

NOTICE OF CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION OF 30 MAY 2019 – HARROW STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

I hereby give notice that I would like to call in the decision “Harrow Strategic Development Partnership” taken by Cabinet on 30th May 2019.

The reasons for the Call-in are as follows:

1) inadequate consultation with stakeholders prior to the decision;

The Report doesn't make any mention of consultation with residents or stakeholders apart from a passing reference to consultation carried out 5 years ago. Specifically, it makes no mention of the “Residents’ Regeneration Panel” which was described in the Corporate Plan (Harrow Ambition Plan) as a “one-of-a-kind, best-in-class initiative showing how residents and Council can work together in partnership to improve schemes and public relations”. So far all the consultation with the public has been on the basis that these projects will be to develop homes for the Private rented sector with the proceeds helping to provide revenue for the Council. Given that this is a significant departure from the previous plans there is a reasonable expectation that further consultation would take place before the decision was made.

Further, the cross-party meeting designed to get a consensus for this long-term commitment was repeatedly cancelled by the administration. Whilst the Opposition were provided with a draft copy of the report before publication there was no opportunity to discuss suggestions and concerns with the administration.

2) the absence of adequate evidence on which to base a decision;

The report includes three sites (Poet's Corner; Peel Road (which is the preferred site for the Harrow New Civic Centre) and Byron Quarter (Phase 1)) and specifically excludes one site at this stage (Greenhill Way site). No evidence is offered to explain this choice and no financial assessment has been made of the Greenhill Way site. The Regeneration Update which was also discussed at the 30th May Cabinet meeting stated “the Council considered that Greenhill Way is a good centrally located site which would gain the interest of a Joint Venture Partner”. The Aspire report, commissioned by the Council, also recommends that the Council consider whether it should “include the site in a JV” stating that as the Council intends to bring forward three sites to a JV “this presents the opportunity to include the Greenhill Way site” which would “allow the JV partner's expertise to be utilised to prepare a viable scheme”. No explanation is given, and no evidence offered as to why this site wasn't therefore included in this joint venture.

Further, the report provides no evidence showing why the New Civic Centre should be in Wealdstone, which the report states is the preferred site. There has been no financial appraisal of the various sites, specifically the Greenhill Way site. Equally there has been no consideration of the effect on the Town Centre of not bring the “key strategic” site of Greenhill Way forward.

3) the decision is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the budget framework;

The report states that the future financial implications can't be quantified at this stage but "If the financial implications of the HSDP can be quantified at the point of setting the draft and final budget and the MTFs, scheduled for Cabinet in December 2019 and February 2020 respectively, the appropriate changes will be recommended. Should this not be the case the budget, MTFs and capital programme will be updated and reported in line with Financial Regulations."

This means that this decision sets the Council on a path which may result in expenditure outside the current Budget framework set by Full Council in February 2019. Cabinet does not have the authority to go outside the framework set by Full Council, if the Executive wishes to change that framework they are required to seek the approval of the Full Council.

4) insufficient consideration of legal and financial advice.

The business cases for these schemes have not been approved by Cabinet and as stated above there has been no financial viability assessment of either bringing forward the Greenhill Way site at this stage or of locating the New Civic Centre on the Greenhill Way site. Instead it sets a preferred site with no financial advice or evidence to support this preference.

Signed by Councillors:

1. Paul Osborn
2. Ramji Chauhan
3. Stephen Wright
4. Anjana Patel
5. Camilla Bath
6. Pritesh Patel
7. Christopher Baxter
8. Marilyn Ashton
9. Ameet Jogia
10. Chetna Halai
11. John Hinkley