

**UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY
PANEL****8 JULY 2004**

Chair: * Councillor Burchell

Councillors: * Marilyn Ashton * Mrs Kinnear
* Mrs Bath * Ray (3)
* Idaikkadar * Anne Whitehead* Denotes Member present
(3) Denotes category of Reserve Member**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS****RECOMMENDATION 1 - Developing the Local Development Framework in Harrow**

Your Panel received a report of the Chief Planning Officer regarding the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Harrow.

It was advised that, in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act which had recently received Royal Assent, the Authority was now working towards the development of a Local Development Framework which would replace the Unitary Development Plan.

In contrast with the Unitary Development Plan, the Local Development Framework would consist of a suite of documents, and it was envisaged that this would facilitate the rolling review of policies, allowing the development plan system to be more flexible, responsive and speedy.

As the first stage in the development of the LDF, the Authority was required to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS) which would set out all those Local Development Documents which the Authority intended to include in the LDF. It would also outline what these documents would cover and a timetable for their preparation over a three year period, up until April 2007. The deadline for the submission of the LDS to the Government Office for London (GOL) was December 2004 and it was advised that having an approved LDS would affect the calculation of the Authority's Planning Development Grant for 2005/06.

The officer report set out a list of matters which it was suggested might be included within the LDS. It was noted that included on this list was the recently adopted Harrow UDP, which it was explained could be 'saved' until such time that the LDF was approved and replaced it.

It was emphasised that the programme set out within the LDS needed to be challenging and reflect the Borough's needs, but also be achievable and realistic as the Borough would be assessed against its performance in completing this programme.

Officers stressed that production of the LDF would require fundamentally closer linkages between the Authority's planning policies and other corporate and pan-London strategies which had implications for the development and use of land in the Borough, the aim being that the authority take an integrated approach to the implementation of those strategies. Relevant strategies would include, for example, the Authority's Housing Strategy Statement, Community Care Plan, and Waste Management and Recycling Plan. Arising from this, a Member requested that the Authority's Community Strategy be re-circulated to Members of the Panel.

Reflecting the Government's general approach in the wider modernising agenda, the LDF process also placed much greater emphasis on the need for authorities to effectively engage the community in the strategic planning process, involving them in the development of policies at an early stage rather than consulting them on a product at the end of the formulation process. It was envisaged that early and effective engagement would reduce differences and create a degree of consensus, thereby avoid confrontation and objection at the examination stage and ensuring a speedier and more streamlined process.

The Authority would be required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which would set out the arrangements for involving the public in the process. Officers explained that the Authority would need to demonstrate that a wide range of different groups had participated, including minority groups which were traditionally difficult to reach, and would therefore need to develop innovative mechanisms to

involve different groups.

Policies would also be required to be justified against comprehensive, sound and reliable evidence.

Having received the officer report, the Panel sought clarification on a number of issues. During the discussion which followed, several Members voiced concern that the additional responsibilities relating to community engagement would be time-consuming and resource intensive, and that the introduction of LDFs generally imposed greater responsibilities on the Authority, but that the additional funding that meeting these responsibilities would require had not been forthcoming.

Officers confirmed that there were significant resource implications arising from the introduction of LDFs and advised that a report regarding these was to be submitted to Cabinet shortly. It was noted that the Authority was liaising with other local authorities in order to develop good practice and a common understanding on some elements of the LDF in order to maximise the use of the Authority's resources. A Member suggested that the Authority might also liaise with local authorities in other countries which had similar strategic planning systems to benefit from their experience.

There was some concern also expressed that the public would feel frustrated by the constraints on the Borough arising from the need to conform with the London Plan and government guidance and policies, and public participation would therefore be low. In response, the Chief Planning Officer emphasised that part of the Authority's role would be to ensure that the constraints and pressures on the Borough were properly explained to the community and that they were given the tools to understand the context within which the Authority was seeking their views, to ensure that they had realistic aspirations.

A number of proposals arising from the officer report were put forward. It was suggested that the Panel recommend to Cabinet that the Panel be retitled to reflect the recent changes to the strategic planning system, and that officers be requested to revise the Panel's terms of reference to reflect its new duties. It was requested that the revised terms of reference be submitted to the Panel's next meeting for discussion. It was further suggested that the Liberal Democrat Group be invited to nominate a Member to be a non-voting co-optee on the Panel. The Chair suggested that training for staff and Members on the LDF be scheduled for the autumn.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (To Cabinet)

That the UDP Advisory Panel be retitled the 'Strategic Planning Advisory Panel'.

