

Town Centre Development Strategy
“The Future of Harrow Town Centre”

July 2005

THE FUTURE OF HARROW TOWN CENTRE

Harrow Town Centre has many good features and is rightly considered a major and important London centre. It is compact with a wide range of shops and services, and good public transport connections. Close to the town centre, there are some beautiful open spaces, including historic Harrow on the Hill.

Though Harrow has been and remains a relatively successful shopping centre, it must respond to rapid changes in services, lifestyles and economic activity so that it is fit for the future. At the same time, it needs to stay true to, and develop, its own character and identity. Places that will do well will be those that people remember for their distinctiveness as well as for the quality of their facilities.

The Council has carried out a number of surveys and studies of the centre over the past 4 years. This strategy is based on that research. In addition, the Council has carried out a consultation exercise on an earlier draft of this strategy to give a wide cross section of people a chance to contribute ideas and express an opinion on the town centre's future. It is clear that Harrow Town Centre could provide more of what residents, visitors and business expect from a modern London centre. Action is needed to bring it up to date and provide the special ingredients that makes a place memorable and sparks affection.

The Council has been thinking about what Harrow Town Centre should become over the next 10 to 15 years. We are determined to take action that will create an attractive, interesting and successful town centre. We want to co-ordinate action that will ensure that the centre becomes more than the sum of its individual parts. Whilst the Council intends to lead this process, everyone with an interest in improving the centre needs to become involved and make a contribution. Having several areas and improved the overall standard of cleanliness. The Council has also prepared a Cultural Strategy that includes ideas designed to make all of a long term plan will ensure that everyone is working towards the same idea of the future.

A Town Centre Management Strategy has also been prepared and this highlights several problems that need to be tackled immediately to improve the maintenance, appearance and attractiveness of the centre. To show that we are committed to achieving results, our New Harrow Project "Clean and Green" team have already tidied up the Borough, including the town centre, a vibrant and exciting place. There are other Council strategies and policies, including the Community Strategy that affect the future of the town centre and these will be referred to later in this document.

When considering the way forward for Harrow Town Centre, the Council has adopted the vision and approach to town centres in the government's Urban White Paper and the Mayor's London Plan. This includes:

- Strong local leadership and partnership
- An integrated approach based on a clear vision
- Attention to good design and master-planning
- Encouraging mixed use development and high densities, especially near public transport hubs

The remainder of this document contains a snapshot of the present character of Harrow Town Centre followed by a vision and proposals that will help guide change in the centre, making it fit for the 21st century. Some immediate improvements are already being carried out but other initiatives will take longer. Work on longer term projects is already underway. For example, a blue print to guide the way in which the land at Harrow on the Hill station will be redeveloped and improved is well advanced.

For each of our proposals, we suggest how they could be achieved. In most cases, the Council's powers as landowner, provider of public services, and its planning and traffic management powers are crucial to the delivery of most of our ambitions. This strategy includes plans that show key sites and illustrates some of the ideas outlined below.

We believe that people should be optimistic about the future of Harrow. Whilst there are challenges that need to be addressed, the town centre can be improved in a way that will make it attractive for residents, businesses, visitors and investors. These improvements will need to tackle the problems set out below.

Despite improvements in recent years (St. Ann's/St George's shopping centre) Harrow is not fulfilling its retail potential. The range of shops, particularly in the critical areas of fashion, clothing and shoes, is not as wide as one might expect in a centre serving a potential catchment in excess of 400,000 people. There are other centres that, because of their proximity, are drawing trade away from Harrow Town Centre, and a significant number of Harrow residents tend to shop elsewhere. In this strategy, we propose action to encourage people to shop in Harrow.

The town centre environment is outdated, lacks quality and does not present a particularly distinctive or strong identity. The town centre is relatively compact and this could be a major advantage in the competition with other centres. Unfortunately, several important and heavily used pedestrian routes cross roads that have moderate to high flows of traffic. Traffic is still using parts of the town centre which are from a business, retailing and pedestrian point of view, highly sensitive. The presence of cars detracts from what should be a relaxed atmosphere and prevents Harrow from offering the sort of experience that people generally look for in a modern shopping centre.

