

# **Harrow on the Hill Station Planning Brief**

**July 2005**

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## SUMMARY

Harrow is identified as one of 10 Metropolitan Centres in the London Plan (2004). However, the town centre is currently underperforming and requires a greater diversity and density of uses to increase its attraction to a range of different user groups, and major investment in its public transport infrastructure. A Town Centre Development Strategy has been prepared with the objective of transforming the town centre into a thriving, distinctive and adaptable centre, which meets the long-term needs of the community. The development of land at and around Harrow on the Hill station is seen as critical in achieving this objective.

The station site comprises an area of 5.8 hectares located towards the southern end of Harrow town centre. It includes Harrow on the Hill station, Harrow bus station, land to the north of the railway in College Road, land to the south of the railway in Lowlands Road and the air space over the London Underground railway line, which bisects the site and divides it into two distinct parts. The site is identified in the Harrow Unitary Development Plan, adopted in July 2004, as Proposal Site 6 - for "Public transport improvements and mixed use development for office, education, civic, residential, leisure and retail use and open space".

Harrow town centre has the opportunity to benefit from significant transport links but is constrained by a lack of capacity, limited bus priority and a weak relationship between transport modes. A step change in the quality and capacity of public transport is required, including a much improved transport interchange, if the town centre is to be transformed and fulfil its Metropolitan Centre role.

The vision for the redevelopment of the station site is to increase the profile of Harrow as an accessible and attractive place to live and work. Redevelopment has the potential to deliver a 21<sup>st</sup> Century transport interchange as part of a distinctive, mixed use development, which will have a lasting benefit and change attitudes and aspirations for the town centre and the surrounding area as a whole. It provides the opportunity for high density development at an important transport hub, integrating land use and transport planning in line with national guidance on development in such areas. It also offers the scope to create a stronger link between the town centre to the green spaces of Harrow on the Hill, benefiting town centre users and local residents by improving access to important facilities on either side of the railway.

The following key development objectives have been identified which any redevelopment should seek to achieve, and which draw on the aims of the Town Centre Strategy, analysis of the site, planning context, property market and viability.

- a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mobility Hub
- a new north/south connection
- signature development to reposition Harrow town centre and fulfil its Metropolitan Centre status
- mix of uses
- improved access

The nature and scale of proposals offer the potential to have a significant and lasting benefit on Harrow town centre and the surrounding area. Delivery will be a complex process that will require a significant level of commitment and co-operation between the Council, GLA/TfL, landowners and stakeholders, the community and prospective development partners. The preparation of this guidance is a key stage in this process and is considered to provide a realistic basis from which to move forward towards achieving the redevelopment of this strategic site.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This brief has been prepared by Harrow Council to help shape redevelopment proposals for land at and around Harrow on the Hill station. It supplements advice contained in the Harrow Unitary Development Plan (HUDP), and establishes a set of principles that will ensure a comprehensive approach to development and enable proposals to be brought forward in accordance with an agreed framework. Potential developers will be expected to follow the guidance in preparing proposals for all or parts of the site.

The Harrow on the Hill station site is a strategic development opportunity, which has the ability to make a significant contribution to the delivery of key Council objectives for the future of Harrow town centre. Its size, location and setting create the chance to achieve an exemplar form of sustainable development, through high quality and distinctive design, and by introducing uses that will add diversity, vibrancy and something unique to Harrow. It also offers the potential to create a public transport inter-change that meets strategic transport objectives and provides the quality and capacity essential for the future growth and development of the town centre.

In preparing this guidance, the Council commissioned a team of consultants to produce a masterplan for the station site. This was undertaken over a six month period through a collaborative process between the consultant team and the Council, drawing on consultation already carried out as part of the HUDP review. Key landowners, the GLA and TfL were also consulted to obtain feedback and specialist advice at key stages of the masterplanning process. A series of development concepts were tested through the masterplanning exercise and an assessment made of the method, cost and implications of construction. This demonstrated that the concepts provide a constructive and realistic basis for which to move forward to a viable redevelopment.

The masterplan formed the basis of draft Supplementary Planning Guidance that was the subject of extensive public consultation over an 11 week period between August and October 2004. Details of the consultation process are included in a separate Statement of Public Consultation. The brief has been modified to take account of comments received and was formally adopted by the Council on XX July 2005.

Five key development objectives are identified in the brief, which form the Council's overall vision for the site. Detailed development guidelines are also included setting out planning, transport and sustainability requirements. Together, they provide the overriding principles on which proposals for all parts of the site must be based. Illustrative material is also included to show how the Council's vision could be realised, and provide a broad indication of scale, massing and layout that should assist developers in bringing forwards proposals. It is recognised, however, that there are a range of potential design solutions capable of meeting the key development objectives and that, as specific schemes emerge, the mix, location and amount of development will evolve in response to market and property decisions and the needs of key stakeholders. This guidance is therefore intended to provide a flexible framework, which will enable developers to bring forward imaginative and distinctive proposals without compromising the wider objectives for the site.

## 2. THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The Harrow on the Hill station site comprises an area of 5.8 hectares located towards the southern end of Harrow town centre. (Plan XX) It includes Harrow on the Hill rail/underground station, Harrow bus station, the former Royal Mail sorting office and post office, Harrow Baptist Church, Lowlands Recreation Ground, Harrow College, retail and office space in College Road and Station Road, and the air space over the railway line, which bisects the site and divides it into two distinct parts. Details of current landowners are shown on Plan YY.

