

Meeting:	Town Centre Project Panel
Date:	14 th July 2005
Subject:	Harrow on the Hill Station Planning Brief
Responsible Officer:	Director of Strategic Planning
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Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development & Housing Portfolio Holder for Environment & Transport
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

To recommend Cabinet to adopt the Planning Brief for Harrow on the Hill Station for Development Control purposes and to advise the Development Control Committee of its decision.

Reason for report

To finalise the Planning Brief for Harrow on the Hill Station in response to public consultation and enable it to be used for development control purposes.

Benefits

Approval of the Brief will improve service delivery by establishing a planning framework to guide and promote development in Harrow Town Centre, and help to facilitate the implementation of a key Proposal Site in the HUDP.

Cost of Proposals

None

Risks

Delay in approving the Brief could weaken the Council's position in determining proposals for a key town centre site, leading to unsatisfactory and piecemeal development.

Implications if recommendations rejected

Future proposals for land at Harrow on the Hill station would have to be considered against general UDP policies rather than site specific guidance

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

In July 2004 the Panel approved draft Supplementary Planning Guidance for land at Harrow on the Hill station for public consultation purposes. An 11 week consultation followed and preliminary results were considered at the Panel meeting in November 2004. Members noted the clear public support for the majority of the Council's objectives for the site, in particular those seeking to create a better bus station and interchange, and enhanced open space provision. The Panel also recognised that the balance of opinion on the proposed link between the Harrow town centre and Harrow on the Hill, and the notion/concept of a landmark development, was inconclusive. Members indicated that these issues would require careful consideration but considered that the illustrative concepts had succeeded in engaging the press and the public and ought to be seen positively.

2.2 Options considered

Since the last Panel meeting officers have continued to engage with key stakeholders in order to ensure that the SPG could be adopted with the fullest possible support and provide a sound basis for taking the project forward. Central to this has been the need to agree an approach with Transport for London, both as transport operator and a principal landowner, which would enable developers to come forward with innovative proposals whilst ensuring that essential operational standards are met. In addition, discussions have continued with other third party interests about their own landholdings and the need to ensure a comprehensive approach to the development of the site.

The draft SPG has been revised to take account of the results of public consultation, Members views and the continuing discussions with stakeholders. A different format has been adopted to improve the presentation and the contents are set out in a slightly different order. Much of the illustrative material, which had been included in the draft to stimulate debate and public interest in the site, has also been removed so as not to constrain developers and architects coming forward with different design solutions. It is therefore considered more appropriate to refer to the final document as a Planning Brief to reflect its primary purpose in providing guidelines to developers.

A text version of the revised SPG is attached as Appendix 1. An illustrated version should be available for consideration at the meeting.

The principal changes are as follows:

- additional background material on the site and its surroundings and constraints on development;
- further information on the policy context and the main aims of national/London Plan/HUDP planning policy;
- further details of current traffic conditions and deficiencies in the town centre infrastructure, and more emphasis on the need for a step change in public transport provision to support the growth of the town centre as a whole;

- additional requirements that development should secure better permeability throughout the town centre and provide enhanced areas of open space to serve the growing number of town centre residents, and increase biodiversity;
- clarification of the role and purpose of the north/south link over the railway;
- emphasis that signature development should be high quality and distinctive as opposed to “unusual” and that it must respond sensitively to the different character areas within the site;
- further details on the land use mix and the need for development to promote sustainable transport choices and improve the wider accessibility of the town centre;
- additional guidelines on “secured by design” requirements;
- clarification of transport requirements and the need for the design of the proposed new interchange to meet TfL station planning standards rather than the conceptual designs shown in the draft SPG;
- additional guidance on sustainability and the use of sustainable design and construction techniques, especially the need for a proportion of the developments’ energy needs to be provided on site, from renewable sources;
- a new section outlining the development process and the way that the Council expect to take the project forward.

2.3 Consultation

Details of the consultation programme have been considered in previous reports to the Panel.

2.4 Financial Implications

None

2.5 Legal Implications

Once adopted the brief will become Supplementary Planning Guidance and it will have weight at any public inquiry.

2.6 Equalities Impact

The extensive consultation programme ensured direct engagement with all borough residents and with groups representing a variety of minority interests. Preparation of the Planning Brief provides the opportunity to promote an exemplar form of sustainable development at Harrow on the Hill station, enhance social inclusion, ensure full access to important transport facilities, and provide a range of new or improved services to all.

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Appendices:

Harrow on the Hill Station Planning Brief July 2005

Background papers:

1. Draft SPG July 2004
2. Town Centre Development Strategy. “The Future of Harrow Town Centre” July 2004.