

HARROW TOWN CENTRE FORUM

THURSDAY 18 JULY 2013

PRESENT:

Councillor Sue Anderson	Harrow Council
Councillor Bill Phillips	Harrow Council
Councillor Simon Williams (Vice-Chairman)	Harrow Council

BUSINESS MEMBERS

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

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

SERVICE MEMBERS

Anthony Wood	Harrow Public Transport Users
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OFFICERS

Andy Stubbs	Town Centre Manager
Louise Baxter	Town Centre Officer
Carly Brown	Marketing Communications Officer

19. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Mark Billington, Inspector Aidan Whelan, Sergeant Gail Reinhart and the Reverend Barry Hingston.

20. Minutes of Meeting:

AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2013 be taken as a correct record.

21. Matters Arising:

Police Update – Dispersal Zone

An officer raised the matter of the potential re-introduction of the dispersal zone and advised the Forum that there had been offers to provide support and information.

Members of the Forum made the following comments:

- a dispersal zone would be beneficial;
- the presence of the dispersal zone had helped to minimise and prevent any damage and destruction during the riots;
- a statement outlining some recent problems, including litter and drug taking, had been given to the Police;
- the final decision on the reintroduction of the dispersal zone would be made by the Police.

An officer agreed to report the view of those present at the meeting to the Police and to advise that on balance the Forum would support the re-introduction of a dispersal zone provided there was suitable justification.

Pigeons

A Member of the Forum requested an update on the situation with regard to pigeons and the officer made comments including the following:

- there had been instances when Town Centre staff had intervened when people had been feeding the pigeons;
- the Town Centre staff would request the area be cleaned;
- a commitment was still being sought from enforcement officers that the feeding perpetrators would be targeted.

The Forum then considered potential solutions to the problem including the use of plastic owls, a hawk and the introduction of signs which stated do not feed the pigeons. The Forum was of the view that the use of signs would be the most suitable solution as it would encourage people not to feed the pigeons which would in turn result in fewer pigeons in the vicinity. It was felt that it was a public health and public realm issue and that the Council should take a lead in addressing the problem.

A Forum Member commented that the issue of food waste litter was enhancing the pigeon problem as the presence of food encouraged pigeons. If the street environment was cleaner there would be fewer pigeons.

Litter

A Forum Member drew attention to the problem of general waste/litter in St Ann's Road.

An officer responded that the matter had been raised with the relevant Director at the Council and the concerns had then been forwarded to a public realm officer. The causes of litter failing to be removed focused on staff availability issues due to sickness absences and annual leave.

The Forum Member further reported litter issues on Greenhill Way arising from the Thursday market and expressed concerns about how frequently the bins were emptied.

Another Member of the Forum advised that efforts were being made by some Councillors to introduce spot fines for littering in Harrow. A number of Forum Members supported this and the introduction of signs prohibiting littering.

The Forum **AGREED** that a letter expressing support for the introduction of spot fines should be sent to the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Borough Commander.

22. Outer London Fund (OLF), Town Centre Management Update and Business Improvement District (BID) development:

An officer provided a verbal update on various projects and forthcoming events which were supported by Round 2 of the Outer London Fund. The officer also updated Members on the development of the Business Improvement District (BID).

St Ann's Public Realm Improvement

There had been some slight slippage in the programme and the section of works from Havelock Place to the entrance of St Ann's Shopping Centre would be completed by 24 July and not 15 July.

The majority of the major works would be completed by 15 November 2013 but it was noted that one of the key dates for retail for Quarter 4 and Christmas Shopping was the October half term. A discussion had taken place with the engineers and it had been confirmed that by October half term there would only be some isolated pockets of work near Clarendon Road remaining.

In response to questions and comments from Members of the Forum, the officer made the following points:

- it would be difficult to speed up the works and the current working hours were 8am to 6pm. There would be cost implications to increasing the working hours;
- at the beginning of October there would be communications issued to the retailers to advise them of which areas would have works until mid November.

Kymerley Road / Clarendon Road Public Realm Improvement

The engineering drawings for the repaving work were being developed and the date for the additional bus stands would be reported.

Lowlands Recreation Urban Park

The planning application for the performance space and café had been agreed at the Planning Committee meeting on 10 July.

Events

The route for the moving performance by Harrow Arts Centre would be modified as a result of the public realm works but the event would still take place on 28 September 2013. An event was being considered for the October half term to help encourage footfall in the town centre. A Christmas event would be held on 30 November 2013 and part of the top deck of St George's Shopping Centre car park would be used for fireworks. The street cleansing teams were aware of the dates of the various events in the town centre.

Development of Harrow Business Improvement District (BID)

The officer and the Chairman of the BID development group made the following comments:

- the BID development group had met 3 times and had helped to shape the format of BID documents that the BID team was using to consult with businesses which would be included in the proposed BID area;
- following the early survey work of nearly 200 businesses, individual meetings had been held with almost 100 businesses to consider the BID consultation document. The majority of those businesses had been supportive of the BID principle and working collaboratively;
- the development group wanted to ensure that people and businesses were as engaged as possible and all businesses in the BID area had been invited to a further meeting next week to help develop the BID business proposal;
- representative groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce, would be approached in early September once the business plan was finalised as this was the document which the business would be voting on in the ballot;
- a letter would be sent to the Secretary of State soon and the relevant legal agreements would be established;
- the BID ballot would close on 12 December 2013 and the result will be announced on 13 December 2013;

An officer advised that the summer newsletter had been delivered to local businesses and agreed to email a copy to Members of the Forum.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

23. Other Updates:

An officer reported that:

- local media coverage was at usual levels and included items such as the St John's Road Public Square on Lyon Road and the visit of the Start Up Britain tour bus;
- Harrow People was being used to keep local people informed of changes, news and developments;
- lamp post banners had been displayed to keep the public informed regarding the St Ann's Road Public Realm Improvements.

AGREED: That the update be noted.

24. Any Other Business:

Lyon Road – St John's Road Public Square

A Member commented that there was currently consultation taking place on the public square but it was likely it would not be completed for a substantial period of time. The project was being funded by a Section 106 Agreement from the Lyon road residential-led development

Other Updates

The representative from St Ann's Shopping Centre updated the Forum on changes to the car park which would come in to effect from August 2013 and an extension of the centre's opening hours from 7am to 7pm which would begin in October 2013.

The representative from Debenhams reported that the store's opening hours on Thursdays to Saturdays had been extended by one hour in the evening. The representative commented that consideration should be given to the Sunday trading hours and whether these should be altered to allow for a late opening and closing time.

The representative from the North West London Chamber of Commerce reported that the quarterly business breakfasts were successful and advised that all Members of the Forum would be invited to the Chamber of Commerce AGM would be held on 16 September 2013.

The representative from St George's Shopping Centre updated the Forum on the current internal redevelopment works, the changes to the St Ann's Road entrance, the reconfiguration of units, new tenants and changes to the car park. The cinema had increased the number of screens from 9 to 12. The representative commented that footfall was down 2% compared to last year but that nationally footfall had dropped by 4.4%.

25. Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday 17 October 2013 – 4pm – Management Suite, St Ann's Shopping Centre

The Meeting having started at 4.00 pm, finished at 5.30 pm.