

## TOWN CENTRE AND MAJOR PROJECTS PANEL

19 JUNE 2007

Chairman:	* Councillor Marilyn Ashton	
Councillors:	* David Ashton	* Phillip O'Dell
	* Susan Hall	* Bill Stephenson (1)
	* Chris Mote	
Advisers (non-voting):	* Mr Abe Hayeem	– Canons Park Residents' Association
	* Mr David Summers	– Harrow Agenda 21
	* Mrs J Verden	– Harrow Heritage Trust
	* Mr A Wood	– Harrow Public Transport Users' Association

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

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL****PART II - MINUTES**39. **Appointment of Chairman:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the appointment at the meeting of Cabinet held on 15 May 2007 of Councillor Marilyn Ashton as Chairman of the Town Centre and Major Projects Panel for the Municipal Year 2007/08.

40. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Reserve Member</u>
Councillor Navin Shah	Councillor Bill Stephenson

41. **Declarations of Interest:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 15 – Priorities and Progress 2007 – Update

- (i) During consideration of this item, Councillor Susan Hall declared a personal interest in that her business was situated on Wealdstone High Street.
- (ii) During consideration of this item, Councillors David Ashton and Marilyn Ashton declared a personal interest in that they lived next to Bentley Priory. They clarified that their interests were personal as the report before the Panel was for noting only.

Accordingly, they would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and subsequently noted.

42. **Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2007 be taken as read and signed as a correct record;

(2) the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2007 be agreed as a correct record and that the Chairman be authorised to sign them when printed in the Council Minute Volume;

(3) that any contributions made by the advisers should be attributed to them in the minutes.

43. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

**RESOLVED:** That (1) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following agenda items be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and grounds for urgency detailed below:-

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Special Circumstances / Grounds for Urgency</u>
12. Project and Programme Management	This report was being consulted on at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were requested to consider the scope of work to improve project and programme management arrangements for major projects in order to ensure that a detailed review was completed in time for the next Panel meeting.
14. Land at Harrow on the Hill Station	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated in order to allow the officers to include up to date information on the site and surrounding area. Members were requested to consider this item, as a matter of urgency, in order to avail themselves with proposals for developments around Harrow on the Hill Station.

(2) all items be considered with the press and public present.

44. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman:**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Susan Hall be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Town Centre and Major Projects Panel for the Municipal Year 2007/08.

45. **Appointment of Advisers:**

**RESOLVED:** That the following non-voting advisers be appointed for the Municipal year 2007/08:-

Mr Abe Hayeem	Canons Park Residents' Association
Mr David Summers	Harrow Agenda 21
Mrs J Verden	Harrow Heritage Trust
Mr A Wood	Harrow Public Transport Users' Association

46. **Petitions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

47. **Public Questions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

48. **Deputations:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

49. **Public Realm and Access Strategy:**

The Panel received a presentation from Urban Initiatives, a consultant design team, appointed by the Council to prepare a Public Realm Strategy for Harrow Town Centre and to work on related projects, such as the Urban Design Framework and the Access and Movement study.

Representatives from Urban Initiatives stated that following their presentation on the Public Realm Strategy to the Panel on 30 January 2007, workshops and meetings had been held with key stakeholders in order to gauge their views on preliminary proposals. The draft Public Realm Strategy was nearing completion and would shortly move to the consultation phase. The purpose of their second presentation, that evening, was to share details of the consultation exercise proposed and to brief the Panel on the schemes that would be consulted on.

### Public Realm Strategy

Representatives from Urban Initiatives stated that consultation on the Strategy would be diverse. An exhibition would be held in St Ann's Shopping Centre, which would be advertised in the local press informing all stakeholders of how they could participate in the consultation. A questionnaire would provide 12 statements on which participants could indicate their preferences. It would also allow them to make general comments on the proposals in order to encapsulate their views. An analysis of the responses received would be presented to the Panel in due course. In addition, the Council's website would also display the proposals, and the provision of on-line consultations would be explored. Interactive games would contribute to the excitement of the exhibition. Other means of encouraging the stakeholders to participate in the consultation would also be explored.

Members and advisers were briefed on the displays that would form the basis of the exhibition in St Ann's Shopping Centre and the wider consultation. The exhibition would focus on the seven projects being proposed as part of the Public Realm. The display boards would define a hierarchy of streets and spaces within the Town Centre, a design "palette" for paving materials, street furniture, lighting and concept designs for the seven specific schemes. An Adviser commented that the size of display panels might not be considered user-friendly. A Member acknowledged the need to strike a balance here and suggested the use of the Council's website where the proposals should also be shown.

Representatives from Urban Initiatives spoke about introducing different paving materials with colours that were distinctive and durable with a view to unifying the Town Centre. Uniform streetlighting and bespoke furniture would also help rejuvenate a 'tired' Harrow Town Centre. The use of buff concrete paving, together with York stone in key areas of the Town Centre, would compliment the street scene and transform the area into a distinctive and attractive environment. An adviser commented on the suitability and sustainability of York stone paving and suggested that the samples of various materials proposed ought to be displayed at the exhibition.