Harrow is fortunate to have the rail, tube and bus stations in the central area and relatively close to each other. Unfortunately, these advantages are seriously undermined because the route between the bus station and the tube/rail station is not attractive. It is also difficult for buses to get to the bus station and within the station itself space is tight. There is limited space to expand and improve the stations making it difficult to cater for increases in passenger numbers that have been predicted. The pedestrian route between the stations and the shops on the other side of College Road is also poor because priority is given to vehicles rather than the very high numbers of people on foot wanting to cross the road. This is such an important part of the town centre that the Council is preparing a long term plan to ensure that this area is improved and developed in a way that achieves dramatic and significant change that will bring benefits to the whole centre.

Experience has shown that Harrow Town Centre has not been attractive to major large office employers. In the future, its employment strengths would seem to lie with smaller, local and new businesses and perhaps public sector or institutional type services. The centre has a wide and interesting range of small and independent retailers and businesses that already make an important contribution to its vitality and economy. These could provide a strong base from which to grow and complement improvements to the “high street” retail offer.

Some of the strengths that the centre does have, such as Harrow’s history and the beautiful green spaces nearby, provide opportunities for changing the way people regard the town centre. The town centre could also become a more vibrant centre, especially in the evenings and on weekends, if the growing numbers of people living in the centre are catered for, particularly their leisure needs. A larger resident population would also start to give the centre a positive image in the minds of investors and businesses.

The strengths and possibilities that the centre possesses override its weaknesses and the threats it faces. We believe that Harrow Town Centre could become much more attractive to a wider range of activities and uses than at present and become a dynamic and interesting place, rightly regarded as one of the major centres in London.

HARROW TOWN CENTRE IN THE FUTURE

To ensure that Harrow Town Centre stays a major London centre, this strategy needs to address its agreed shortcomings, as well as looking ahead to identify what will keep it healthy in the future.

The **aim** of this strategy is to set out a path that will:

Transform Harrow Town Centre into a thriving, distinctive and adaptable centre, which meets the long-term needs of the community.

To meet this aim, which we will try to achieve in 5 to 10 years, the Council has identified 5 key objectives.

Objectives 1,2 & 3 deal with concerns about the lack of vitality and interest in the centre and are based on the evidence gathered in the surveys and studies undertaken over the past few years.

Objectives 4 & 5 are designed to give Harrow Town Centre a distinct identity and sense of place.

Objective 1: To promote diverse activity in the centre that meets the needs of a modern economy and contributes to the overall aim of making Harrow special and distinctive.

Town centres are places where the social and economic activities of a community come together, and they need to constantly evolve to meet external pressures. Changes in economic activity, such as the proliferation of evening leisure facilities, and the increasing ethnic diversity of the borough, have a significant impact on these aspects of life. Modern centres should try to provide for this ever-changing range of activity and harness these forces without harming their character. For Harrow Town Centre to be as responsive as possible, and meet the changing aspirations of a very diverse community, the Council needs to continually review its policies and programmes.

Our proposals provide a clear vision of what the Council wants for the centre without putting unnecessary barriers or constraints in the way of economic change.

To achieve **Objective 1** we will take the following actions:

- Improving the range and quality of the shopping experience by:

Ensuring that new developments include space suitable for a range of retailers, from major “high street” retailers needing modern shop units to local and independent businesses.

Holding marketing events to raise the profile of Harrow with new retailers, particularly in the area of fashion and the better quality High Street names.

In partnership with the North West London Chamber of Trade and Commerce, helping local businesses that fill gaps and add variety and character to trade successfully in the centre.

Introducing some more covered shopping areas. For example, the St Anns and St Georges centres could be linked by a transparent roof structure. Similarly, the route along St Ann’s Road towards Debenhams could be enhanced by a lightweight canopy to provide some weather protection. These should be designed to create the atmosphere of covered streets rather than a conventional shopping mall. Such facilities would not only encourage pedestrian flow but could be given a distinctive appearance that would help to give Harrow a unique identity.

Raising the standard of new shopping developments and shopfronts through planning policies, design guidance and development control.

- Increasing the variety of businesses and services on offer in the centre by:

Collecting regular up to date information about changing demand, and using this information to actively seek out new town centre partners, investors, businesses and activities.

Using Council owned land to introduce a variety of services and activities and achieve mixed use developments.

Raising awareness of facilities, services and events by establishing an information point in the centre and by co-ordinated publicity and marketing information.

By focusing relevant Council strategies on business advice and support that addresses opportunities and identifies barriers to relocation or expansion of suitable small local businesses in the town centre.