The site forms a transitional area between the main commercial focus of the town centre in St Anns Road, Station Road and College Road, and open space and suburban housing to the south of the station. The main obstacle to movement between these areas is the railway line, which creates a physical and visual barrier, restricts pedestrian and vehicular access to the town centre, and severs it from the open space, Harrow on the Hill and the residential areas to the south.

The strong topography is a significant characteristic of the site. Located on the lower slope of Harrow Hill, the College and Lowlands Recreation Ground face onto the rising ground of the Grove Open Space. There is a fall in level across the site and ground levels north of the Station are significantly lower than to the south.

The main component parts of the site vary considerably in their land use character, quality and function.

Harrow on the Hill station is a vital town centre facility, which provides train and underground services and also connects the town centre to the residential area to the south of the railway. The station building itself has a number of design constraints. Disabled access to the station, in particular, needs to be improved. The main entrance in College Road is obtained through an uninviting enclosed space between two office blocks resulting in a weak presence in urban design terms within the town centre. A more detailed description of the station is set out in section 3 below.

The vacant former Post Office and adjacent retail/office block at 17-33 College Road provide the main commercial frontage to the site and comprise outdated 3 storey buildings of no great distinction. They make a limited contribution to the streetscene and are largely out of character with adjacent modern office blocks on the south side of College Road.

Harrow Baptist church and the 5 storey office block at the junction of College Road and William Carey Way form part of the same development completed in 1984. The church is set back from the road, with a very narrow street frontage, and most of the building is hidden from view by the 17-33 College Road block.

Harrow College is located to the south of the railway, sitting between Lowlands Recreation Ground and semi detached properties on Grove Hill Road. The College site is intensively developed, comprising mainly 3 and 4 storey buildings of different ages, many of which are in poor condition and in need of urgent replacement. The College is currently developing an accommodation strategy, in conjunction with the Learning and Skills Council, but is likely to continue to require a substantial town centre presence. Within the site is a Grade II listed Edwardian villa, "The White House". Although the building itself has some quality,

it has lost its curtilage and its setting is severely compromised by the surrounding properties.

Lowlands Recreation Ground, to the rear of Harrow on the Hill station, lies within the Roxborough Park and The Grove Conservation Area and is allocated as Metropolitan Open Land in the Harrow UDP. Although the only significant open space within the town centre boundary, it is not integrated within it and has little value as a town centre amenity. Pedestrian access is limited and whilst it contains some attractive mature trees and a small children's play area, the park's relative isolation and poor adjoining environment results in it being under used and occasionally subject to abuse.

Other buildings within the site comprise the bus station, a single storey structure around an elongated central island, a multi storey car park of poor quality design in Station Approach and a group of single storey retail units forming part of the railway bridge over the tracks at Station Road, at the eastern end of the site.

The area surrounding the site reflects its transitional nature.

Land in College Road and Station Road, to the north of the railway, is mainly in retail or office use, with a tight urban grain typical of established town centres. Properties vary in age and height, comprising 3/4 storey Edwardian terraces in Station Road, free-standing 6-8 storey, 1980's/1990's office blocks in College Road and the St Anns shopping centre, opposite the station entrance, completed in 1987. The St Ann's Centre is closed at night, limiting the number of routes through to St Ann's Road (a pedestrianised shopping street) and the area generally suffers from a relatively low permeability for north/south movement. This part of Harrow Town Centre presents few physical constraints that would directly affect the development of the station site.

Land to the south of the railway is more disparate in character comprising a mixture of buildings and open space and a wider range of uses, with Lowlands Road providing a clear physical demarcation between the town centre and the residential area beyond. Lowlands Recreation Ground provides a visual break in the built frontage, separating Harrow College from an area of modern office development, rising up to 5 storeys, to west of Station Approach. The Roxborough Park and The Grove Conservation Area extends along the full length of Lowlands Road and includes the Recreation Ground and a strip of land along the College Road frontage. It creates a perception of openness and quiet and contributes to the setting of the collection of historically important buildings and spaces on Harrow on the Hill. These important characteristics and opportunities for improvement to the Recreation Ground, Conservation Area and setting to the listed White House, will have a significant bearing on the approach to development south of the railway.

### **Ownership ( to accompany plan)**

- 1 Transport for London, and its subsidiaries, are the freehold owner of the bus/train stations and adjoining land. This includes a small multi storey car park in Station Approach which forms part of the lease to 79 College Road.
- 2 The former Royal Mail sorting office and post office and has been acquired by Dandara Ltd, a property developer.
- 3 Lowlands Recreation Ground is owned by the Council.

- 4 Harrow Baptist Church own the freehold of the church site.
- 5 SBH Properties own the freehold of 17-33 College Road, Sproull & Co. have a long leasehold interest on the upper floors.
- 6 Harrow College own the freehold of the site, and also operate from a second campus in Harrow Weald.
- 7 15 College Road is a 6 storey office block, linked to the Baptist Church, and is in the freehold ownership of Mirage Properties Limited and leased to First National Securities.
- 8 Transport for London have the freehold of this area, which comprises two office blocks and a small number of lock up shops. 79 College Road is vacant but the lease has recently been acquired by Quintain. First National Bank is occupier of 53/61 College Road, leased from Mapely. Although outside the boundary of Proposal Site 6, these two buildings enclose the main station entrance in College Road and adjoin parts of the site where significant development is expected to take place. If they were to become available within the relevant timescales, their inclusion within comprehensive development proposals would be considered positively in the context of the overall scheme objectives.



### **3. THE CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.1. PLANNING CONTEXT**

Relevant national, regional and local planning policy has informed the development of this guidance.

