

HARROW TOWN CENTRE FORUM ORDINARY

MONDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2011

PRESENT:

Councillor Sue Anderson (Vice-Chairman)	Harrow Council
Councillor Ben Wealthy	Harrow Council
Councillor Simon Williams (Vice-Chairman)	Harrow Council

BUSINESS MEMBERS

Jonathan Betteridge	Debenhams Ltd
Darren Harman	St George's Shopping Centre
Jeff Jackson	St Ann's Shopping Centre
Howard Bluston	North West London Chamber of Commerce

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The Reverend Bob Gardiner	Churches Together in Harrow
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OFFICERS

Mark Billington	Head of Economic Development and Research
Andy Stubbs	Harrow Town Centre Manager
Dayo Ogunmuyiwa	Harrow Town Centre Officer
Philip Greenwood	Head of Major Development Projects

47. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Mr Anthony Wood, Harrow Public Transport Users Association.

48. Minutes of Meetings:

AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2011 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

49. Matters Arising:

AGREED: That no matters were raised.

50. Outer London Fund:

Outer London Fund – Round 1:

An officer provided an update on various projects being conducted with funding from round one of the outer London Fund. Projects included:

- Banners of Faith - Ten schools within the borough were taking part in the Banners of Faith project. Mrs Nina Gebauer had been appointed as the artist in residence to assist young people in designing banners to reflect the different faiths in the borough;
- Community Radio - The license for the online Community Radio had been granted and was due to commence on 4 December running until 31 December 2011;
- Town Centre Web - TownTalk had been selected as the provider for the town centre website following a rigorous procurement exercise, and would develop a custom website for Harrow Metropolitan Town Centre;
- Harrow Into Work - Delivered by Harrow College, the project was set to deliver 100 local work placements by 30 March 2012. Having commenced on 1 October 2011, 30 work placements had been achieved;
- Pop-up Shop - A meeting with a commercial agent was due to be held on 21 November 2011, with a view to securing a temporary lease for a property in the town centre.

Outer London Fund – Round 2:

An officer provided the Forum with an update on the progress made with round two of the Outer London Fund bid. He advised that:

- £2 million had been bid for. The requirement of bid necessitated that 80% of the award needed to be allocated for Capital works. The remaining 20% would need to be invested in Revenue expenditure;
- The major focus of the spend would be on Lowlands Recreation Ground and the creation of a Performance Space. Other spend would include public realm improvements (Havelock Place/St Ann's Road), Legible London signage, car park indication signs, Town Centre Management and the promotion of a Business Improvement District;
- Results of the bid were expected in January 2012, with negotiations expected to continue through until March. The Forum would be kept up to date with progress.

In response to questions, officers advised that plans included improving access to Lowlands Road Recreation Ground via Harrow on the Hill Station, removing the playground area and resurfacing.

AGREED: That the updates be noted.

51. Harrow Town Centre Marketing Plan:

An officer provided an update on the Harrow Town Centre Marketing Plan. She advised that:

- A contestant from the X Factor was due to switch on the Christmas lights during an evening of entertainment on 1 December 2011;
- Late night shopping would be launched in the town centre from 15 December 2011 with goodie bags filled with goods from Harrow retailers being handed to the first 1,000 shoppers. Both St. Ann's and St. George's shopping centres would remain open until 9.00 pm that evening.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

52. Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan - Update:

An officer provided an update on the progress made with the Area Action Plan (AAP). He advised the Forum that:

- Steady progress on the preferred option was being made. Focus was now on granting the community and local businesses the opportunity to comment on proposals;
- The AAP would concentrate on seven sub-areas, setting out the contribution that each would make to the overall objectives of the Plan, and the requirements for supporting infrastructure, including transport, access and public realm improvements. Design guidelines for major sites within each sub area would also be included;
- Reports putting forward the preferred option would be presented to the Council including the Major Development Panel and Cabinet by December 2011. A six week consultation stage would then commence in January 2012. Work with Council's Communications Department would increase to establish the best way to heighten public involvement and generate feedback.

In response to questions, the officer advised that:

- Work on St. Ann's Road would commence in January 2012. This would include paving, new bins and planting new trees. The work would be concentrated on St. Ann's Road leading up to Havelock Place;
- A planning application had been received for the redevelopment of Lyon House. The scheme included over 300 dwellings, replacement offices, and community uses, and also showed provision for the creation of a new public square in the area opposite the entrance to Debenhams.

AGREED: That the update be noted.

53. Other Announcements:

The Chairman encouraged Members of the Forum to comment on the performance of the Harrow Town Centre.

- Councillor Sue Anderson stated that she was pleased to see how well progressed the projects were;
- Councillor Simon Williams expressed that the news shared with the Forum was positive. He requested officers to keep Members up to date with scheduled events in the Town Centre;
- Councillor Ben Wealthy was grateful for the updates provided and pleased to see the amount of work being conducted around the town centre;
- Philip Greenwood, Head of Major Development Projects, stated that it was encouraging that there was healthy developer interest in Harrow Town Centre;
- Lindsay Coulson, Interim Head of Communications looked forward to working more closely with St. Ann's and St. George's shopping managers;
- Jonathan Betteridge, Debenhams Manager, advised the Forum of a recent £3 million investment in the store. Management were monitoring customer services and seeing significant improvements;
- Howard Bluston, North West London Chamber of Commerce, expressed how well officers had done with the Outer London Fund bids. He added that the Chamber's website was also under construction and would investigate the possibility of linking the site to the Town Centre Website;
- Teresa Cannon, Interim Manager - Business Base at Harrow College, advised that the College was running a homelessness programme. Volunteers were welcome.
- Darren Harman, St. George's Shopping Centre Manager described that his staff had attended training events to improve customer relations and satisfaction. A change in ethos was acknowledged as working well by the Forum;
- The Reverend Bob Gardiner, Churches Together in Harrow advised that the festive parade on 17 December 2011 would take place as planned.

AGREED: That the comments be noted.

54. Date of Next Meeting:

AGREED: That the Forum was next due to meet on 6 February 2012.

The Meeting having started at 4.20 pm, finished at 5.30 pm.