Regularly reviewing planning policy to assess its effectiveness, developing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and Master Plans to set out more detailed objectives for particular parts of the centre.

- Identifying and promoting development opportunities in the areas near to Harrow on the Hill station to take advantage of their location in order to attract a variety of new activities into the centre by:

Completing the Master Plan and urban design framework for this area to highlight its huge potential, setting out a comprehensive and integrated approach to public transport improvements and redevelopment, indicating appropriate design, access, uses and densities.

- Promoting residential development to increase spending power and demand for a range of activities in the centre by:

Identifying suitable housing locations, and through regular reviews of planning policy, and SPG.

Releasing Council owned sites in the centre for housing or for mixed-use schemes that include a housing element.

Taking a sympathetic approach towards proposals to change business uses to housing, where the commercial use is causing environmental problems or where the building is not suitable or required for employment use.

- Providing new dwellings that are flexible enough to accommodate the requirements of working from home and related changes in lifestyle by:

Encouraging developers to include purpose designed home working facilities in new housing developments.

Using Harrow's housing strategy and SPG.

- Ensuring the town centre provides affordable housing, including housing for key workers by:

Regular assessments of housing need and key worker requirements.

Using land owned by the Council and partner organisations.

Using housing and planning powers.

- Ensuring that there are convenient and high quality facilities for town centre residents and workers such as food shops, a good range of restaurants, good schools and other educational facilities by:

Using planning powers, town centre surveys and the Council's role as local educational authority. Also, through developing partnerships with other public bodies such as the College and the University of Westminster.

Using planning powers and Council land ownerships to ensure new developments include space suitable for restaurants that will help support the evening economy.

- Encouraging the expansion of the evening economy to support a range of modern leisure activities catering to different age and interest groups by:

Identifying suitable locations, where leisure and food and drink uses will be positively encouraged.

Carrying out regular reviews of planning policy, and SPG.

Adopting related town centre access, car parking, licensing and management regimes.

Encouraging shops, car parks and other facilities to stay open later in the evenings.

- Providing childcare facilities for town centre residents, visitors and/or employees by:

Including such facilities in a new library and council service centre and encouraging developers to include them in other new developments.

Co-operating with other agencies to jointly provide such facilities and through the Council's roles as service provider and planning authority.

Objective 2: To ensure effective transport and pedestrian access to and within the centre.

People often judge whether a centre is good or bad by how easy it is to get to, whether they are driving, walking, taking public transport or on scooters, motorbikes or cycles. They also like to have routes that are easy to follow within the centre once they arrive. Therefore, it is important to make best use of transport facilities and the road space that leads to and around the centre. However, there will be conflict between the needs of different sorts of vehicles and between drivers and those on foot or cycle. Choices will need to be made about access priorities. (Objective 3 deals with access for disabled people)

Current Council policies identify a general commitment to reroute through traffic away from sensitive parts of the central area and set out public parking priorities.

To put these ideas into practice we are preparing proposals to modernise the railway and bus stations as part of a major development. We are also developing ideas for environmental and traffic improvements in the centre, using funds from Transport for London.

To achieve **Objective 2** we will take the following actions:

- Agreeing priorities for pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to the centre and for use of the streets in the centre by:

Preparing a Town Centre Access Plan covering traffic management, directional signs, access and parking that would help secure the aims of this strategy and complement the Local Transport Plan (LTP), Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the Town Centre Management Strategy.

- Making better use of existing road space in and around the centre by:

Using traffic management systems and features, better signage, cycle routes, bus stop locations, etc. more effectively to implement the Town Centre Access Plan.

- Reviewing car parking priorities, to make sure parking is in the right places to meet changing needs and that car parking charges reflect the objectives of this strategy by:

Reviewing parking provision and the cost of parking, using the Council's powers as planning and highway authority, landowner/car park manager and partnerships with the private car park operators and other stakeholders including the owners of the St Ann's and St George's shopping centres.

- Encouraging people to make less use of cars for trips to the town centre by:

Testing the idea of providing Park and Ride facilities as part of the parking review referred to above.

Working with retailers, town centre businesses and bus operators to provide incentives to their customers to use the car less e.g. free home delivery, discount promotions for public transport users.

