

# **Planning Policy Advisory Panel**

## **Minutes**

### **17 July 2024**

**Present:**

**Chair:** Councillor Marilyn Ashton

**Councillors:** Christopher Baxter  
Stephen Greek  
Nitin Parekh

Krishna Suresh  
Zak Wagman

**Apologies received:** Councillor Graham Henson Councillor David Perry

**75. Appointment of Vice-Chair**

**RESOLVED:** To note that Councillor Stephen Greek was appointed Vice-Chair of the Panel for the 2024-2025 Municipal Year.

**76. Attendance by Reserve Members**

**RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:

Ordinary Member

Councillor David Perry

Reserve Member

Councillor Krishna Suresh

**77. Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were none.

## 78. Minutes

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meetings held on 21 March 2024 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

## 79. Public Questions, Petitions, Deputations

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received.

## Resolved Items

## 80. New Harrow Local Plan

The Panel received a presentation on the formal consultation exercise carried out on Harrow's New Local Plan (2021-2041) Initial Proposals (Regulation 18), between 26 February and 25 April 2024.

### PROPOSAL:

To provide the Panel with an update on the Local Plan process since it last considered the matter in January 2024 and outlined the next steps.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Panel were requested to note:

- (A) The Regulation 18 Consultation and Engagement Feedback report as set out in Appendix 1.
- (B) That further engagement with stakeholders would continue through to Regulation 19 stage.
- (C) The update provided in relation to the local plan process and next steps.

Following the presentation, Members asked questions and made comments regarding the Local Plan and the next steps.

Cllr Ashton emphasised the following points regarding the Green Belt, Grey Belt, and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) areas:

Highlighted the importance of discussing local plans publicly.  
Expressed strong opposition to reviewing Green Belt boundaries and emphasised the protection provided by the London Plan.  
Raised concerns about private landowners degrading land to gain development permission.  
Stressed the administration's commitment to protecting the Green Belt.  
Noted potential pressures on neighbouring areas and the need for vigilance.

The following questions were asked and answered.

- How will parking be facilitated to prevent issues with double yellow lines and fines, Officers emphasised that parking regulations are

constrained by the London Plan, which is anti-car. The Council cannot increase parking spaces due to these regulations, despite acknowledging the problems this causes.

- With new housing, how will the demand for GP surgeries be managed, given the current overflow. Officer acknowledged varying performance among surgeries; some manage well, while others struggle.
- How will the capacity of local schools be handled, given current waiting lists, contrary to concerns raised, recent data shows declining pupil numbers, potentially leading to school closures. Misunderstandings about the current school capacity should be clarified with up-to-date data.
- Members queried whether the draft Local Plan could be used in planning decisions as it progresses. Officers advised it could, but only for less contentious policies. Controversial policies need to be resolved first.
- Members asked if the planning department would have to use both existing and draft policies during this transition. The Chief Planning Officer advised that they would, some policies will gain weight sooner if they are widely supported, while others will need to be fully adopted before they carry weight.
- Members queried on how cycle routes could be improved, Officer advised that it would be difficult due to existing infrastructure. Connecting all routes would be costly and complex.
- What will the next consultation stage include, Officers advised it would focus on whether the plan meets national requirements and would be more targeted, with fewer public events.
- How is the final consultation different. Officers advised the final version will include specific site allocations, likely attracting more local feedback. The goal is to prepare for submission early next year.
- Member enquired about the availability and conversion of brownfield sites for development. Officers confirmed sufficient developable sites, including phases of existing projects and other large sites like the civic centre. Emphasised the need for family-sized, affordable homes.
- Members asked about the changes from the draft plan and the duty to consult neighbouring boroughs. Officers explained substantial differences in plan structure and policies, emphasising the introduction of new policies due to changes over time. Confirmed ongoing dialogue and formal consultations with neighbouring boroughs.
- Members asked about the impact of potential government changes on the plan timelines. Officers acknowledged risks but stated the need to wait for detailed information to assess implications.

- Members raised questions on how the plan can help developers achieve the 50% affordable housing target. Officers emphasised the difficulty due to high building costs and the necessity of grant funding. Officers also acknowledged the challenge of achieving high percentages of affordable housing without compromising project viability.
- Members had suggested creating a new crematorium facility due to the demand from communities like Hindus and Muslims. The Chair agreed that the need to ensure there were enough spaces in the nearby crematoriums for Harrow's citizens. This was in the context of saying that the main challenge for Harrow was burial plots and, in particular, Muslim Communities with whom the Council was actively working. She assured the Panel that serious work was being done to address the shortage of burial spaces and improve the situation for affected communities.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 8.18 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Marilyn Ashton  
Chair