

## STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES SUB-COMMITTEE

9 APRIL 2003

Chair: \* Councillor Thammaiah

Councillors: \* Nana Asante \* Janet Cowan  
 \* Ann Groves \* Vina Mithani  
 \* Omar \* Seymour

\* Denotes Member present

## PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS

## PART II - MINUTES

34. **Attendance by Reserve Members: RESOLVED:** To note there was no appointed Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.
35. **Declarations of Interest: RESOLVED:** To note that there were no declarations of interest made by any Council Members in relation to the business to be transacted at this meeting.
36. **Arrangement of Agenda: RESOLVED:** That all items be taken with the press and public present.
37. **Minutes: RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2003, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.
38. **Public Questions/Petitions/Deputations: RESOLVED:** To note that there were no public questions, petitions or deputations to be received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules 8, 9 and 10 respectively.
39. **Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD):** The Sub-Committee received a presentation from Kathryn White, Deputy Chief Executive of the Association.

It was explained that the aim of the Association, which was established in 1972, was to promote equality of opportunity for all disabled people in all areas of life. Therefore the make up of staff and the decision-making Board were mostly disabled people.

Members of the Sub-Committee were told that the Association offered expert advice in the areas of: Advocacy; Direct Payments; Information; Welfare Benefits; Employment and Training; and Services for the Business Community.

In summing up, Kathryn White explained that there were a number of Key Issues for the Association to deal with in the future, such as: Staffing Structure and Board Membership; Financial Sustainability; Marketing and Fundraising; Maintenance of Quality Marks achieved; Community and Service Users Involvement; Recording and Monitoring; and Funding.

Members of the Sub-Committee welcomed the information presented and praised the Association for all its work undertaken for disabled people in Harrow, and wished it every success in the future.

**RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.

40. **Development of the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP):** The Manager of the Strategic Partnerships Section addressed the Sub-Committee in relation to the developments that had so far taken place in the development of the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP).

It was highlighted that the Partnership Steering Group in October 2001 agreed to develop a HSP. It was stated that the HSP was being developed in association with: the government guidance on 'Local Strategic Partnerships'; and the Council's priorities in promoting the environment, strengthening Harrow's local communities, promoting Harrow as the centre for lifelong learning, improving quality of health and social care, and developing a prosperous and sustainable economy in Harrow.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the Constitution and the membership structure of the HSP had been developed; elected Councillors nominated by Cabinet to sit on the HSP were: Lyne, Foulds, Lammiman and N Shah. It was also mentioned that the Harrow Association of Voluntary Services (HAVS) had taken the responsibility of organising and

conducting elections for the voluntary and community sector positions available on the Board of the HSP.

The Officer advised that the HSP would be launched on the 20 May 2003, and that Member Development sessions would be available for Members after the launch date.

Members of the Sub-Committee questioned the viability of the delivery groups in the HSP. The Officer responded by explaining the function of each group and described their roles, which demonstrated that they were distinctive and focused, thus eliminating duplication of workloads. It was also emphasised that the structure of the HSP was democratic and represented the various private and public sector businesses that operate in Harrow.

Members also questioned the election process of the HSP, in relation to voluntary and community groups that were not affiliated with HAVS; they asked how unknown groups were going to be accessed and encouraged to take part in the election process. The Manager advised Members that she would look into how HAVS were going to ensure that the elections were publicised to the community.

The Chair and Members of the Sub-Committee welcomed the progression of the HSP and requested that they be kept informed of the developments that take place.

**RESOLVED:** That the Sub-Committee note the developments of the Harrow Partnership into the HSP, and its intended membership.

41. **West London Community Cohesion:** The Sub-Committee received a report of the Chief Executive, detailing the West London Community Cohesion, the Manager of the Strategic Partnerships Section presented the report.

It was explained that an inter-departmental ministerial group, chaired by John Denham, had undertaken a study into the racially motivated riots that took place in Oldham and Burnley. Through the group's study and the consequential end report produced, they identified a number of contributory factors that played a motivating role in triggering the riots; so as a direct result, a Community Cohesion programme had been devised to address the issues identified.

It was announced that under the West London Pathfinder Bid, that included Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hounslow and Hammersmith and Fulham, who collectively form the West London Alliance, had successfully secured a bid for £570k. It was explained that there were 3 main elements to the project:

- 1) Communication and Dissemination, which included work with the media, faith and cultural networks, and the use of west London portal for online access to good practice.
- 2) How the public sector mainstreams community cohesion values, through regeneration and the planning and delivery of frontline services.
- 3) Community development and strengthening community and voluntary networks. This work would cover youth and community organisations and networks, which would include Black and Ethnic Minorities communities and refugees, sports, leisure and cultural activities; faith communities and ownership of the community cohesion agenda.

Partners in the project included the West London Alliance, West London Voluntary Sector Network, Metropolitan Police, West London Business, London Fire Brigade, Primary Care Trusts, and the Trinity Mirror Group

Members of the Sub-Committee welcomed the cross borough working, but mentioned who would be responsible for implementing the plans of the West London Community Cohesion in Harrow. The Officer indicated that the new HSP would play a vital role in overseeing the project.

The Chair along with Members agreed that this programme was an important one for Borough, and therefore asked to be kept informed of the progression of the programme.

**RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.

42. **Report on Current Community Issues:** The Manager of the Strategic Partnerships Section presented a report of the Chief Executive to the Sub-Committee, regarding the Chair's meetings with a variety of community groups.

It was explained that the meetings with the community groups had identified a number of issues for the Council. In an attempt to address the issues raised, the Lead Officer of the Sub-Committee created a proforma detailing issues, process and its eventual resolution, it was intended to be completed by the Officer in conjunction with Members.

However, Members felt that the Sub-Committee should become more proactive in investigating the issues raised in reports received at Sub-Committee meetings.

It was decided by Members that the Lead Officer should complete the preliminary findings of the meetings that had so far taken place, completing the relevant sections of the proforma. By doing this, it would then enable Members to select or probe an issue further, until a decision is reached on a review topic.

**RESOLVED:** That the requests of the Panel be noted.

43. **Draft Outline Work Programme for the Scrutiny Function for 2003/04:** **RESOLVED:** That the following topics be entered onto the Strengthening Communities Work Programme for 2003/04:

- Access to Justice – monitoring the developments of the proposed closure of Harrow Magistrates' Court by the GLMCA;
- Grant Funding;
- Better Government for Older People;
- Community Safety Unit (Police);
- CPS and Victim Support;
- Youth Crime

44. **Harrow Magistrates' Court:** Further to this issue being raised as an item for any other business, Councillor A Groves reported that the Greater London Magistrates' Courts Authority, who was proposing to close Harrow Magistrates' Court, had decided to defer their final decision to 30 May 2003. The Member said that she would continue to update the Sub-Committee on the developments that take regarding the proposed closure of the courthouse.

45. **Domestic Violence Officer's Post:** Further to this issue being raised as an item for any other business, Members of the Sub-Committee queried the outcome of the Sub-Committee's Reference to Cabinet, regarding having a permanent Domestic Violence Officer position in Harrow Council. They requested that written information be made available to them detailing what Cabinet had decided to do with their Reference and their plan of action in making the post permanent.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.55 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR THAMMAIAH  
Chair