Promoting co-ordinated travel plans for major town centre employers

- Maintaining and improving public transport access to the centre by:

Improving the quality and capacity of public transport services provided at Harrow on the Hill station by implementing the Master Plan for this area referred to under Objective 1 through partnership with rail and bus

operating companies, adjacent landowners, developers, Transport for London, Strategic Rail Authority and the government.

Building a partnership with Transport for London, the Strategic Rail Authority, government, operators and other stakeholders to deliver the Town Centre Access Plan.

- Integrating the bus station with Harrow on Hill rail/tube station to create a modern transport hub by:

Carrying out short-term improvements to bus access such as re-routing and bus priority measures.

Reviewing the current location of the bus station and access as part of the Town Centre Access Plan and also dealing with these issues in the Master Plan for the Station area.

- Improving access to and from Harrow on the Hill rail and bus stations and the facilities in them by:

Making immediate improvements to the facilities for disabled people, improved street furniture, lighting, CCTV, policing, through the Town Centre Management Strategy in partnership with relevant operators and in consultation with users.

Ensuring that the design of the new public transport interchange takes into account the needs of disabled people.

- Improving taxi services, in partnership with Hackney Carriage and licensed private hire operators by:

Encouraging more licensed vehicles and taking action against unlicensed vehicles.

Introducing taxi priority measures on the approaches to the town centre and within the central core.

Reviewing the existing position of taxi ranks as part of the Town Centre Access Plan and in the Harrow on the Hill Master Plan to reflect the way in which the centre will change over time.

- Making pedestrian and cycle links to the surrounding residential areas, green spaces and entrances into the centre safer, easier and more attractive by:

Providing safer and more pedestrian and cycle friendly crossings and making existing routes into the centre clearly signed, properly lit and free of obstructions such as unnecessary street furniture.

- Make pedestrian routes through the centre safe, attractive and convenient by:

Carrying out a programme of environmental improvements to enhance the appearance and comfort of areas in Station Road, College Road and St Ann's Road giving priority to the needs of pedestrians. These improvements could include lighting, trees, banners/flags and space for cultural events, outdoor performances and art exhibitions. As well as helping to link different parts of the centre together, such features will help to improve its appearance and help to give Harrow Town Centre an unique identity.

We are already testing ways of providing a new pedestrian route between Harrow on the Hill over the railway lines on a new bridge structure to the town centre. We will also work with landowners around College Road and the service yard to Marks and Spencer off Havelock Place to create a new route from College Road to St Ann's Road for pedestrians. Together such new routes will give people much greater opportunity to move through and around the centre at different times of the day.

These ideas are illustrated on Plan 2.

Objective 3: To make the centre look and feel attractive and safe

Once in a centre, people need to be able to enjoy their surroundings and get around without difficulty, feeling safe and comfortable, no matter what time of day or night. They enjoy attractive buildings and surroundings. They also expect the same level of cleanliness generally found in enclosed shopping malls. Town centres also need to be attractive and accessible for disabled people. Some of these are matters for continuous assessment and improvement, carefully coordinated across services and led by the Town Centre Forum. However, some more strategic ideas for improvement are listed below.

To achieve **Objective 3**, we will take the following actions:

- Adopting a long-term strategy for physical change and improvements in the centre by:

Producing a programme of improvements to public spaces based on the ideas in the strategy and illustrated in Plan 2. This Public Spaces Plan will guide future environmental improvements so that a series of attractive and distinctive public spaces and routes are created as well as improving street furniture, such as seating, litter bins and signing. It will also identify the shape and size of new town centre developments, enhance the best

features of the centre, set the context for site specific Master Plans and complement the Town Centre Access Plan. We will be consulting the public, businesses, retailers and others with an interest in the town centre about this programme of improvements.

Preparing SPG to give weight to the Public Spaces Plan.

- Improving the quality of new development by:

Using development control powers to achieve a high standard of design quality.

Where the Council owns land and sells it for development, ensuring a high standard of design by requiring prospective purchasers to demonstrate their commitment to high quality architecture and make this a condition of the sale.

Ensuring that all new Council buildings achieve a very high standard of architectural quality.

- Increasing the amount and quality of greenery in the centre and improving access to nearby green spaces by:

Including the planting of trees and other landscaping suitable for town centres as one of the most important parts of the Public Spaces Plan described above.

Creating a new pedestrian route between Harrow on the Hill and College Road that will give access to this unique amenity and reinforce Harrow's reputation as the "Green Borough" (See Plan 2).

