

PUBLICATIONS ADVISORY PANEL

7 NOVEMBER 2006

Chairman: * Councillor Paul Osborn

Councillors: * Mrs Lurline Champagnie * Macleod-Cullinane
 * Keith Ferry Tom Weiss
 * Archie Foulds

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**12. **Attendance by Reserve Members:****RESOLVED:** To note that the following duly appointed Reserve Member would be attending this meeting:

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Reserve Member</u>
Councillor Tom Weiss	Councillor Anthony Seymour

[Note: Subsequently, Councillor Anthony Seymour did not attend the meeting.]

13. **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.14. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

A Member, having requested that the Panel discuss the issue of community notice boards, it was

RESOLVED: That (1) a report on the contract with JC Decaux for community notice boards be presented to the next meeting of the Panel, to be held on 8 February 2007;

(2) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following agenda item be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and grounds for urgency detailed below:-

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Special Circumstances/Grounds for Urgency</u>
9. Harrow People	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. The Chairman requested Members to consider this item, as a matter of urgency.

(3) all items be considered with the press and public present.

15. **Minutes:****RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2006 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.16. **Public Questions:****RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).17. **Petitions:****RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

18. **Deputations:**

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

19. **Web Refresh Update:**

The Panel received a presentation on channel migration and the Web Refresh project.

The Panel was informed that channel migration was the process of moving the customer's interaction with the Council from one communication channel to another. Officers noted that some channels of communication were more expensive for the Council than others, and that promotional campaigns would aim to encourage customers to switch to the more cost effective channels. For example, a small number of customers switching from face-to-face interactions with the Council to web-based contact would represent large savings.

Officers were in the process of producing a spreadsheet with accurate costing for different forms of customer contact. This would form the basis of a set of recommendations with respect to which channels to migrate as a priority. It was expected that engagement with customers on channel migration would begin in summer 2007. Members were informed that, as Harrow had a high level of home internet access compared with other London boroughs, a high level of demand for web-based contact could be unleashed with appropriate publicity.

Members were informed that the Web Refresh had moved into the Design stage, and that officers were in the process of examining successful solutions provided by other councils. Focus groups had emphasised the need for effective search and navigation functions, since many users did not manage to go beyond the homepage. The officer confirmed that the technology behind the current website was outdated, and that, as a result, seemingly simple adjustments and changes were complex and time consuming. The new website would therefore be more adaptable and easier to update, and would offer the potential of changing the front page completely if required.

The Panel was informed that the design of the new website was due for completion by Christmas 2006, realisation was scheduled for April 2007, and implementation planned for May 2007. Officers were confident that the project would be delivered within these timescales. Members requested that officers circulate a template design for their comment.

RESOLVED: That (1) the above be noted; and

(2) Members be sent a template design as soon as it was available to allow them make their comments.

20. **Harrow People:**

The Panel received a report of the Group Manager of Communications, which outlined a range of options to be considered for the future of Harrow People.

The officer informed the Panel that many authorities were in the process of reviewing their publications, and that a variety of formats were published with varying frequency. Lambeth Council, for example, used colour newsprint. This had the advantage of being cheaper than the current format used by Harrow People, and that it could be printed on recycled paper. Some councils published thirteen editions per year, which meant that their publications counted as newspapers. This represented a cost saving because it meant that councils could publish public notices in their own publications instead of using the local press.

The officer confirmed that Harrow People had relied heavily on advertising for funding, and that since it was the only publication delivered to every household in the Borough, it had been attractive to many advertisers. The Panel was informed that Brent Council had identified an advertiser who was willing to place adverts in the publications of up to six West London authorities including Harrow. The Chairman informed the Panel that preliminary discussions had been held with statutory partners, most notably the Police, to look into the possibility of a joint publication with the Council.

Members were in agreement over the benefits offered by working with partners, and requested detailed information on increasing the number of editions to thirteen per year. If possible, this information would be circulated prior to the next meeting of the Panel.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted; and

(2) a detailed report on the business case for producing thirteen editions of Harrow People per year be presented to the Panel at its next meeting on 8 February 2007.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.55 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR PAUL OSBORN
Chairman