At the highest level, Central Government has increasingly pursued a new urban planning agenda, promoting more sustainable and inclusive patterns of development and higher design quality. Fundamental to this objective is to ensure that land is used more effectively through higher density, mixed use development in locations that are accessible and well served by a choice of means of transport. Local Authorities are encouraged to be proactive in promoting intensive development in such areas, integrating land use and transport planning based on the concept of Transport Development Areas, recommended by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. It also means promoting development that reduces the need to travel, especially by car, conserves and enhances natural resources, increases social inclusion by improving access to housing, jobs, leisure and other facilities, and achieves high quality buildings and public spaces through better design.

The creation of vital and viable town centre is central to this agenda. Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to focus development in existing centres and to actively promote growth by accommodating it, where possible, by more efficient use of land and buildings. Provision of a high quality and safe environment is considered essential if town centres are to remain attractive and competitive. Latest Government guidance also recognises that well designed public spaces and buildings which are fit for purpose, comfortable, safe, attractive, accessible and durable are key elements which can improve the health, vitality and economic potential of a town centre.

Accommodating growth in a way that is consistent with sustainable development principles is a theme running through the London Plan – the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. The Mayor's vision is for an exemplary, sustainable world city based on three balanced and interwoven themes of strong, long term and diverse economic growth, social inclusively, and fundamental improvements in the environment and use of resources. Underpinning this vision is the recognition that, if growth is to be accommodated without encroaching on open spaces, more intensive development of brownfield sites will need to take place and the future scale and phasing of development should be integrated with the capacity of public transport system and accessibility of different locations. In particular, the London Plan argues that, to achieve the Mayor's vision, the quality of public transport must be transformed by taking an integrated approach to transport provision and development, making major improvement to public transport, tackling traffic congestion and using appropriate controls and restraint based parking to encourage more sustainable development.

Harrow is identified as one of 10 Metropolitan Centres in the London Plan and recognised as a town centre where opportunities for intensification should be exploited. The Harrow on the Hill station site has also been included in the Mayor's 100 Public Spaces Programme creating an opportunity to make a significant improvement to Lowlands Recreation Ground and enhance open space provision throughout the site.

The Harrow Unitary Development Plan, adopted in July 2004, is the statutory Development Plan for Harrow and provides an up to date planning framework to guide the future

development of the Borough. Like the London Plan, the HUDP reflects the increasing emphasis on securing a form and pattern of development that accords with the principles of sustainable development, efficient use of land, reduced travel demand and social inclusion. These objectives were fundamental in the evolution of proposals for land around Harrow on the Hill Station and its designation as a Proposal Site in the UDP, capable of delivering high density, mixed use development around a major transport interchange in line with Government and strategic planning policy: Development Objectives and Constraints for the site, which this guidance supplements, are set out in the HUDP, as follows:

“This significant site and major public transport interchange provides the opportunity for high quality, higher density, mixed use development and enhanced interchange facilities. In order to achieve these objectives, the Council in conjunction with landowners and key stakeholders, will prepare an urban design framework for the site to facilitate a comprehensive approach to development and enable developments on any part of the site to be brought forward provided that they are in accordance with the development objectives. The design framework should apply Transport Development Area (TDA) principles, to optimise the development potential of the site, integrate land use and transport functions and ensure an appropriate built form at a key town centre location. A wide range of uses would be suitable, particularly those that attract large numbers of people, including office, retail, leisure, civic and residential uses. Specifically, the site offers the potential for Harrow College to locate its core functions at a single site within Harrow Metropolitan Centre.

Harrow Baptist Church occupies an important position within the Proposal Site boundary and represents a significant community asset in the town centre. The retention of the church and the opportunity to integrate it with other proposed facilities, as part of the development framework, should be carefully considered. However, if a suitable scheme cannot be designed to respect the church’s presence, relocation to a more appropriate part of the site, or elsewhere within the town centre, will be encouraged.

The ground floor to College Road should provide commercial activities that create an active and vibrant frontage, including retail, food and drink and other service uses. Pedestrian access through the development, and links to that part of the site to the south of the station, should be enhanced to overcome the railway barrier and ensure the integration of the whole development within the town centre boundary.

The site includes Lowlands Recreation Ground, an area of Metropolitan Open Land within the Harrow Town Centre boundary. This provides a visual break within the commercial frontage to Lowlands Road and a link to the more extensive area of open space on the lower slopes of Harrow on the Hill. The current amount of open space would need to be retained in any comprehensive development of the site and laid out in a manner that reflects its MOL characteristics. However, there may be scope to remodel the open space as part of the detailed design, to provide a landscaped setting for development, improve pedestrian access to the town centre, and secure an enhanced open space that would make a positive contribution to the range of town centre facilities.

Lowlands Recreation Ground also forms part of the Roxborough Park and The Grove Conservation Area. In addition, the Harrow College site includes a grade II listed building – the “White House”. Proposals for the site must preserve the character and setting of the listed building and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Harrow-on-the Hill station is a key interchange and has been identified for priority treatment in the West London Transport Strategy. Significant infrastructure improvement should be made to ensure the modernisation of the station to fulfil its function as a modern interchange and as a key part of the town centre”.

Several key planning objectives can be derived from national, regional and local policy and guidance, which proposals for the site should achieve:

- an approach that embraces the new planning agenda and which would acknowledge the principles of achieving a sustainable urban renaissance;
- a comprehensive and optimal approach to the site’s redevelopment;
- high quality, higher density, mixed use development and enhanced public transport interchange;
- a development that would enhance the centre’s role and identity;
- a significant increase in the residential housing stock, including a proportion of affordable housing, in a sustainable location;
- enhanced accessibility and a stronger pedestrian link between the town centre and the adjoining Metropolitan Open Land;
- potential for providing an increase in the quality and quantum of the College’s accommodation in the town centre;
- better permeability throughout the town centre; and
- enhanced areas of open space to serve town centre residents and users.