Urban Initiatives stated that the longevity of York stone was its main feature and that it was not intended to pave over vast areas with York stone. They had also given due consideration to the type of paving brick that ought to be used for the benefit of the visually impaired. Disability organisations would be consulted.

The following seven projects were identified by Urban Initiatives for improvement: St Ann's Road, College Road, Greenhill Way, Station Road, Station Road North, St George's area and Lowlands Road.

Urban Initiatives briefed Members and advisers on how these key areas could be improved and transformed. Existing problems in each of the areas were defined and features that would improve them were highlighted at the meeting. It was noted that from the seven projects proposed, St Ann's Road, the prime shopping street in Harrow, could be delivered first (by 2008). The Panel was shown how the road could be improved by comprising 'fun' elements, such as water features, improved street furniture, creation of public spaces at either end of this long linear road and by ensuring a seamless interface with Havelock Place.

### Project Delivery

The Panel was advised that delivery of the entire programme was dependent on Transport for London (TfL). However, the St Ann's scheme would be delivered with resources from the Council's Capital Programme, which had already been approved. The Council should expect to receive money from the TfL for schemes for College and Lowlands Roads. The schemes would also incorporate variable message signage.

### Transport Strategy

The exhibition would also focus on the Transport Strategy and the following key points were outlined by Urban Initiatives in relation to the Town Centre:-

- Restricted zone – the existing zone could be restricted further or it could be reduced.
- Bus trends – these could be improved by creating a two-way traffic flow taking buses to the 'heart' of the Town Centre, including a two-way working on Station Road.
- Walkability – whilst some parts of the Town Centre were walkable, the area would benefit from additional safer crossing points to make it easier to access

all parts. A Strategy had been devised to achieve this initiative. The proposals at Gayton Road – exhibition space/library – were at the periphery of the Town Centre and would benefit from this Strategy.

In opening the presentation to questions, Members and advisers queried and commented on aspects of the proposals. Of particular note were:-

#### Lowlands Road

An Adviser stated that whilst 'surface dressing' on Lowlands Road would be attractive as it was hard to cross the road because of the fast moving traffic, it ought to be recognised that it was an important highway, which helped the Council's 'Keep Harrow Moving' pledge. Rat running through the Town Centre ought to be discouraged by ensuring increased use of Lowland Road.

The Grove Open Space at Lowlands Road was already an attractive feature and was unlikely to benefit from landscaping, as suggested by Urban Initiatives. The beauty of the Grove was that it already provided visual clarity and this view should not be 'broken-up' with landscaping, which would be detrimental to the area.

In response, representatives from Urban Initiatives stated that traffic on Lowlands Road could be managed and redistributed by rephasing traffic signals.

#### St George's Area

An Adviser stated that the proposal from Urban Initiatives to remove the one-way system was unnecessary. Reversal of the entry and exit points in the area would enable the one-way system to be retained.

Urban Initiatives responded by stating that St. George's area suffered from traffic and heavy parking, poor interface and frontages, which created a sterile environment. Removal of the one-way would simplify access to St. Ann's shopping centre. Two-way traffic here would require the stopping-up of Kymberley Road. Urban Initiatives was also examining a 'stacking' area for cars during high demands for parking. It was intended to stop-up Kymberley Road and create a taxi reservoir there. This scheme was deliverable. The scheme proposed by an Adviser was unworkable. A taxi rank on Kymberley Road would avoid 'sterile' space. The creation of a public open space was not possible on this road.

#### Harrow on the Hill Station

The Director of Planning, Development and Enterprise stated that the proposed lightweight permeable bridge, a striking feature, would provide a 'welcoming' feature for Harrow. On exiting the station, it would provide a view up the Hill. The funnelling of the bridge would provide a dramatic entrance.

#### Town Centre

In response to the suggestion from an Adviser that the Town Centre would benefit from public squares, representatives from Urban Initiatives stated that there was potential for new public squares, as part of the proposed redevelopment of the Town Centre. The company was examining merging Greenhill Way with St John's Church area and creating a 'gateway'. This approach had worked well in other areas of London.

#### Station Road

An Adviser stated that a two-way traffic flow on Station Road ought to be explored. However, there was opposition from residents to this initiative as it would entail the removal of bus stops that served St George's Centre. Both demands needed to be addressed. He added that the creation of a seamless interchange between all the different modes of transport should not be lost when implementing the various proposals, as laid down in the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

The Director of Planning, Development and Enterprise stated that the results of the consultation exercise would be submitted to the Panel in due course. In addition, the Public Realm Strategy would require formal adoption.

**RESOLVED:** That the presentation from Urban Initiatives be received and the arrangements for public consultation noted.

50. **Project and Programme Management:**

The Director of Planning, Development and Enterprise introduced the report, which outlined the Council's ambitious programme for Harrow and how those key corporate priorities could be delivered in a timely fashion, whilst allowing for essential corrective action to be taken.