- Using lighting as a feature and attraction by:

Flood lighting landmark buildings, landscape feature and major open spaces.

Using feature lighting creatively to guide people around the centre after dark as well as improving their sense of security.

Commissioning artists to design unique lighting columns, effects and features.

Identifying areas where commercial premises can use floodlighting and where appropriate coloured light and moving light features.

- Improving the comfort and safety of pedestrians when in the vicinity of traffic and cycle routes by:

Improving road safety standards by means of the Town Centre Access Plan.

Recognising that the need for pedestrian safety and convenience should have the highest priority in some parts of the town centre.

- Ensuring disabled and elderly people and people using pushchairs find the centre easy to use by:

Including mobility features in any environmental improvement schemes, new public spaces, road crossing points and footpath improvements.

Rearranging street furniture from selected locations to aid mobility.

Ensuring that directional signs and visitor information meets the needs of disabled people.

In partnership with the Town Centre Forum, continuing to support and publicise Shopmobility.

- Giving a sense of security to people in the town centre by:

Ensuring that streets, pedestrian areas, open spaces and buildings are improved or designed to feel safer, well lit and feel as though they are under supervision.

Improving street lighting.

In partnership with the Town Centre Forum, increasing membership of the Retailers Radio Link scheme.

Improving the coverage of CCTV system and publicising its presence and effectiveness in reducing crime.

In partnership with other agencies, establishing a Town Centre Crime Reduction centre in a central location. As well as offering crime prevention and other information, the centre would provide a highly visible town centre base for police officers and community security officers.

Taking action to curb aggressive and excessive begging and canvassing.

One of the most common grumbles about modern shopping centres is that they tend to be very similar and are, as a result, dull. People value places that are different and offer a range of interesting experiences. To encourage people to use it more in the future, Harrow Town Centre needs to be lively and interesting with a character of its own.

It is more straightforward to identify the ways to make Harrow economically successful than to find ways to make it an interesting and distinctive place. The following 2 objectives are aimed at developing a centre that is lively and unique. We will use the feedback on this strategy to develop our current ideas for making the centre more distinctive.

Objective 4: To celebrate the history, diversity and greenery of Harrow in the town centre.

Harrow Town Centre contains little sense of the history and variety of Harrow despite the significant historical associations and cultural diversity that the Borough has. In addition, the green areas around the centre that give the Borough much of its identity are hardly visible from within the centre and are difficult to get to. These are important and distinctive characteristics that should be an integral part of the experience of using Harrow Town Centre, but currently are not.

To achieve **Objective 4** we will take the following actions:

- Enhancing existing town centre features that add local distinctiveness by:

Identifying the most important and valued physical features, and incorporating them into the programme of environmental improvements in the Public Space Plan so that they have an attractive setting that enhances the contribution they make to the street scene. This will be done in consultation with residents and others.

Including historic and/or culturally diverse themes in the design of public spaces, street furniture, banners and in publicity and marketing information.

Using the skills of artists to help create distinctive features in the centre that interpret the life and history of Harrow in a unique and attractive fashion. We will co-ordinate this initiative with our “Arts in Public Places” programme.

Identifying opportunities to enhance key individual or groups of buildings which could provide a positive contribution to the character of the town centre and its sense of place

- Making more of the reputation and physical presence of Harrow on the Hill by:
 - Using “The Hill” symbolically in communication strategies and publicity material.
 - Working to create a new pedestrian route between the town centre and “The Hill” so that its unique qualities enhance the town centre more directly.

- Providing opportunities to significantly enhance and extend the amount of trees and plants in the centre by:
 - Identifying the “green” reputation of Harrow as something that should play a major part in the future of the centre and reflecting this priority in the Public Spaces Plan.
 - Using landscaping to identify the new pedestrian routes we will be creating.

- Creating or identifying focal points for meeting and outdoor activity in the centre by:
 - Including the creation and landscaping of focal points identified in the Public Spaces Plan.
 - Encouraging developers to include space for activity, exhibitions and cultural events in new developments.

- Establishing a series of themed trails by:
 - Linking new and improved open spaces, points of interest and landmarks by attractive routes identified by artist designed features, landscaping and feature lighting.
 - Providing information in a variety of formats to encourage residents and visitors to use and explore the trails.