All relevant Planning Policy Statements, PPG’s, London Plan and UDP policies and proposals which should be taken into account in the future development of the site are summarised in appendix XX.

## **3.2. URBAN ANALYSIS**

The London Plan recognises Harrow town centre as a place where opportunities for intensification should be exploited. However, its strategic role in the sub region is unclear and it is not fulfilling its potential as a Metropolitan Centre.

### **The town centre is ordinary**

It lacks a strong and distinctive identity.

It is characterised by a poor and outdated appearance.

The cluttered public realm is uninspiring and does little to raise the aspirations of the town centre

It fails to celebrate and connect to the nearby open space

It does not reflect Harrow's heritage.

### **The town centre has poor legibility**

Despite being a compact centre with bus, rail and tube transport links, people find it difficult to navigate the town centre.

The rail station concourse is accessed by steep staircases on both sides and is often congested with passengers, as well as people moving between north and south

Large developments such as the St Anns and St Georges Centres, make it difficult to permeate the centre after hours.

Traffic intrudes into sensitive areas.

### **The town centre lacks diversity**

It is not fulfilling its retail potential; the range and quality on offer is limited

The variety of convenient facilities to support living and working in the town centre is insufficient

The choice of restaurants, leisure activities, civic and cultural facilities is limited

The evening economy is dispersed and caters for few age and interest groups

Evening activities are not well related to the retail core, discouraging late retail opening hours

Housing choice is limited and there is lack of open space

There is a perceived fear of crime and safety and security concerns, especially at night

Overall the town centre is less important, vital and interesting than it should be and fails to attract a wide cross section of the community.

### **3.3. TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY.**

Harrow Council has prepared a Town Centre Strategy entitled “ The Future of Harrow Town Centre”, which has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance following wide ranging consultation.

The town centre strategy sets out a long term vision for the future of Harrow, identifying incremental change over time, within the context of a realistic, identified and understood role, to create an attractive interesting and successful town centre. It represents a key document to demonstrate the Council’s commitment to moving the town centre forward - to residents, occupiers, investors, and landowners and is critical in improving confidence in the town centre. The overriding aim of the strategy is to:

“Transform Harrow town centre into a thriving, distinctive and adaptable centre, which meets the long term needs of the community”

Harrow wants to benefit from its compact town centre, by creating a diverse and distinctive experience that connects key attractions with vital gateways and raises the overall aspirations of the town centre.

The five key objectives outlined in the strategy are:

- 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
- to ensure effective transport and pedestrian access to and within the centre
- to make the centre look and feel attractive and safe
- to celebrate the history, diversity and greenery of Harrow in the centre
- to make the centre feel more alive with people

A series of measures have been identified to achieve each of the objectives – through ongoing work already in progress, thorough planning policy development, through Council service provision/improvement and through the development of various key sites.

The strategy identifies the Harrow on the Hill station site as a key site that is vital to the transformation of the town centre.

### **3.4. ACCESSIBILITY AND MOVEMENT**

Ensuring effective transport and pedestrian access to and within the town centre is a key objective of the Council's Town Centre Strategy. The town centre benefits from having existing public transport facilities – underground, overground, bus and taxi - close to the retail core and close to one another. Surveys have shown a significant demand for bus and rail services, with the majority of pedestrians arriving in the town centre by bus or rail in both the morning and evening peak periods and on Saturdays. However, the proximity of the existing facilities is undermined by the lack of properly integrated transport connections, problems of capacity and limited bus priority within surrounding roads.

Access to the town centre by car is affected by high traffic demand throughout the day, causing vehicle delays and queues at a number of road junctions. As a result of the general increase in road traffic, by 2009 significant additional capacity problems will be experienced if forecast growth rates are achieved. Major enhancements to capacity and highway provision, however, would be entirely contrary to national planning policy, and the Mayor's Transport Strategy and, in any event, would only attract further through trips and result in an unacceptable increase in vehicular traffic throughout the town centre.

The further development of Harrow town centre cannot rely on increased accessibility by car. Improvements to the quality and capacity of public transport will therefore be central to its future growth and success. This will require a step change in provision if the town centre is to be transformed in the way set out in the Development Strategy, fulfil its Metropolitan Centre potential and meet demand for new retail, residential, leisure, cultural and employment uses. Tackling current deficiencies at Harrow on the Hill station, Harrow bus station, and the interchange between the various public transport modes, will be a key first stage in this process.

Increasing public transport usage, and encouraging people to change their mode of travel from cars to bus and train, will be essential if the town centre is to retain and improve its function and status. Achieving a step change will not be solely about capacity, although this will be essential. Just as important is the quality and attractiveness of the public transport offer, making the experience comfortable and inviting and a real alternative to the private car. Restraint based car parking standards, based on the London Plan (or stricter standards as appropriate), will apply within the boundary of the masterplan area, and will act as a further tool to encourage more sustainable development.

