

PUBLICATIONS ADVISORY PANEL

10 FEBRUARY 2005

Chair: * Councillor Marie-Louise Nolan

Councillors: * Branch * Jean Lammiman
* Harrison * Stephenson
* Knowles

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**182. **Appointment of Chair:**

RESOLVED: To note the appointment at the meeting of the Cabinet on 11 November 2004, of Councillor Marie-Louise Nolan as Chair of this Panel for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2004/05.

183. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

184. **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.

185. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That (1) all items be considered with the press and public present;

(2) the document 'Your Council, Your Services' be admitted onto the Agenda after Item 13, in order to allow Members to consider the leaflet before it is distributed to Harrow residents.

186. **Appointment of Vice Chair:**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Jean Lammiman be appointed Vice Chair of the Panel for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2004/05.

187. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

188. **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 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

189. **Petitions:**

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

190. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

191. **Web Site Update:**

The Group Manager, Communications provided the Panel with a verbal update on the development of the Council website.

It was reported that the Council sought to improve several areas of the website, including the homepage, the photographs used and the accessibility of the website. It was further advised that part of the website could be used to promote tourism in Harrow. A presentation of the updated website would be made to the Panel's next meeting.

A Member suggested that the site be audited to ensure all links were working effectively. It was also proposed that a standards protocol be established for Council responses to email enquiries.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

192. **Harrow People and Area Newsletters:**

The Panel received a report of the Group Manager, Communications that outlined the implications of increasing the frequency of the Harrow People magazine to a monthly or bi-monthly publication.

The officer explained that research had shown that residents felt they received insufficient information from the Council, and it was added that increasing the frequency of publication could help improve communications with local residents. He also explained that regular and repeated communication helped to reinforce important Council messages.

The officer outlined the present arrangements for distributing the magazine, alongside some alternative methods for the Panel's consideration. The Panel was informed that any extra costs incurred from increasing the frequency of the publication could be met through the income generated from advertising. Under the proposed system, Council Directorates would pay the Communications Department directly to advertise in the magazine, which would bring a net saving to the Council. Previously, the Harrow Observer had received this income in return for distributing and printing the magazine. The Group Manager, Communications was confident that the magazine already had sufficient staff and material to increase production.

In response to a query from Members regarding whether the magazine could find enough advertisers to sustain an increased frequency, officers replied that it was expected that the economic risk would be minimised by reducing the size of the magazine and appointing a part-time advertisement representative.

The Panel also discussed the feasibility of distributing the magazine alongside another Council service, such as refuse collection. The Panel was advised that this was not currently practical, and it had been suggested that a distribution company should be trialled until a viable in-house distribution system could be developed. It was reported that the last edition of Harrow People with Area Newsletters stitched in had been distributed to the correct areas, although some streets on the periphery of the borough were still not receiving the magazine at all.

A Member commented on the environmental implications of increasing the frequency of the magazine. It was stressed that the need to communicate with residents must be balanced with a regard for the environment, and it was suggested that the Council conduct an environmental audit to explore the cost of increasing the frequency of the magazine.

It was also suggested that officers refer to the Scrutiny Review Group on Community Engagement to get more feedback from stakeholders with regards to their thoughts on the magazine.

The Panel was generally more supportive of a bi-monthly publication, believing the monthly publication to be too high risk.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

193. **Harrow People - Reader Survey Feedback:**

The Panel received an initial report on the results from the readers' survey included in the winter edition of Harrow People. A full analysis of the responses would be circulated to Members of the Panel once it became available.

Members felt that although the number of responses was low, respondents were generally satisfied with the publication. The Chair reported that most of the complaints received by the Communications Unit were concerned with distribution.

A Member suggested that the survey should be expanded to include a question on whether residents considered Harrow People to be good value for money.

RESOLVED: That the Panel's comments be noted.

194. **Harrow People - March Edition:**

The Panel had received a draft copy of the March Edition of Harrow People by post prior to the meeting, which included several designed feature pages and the text of proposed news articles. The officer explained that Members would receive the pages that had not yet been designed at a later stage, as well as a deadline for their comments on those pages.

Members expressed concern over the number of quotes from officers and Members, and advised that it had been agreed to avoid featuring such quotes in the magazine. The officer undertook to review the quotes and consider possible alternatives.

The Panel suggested amendments to the text and design; these were noted by officers.

RESOLVED: That the amendments to the draft copy of the magazine be noted.

195. **'Your Council, Your Services':**

The Panel received a draft copy of the leaflet 'Your Council, Your Services', which would be distributed to residents of Harrow to offer guidance on Council Tax and services provided by the Council.

The Panel considered the leaflet to be an improvement on the literature produced in previous years, and congratulated the officers.

Members suggested that reference be made to the cost of the leaflet per resident. It was also suggested that residents be asked whether they found the information more helpful than last year.

The Panel suggested amendments to the text; these were noted by officers.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

196. **Any Other Business:**

Harrow Show

A Member asked whether an article could be included in Harrow People to determine local people's views on the decline of the Harrow Show.

Fovea Art Gallery

A Member submitted a request from Fovea Art Gallery to be featured in a forthcoming edition of Harrow People. This was discussed in relation to greater arts coverage in the magazine.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

197. **Date of Next Meeting:**

RESOLVED: To note that the Panel's next meeting would be held on 23 May 2005.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.47 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MARIE-LOUISE NOLAN
Chair