Objective 5: To make the centre feel more alive with people

People have gathered in town centres and markets for centuries. Though most visits have a purpose, they are also part of the social fabric that is part of our culture. However, centres are not attractive for people to visit if they appear empty and unused. This is particularly true after dark.

The Council has an important role to play in encouraging events and community activity in the centre. Community and civic-based events or facilities providing Council services can make Harrow Town Centre distinct from any other shopping centre and will add to the diversity and liveliness of the centre. Some of these activities would also encourage people into the centre after the shops close and so help to encourage a better atmosphere in the centre in the evening.

Council services can often be a catalyst for the activities of other agencies or groups. They also attract a large number of people. It is therefore important to consider the benefits of a town centre location that is accessible to many customers when considering how best to provide Council services and information.

To achieve **Objective 5** we will take the following actions:

- Encouraging more varied activity in the centre by:

Promoting more diverse land uses in the centre as outlined under Objective 1, and using partnerships and the Town Centre Management Strategy.

Delivering some Council services including an Information Desk, library, exhibition and performance space from locations in the town centre. These facilities could be shared with other organisations such as the College and University.

Developing land owned by the Council to bring a more diverse range of activities into the centre.

Working in partnership with other public sector agencies, such as Harrow College, the University of Westminster and health organisations to take advantage of the benefits of integrating public sector activity in the town centre. Priority will be given to services that draw users from a wide catchment and could benefit from a central location near public transport.

- Letting more activity spill into public spaces by:

Identifying appropriate locations for outdoor events, street entertainment and eating outside through the Town Centre Management Strategy and using highway and licensing powers.

Protecting the future of market activity in the centre by providing purpose designed spaces for market traders that can add interest and diversity by what they sell.

- Encouraging cultural activity and the celebration of Harrow's multi cultural character by:

Organising more cultural, civic and seasonal activities to take place in public spaces and allowing groups to use the town centre for a wide range of events.

Examining opportunities to create a viable and sustainable performance/exhibition space

Providing an events "toolkit" designed to give encouragement and guidance to community groups wishing to arrange events.

Developing the distinctiveness and profile of the Harrow Arts Festival and Words Live Literature Festival

Using the areas created by the Public Spaces Plan for outdoor activities of a civic or cultural nature, such as temporary or permanent art installations, performance, community celebrations and play facilities. Particular emphasis will be given to events that reinforce the multi cultural identity of the Borough.

- Making the centre a good place to live for existing and future town centre residents by:

Making it attractive and secure as described under Objective 4, using mechanisms described under Objective 1 to improve its facilities and services, and by protecting and improving the excellent public transport access at Harrow on the Hill station.

KEY SITES

There are several areas of land that are crucial to the transformation of Harrow Town Centre and can be developed in a way that will help to achieve the objectives of this strategy. They are shown on Plan 1 and are as follows:

Key Site 1 Adjacent to Debenhams, Greenhill Way (Council owned)

This site is currently used as a surface car park and an outdoor market. It is in a prominent position next to one of the main entry points into the centre but has a very poor appearance. Any future development on the site must be of high architectural quality. It must also contain a mix of uses that will attract a high flow of pedestrians throughout the day and into the evening. High pedestrian flows are needed to sustain this area because of the distance between it and the two covered shopping malls. With careful design, and subject to the results of the parking review, it may be possible to retain car parking in the development. The outdoor market would need to be relocated, perhaps to a more central location in the pedestrianised area.

Key Site 2 Harrow on the Hill Station

This area is very well suited to a mixture of uses that would benefit from its superb location on the edge of the present shopping core of the town centre and immediately next to the rail, tube and bus connections with their excellent potential. Whilst the development of this site will be a long-term process, it offers a chance to create a new urban quarter that could include housing, offices, retail, leisure and educational uses and so become a very vibrant and interesting addition to Harrow. It also offers a chance to connect the beautiful landscape of Harrow on the Hill to the central area by building over the rail and tube lines so that one of Harrow's most famous and prized assets can directly enhance the centre.

Key Site 3 Havelock Place

This area is dominated by a very large open area used by lorries to deliver to goods to nearby shops. The only route to this service yard is from Havelock Place from Greenhill Way. This route cuts the pedestrian area in St Ann's Road in two and significantly reduces pedestrian safety and the quality of the shopping environment.