#### **Harrow on the Hill Station**

Harrow on the Hill Station provides dual functions for the Town Centre. It is a busy interchange offering a rail/LUL station, an adjacent bus station, taxi rank and cycle facilities, and also acts as a public through route, providing north/south access across the rail corridor. There is currently no opportunity to increase capacity or improve interchange between modes. Passenger congestion is experienced in the existing narrow ticket hall/concourse area during peak periods, and in the area at the bottom of the stairs onto the Metropolitan Line platforms. In addition, steep steps to both entrances and down to the platforms severely restrict accessibility and create a very poor environment for mobility impaired people. The station does not give the impression of a transport gateway. These problems stem, in the main, from a lack of space and consequently, any development involving the station would have to be undertaken in conjunction with the surrounding area. It is an interchange that would greatly benefit from being developed in a comprehensive manner rather than a piecemeal approach.

An integrated transport facility with improved accessibility for all and a reduction in the number of areas of conflict that occur during peak periods will need to be central to any future development.

### **Bus Station**

There are currently 14 services that use the existing bus station. It has six stops and space for six standing buses and operates around an island passenger waiting and information area. During peak periods the bus station experiences operational difficulties due to the volume of buses and passengers. Due to the one-way system on College Road, southbound buses are required to use Greenhill Way, Headstone Road and Kymberley Road to access the bus station.

London Buses consider the existing bus station accessible but of insufficient capacity for future growth with very limited space available for passengers and buses. The existing bus station facility is already at operational capacity, particularly in regard to bus standing, and London Buses have forecast further expansions in services. London Buses anticipate that they will require a bus station accommodating 2 triple and 4 double stops and room to stand 11 buses by 2011.

For a number of years, the bus station has been associated with high levels of crime and disorder. This varies from anti social behaviour, mainly in the late afternoon coinciding with the end of the school day, to more serious crimes involving assault or robbery. Surveys have consistently highlighted public concern about the bus station area. Improving security is an important design objective that must be addressed in any proposals for the site.

### **Public Carriage Conditions**

There are currently 14 taxi rank spaces available in College Road. These comprise two spaces directly outside the Station, a second portion of five spaces and a third portion of 7 spaces. The third portion of the taxi rank frequently has more taxis ranking from it than its capacity, and this can create problems for buses turning from Station Road into College Road.

The Public Carriage office has identified a need for 20 spaces within the town centre. This rank provision must be in a location that maintains the prominence of taxis within the town centre whilst continuing to maintain prominence within the station area and thus the ability to maximise trade from the interchange.

### **Pedestrian Environment And Linkages**

The rail corridor creates a significant barrier between the town centre and open space to the south. The north/south route through the station plays an important role in reducing this severance during station hours, particularly for the College, which is located adjacent to the station beside the Metropolitan Open Land. A significant proportion of students attending the College arrive by bus and train/underground, and are all potential users of the station link to access the College.

Future development proposals should maximise opportunities for enhanced pedestrian movement and access through the site, and provide better links to the rest of the town centre and the green spaces to the south of the railway. Recent years have seen a considerable increase in residential development within the town centre, in accordance with national, London and Harrow planning policies. This is likely to continue into the future,

and the open space south of the railway provides an important local amenity for these residents. Convenient and attractive access across the railway will be essential to ensure that this function is fully exploited. It is therefore considered important that a public route is maintained through the station, although in a manner that minimises conflict between rail passengers and through trips and does not compromise station security.



## 4. THE VISION

The vision for the site encompasses five key objectives;

- 1 **A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mobility Hub**  
That celebrates a strategic mobility hub and resolves bus and rail station capacity issues to encourage sustainable travel.
- 2 **A New North/South Connection**  
That glues two distinct places together through a series of high quality public spaces and improves the link between the town centre and some of Harrow's most important assets.
- 3 **Signature Development**  
That raises the profile and performance of Harrow town centre through high quality distinctive design.
- 4 **Mix of uses**  
That promotes an exemplar form of sustainable town centre development.
- 5 **Improved Access**  
That integrates all modes of transport into the town centre and achieves equitable balance – improved public transport facilities, reduced reliance on the car, better facilities for cyclists and greater accessibility for pedestrians to essential facilities and services.

### **A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mobility Hub**

The provision of new station facilities and enhanced interchange, with improved access, capacity and layout, is a key objective of this guidance. The bus station is currently operating at capacity and the existing site does not provide the potential to meet future operational needs. Congestion within the rail station, lack of access for disabled people and poor interchange arrangements also detract from the quality of public transport serving the town centre. A step change in provision is required to support the growth and improvement of the town centre and meet strategic transport objectives. To achieve this, it is considered that the bus station needs to be relocated.

Land centred on the former Post Office site in College Road offers the only opportunity for relocating the bus station and meeting the requirements for a significantly improved facility. By relocating the train station and taxi ranks, there is also the opportunity to provide a significantly enhanced relationship between buses, trains, and taxis, in addition to improved ticketing facilities and better platform access.

All modes of public transport should be brought together into a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mobility hub – a multi modal interchange.

### **A new north/south connection**

Redevelopment of the site should improve pedestrian access between the town centre to the north and open space, the Harrow College campus and other facilities to the south, creating a high quality and secure 24 hour connection between the two. Future

proposals should knit these distinct areas together, breaking down the barrier of the railway, creating a dynamic and secure space that transforms from north to south.

Lowlands Recreation Ground should be enhanced so that it better reflects Metropolitan Open Land functions. Currently the open space is under utilised, unloved and uninviting. Enclosed by mature trees and fencing, the space fails to connect into the town centre and is laid out in a way that segregates it from The Grove open space on the opposite side of Lowlands Road. As a result, it fails to serve as a destination, either for town centre users or the wider residential area to the south. The improved MOL must provide a quality open space that will attract the whole community and, in particular, create an accessible amenity for the growing number of people living in the town centre.

