

Meeting:	Town Centre and Major Projects Panel
Date:	30th January 2007
Subject:	Priorities and Progress 2007
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Trehern Executive Director Urban Living and Graham Jones Director of Planning
Portfolio Holder:	Marilyn Ashton Planning and Enterprise
Exempt:	no
Enclosures:	none

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

The Panel is recommended to note the report and comment on any issues which they consider should be taken into account in progressing the projects

REASON:

To assist progress in taking the projects forward

SECTION 2 – REPORT

The Panel's terms of reference were amended in 2006 to include responsibility for advising Cabinet on major projects as well as matters in Harrow Town Centre. A copy of the terms of reference is attached at appendix 1. In general terms, the Panel will be the key member level body for considering development opportunities where the council wishes to deliver corporate and community objectives through either its property interests or its planning powers or a combination of both.

Many of the sites have a clear policy framework through the Unitary Development Plan and/or Supplementary Planning Guidance whereas others will need to be progressed through planning briefs, the planning application process, or through the Local Development framework. Final decisions on these matters will normally rest with Cabinet, and inevitably many if not all will require planning permission which will be dealt with by the Strategic Planning Committee. All the projects will also involve input from a variety of stakeholders at different stages of the process.

This report sets out the range of projects currently being pursued and which will be reported over the coming year. The projects are of strategic importance and will have an impact on the Borough, in terms of the range of services available to the community, their physical presence and their environmental impact. In their totality they have the potential to change the face of the Borough and the Council has the opportunity to exploit their potential in the best interests of the residents, the business community and other stakeholders.

The approach to development is intended to be consistent with emerging themes in the Local Development Framework but clearly cannot await its adoption. Most if not all of these sites will be included in the 'Delivering Development' Development Plan Document which will provide further opportunity for public engagement.

The main purpose of this report is make Members and Advisors aware of the Panel's workload and its potential impact. Officers will be preparing a monitoring framework which will outline progress and reporting this regularly with updates and with specific reports on individual projects. Inevitably some projects have reached a much more advanced stage than others and it is not the intention to revisit decisions that have already been made.

Harrow Town Centre

Harrow on the Hill station

This site, identified as a proposal site in the UDP, has the potential to change the image and functioning of the Town Centre. The Planning Brief for this site was adopted by the council in July 2005, with the objective of creating a step change in public transport accessibility by re-providing bus and train facilities and improving the user experience.

To achieve this will require value to be created, mainly through residential development, but it also provides for a new Harrow College, improved usable and attractive public spaces and pedestrian links across the railway.

The College need to have a planning permission in place by November this year to meet their programme to be on site by May 2008 with completion by May 2010.

This is a complex project involving a number of agencies, landowners and developers. On the south side of the railway, Harrow College has now had funding approval for complete re-provision of its buildings which will involve development in the order of 25000 sq metres of building at a cost of £90m. Officers are working with the college to ensure that their proposals integrate with public space provision and residential development on the south side and with the Station/public transport proposals. On the north side of the railway work is continuing with the 2 major landowners Quintains and Dandara to establish how a comprehensive development could achieve the transport objectives. The results of this work should be available during February.

Public Realm and Access Strategy

A consultants Brief for this work was agreed by the then Town Centre Panel in December 2005 and following a competitive selection process Urban Initiatives were appointed to undertake this work in August 2006. Work has been continuing since that time, complicated and delayed because of hold-ups in the preparation of the Town Centre Access Strategy which has now been added to Urban Initiatives commission. The strategies will be the subject of consultation with key stakeholders in February/March with a wider public consultation later in the year.

The Council's draft Capital programme as agreed by Cabinet on the 14 December 2006 includes a combined provision for 'Strategic Development' for £1.5m in 2007/8, £3.2m in 2008/9 and £4m in 2009/10. A significant element of this provision will be to implement aspects of the public realm strategy throughout the Town Centre. Other elements will be implemented with development proposals as they occur, and Officers will be exploring other funding opportunities such as TfL grant.

Sites in Gayton Rd

The Cabinet in December 2006 agreed in principle to pursue the development of Gayton Road car park, Gayton road library and the Sonia Court which lies between the two Council owned sites for a Library, Performance and Exhibition Centre, new public car park and residential development with Fairview Estates who have an interest in the Sonia Court site. On the basis of proposals submitted by Fairview, the library/exhibition and performance space building envelope will be provided at no cost, together with the car park.

Officers are in discussion with Fairview in respect of the detailed proposals and possible timescales, with a view to start on site in 2008.

Both the Town Centre Strategy and the Cultural Strategy identified the lack of cultural and leisure facilities in the Town Centre as having a significant impact on its ability to provide the full range of functions and facilities expected of a Metropolitan Centre. This proposal has the potential to remedy this deficiency.

Greenhill Road car park

The December cabinet also authorised the disposal and exchange of land at this site, the small car park north of Greenhill Way, to facilitate the rationalisation of the parking arrangements for the office development at the corner of Greenhill way and Station Rd and the creation of a development site suitable for small scale residential development. This is being implemented and should be completed this year.

Travis Perkins Site, Pinner Road.

Transport for London the owners of this site have marketed it and selected a preferred developer.

Greenhill Way Car Park

Greenhill way car park represents a major development opportunity in the Town Centre. Previous attempts to secure development have not proceeded as developers have not delivered the gains promised. The opportunity to link development with Debenhams to increase the retail offer will be further explored but this is not seen as a high priority against the other projects being progressed at the current time. The Urban Initiatives work will help inform how best to take this site and Land at Havelock Place (see below) forward.

