

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL
Date:	15 SEPTEMBER 2003
Subject:	HARROW AGENDA 21- PROGRESS REPORT
Key decision:	NO
Responsible Chief Officer:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	PARTNERSHIP AND PROPERTY
Status:	PART 1
Ward:	N / A
Enclosures:	APPENDIX A HARROW AGENDA 21 STATUS REPORT APPENDIX B INFORMATION ABOUT LA 21 IN LONDON

1. **Summary/ Reason for urgency (if applicable)**

- 1.1 Members of the Panel at their last meeting on 1st July 2003 requested a progress report by this meeting and information on how Local Agenda 21 is supported in other London Boroughs.

2. **Recommendations (for decision by Portfolio Holder)**

- 2.1 That the progress report be noted.
2.2 Those Members note the information about LA 21 in other London boroughs.

REASON: To help the Council to decide the level of support it needs to provide to Harrow Agenda 21.

3. **Consultation with Ward Councillors** Not applicable

4. **Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)**

- 4.1 Grants Advisory Panel meeting 1 July 2003 –Recommendation 3 (to Portfolio Holder).

5. Relevance to Corporate Priorities

5.1 This report addresses the Council's stated priority of "strengthening Harrow's local communities by promoting social inclusion amongst all Harrow residents both young and old, by seeking to eradicate poverty and by reducing the fear of crime."

6 Background Information and options considered

6.1 The Panel received a report on 1 July 2003, which detailed the activities and projects undertaken and planned by Harrow Agenda 21 in the current year. Members wanted to be kept informed of progress being made by HA 21 and requested information on how Local Agenda 21 is supported in other London Boroughs.

6.2 HA 21 produced the attached report "Harrow Agenda 21 Status Report", which details the activities and plans of the organisation. They have also carried out a survey of other London Boroughs that show the level of support given to Local Agenda 21.

6.3 Some Members at the last Panel meeting expressed concern that the lack of progress by HA 21 in comparison with other boroughs was due to the lack of a dedicated officer to support the organisation. **The Environmental Services Department provided the following information about the support they give to HA 21:**

6.4 Support given by London Boroughs to Local Agenda 21 organisations and the situation in Harrow.

Since the inception of LA21 in the early 1990's, the approach adopted has been very varied. In a few Boroughs the process introduced was very much Council-led. In others, a more community—led approach has been pursued, more in keeping with the spirit of LA21. Some Boroughs have no formal LA21 organisation. Accordingly, the level of technical and/or administrative support varies widely, usually related to the scale of activities being undertaken. Assistance with accommodation etc is also offered to differing degrees. As such, therefore, there is no typical 'average level of support' which can be used as a reference point. In addition, in recent years activities associated with LA21 have increasingly become mainstream Council activities.

In Harrow, the HA21 Environmental Forum has developed as a community-led organisation. Varying levels of Council support (in addition to the Council Grant) has been provided during the life of HA21, most extensively in the years leading the production of the HA21 Action Plan. As the focus of the Forum's work changed to implementation and action, the scale of Council technical officer support reduced significantly, in line with the scale of work being undertaken by HA21. In the last year, specialist officer support has continued to be provided for the Waste and Transport groups.

Members may be aware that during its early years, dedicated support for HA21 was provided by the Environmental Liaison Officer (ELO). The administrative support was then delegated to another officer in the same office. When the first ELO left the authority in 1999, and at the time the HA21 Action Plan was well developed, the responsibilities of the post were re-focused to firstly reflect the reduced activity of HA21, and secondly, the increased need for the Council to develop and support its own environmental initiatives. However, whilst dedicated technical support from the ELO continued until 2002 when the post-holder left, assistance continued to be provided by the Interim Director (Environmental Services), the Funding Officer, and Group Planner-Planning Services.

Administrative support continued to be given to HA21, together with specialist technical support to HA21 action groups, as and when necessary. Support also continues to be given in terms of accommodation and equipment for HA21 employees (when they have been in post), and volunteers. Administrative support continues to be given by the Senior Information Officer in respect of a range of matters. These include the distribution of minutes; booking of meeting rooms for forum meetings; attendance at EC meetings. organising refreshments, organising displays, printing of the HA21 Annual Report; the distribution of AGM papers to a mail-out of 300; and quarterly returns.

HA21 do not currently have a Chair, and no permanent employees in post. In the light of the resources and staff currently available within HA21, and the current work programme actually being undertaken as indicated in the HA21 Status Report, it is considered that appropriate Council administrative and other support continues to be given to HA21.

7. **Consultation** - Not applicable

8. **Finance Observations**

8.1 None

9. **Legal Observations**

9.1 None

10. **Conclusion**

10.1 HA 21 have begun to make progress in many areas. Officers will continue to monitor the work of HA 21 to ensure that it meets the funded objectives.

11. **Background Papers**

11.1 N / A.

12. **Author**

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