

HARROW TOWN CENTRE FORUM

WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2008

PRESENT:

CORE FUNDERS

Steve Kent (Chairman)	St George's Shopping & Leisure Centre
Councillor Marilyn Ashton	Harrow Council
Councillor Narinder Singh Mudhar (Vice-Chairman)	Harrow Council
Councillor Rekha Shah	Harrow Council
Clive Ridgeway	HSBC, Harrow
Suzy Wood	St Ann's Centre

PERMANENT MEMBERS

Howard Bluston	North West London Chamber of Commerce
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ORDINARY MEMBERS

Bernard Segal	Roxborough Residents' Association
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NON-VOTING ADVISORS

The Reverend Bob Gardiner	Churches Together in Harrow
PC Christine Booth	Metropolitan Police, Harrow Town Centre Team, West Street

OFFICERS

Claire Codling	Harrow Council
Phillip Greenwood	Harrow Council
David Sklair	Harrow Council

1. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Jeannie Cohen-Brand (Harrow College) and Anthony Wood (Harrow Public Transport Users' Association).

2. Minutes:

AGREED: That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 31 October 2007 be taken as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising:

No matters were raised.

4. Shaping Harrow:

An officer of Harrow Council gave a presentation and answered questions on the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Draft Preferred Options. The officer welcomed the opportunity to consult the Forum and encouraged businesses and the public to respond by completing online questionnaires available on the Council's website. Hard copies of the questionnaires were also available.

The officer informed the Forum that Harrow's population was projected to increase by 10,000 by 2025. She outlined the two preferred options for managing this expansion in a planned and constructive way, with strategic vision: option A focussed growth around Central Harrow, while option B spread growth further throughout the borough. Both options had advantages and disadvantages, and the Council was keen to hear the views of residents and businesses. A meeting to consult large employers had been held on 12 June 2008 and a promotion campaign was being organised through newspapers, the Council's website, open meetings and partnership meetings.

During discussion it was noted that a hybrid option might also be possible. Concerned that option A might cause further pressure on medical services and increased congestion in the town centre, members of the Forum were inclined to support a hybrid option, with an emphasis on option B as a starting point.

Councillor Marilyn Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise, stated that, while not essentially different from its predecessor, the Unitary Development Plan, the LDF was more a visionary document that would become part of the planning policy and a benchmark in relation to planning applications. She was proud of the document, which set out to regenerate Harrow, as well as protecting the Green Belt and the borough's leafy roads, and she was pleased to report that it had received cross-party support and been endorsed by Council.

AGREED: That (1) the presentation and the comments above be noted;

(2) the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy be placed on the agenda as a standing item.

5. Harrow Business Improvement District - Update:

An officer of Harrow Council reported that the formal launch of the Business Improvement District (BID) and Shadow Board had taken place on 21 May 2008, with 30 businesses represented. The Shadow Board was working out a draft business plan and consulting businesses over the summer. The business plan would set out how money would be spent, for example, on safety, cleanliness, promotion and marketing, partnership working and lobbying. It was still hoped to hold a vote early in 2009 on setting up the BID.

At its previous meeting, on 31 October 2007, it had been agreed that the Forum would act as a consultative body to the Shadow BID Board. The future of the Forum would also be discussed at the Forum's next meeting.

AGREED: That (1) the verbal update be noted;

(2) the Forum's future be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Other Updates:

- Police

PC Booth reported that a town centre dispersal order would be in force from 1 August 2008 to 31 January 2009. The order was aimed at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and would need to be publicised. She also reported that the police were introducing the idea of gating alleyways to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

- Harrow Business Against Crime (HBAC)

The Chairman reported that HBAC was expanding and doing well. The organisation had recently received a grant to supply Harrow Weald retailers with radios, and the pubwatch scheme was growing.

- Public Realm Works

An officer of Harrow Council updated the Forum on public realm improvements. He reported that the design for improvements to St Ann's Road was nearly ready. This would be a high quality scheme, and a communications specialist had been employed to advise on how best to minimise disruption and communicate with residents and businesses. An announcement was due very soon. In the meantime, it would be helpful to have the Forum's views on periods during which construction work should be avoided. One view was that any date after the start of November could be detrimental. The possibility of postponing work until January and of carrying out the work in phases was also discussed.

The officer also briefed the Forum and answered questions on the progress of applications for several proposed developments in the town centre. The officer also reported on discussions with Transport for London about improvements to Harrow-on-the-Hill station, including step-free access. Improvements were also planned for the bus station.

7. Other Business:

- Town Centre Week of Action

An officer of Harrow Council briefed the Forum on the forthcoming Town Centre Week of Action, during which the Council would be working with the police, housing and other officers to raise the profile of the town centre. An information tent for the public would be available.

8. Date of Next Meeting:

AGREED: To hold the next meeting as early as possible in the autumn, with four weeks' notice, the exact timing to depend on progress on finalising the Business Improvement District (BID) plan.

The Meeting having started at 4.15 pm, finished at 6.10 pm.