

TOWN CENTRE PROJECT PANEL

26 SEPTEMBER 2006

Chairman:	* Councillor Marilyn Ashton	
Councillors:	* David Ashton	* Navin Shah
	* Mrs Kinnear	* Bill Stephenson (1)
	* Chris Mote	
Advisers (non-voting):	* Mr Abe Hayeem	– Canons Park Residents' Association
	* Mr Baj Mathur	– Harrow Heritage Trust
	* Mr John Palmer	– Harrow Agenda 21
	* Mr A Wood	– Harrow Public Transport Users' Association

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

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION 1 - Progress on UDP Proposal Site 6: Harrow on the Hill Station**

The Panel received a report of the Director of Planning Services, which set out the progress made on issues relating to the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposal Site 6, following discussions with Harrow College, Transport for London (TfL)/Metronet, Quintains and Dandara; all the current land owners surrounding the site under discussion. The report sought approval to a number of recommendations for submission to Cabinet in order to show support for the funding bid made by Harrow College to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for a new consolidated college in the Town Centre. This would largely be located on Lowlands Recreation Ground which was owned by the Council and involve a land swop between the Council and Harrow College. It was noted that the LSC would be making a decision on the funding bid on 5 October 2006.

To assist the Panel, a copy of the document titled '*Harrow on the Hill Station – Planning Brief, July 2005*' was circulated to Members and advisers. The Planning Brief had been prepared to help shape redevelopment proposals for land at and around Harrow on the Hill Station and established a set of principles to ensure a comprehensive approach to development in Harrow Town Centre.

The Director of Planning Services (Urban Living) stated that the over arching primary objective of the Council's policy in relation to this site was to develop and ensure a step change in public transport which would provide the foundation on which the Town Centre could build for the future. This would require significant funding from all involved in the proposals, and this would leave less money to achieve other planning and development objectives, including affordable housing. He added that Harrow College would be under an obligation to make a significant contribution towards the cost of the overall development of the tube and bus stations; the remainder of the cost to be funded by adjoining site owners. The Panel was briefed on the ongoing negotiations with these companies.

The Director stated that the Council's vision was to create a new north/south connection, which might involve the pedestrianisation of College Road. It was intended to create a town centre, which combined development that was sustainable, delivered on housing and retail space, made public transport fully accessible and provided a traffic free environment.

The Panel also received contributions from its advisory members who suggested a number of ways in which the various sites surrounding Harrow on the Hill Station could be reconfigured to help transform Harrow Town Centre into a distinctive and attractive environment that would help change the face of Harrow. It was noted that many of the various suggestions put forward had previously been explored and tested, some of which had already been taken on board. Additionally, the Panel was advised that the Council was exploring options, which could remove traffic from College Road and introduce a town square. Proposals for a new library and a performance/exhibition centre in Harrow Town Centre had not been discounted either.

In response to questions, the Director assured the Panel that other sites had been considered for the redevelopment of Harrow College and that the option set out in his report was considered to be the most suitable. Additionally, the reference to waive the normal affordable housing requirement applied only to the existing Harrow College site. Issues in relation to the height of new buildings in and around the Harrow Town Centre would be a matter for the Council's Development Control Committee and planning requirements. However, in the interim, a decision was required in relation to the re-siting of Harrow College and its bid to the LSC.

A Member remarked that the Council's Strategic Planning Advisory Panel should also have considered the report; this was noted.

Following further discussion, it was

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Cabinet)

That (1) all developments within the proposal site 6 (PS6) site should contribute to the delivery of the key objective of a new transport hub for the Borough; contributions were 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, where necessary, take priority over other policy considerations;

(3) contributions from individual sites would 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;

(4) the progress made in discussions with Harrow College, TfL/Metronet, Quintains and Dandara, as set out in the Director's report, be noted;

(5) formal representations be made to TfL/Metronet on the need for comprehensive proposals to make Harrow on the Hill Station fully accessible

Reason for Recommendation: To ensure that the Council's primary objective of securing a step change in public transport was achieved.

[Note: Councillors Navin Shah and Bill Stephenson wished to have their concerns recorded as to the content of paragraphs 3 and 4 of page 3 of the report considered by the Panel in relation to the waiver of affordable housing].

(See also Minutes 14 and 15).