In addition to the improved MOL, development of the site should provide a series of public spaces to enhance the pedestrian environment throughout the area, creating a public realm that invites you through and encourages you to linger. In particular, the opportunity for a new square in College Road providing an enhanced setting to development should be considered.

The north south link will improve the connection across the railway line from Harrow town centre to the wide range of facilities to the south.

### **Signature Development**

A key aspiration is to secure a high quality, distinctive, signature development that will help to reposition Harrow town centre as a growing metropolitan hub.

This demand something unique.

Something that adds a new dimension to Harrow.

Something that creates a new landmark and focal point within the town centre.

The site is highly visible and important in defining people's perceptions of the area. The potential visual impact demands buildings of outstanding architectural quality, well related to the surrounding streets and open spaces with high quality design, creating signature development that would enhance the town centre without detracting from the views of the historic St Mary's church to the south, as shown on page xx above. It also requires development that responds sensitively to the different character areas within the site and ensures an appropriate transition between town centre and surrounding residential areas.

### **Mix of uses**

Development should provide a mix of uses that supports the objectives of the Town Centre Development Strategy, extends the range or quality of facilities and services currently available, animates the public realm and new public spaces and contributes to the overall character and identity of the area. It is anticipated that development of the site will be largely residential led. An appropriate amount of affordable housing should be provided that has regard to London Plan and UDP targets but does not compromise the development objectives for the site. The commercial element will need to be demand led, principally focusing on an intensification and quality improvement of the existing station retail offer to include a convenience retailing element and incorporating a mix of quality café, bar restaurant operators to enhance the evening economy.

**Improved Access**

Development of the site should promote sustainable transport choices and improve the wider accessibility of the town centre for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. On site parking should be minimised, at a level significantly lower than the London Plan and UDP maximum standards, due to the level of accessibility resulting from the proximity to the public transport interchange, which will be improved as an integral part of the proposals. Car free development could also be considered for parts of the site. Parking for disabled people and pedal cycle parking should be provided in accordance with UDP guidance.

## **5. DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

### **5.1. PLANNING**

Developers will need to take account of the following guidelines when developing schemes.

#### **Matching Development to Transport Capacity**

Proposals must demonstrate that key transport improvements identified in this guidance can be delivered, in order to ensure that the public transport infrastructure throughout the town centre has sufficient capacity to meet the travel demand generated by development.

#### **Mix of Uses**

Development of the site should extend the range of town centre uses rather than duplicating them. Although a mix of uses is required, detailed feasibility work has highlighted the likely importance of residential in terms of a scheme's viability and the importance of facilitating other key benefits.

#### **Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing requirements will be negotiated with developers to achieve an acceptable mix of units and tenure and to ensure that integration is achieved with the rest of the development and the Town Centre. A flexible approach should be adopted, within the policy framework set out in the London Plan and UDP to ensure that the objectives of the development are not compromised. 10% of all new social rented dwellings should be built to wheelchair standards and the remainder should be built as "Lifetime Homes".

#### **Impact on Town Centre**

The proposed uses should complement the town centre and have a positive impact on its vitality and viability.

#### **Harrow College**

PS6 seeks a comprehensive approach to the site's development and which accommodates, at least as a future phase, the expansion plans of Harrow College.

#### **Design, Architecture and Build Form**

Development should produce a distinctive scheme that strengthens the town centre and brings enhanced identity, at a scale and density that makes full and effective use of the site's location adjacent to a major transport hub. A design led approach should be adopted that takes full account of the different site characteristics on either side of the railway and secures buildings of a design and form appropriate to their specific planning context. Buildings generally higher than their surroundings must be of outstanding architectural quality and satisfy the design and functional criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the HUDP. Active frontages should be created to College Road to ensure vibrancy and security at street level. A Design Statement should be submitted with any future planning application to explain the design approach and demonstrate how proposals address the development objectives for the site.

#### **Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)**

Proposals should respect the character and function of Metropolitan Open Land located within the site and priority should be given to protecting/enhancing its openness and quality. The scope to remodel the open space to improve its function and create a better

relationship with The Grove should form part of comprehensive proposals for land to the south of the railway. Any built development should be restricted to that part of the site adjacent to the railway, framing the open space and maximising its open character.

### **Public Space**

Development should contribute to the creation of a network of accessible and usable public spaces.

### **Access and Permeability**

An inclusive design approach should be adopted to ensure that development is fully accessible to all, and available at all times to the public. The space around buildings should promote safe, continuous, and barrier free movement and all surface materials should be suitable for people with impaired mobility. An Access Statement should be submitted with future planning applications describing the philosophy and approach to inclusive design and the key access issues that proposals have sought to address.

### **Listed Building**

Proposals should protect or enhance the setting of the listed 'White House'. The buildings that currently surround the White House are considered to impact negatively on its setting. The future use of the listed building should be considered carefully in relation to any plans for the College.

### **Conservation Area**

Proposals will need to demonstrate that The Roxborough Park and The Grove Conservation Area is protected. The conservation area is generally open and leafy and prominent from several key vantage points. However, that part which falls within the station site is disparate in character and lacks focus, and the poor quality of some of the buildings and spaces immediately south of the railway station detract from its overall appearance. In addition, the conservation area/MOL designations merge with the town centre, creating a transitional character. Proposals should aim to make significant improvements to the appearance area and better articulate the transition from soft to hard landscape.

### **College Road**

Development of the site must secure a high quality pedestrian environment in College Road. The building edge addressing the street should be of a human scale and of a character and form that creates vitality and interest at street level.