If this area including property fronting College Road was redeveloped to provide some additional retailing, housing and other town centre uses this would create the opportunity to provide an alternative route for the delivery of goods from College Road. Havelock Place could then be pedestrianised

where it crosses St Ann's Road so pedestrian flows would no longer be interrupted and the overall attractiveness of the shopping area would be greatly improved. A new public space could be created at the junction of St Ann's Road and Havelock Place and a second small space in the vicinity of College Road.

Key Site 4 Kymberley Road

This area contains a multi storey car park, adjacent to the office block, King's House. Its overall appearance is unattractive and there is very little activity at ground floor level to encourage pedestrian flow. The vehicular flow around Kymberley Road tends to isolate this area from the prime shopping area and overall it contributes very little to the vitality and environment of the centre. It therefore has potential to be redeveloped with a mixed use scheme in a way that would significantly improve the centre, particularly if it contained some modern retailing accommodation.

Opportunity sites

In addition to the key sites described above, Plan 1 shows land where there are development opportunities. Whilst these sites are in or close to the town centre, they do not have the same significance as the key sites either because of their size or location. It is important, however, that they are also used to help implement this strategy.

Opportunity Site 1) North side of Greenhill Way

Currently used as a surface car park and advertising hoardings, this site could be used for housing.

Opportunity Site 2) Gayton Road Library and Car Park (Council owned)

Depending on the results of the review of parking provision, as part of the Access Plan, and once the library is relocated, this site could be used wholly or in part for housing or perhaps a hotel.

Opportunity Site 3) St John's Road (Council owned)

Currently used as a surface car park, this site could be used as a restaurant/bar and associated with environmental improvements to the adjacent part of St John's Road to create a new public space.

IMMEDIATE ACTION

The transformation of Harrow Town Centre we are proposing is ambitious and will of course take some time to complete. A lot has already been done to improve things. These include:

- Improved street cleaning.
- Removal of fly posters and graffiti.
- Improved street lighting.
- Removal of damaged and unused street furniture
- Removal of raised brick flower planters that mask shopfronts and inconvenience pedestrians (particularly disabled people).

In addition, we will carry out further improvements such as:

- Promoting development of the highest architectural and urban design quality
- Improve pedestrian crossing from Harrow on the Hill Station to St Ann's Centre across College Road.
- Prosecute unlicensed street traders.
- Encourage professional street entertainers.
- Provide some drop off/pick up parking spaces for shoppers limited to very short stay.
- Provide designated unloading/loading bays for businesses in Station Road.
- Improve car parking signing.
- Enforce existing traffic restrictions in Station Road to stop "rat running".
- Improve CCTV and advertise its benefits.
- Promote and advertise Shopmobility.
- Invite retailers, restaurant chains and businesses without premises in Harrow to a marketing event.
- Introduce market stalls or themed markets into pedestrianised areas.

The Harrow Town Centre Management Strategy contains more detail about these and other more immediate initiatives.

SUMMARY

To modernise Harrow Town Centre and transform its image in line with this strategy, the Council is committed to taking the leading role. This involves a programme of activity that includes:

- Immediate action to improve the appearance, cleanliness and safety of the centre
- Promoting key sites that will unlock the potential of the town centre and entering into development partnerships where appropriate
- Extending the range of uses and activities in the centre, including more retail, civic, cultural and leisure facilities.
- Achieving a significant improvement in public transport facilities.
- Increasing the number of people living in the centre
- Using Council land and activity to lead the way
- Developing town centre traffic management and access schemes and reviewing car parking provision
- Creating new and attractive pedestrian links between the centre, the surrounding residential areas and Harrow on the Hill
- Improving existing public spaces and routes and creating new ones.
- Major environmental improvements
- Ensuring other strategies are working to the same objectives, especially the UDP, Local Transport Plan, Town Centre Management and Cultural Strategies.

NEXT STEPS

Once the strategy has been adopted, a plan of action will be prepared to implement it and co-ordinate everyone's efforts. This Action Plan will be divided into short, medium and long term initiatives and cross-refer to other documents such as the Community Strategy, Unitary Development Plan and the Town Centre Management, Transport, Cultural and Regeneration strategies.

So that we can see what difference we are making we will be monitoring what progress we make on the 5 objectives. We will be regularly measuring things like the economic health of the town centre, vacancy rates and also asking residents and businesses for their views on the changes that are made.