

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 10 JULY 2003
ADVISORY PANEL

Chair: * Councillor Keith Burchell

Councillors: * Idaikkadar * Marilyn Ashton
* N Shah * Mrs Bath
* Anne Whitehead * Mrs Kinnear (1)

* Denotes Member present

(1) Denotes category of Reserve Member

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1 - Draft Town Centre Development Strategy:

Your Panel received a report of the Chief Planning Officer regarding the Draft Town Centre Development Strategy. It was explained that external consultants had been commissioned to prepare a strategy which examined the needs of the Town Centre holistically and proposed specific objectives which, together, would contribute to the overall aim of transforming Harrow Town Centre into a thriving, distinctive and adaptable centre, which would meet the long term needs of the community.

The key objectives identified by the draft strategy were:

- To promote 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 town centre.
- To make the centre feel more alive with people.
- To promote more community and civic activity in the centre.

The strategy set out measures to achieve each of these individual objectives and the officer report outlined possible sources of funding.

Members and stakeholders had been extensively involved in the production of the draft and it was now proposed that Cabinet agree the strategy for the purposes of consultation with the public and a wider range of organisations. Your Panel were invited to make comments on the draft strategy, prior to Cabinet's consideration of it. A consultant's brief in respect of Proposal Site Six (Harrow on the Hill Station) had also been drafted, with the aim of maintaining momentum in the future development of this site, and this was also to be submitted to Cabinet for approval. Your Panel's comments on this document were similarly invited.

During the debate which followed, the Panel raised, inter alia, the following issues:

- It was suggested that, in the section of the strategy which dealt with objective 2 (which referred to the need to ensure effective transport and pedestrian access to and within the centre), greater emphasis should be placed on the car parking needs of all town centre users, and not just shoppers.
- It was commented that, in the section of the strategy which dealt with objective 5 (which referred to the need to make the centre feel more alive with people) greater emphasis should be placed on the need to balance this objective with consideration for the amenity of nearby residents.
- It was suggested that, in the section of the strategy which dealt with objective 6 (which referred to the need to promote more community and civic activity in the centre), the importance of the Back History Month should also be highlighted and that greater reference be made

- to the Cultural Strategy.
- It was agreed that the questions for public consultation, as set out at Appendix 4 to the draft strategy, should be 'open-ended' and phrased in such a way as to encourage those consulted to provide detailed answers.
 - It was pointed out that there was a minor factual error in Appendix 3 to the draft strategy – the change to Harrow's retail position should have read '-16' rather than '16'.
 - Some concern was expressed regarding the relationship of the strategy to the deposit replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the fact that the UDP had yet to be finalised after receipt of the Inspector's report..
 - Further concern was expressed that, when the strategy was sent out for consultation, the covering document emphasise the status of the strategy and be very clear that the proposals were by no means concrete.

Following further discussion it was

Resolved to RECOMMEND:

That the above comments regarding the draft Town Centre Development Strategy be forwarded to Cabinet.

REASON: To progress the Town Centre Development Strategy in accordance with the Council's objectives for the environment and the economy.