

TOWN CENTRE PROJECT PANEL

8 DECEMBER 2005

Chair: * Councillor Burchell

Councillors: * D Ashton
* C Mote* O'Dell
* Bill Stephenson (1)* Denotes Member present
(1) Denotes category of Reserve Member**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL****PART II - MINUTES**61. **Attendance by Reserve Members:****RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at the meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-Ordinary MemberReserve Member

Councillor N Shah

Councillor Bill Stephenson

62. **Declarations of Interest:****RESOLVED:** To note that the following interest was declared:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
10. Harrow-on-the-Hill Station	Councillor Bill Stephenson	Declared a personal interest in that he was a Governor at Harrow College. Accordingly, he remained in the room whilst matters was considered and voted upon.

63. **Arrangement of Agenda:****RESOLVED:** That all items be considered with the press and public present with the exception of the following items for the reasons set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
10. Harrow-on-the-Hill Station	The report contained exempt information under paragraphs 7 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) on the grounds that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person and any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property
11. Clarendon Road Public Realm Improvements	The report contained exempt information under paragraph 8 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that it contained information concerning the amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Authority under any particular contract for the acquisition or the supply of goods or services.

64. **Minutes:****RESOLVED:** That, subject to the following amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2005, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record:

Minute 58, Café Culture: Resolution be amended to read:
"That the draft Café Culture Guide for Harrow Town Centre be approved."

65. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received at this meeting under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

66. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

67. **Harrow-on-the-Hill Station:**

The Director of Strategic Planning reported orally at the meeting on this matter, both in the public and private sessions of the meeting. He reported that the Council had received a planning application from Dandara Ltd for the redevelopment of 51 College Road, the old Post Office site.

The Director advised that the Council was consulting widely on the planning application. He stated that the application would be considered by the Development Control Committee in due course and that the merits of the application would be judged against the Council's adopted policies for Harrow Town Centre and the Planning Brief for the Harrow-on-the-Hill Station site.

The Panel was also informed that the office building adjacent to the bus station in Harrow Town Centre had been purchased by a property company and that officers were discussing whether this could be included in any future development.

Additionally, the Council was holding discussions with Harrow College on their accommodation strategy which they intended to submit to the Learning and Skills Council in January 2006.

RESOLVED: That the oral report be noted.

68. **Harrow Town Centre Public Realm Strategy:**

The Director of Strategic Planning and an officer introduced the report and responded to questions from Members of the Panel.

The Director sought the Panel's approval to the appointment of a consultant design team to prepare a public realm strategy for Harrow Town Centre and the Brief circulated with the agenda. He also sought Members' views on the extent of their own involvement in the selection process for a consultant.

An officer reported that it was intended to create a high quality public realm in conjunction with a multi-disciplinary consultant team who had a proven track record in public realm design and its delivery. He explained that the consultant team would implement the proposals and deal with all engineering and technical issues. He added that, subject to the approval of the draft Brief, the tender process would commence after Christmas 2005 with a view to appointing a consultant by March 2006.

In response to questions from Members of the Panel on the Brief, the Director and the officer responded as follows:

Vision and Objectives

- that it was intended to create a distinct identity for Harrow Town Centre in order to distinguish it from its competitors such as Brent Cross and Watford Shopping Centres;
- that whilst there may be some benefits in taking a consistent approach to the public realm for Harrow as a whole, it was important for Harrow Town Centre to have a distinct identity which would distinguish Harrow from competing shopping centres;
- that the priority was to regenerate Harrow Town Centre and to create a high quality public realm that provided a unique sense of place and a unique Harrow identity that was distinctive;

- that lessons could be learnt which could be developed for Harrow's other District Centres;
- that the Council's procurement team would be involved in the process;
- that the consultant appointed would be expected to develop designs to a stage where they could be implemented and that the Council was not looking to appoint a contractor to implement the design at this early stage.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport considered this scheme as a pilot and supported the concept. He stated that officers should be mindful of asking the consultant appointed to create a design that could be adapted for Harrow's District Centres. He emphasised the need for close liaison between the consultant appointed and the Council's procurement team, and the Director undertook to ensure that this issue was addressed in the Brief.

Two Members opposed the proposal to pay a maximum of £5,000 to consultant teams shortlisted to cover the costs of preparing a detailed tender and an outline design approach in response to the Brief. They noted the reasons behind this approach but were of the view that this approach was fundamentally inappropriate.

In response to comments from other Members of the Panel, the Director stated that:-

- the consultant appointed would be asked to create a physical environment which had economic/commercial benefits on the scheme but emphasised that the scheme was intended to be a design-led approach.
- the Council's intention was to ensure that Harrow Town Centre was able to compete with other shopping centres such as Brent Cross and Watford, whereas Harrow's district centres were considered to be complementary shopping areas to its Town Centre. It was acknowledged however, that there would be a spin-off for the district centres when Harrow Town Centre was developed.

The Director responded that these aspects would be emphasised in the Brief.

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning requested that the Brief ought to include requirements of costs and design. The Director responded that these aspects would be emphasised in the Brief. These are listed in resolution (2) below.

Members of the Panel expressed the view that they be invited to take part in the selection process of the consultant.

RESOLVED: (1) That the proposed appointment of a consultant design team to prepare a Public Realm Strategy for Harrow Town Centre be endorsed;

(2) that the Draft Consultants' Brief be approved, subject to the inclusion of the following:

- the need for the consultant appointed to liaise closely with the Council's procurement team
- that the design would be straightforward and not to lead to maintenance problems or excessive expense;
- that both revenue and capital costs for future years should be projected by the consultant(s) so that the Council was aware of its commitments.

(3) that all Members of the Panel be invited to take part in the selection process.

[Note: Councillors D Ashton and C Mote wished to be recorded as having voted against the proposal included in the Brief that a maximum of £5,000 be paid to consultant teams shortlisted to cover their costs for preparing a detailed tender and an outline design approach].

69. **Clarendon Road Public Realm Improvements:**

The Panel considered a confidential report of the Director of Strategic Planning which provided a brief history of the proposed 'Hanging Gardens' and surface treatment works in Clarendon Road.

The Director reported on the changes in the scheme prepared by Alsop & Partners, the consultants appointed by the Council to oversee improvements to Clarendon Road. He

sought the Panel's views on whether the proposed scheme should proceed in whole or in part, and advised Members of the benefits or otherwise of each of the options. He advised that the surface treatment works provided good value for money.

RESOLVED: That the provision within the agreed Capital Programme for Harrow Town Centre, to reflect the omission of the 'Hanging Garden' element from the Clarendon Road Public Realm proposals, be agreed.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 7.29 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR KEITH BURCHELL
Chair