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| Meeting:             | Town Centre Project Panel  |
| Date:                | 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2006                                  |
| Subject:             | Progress on UDP Proposal Site 6 : Harrow on the Hill Station     |
| Key Decision:        | No   |
| Responsible Officer: | Director Of Planning : Graham Jones                              |
| Portfolio Holder:    | Property, Housing Planning (Development) and Planning (Strategy) |
| Status:              | Part I   |
| Encs:                | None   |

## SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out progress since the last Panel Meeting on issues relating to UDP Proposal Site 6, involving discussions with Harrow College, TfL/Metronet, Quintains and Dandara.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Advisory Panel is requested to:

A: recommend to Cabinet that

1. All developments within the PS6 site should contribute to the delivery of the key objective of a new transport hub for the Borough. Contributions are likely to be both financial through a S106 agreement and where necessary in the form of land
2. The provision of improved public transport infrastructure should be the Council's primary objective and take priority over other policy considerations where necessary.

3. Contributions from individual sites will be determined on the basis of the estimated overall cost of public transport improvements together with an economic appraisal of the appropriate level of contribution.

B: note progress in discussions with Harrow College, TfL/Metronet, Quintains and Dandara

C: To consider making formal representations to TfL/Metronet on the need for comprehensive proposals to make Harrow on the Hill Station fully accessible

**REASON:**

To ensure that the Council's primary objective of securing a step change in public transport is achieved.

## **SECTION 2 – REPORT**

### **Harrow College**

Discussions have been ongoing with Harrow College in respect of their future development proposals and how these relate to and integrate with the Council's strategy for the development of Harrow Town Centre, and in particular the area around Harrow on the Hill Station.

Harrow College has been reviewing its ability to deliver the full range of post 16 educational requirements since the merger between Greenhill and Weald Colleges in 1999. The estates options have involved multi and split-site working as well as consolidation on a single site.

In parallel the Council has been reviewing the Harrow on the Hill Station proposal site as included in the UDP and subsequently in the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted in July 2005. The Proposal site includes the College's Harrow on the Hill campus and the College has been involved throughout the process as a stakeholder.

A number of options for the College have been identified and for both educational and planning reasons it is now considered that the land swap option between the College and the Council involving the rearrangement of Lowlands Recreation Ground is the best option. This involves the College building on a triangular area adjacent to the Lowlands Road access to the Station, the open space being reconfigured in a more usable and distinctive form (retaining the same area), and the remainder of the College site being redeveloped for housing.

This arrangement is consistent with the adopted SPG, subject to it not prejudicing the other objectives and in particular the development of a 21<sup>st</sup> century mobility hub.

The College has submitted a bid to the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) which is to be considered in October. The bid is for a new consolidated College in the Town Centre, largely on Lowlands Recreation Ground which is owned by the Council. The relocation would enable the College to release both its existing sites in Lowlands Road and Brookshill, and use the receipts to help fund the redevelopment. A commensurate area of open space, partly from Lowlands Recreation Ground and partly from the College site, would replace the Recreation Ground.

Officers and the Council's advisers have been concerned that in isolation the College's proposals would make no contribution to the transport infrastructure and therefore place the onus on provision both physically and financially on development north of the railway.

Recent discussions with the College have been around the provision of funds which would make an appropriate and equitable contribution towards public transport. The Bid to the Learning and Skills Council does not make provision for such a contribution and the LSC does not recognise such contributions in their calculation of grant. It is therefore for the College to fund through its own mechanisms. In this respect the College and the Council officers have been working through options for increasing the value of the Colleges land assets and utilising this to fund a Section 106 Planning Obligation towards the cost of the transport infrastructure.

The Council's adopted SPG states that 'an appropriate amount of affordable housing should be provided that has regard to the London plan and UDP targets but does not compromise the development objectives for the site'. The primary development objective is the delivery of a first class transport interchange and for this reason it is proposed that the normal affordable housing requirements should be waived provided that an equitable and appropriate contribution is made towards transport infrastructure. Negotiations between the College and the Council have concluded that a sum of in the order of £5m would be appropriate level of contribution from the College through S106 obligations.

### **TFL/Metronet**

Metronet is the operating company for Harrow on the Hill Station and are obliged under their contract to provide disabled access to the Station. They are currently establishing a range of options for achieving this within the existing station configuration. The options range from a minimum option utilising an existing tunnel and lift which would be linked to a new ticketing facility on the Lowlands Road side to more extensive works providing access from College Road via lifts and the existing station concourse.

Discussions with TfL and Metronet have centred upon (i) ensuring that the station is fully accessible and (ii) finding solutions compatible with the Council's objectives for the Station. In this respect it would be unfortunate if money was spent on a project which would be overtaken by future more comprehensive development.

Further discussions will be taking place with TfL in the near future. In the interim members may wish to consider whether to make formal representations to TfL and Metronet in respect of both ensuring the Station is fully accessible in the future and that the access proposals are consistent with the Council's objectives.

### **Dandara**

Members will be aware that Dandara requested deferral of their current application for the former Post office site (51 College Rd) which was on the agenda for the Development Control Committee of 27<sup>th</sup> July 2006 recommended for refusal. Dandara made this request on the basis that they wished to discuss their proposals further with officers to establish what common ground there may be to progress. Officers have made clear the Council's position that delivery of a step change in public transport is of paramount importance if proposals for their site are to be are to be progressed.

Dandara have also put together a new team to take over responsibility for their site and met with Officers on the 21<sup>st</sup> September. Dandara indicated a willingness to work with the Council and its partners towards mutually acceptable and viable development solutions., If the Council is to work with Dandara there would need to be a clear and agreed statement of the arrangements and outcomes and officers will be discussing this with our advisers and the other parties involved.

### **Quintains**

Following Quintains acquisition of 79 College Rd discussions have been taking place about their potential role as developer for all or part of the PS6 site. Negotiations stalled earlier in the year , largely due to lack of certainty in respect of the College's position and the impact this would have on the wider scheme. This is now clearer and the decision of the LSC will be known on the 5<sup>th</sup> October. Clarification of the College's proposals and the contribution to the costs of transport improvements, together with the willingness of Dandara to work with the Council and Quintains, will enable meaningful discussions to proceed. The position will be updated following a meeting with officers on the 25<sup>th</sup> September.

## **SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE**

|                         |                                     |  |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Chief Financial Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Anil Nagpal<br>21 <sup>st</sup> September 2006 |
| Monitoring Officer      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Ade Amisu<br>21 <sup>st</sup> September 2006   |

## **SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Contact:** Graham Jones, Director of Planning Services 020 8420 9317

**Background Papers:**

None

**IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?**

|    |  |       |
|----|--|-------|
| 1. | Consultation                                     | YES   |
| 2. | Corporate Priorities                             | YES   |
| 3. | Community Safety (s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998) | YES   |
| 4. | Manifesto Pledge Reference Number                | A2/B2 |