[REASON: To reflect the recent changes to the Planning System].

(To the Portfolio Holder)

That (1) the above report be noted;

(2) officers be requested to prepare the draft Local Development Scheme (LDS) for Harrow for clearance by the Portfolio Holder or Chair and Nominated Member of the Panel for informal discussion with GOL;

(3) the final version of the LDS be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Panel;

[REASON: To allow the preparation of the LDS to be progressed to meet statutory deadlines].

(4) officers be requested to revise the Panel's terms of reference to reflect its new duties and submit them to the Panel's next meeting for discussion;

[REASON: To ensure that the Panel's Terms of Reference reflect its new duties].

(5) the Liberal Democrat Group be invited to nominate a Member to be a non-voting co-optee on the Panel;

[REASON: To allow representation of the Liberal Democrat Group on the Panel].

(6) training for staff and Members on the LDF be scheduled for the autumn; and

[REASON: To ensure Members are fully conversant with the new planning system].

(7) copies of the Community Strategy be re-circulated to Members of the Panel.

[REASON: In accordance with a Member's request].

RECOMMENDATION 2 - Interim Report on Green Belt Management Strategy

The Panel received an interim report of the Chief Planning Officer regarding a long-term management strategy for Harrow's Green Belt land. It was noted that this report had recently been submitted to Cabinet for discussion and was now put before the Panel for comment. The Panel's comments would be forwarded to Cabinet, together with a further report on this matter.

The report explained that the Authority had significant land assets within the Green Belt, including farm land and open spaces such as Stanmore Common and Bentley Priory, and that the need for a long-term management strategy for the Green Belt in general and the Council's land holdings within the Green Belt specifically had recently become apparent. The aims of the Strategy and the options for funding it were outlined.

In the discussion which followed, several Members expressed support for this initiative. A Member commented that she would welcome, however, explicit mention within the Strategy of the Council's aim of protecting the Green Belt. A second Member indicated that she would like to see greater emphasis not just on maintaining the appearance of green spaces but on increasing their environmental and conservation value. It was also agreed that the Authority should look to increase their promotion of open spaces to residents as it was felt that there was low awareness of many of them.

Some reservation was expressed with regard to using money from potential future Section 106 agreements to fund the strategy and it was suggested that the Council explore further the option of obtaining grants from charitable or other organisations as a source of funding.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (To Cabinet)

That the comments outlined above be noted.

[REASON: To inform Cabinet's decision].

PART II - MINUTES

108. **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 N Shah	Councillor Ray

109. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note the following declarations of interest made by Members present relating to the business to be transacted at this meeting: -

Agenda Item 9 – Interim Report on Green Belt Management Strategy

Councillor Marilyn Ashton pointed out that the above report contained some reference to Bentley Priory and advised that she lived near Bentley Priory. She noted that the report did not go into specific proposals for this area and explained that she therefore considered it appropriate to declare only a personal interest in the item.

Councillor Mrs Bath declared an interest in the above item arising from her position as Chair of the Bentley Priory Nature Reserve Management Committee.

Both Members remained and took part in the discussion and decision-making on this item.

110. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

111. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That (1) the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 18 March 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record of that meeting; and

(2) the minutes of the Special Meeting held on 7 June 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and the Chair be given the authority to sign the minutes as a correct record of that meeting once they have been printed in the Council Bound Minute Volume.

112. **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).

113. **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).

114. **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).

115. **Developing the Local Development Framework in Harrow:**

See Recommendation 1 above.

116. **Interim Report on Green Belt Management Strategy:**

See Recommendation 2 above.

117. **Item Placed on the Agenda Further to a Request made by a Member - Section 106 Agreements:**

Further to the request at the Panel's previous meeting that this item be placed on the agenda for discussion, a Member raised a number of queries in relation to Section 106 Agreements.

In response to a query regarding whether the right to buy key worker accommodation extended to those renting units, the Chief Planning Officer confirmed that it did not.

The Member agreed that, as a legal officer was not present at this meeting, she would submit the remainder of her queries and comments in writing.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.15 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR KEITH BURCHELL
Chair