### **Impact on Identified Important Views**

The visual impact of proposals from key views as identified within the UDP and the Roxborough Park and The Grove Conservation Area Statement will need to be considered. Buildings should also be laid out in a manner that creates opportunities to provide new views to St Mary's church from College Road and other parts of the site.

### **Evening Economy**

Proposals should facilitate the delivery of a strengthened and balanced evening economy. Simultaneously, the importance of protecting residential amenity will need to be considered.

### **Open Space and Recreation**

Development should ensure a significant improvement to the quality of open space provision throughout the site. Existing strategic and site specific functions, consistent with the open space typologies set out in PPG 17, should be maintained and enhanced to provide an amenity for town centre residents and users, increased biodiversity, opportunities for outdoor performances and events and a quality setting to new development.

### **Planning Obligations/Conditions**

In light of the possibility of land parcels being brought forward separately, the Council will apply planning obligations/conditions to ensure that development objectives are realised and a comprehensive scheme ultimately provided. Through planning obligations and or development agreements the Council will ensure that the public benefits of the transport infrastructure, public spaces and other public benefits are delivered, by pooling resources if necessary, and that each phase of any development bears an appropriate cost.

### **Secure Design**

Crime prevention should be integral to the initial design process. “Secured by Design” principles should be adopted in the design and layout of development to minimise the risk of crime and maximise security. New streets, footpaths, open spaces, parking and servicing areas should be designed to ensure natural surveillance and the layout of development should ensure a clear distinction between public and private space. Public areas should be well lit, secluded places where people can hide should be avoided, and landscaping should ensure that views into and out of open spaces are not obscured. Developers are advised to consult with the Police Crime Prevention Design Adviser at the earliest opportunity.

### **Proposals will also need to take into account:**

- Emerging Town Centre Access Plan and Public Realm Strategy
- Railway Safety Principles and Guidance and London Underground TfL Planning Guidelines including Intermodal Transport – Interchange for London: January 2001
- Private residential amenity space
- Assessing bio-diversity and natural heritage (open space)
- Environmental protection issues including noise and vibration
- Public art
- Childcare facilities
- Sustainable design and construction principles
- Access for disabled people

## **5.2. TRANSPORT**

The principal transport objective is to produce a high quality transport hub that is accessible, easy to use and has sufficient capacity and space for future passenger demand. Interchange rationale dictates that the bus and rail relationship is maintained and enhanced within the transport hub.

### **Relocated bus station**

Provision should be made in any development for the relocation of the bus station to land centred on the former Post Office site in College Road. The Council's vision envisages a landmark building sitting above the replacement bus station with a high ceiling over the carriageways and external footways to ensure natural light and air above all external areas and full weather protection for passengers. This arrangement could enable the common destination bus stop groupings for existing bus routes to be maintained whilst providing the increased stop/stand capacity sought by London Buses. Access/egress would continue from College Road, but the scope for dedicated bus access/egress from the bus station onto Station Road, at the junction with Gayton Road, should also be considered.

All proposals for the replacement bus station must conform with TfL London Buses station planning, interchange and taxi guidelines. In particular, the detailed design and layout must ensure open ventilation, good lighting, enhanced facilities and safe pedestrian access, in a secure, high quality passenger environment. Vehicular access to the site should be capable of accommodating the current one way system of bus operation over most of the town centre, which involves heavy use of Kymberley Road to the west, but should also allow for changes in bus priority to enable two way working on Station Road. Proposals should ensure that sufficient space is provided in a usable configuration for the bus station in order to meet capacity for future growth. Further advice can be obtained from TfL London buses in this respect.

The relocated bus station should integrate well with taxis. The TfL requirement for twenty rank spaces at the transport hub will need to be addressed, with visibility and accessibility of the ranks to town centre and station users a high priority. Sufficient cycle parking should be provided in the vicinity of the transport hub so as to aid interchange between cycle users and other modes and promote more sustainable patterns of travel.

### **Harrow on the Hill station**

Harrow on the Hill station does not provide the transport gateway expected of a Metropolitan Centre, and the lack of opportunity to increase capacity or improve the interchange between transport modes is a potential constraint on future town centre development and growth. In order to address current deficiencies, improve accessibility, reduce ticket hall and platform congestion and secure an enhanced interchange, proposals for the transport hub should provide for a replacement station to the east of its existing position, adjacent to the relocated bus station. This would entail a new booking hall and access to platforms situated within a concourse spanning the railway linking the relocated bus station to open space, Harrow College and the wider residential area to the south. The existing station would need to be retained as an operational centre for control of the railway, but public use would no longer be required. If necessary, the concourse could be retained to provide an alternative pedestrian crossing point, or could be converted to another appropriate town centre use. Where possible pedestrian flows across the railway should be fully segregated from those to or from the railway.

Development proposals should be in accordance with all TfL and London Underground station planning standards and guidelines, including Railway Safety Principles and Guidelines and provide sufficient capacity to accommodate future passenger and pedestrian demand. The following key components should form part of the detailed design:

- access from the new station concourse to deliver passengers to a more central position on existing platforms, thus improving platform utilisation and train loading.
- a high quality, secure, 24 hour pedestrian through route linking the town centre to the area south of the railway, capable of independent use when the station is closed.
- a concourse of sufficient width to accommodate the number of passengers entering and exiting the station, waiting at the gates, and pedestrian through movement.
- provision for Mobility Impaired Person (MIP) access via lifts directly onto the three island platforms from the concourse, but within the “paid area” of the station.
- step free access from street level to the main station concourse. This could take the form of a shallow ramped access at the southern entrance from Lowlands Road and a high quality escalator and lift via the bus station at the northern entrance.
- suitable passenger drop off points. The primary drop off facility is likely to be to the south of the station with vehicular access from Lowlands Road. Opportunities for a secondary facility from Station Road should also be considered.

