document and details of any savings in relation to previous years.

The Panel discussed how the consultation document would be distributed this year and how the Council could check whether it had been successfully delivered to all residents. The Head of Communications advised that 100% delivery could not be guaranteed but that the Harrow Observer, who would be delivering the consultation document with the Winter Edition of Harrow People, had installed a new system of checks to monitor delivery.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the consultation document be altered to explicitly set out what would be included in the Greater London Assembly (GLA) precept;

(2) the layout of the page looked untidy and it was requested that the colour coding of the options on page 2 be consistent with those on page 3;

(3) details of the Council's phone line be inserted alongside the Council's web site throughout the document;

(4) the term 'greening and cleaning' be replaced with 'clean and green' on page three;

(5) a hanging indent be inserted into the left hand column to separate the lettering from the text on page three;

(6) the titles of the options on pages two and three be consistent;

(7) the Panel would be advised of what the telephone operators / voicemail would state on the phone line;

(8) the text above the comments box be made more engaging;

(9) Members of the Panel be sent information relating to the total cost of the consultation document and details of any savings in relation to previous years;

(10) the Budget Consultation Document for 2004 / 2005 be welcomed, noted and amended accordingly.

104. **Advertising in Harrow People:**

The Head of Communications confirmed that the advertising space in the Winter Edition of Harrow People had been filled to capacity. Members of the Panel noted that this source of revenue had greatly decreased the costs for printing and design work and that the Council now had the best deal in London for a council magazine.

**RESOLVED:** That the verbal update from the Head of Communications be noted.

105. **Corporate Branding / Identity:**

A Member informed the Panel that two recent documents from Housing Services had not carried the Council's new design or logo. It was re-iterated that draft copies of Housing Services' publications 'Homing In' and 'Homing In [Special]' should be circulated to the Chair and Vice Chair prior to distribution in order to ensure that all Council publications had corporate branding.

**RESOLVED:** That draft copies of Housing Services' publications 'Homing In' and 'Homing In [Special]' be circulated to the Chair and Vice Chair prior to distribution and that the appropriate officers be reminded of this requirement which has previously been agreed.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.02 pm, closed at 7.46 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MARIE-LOUISE NOLAN  
Chair