Havelock Place and Adj land

Havelock place and the area of the St Anns Service yard is identified as a development site in the UDP and the Town Centre Strategy. It presents an opportunity for mixed use development which can improve the retail offer and provide a new pedestrian route through from College Rd to St Anns Rd, an objective identified in the Town Centre Strategy. This is not being actively pursued at the present time.

Wealdstone

Re-opening Wealdstone High St

Re-opening Wealdstone High Street is being pursued with the support of Accord MP and subject to agreement from TfL will be commenced this year. This is seen as a critical first step in regenerating Wealdstone. Public Realm enhancements to complement the re-opening are being considered against the funding constraints. The Council's strategic partner Accord MP has produced ideas for the wider regeneration of the area. These ideas are under consideration as to how to take them forward.

Potential development Opportunities

There are a number of potential development sites within the Wealdstone area which could contribute towards regeneration objectives. Some of these involve Council owned land in whole or in part and these will be examined in more detail over the course of the year to see what opportunities there are for early release and development.

Station Road including Civic Centre Site

Station Road between the Town Centre and Wealdstone is a strategic artery for the Borough, both as a major communications route through the Borough and the link between two main commercial centres. Its physical appearance and the adjoining land uses do not reflect either its significance or its potential. The Council's strategic partner Accord MP has been looking at ideas for how this corridor could be improved.

Options for the Council to rationalise its accommodation and either consolidate within the existing site or relocate are being examined. The first stage of reviewing the council's requirements in the light of organisational and service delivery changes is underway and will be reported to members in March this year.

The Civic Centre sits on a site of approx 10 acres (4Ha) and development options which will support the Council's planning and corporate objectives will be a key element of further discussion. These will need to be set within the context of the future of Station Road.

Kodak

The rationalisation of the Kodak site is proceeding with building demolition and reorganising of the Kodak manufacturing base. This will result in the release for development of approximately 8 acres (3.5Ha) of land adjoining Headstone Drive. Negotiations between the Council and Kodak for the purchase of some or all of this land stalled in the autumn of 2006.

It offers the potential for redevelopment to provide employment generation which would assist in the regeneration of Wealdstone, including the possible use of retained buildings for an Incubator Centre for start up businesses, an important element in the emerging economic development strategy.

Leisure Centre/Driving Centre/Byron Recreation Ground

The former driving centre site adjacent to the Leisure Centre has been vacant for some time and represents a major development opportunity. The existing Leisure Centre, owned by the Council but run under contract by Leisure Connections, is no longer 'fit for purpose' in terms of the facilities it provides or the condition and efficiency of the building. Preliminary discussions have been held with Leisure Connections about the re-provisioning of the Leisure Centre. This would need to be set within an overall masterplan for the whole site including the Driving Centre and car park, and which would integrate with and improve Byron Recreation Ground. Taking this forward will require a combination of project development and masterplanning work which will require external resources, some of which could potentially funded through Leisure Connections.

Hatch End Arts and Leisure inc Bannister playing Fields

The area of land currently occupied by the Harrow Arts Centre, Hatch End Library, the swimming pool and education playing fields offers scope for expanded and improved leisure provision which could potentially involve relocation of facilities from Bannister Playing Fields. Little work has been undertaken on this site to date but Leisure Connections who manage both

Bannister and the Hatch End Pool are reviewing options for leisure provision which would include a replacement pool. Opportunities for further development which would help fund leisure/cultural facilities will also need to be explored.

Stanmore District Centre incl the Anmer Lodge site and adjacent land

The current users at Anmer lodge are to be relocated by early 2008. The lodge site together with adjoining surface level car parking offers the opportunity for development which could consolidate the vitality and viability of Stanmore District Centre including improved car parking. Officers will be examining the opportunities this presents with a view to having proposals ready for when the site becomes available. This work will be complement the initiatives for Harrow Town Centre and Wealdstone in improving centres across the Borough.

Prince Edward Playing Fields

Following Cabinet agreement in principle to develop the playing fields Barnet Football Club has submitted a planning application for the completion of the works started in 2005 together with some amendments and additions. Should the application be successful development should proceed in time for the beginning of the next football season. It is intended that the facilities will be used by Wealdstone FC and by Barnet for training and development. An integral part of the agreement will be the development of youth and community programmes.

William Ellis Playing Fields

The Cabinet has agreed in principle to the disposal of a part of the William Ellis Playing Fields site for the proposed Hindu School, subject to planning permission. The Schools Organisational Committee on the 16th January unanimously supported this proposal. The promoters of the School, the I-Foundation, will be preparing a planning application which will include proposals to consolidate and improve facilities for Belmont Football Club on the remainder of the site.

Wood farm

This important green belt site is in the freehold ownership of the Council but subject to leases to Stanmore Dairies, now wholly owned by CP Holdings.

The Cabinet has agreed that should a planning permission be granted it will negotiate with CP holdings for the freehold sale of a small part of the site in exchange for the termination of the leases on the remainder and their re-instatement as an integral part of Stanmore Country Park. CP Holdings have a planning application lodged but this is not currently being progressed pending further survey work on the ecological issues.

Bentley Priory

Bentley Priory is to be vacated by the RAF early in 2008. It is a significant site in many ways, not least the Grade II* listed building with its historical associations with the Battle of Britain and The RAF. The Council has commissioned a Supplementary Planning Document to guide its development when released. This will be the subject of extensive consultation in the near future and is programmed for adoption by the Council in the Autumn.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

Chief Finance Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name:.... ..Sheela Thakrar
		Date 19 th January 2007
Monitoring Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name:Adekunle Amisu
		Date: 19 th January 2007..

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: Graham Jones, Director of Planning Services 0208 420 9317

Background Papers:

1.	Consultation	No
2.	Corporate Priorities	Yes
3.	Manifesto Pledge Reference Number	A2, B1, C1, D4, F