### **Linkages**

Designs for the transport hub should ensure an attractive, easy to use approach from both north and south. The approach from College Road should provide safe and convenient access to the rest of the town centre and be designed as a space primarily for people and public transport. The southern entrance would be accessed from the remodelled open space at Lowlands Recreation Ground and would need to be integrated within the landscape proposals for this sensitive part of the site. It should provide a logical and attractive focal point/desire line for pedestrian activity to and from the range of facilities to the south of the station.



### 5.3. SUSTAINABILITY

The Council is committed to promoting sustainable development and to maximising the opportunities arising from the site's size, town centre location and public transport accessibility.

The site offers a rare chance to deliver an exemplar development that can bring significant social and economic benefits to the town centre and make a substantial contribution to sustainable development objectives. The planning and transport guidelines, described above, are designed to achieve a more sustainable pattern of land use, by maximising the development potential of the site. However, they also help to promote more sustainable lifestyles and sustainable transport choices through the proposed mix of uses, high quality, inclusive design, improved open space and enhanced public transport. All proposals will need to take full account of sustainable development principles and demonstrate consistency with current policy and best practice.

Any development should exemplify the principles of sustainable design, use and construction, incorporating cost effective, energy efficient, reliable and adaptable systems to meet the architectural, structural, business and planning requirements of the project.

A major goal of the design should be to limit the environmental impact of the development, minimise its energy consumption and maximise the use of energy efficient techniques. Preliminary review of the site has been made to make most of environmental factors such as the sun path and the prevailing wind conditions.

With regard to environmental system design, consideration should be given to the following design features and measures:

- use of passive solar design in the orientation of buildings to maximise passive solar benefits.
- a proportion of the developments energy needs to be provided on site, from renewable sources.
- good thermal insulation and use of materials with high thermal mass.
- day lighting where appropriate combined with high efficiency lighting, good lighting control and effective shading.
- use of natural ventilation where appropriate.
- ventilation systems incorporating re-circulation, free cooling and heat reclaim as appropriate.
- rainwater harvesting combined with recycled water distribution for toilet flushing and irrigation.
- design to limit the water and drainage demands of the building on the local utility infrastructure, and use Sustainable Urban Design systems to control surface water run-off, including conventional attenuation, permeable pavements, grassed swales, infiltration trenches and ponds.

- maximise the wildlife potential of the site through the management of existing open spaces and the creation of new habitats.
- use of native species in landscaping proposals to enhance the amenity value of the area and benefit local wildlife
- re-use of demolition waste and recycled materials and provision of appropriate recycling facilities on site.

Any residential aspects of the development should give consideration to the following:

- operable windows and trickle vents to provide natural ventilation, whilst central kitchen and bathroom exhausts should ensure extract from each apartment whilst minimising energy use and maintenance requirements.
- exhaust systems to terminate away from air intakes and windows to ensure no short-circuiting of foul air.
- balconies to provide shading to the external face whilst still allowing natural daylight into each apartment as well as private outdoor space.
- heating and domestic hot water to be provided from a central system to allow for efficiencies of diversity and scale of installation. Heating to the apartments to be at the perimeter to offset fresh air and envelope losses.
- good insulation of the external skin combined with internal circulation spaces to help to limit the heat gains and losses in each apartment.
- good sound insulation to be provided between apartments to ensure privacy.
- any air handling systems to incorporate heat recovery to minimise energy usage and increase efficiency.

## 6. ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUT

An illustrative layout is presented here to demonstrate how the development objectives for the site could be realised. It is based on concepts developed through the masterplanning process to test whether the Council's vision for the site was viable and deliverable, and to provide the basis for engagement with landowners, transport operators and local residents.

The layout shows one interpretation of the development objectives for the site. Other design solutions are likely to emerge as specific schemes are prepared, and uses could vary from those currently assumed, provided that they support the objectives of the Town Centre Strategy and are consistent with UDP policy. This particular layout assumes that Harrow College forms an integral part of the development. It is uncertain, however, how the College will ultimately seek to deliver its future services and developers should work closely with the College in bringing forward proposals for the site.

The layout provides an integrated development covering all the different land use parcels that form the site. At its heart is a 21<sup>st</sup> century mobility hub, uniting rail with bus, taxi and bicycle within a new station plaza. New retail and restaurant/bar facilities could be incorporated within a wide, high quality concourse spanning the railway, connecting the town centre to the College campus, open space and residential area to the south. Upper levels would provide the focus for new urban apartments.

To the south of the railway, Harrow College is comprehensively remodelled to become a model campus with 21<sup>st</sup> century facilities for learning, framing the open space, and combined with high quality flats offering superb views of the historic Harrow on the Hill.

The reconfigured Metropolitan Open Land complements the adjacent development, significantly improving the setting of the listed White House and removing some of the features that detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area, creating a destination for the south. New feature gardens and improved "kiss and ride" could all feature in the improved space. The mature trees continue to add to the setting and add to the value of the proposed development.

The Harrow on the Hill station site presents a number of individual, but linked, development opportunities and, whilst development as a single scheme would have considerable benefits, the Council recognises that implementation could involve different developers, on different parts of the site, over different timescales. To ensure that the various elements are deliverable, meet the key objectives for the site and knit together from an urban design perspective, developers will need to prepare an overall development phasing/delivery strategy for the whole site as part of proposals for any individual part.