

NEW HARROW PROJECT PANEL

8 JULY 2003

Chair: *Councillor A T Foulds

Councillors: * D Ashton (1) * O'Dell
* C Mote

* Denotes Member present
(1) Denote category of Reserve Member

[Note: Councillor Jean Lammiman also attended this meeting in a participating role. See Minute 9].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: South Harrow Public Realm Maintenance Services Pilot

The Panel received a presentation and report from the Head of Contract Services, which evaluated the progress on the New Harrow Project - South Harrow Public Realm Maintenance Services Pilot to date. The presentation of the Head of Contract Services detailed the current public realm maintenance services provided to residents and demonstrated why a new and different approach to public realm maintenance services was necessary. The Head of Contract Services also discussed the project and its link to central government's 'Liveability Agenda'.

Members were additionally informed that the objectives of the pilot had been achieved and the main learning points to note from the work to date. The Head of Contract Services advised Members of the results of the MORI Survey May 2003, which was largely positive, based on an evaluation of the past six months, for example, it was recorded that 82% of those surveyed felt that the streets in South Harrow were cleaner and brighter. Resident satisfaction surveys and newsletter feedback forms were also conducted and, in line with the MORI Poll, had produced positive results. Members noted that areas of improvement raised by residents were related to traffic management and congestion.

The Head of Contract Services also discussed the Best Value aspects of the project, the current Operational Service Standards and the Added Value Benefits of the new approach. Members were also invited to compare the New Harrow Project against similar schemes devised by other local authorities, such as the London Borough of Camden's 'Boulevard Project'. The medium and long term expectations of the project were also discussed and a plan to enable continuous improvement was also explained.

A Member of the Panel commented on the statement on page 18 of the report; that it would not be desirable for competition to result in the return of the client/contractor split; and stated that he felt that it would be incorrect for the Authority to fetter its discretion in such a matter. In response, the Chair informed the Panel that market testing was not mandatory and that there would be flexibility around this issue. The Member also raised the issue that the figure of £1.90 per week, quoted as being the additional cost to each household for good standards of public realm maintenance, may be good value for those who will be currently benefiting from the project but not such good value for those who live in areas that will be rolled-out last and that the Authority needed to take this into account.

The Member also expressed concern in relation to the information presented on page 30 of the report; that economies of scale, which will be realised when all nine areas are operational, equate to approximately 28% of the gross cost of Area 1. The Member felt that the figure quoted was optimistic and that the economies of scale needed to be monitored closely and regularly by either Cabinet or the Budget Review Working Group. Responding, the Chair advised that alongside economies of scale there was also economies of repetition and that as the project was rolled-out, the Authority would become more competent at carrying out project-related actions, which would in turn decrease costs.

Another Member of the Panel wished to congratulate all those involved with the work in Area 1 and described the outcome as a major achievement for the whole of the

Borough. The Member added that the Authority had obtained political recognition from this project, specifically in terms of carrying out manifesto promises made to the public.

The Chair thanked the Head of Contract Services for his thorough analysis of the progress so far and welcomed the fact that the pilot had achieved the set objectives. The Chair also invited the Panel to agree the recommendations contained within the report and to add another recommendation; that the Council staff working on the New Harrow Project be congratulated for their superb work and efforts to date.

RESOLVED to Recommend: (1) That the recommendations contained within the report be agreed, as now amended, to read: -

- (i) To note that the South Harrow Public Realm Maintenance Services Pilot has achieved the objectives agreed by the New Harrow Project Panel;
- (ii) That the service standards and service frequencies be deemed as appropriate;
- (iii) That the Public Realm Maintenance Services approach be rolled-out across the Borough;
- (iv) That the Council staff working on the New Harrow Project be congratulated for their superb work and efforts to date;
- (v) That Cabinet be requested to re-examine the balance between cost and benefits/impact of the project, as part of the 2004/2005 budget review process.

(2) that the report of the Head of Contract Services be welcomed and noted.

RECOMMENDATION 2: New Harrow Project – Public Realm Maintenance Services – Roll Out to Areas 2 and 3

The Panel received the report of the Head of Contract Services, which provided a methodology for the determination of the New Harrow Project Operational Areas 2 and 3, together with a summary of the roll-out plan and initial capital expenditure proposal for Area 1 and the Town Centre.

With reference to the management factors to inform area selection, the Head of Contract Services informed Members that the following factors needed to be taken into consideration: proximity to operationally live area; customer volumes, development initiatives and community profiles. The Panel then received assessments on both Areas 2 and 3 based on the latter factors, as well as an overview of the roll-out programme in its entirety. Members were additionally informed of the capital resources required to see the project through to a successful conclusion.

The Head of Contract Services proposed to the Panel that Area 2 consist of the following Wards: Greenhill, Marlborough and Wealdstone; and that Area 3 consist of the following Wards: Kenton East and Kenton West.

The Chair thanked the Head of Contract Services for a thorough account of the roll-out process and financial implications and invited the Panel to agree the recommendations as set out in the report. All Members of the Panel unanimously agreed to recommendation 1; that the New Harrow Project Operational Area 2 be comprised of the following Ward: Greenhill, Marlborough and Wealdstone. However, two Members expressed concern about recommendation 2; that the New Harrow Project Operational Area 3 be comprised of the following Ward: Kenton West and Kenton East.

The Members advised that their reservations were based on the following reasoning: that the grounds for selecting Area 2 were not equal to the grounds for selecting Area 3, e.g. use of the community profiles. The Members added that the decision was also based on out-of-date census data and old Ward boundaries. It was proposed by these two Members that the decision on which Wards should constitute Area 3 be deferred to the meeting of Cabinet on 15 July 2003. The Members also requested that the following Wards be considered as constituting Area 3: Belmont and Stanmore Park. Another Member of the Panel wished for it to be made clear that the Belmont Circle shopping area would be dealt with under the current proposal of the Kenton East and Kenton West Wards.

The Chair agreed that it would be reasonable to defer the decision to the meeting of

Cabinet, in order for discussions to take place regarding which Wards were most suitable to comprise as Area 3. The Chief Executive requested that an addendum to this report be submitted to the meeting of Cabinet, which would provide an evaluation on the suitability of the proposed (Ward) areas: Kenton East and Kenton West or Belmont and Stanmore Park.

RESOLVED to Recommend: (1) That the New Harrow Project Operational Area 2 be comprised of the following Ward: Greenhill, Marlborough and Wealdstone.

- (2) that the decision to confirm the New Harrow Project Operational Area 3 be deferred to the meeting of Cabinet on 15 July 2003;
- (3) that an addendum to this report be submitted to the meeting of Cabinet, which would provide an evaluation on the suitability of the proposed (Ward) areas.