The Director responded to questions from an Adviser and explained why advice was being taken from Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) instead of the Council's other strategic partners.

A Member expressed concerns about the capacity available within the Council to deliver the programme. The use of external expertise would have revenue implications for the Council in the current challenging financial climate. He stressed that the opportunity to rejuvenate the Town Centre should not be lost as a result of conflicting priorities and demands.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted and the Panel receive regular reports on major projects monitored against project plans.

51. **Harrow Town Centre Business Improvement District:**

The Panel received a report of the Director of Planning, Development and Enterprise, which summarised the discussions at the recent Town Centre Forum meeting and provided an update on the proposed establishment of the Business Improvement District (BID) for the Town Centre.

The Director explained how BIDs worked and the types of services they could buy-in. He was pleased to report on the support it had received from the Town Centre Forum. However, the BID was expected to take eighteen months to set up. Suggestions to speed up the process were explored at the meeting but discounted.

The Chairman informed the Panel that the Town Centre Forum was enthusiastic about the proposal and other BIDs could follow once the Town Centre BID had been established. BIDs provided ownership and a degree of independence.

There was cross-party support for the creation of BIDs. It was noted that, whilst small businesses might not necessarily have the financial resources to participate in the BID, they would benefit from improvements that would ensue. Experience had shown that BIDs, by their very nature, improved areas.

**RESOLVED:** To note the report submitted to the Harrow Town Centre Forum annexed as Appendix 1 to the report of the Director of Planning, Development and Enterprise.

52. **Land at Harrow on the Hill Station:**

The Director of Planning, Development and Enterprise introduced the report, which set out the latest position on proposals for development around Harrow on the Hill station and options to secure improvements to public transport. He informed the Panel that the exchange of land between the Council and Harrow College, including the terms, were nearing completion. Redevelopment of the College would be subject to planning permission.

The Director reported that Quintain had sold 79 College Road. As a result, the options for the proposed re-development of Harrow on the Hill station were being explored with Dandara, which was now the major landowner in the area. He was pleased to report that the Council and Dandara were working towards the same goal.

Members of the Panel were briefed on the two options for the redevelopment of the Station, their achievability and anticipated budgets. The Mayor of London had invited the Council to make a presentation on the proposals on 1 August 2007. The schemes would require the full support of Dandara and Harrow College and meet with the requirements set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). Compelling arguments would be made to the Mayor of London for Option 1 as he would be able to influence bodies such as the TfL and Metronet and thereby deliver a significant change to the station and Harrow for the benefit of its residents and transport users. However, Option 1 was costly and would require land that was no longer under the ownership of Quintain. Option 2 was the fallback position, but would deliver 90% of the benefits of Option 1.

The Director acknowledged that a seamless interchange was key to the proposals. However, doing 'nothing' was not on the Council's agenda.

In response to questions from advisers, the Director briefed the Panel on the proposals for a new bridge at the station. He confirmed that the existing station bridge would be

retained and its use would depend on the TfL. Timescales for the options were discussed and it was

**RESOLVED:** To (1) note the progress made with stakeholders and developers in bringing forward proposals for the development of the land at Harrow on the Hill station;

(2) take on board the message from the Panel that the Mayor of London be fully appraised of both options (and not just option 2), including their financial benefits.

53. **Priorities and Progress 2007 - Update:**

The Panel considered a report of the Director of Planning, Development and Enterprise, which set out the latest position in a range of projects that had strategic importance and were currently being pursued. The projects would have an impact on the Borough in terms of the range of services available to the community, their physical presence and environmental impact. It was noted that Headstone Manor had erroneously been omitted from the report.

Prince Edward Playing Fields

Barnet Football Club had reached an agreement with the Environment Agency, which would involve amendments to the scheme that had recently been considered for planning permission.

Reopening of Wealdstone High Street

In response to comments from an adviser, the Leader of the Council stated that a temporary Traffic Order, which would allow the Council to proceed with the scheme, was not an option and could prove a costly exercise. He stated that TfL would be invited to a public meeting planned soon.

Sites in Gayton Road

In response to the concerns expressed by the advisers, the Chairman stated that the design of the library/arts centre would have to be imaginative and energy efficient. The Hatch End Arts Centre would compliment the proposed arts centre at Gayton Road.

It was noted that a design brief would be submitted to the July 2007 Cabinet meeting.

Kodak

In response to questions from an Adviser, the Director of Planning, Development and Enterprise confirmed that he was meeting with representatives from Kodak on 20 June 2007. He expected the site to be available for re-development by January 2008. Disposal of the site was a key issue.

Wood Farm

Advisers thanked the Deputy Leader of the Council for facilitating a site visit to these premises. The Director of Planning, Development and Enterprise undertook to respond to questions from Advisers, which had been sent to him recently.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.00 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MARILYN ASHTON  
Chairman