

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PANEL
(SPECIAL)**

2 SEPTEMBER 2008

Chairman: * Councillor Marilyn Ashton

Councillors: * Keith Ferry * Joyce Nickolay
* Thaya Idaikkadar * Raj Ray (3)
* Julia Merison (4) * Dinesh Solanki (3)

* Denotes Member present

(4), (3), (3) Denote category of Reserve Member

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION I - Local Development Scheme - Revision

An officer introduced the report and explained that it reported on a summary of issues which had arisen in the last 6 – 9 months relating to the Planning system. The officer explained that the report suggested how the Council should move forward to ensure compliance with the various regulations.

The officer explained the background to the development of the Local Development Framework by the Council and highlighted the recent significant changes that the Government had made relating to the Planning legislative system. These notably included changes to Planning Policy Statement 3 and Planning Policy Guidance 12.

The officer reported that the Government had also provided guidance that Development Plans should demonstrate that growth was deliverable. As a result the Planning Inspectorate was now looking for the supply of greater detail. This had been demonstrated by several neighbouring boroughs of the Council being asked to withdraw their core strategies by the Planning Inspectorate for the lack of detail provided.

The officer further reported that the resulting impact of the recent changes on the two growth options in the Core Strategy Draft Preferred Options, meant that the Council had identified gaps in its evidence base. Work to address these gaps was underway and included:

- Identifying and clarifying Strategic Development Sites in the borough.
- Finalising a Characterisation Study of the borough which was almost complete.
- Working with Sport England and the Council's leisure services to assess the future need for sport and leisure facilities throughout the borough.
- Working with Enterprise Mouchel to investigate the impact of future development growth on the existing transport infrastructure network.
- Working with the local Primary Care Trust to ensure future health facilities were provided in the growth areas identified in the final core strategy.

It was reported that as a result of the changes in legislation and national guidance, a greater amount of work was still required on the Core Strategy before the Council could be confident that it would satisfy the Government's requirements. The officer explained that this factor together with the development pressure on Harrow Town Centre had resulted in the suggestion of a Harrow Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document being prepared. This would enable the Council to better manage development in Harrow and could also demonstrate deliverability to the Planning Inspectorate and that structures were in place to manage growth.

During the discussion on this item, Members raised a number of issues, which officers responded to as follows:

- The council had asked Enterprise Mouchel to take a strategic approach when investigating the impact of growth on the transport infrastructure. They would be looking at the level of provision and improvements currently planned. Additionally the impact on 10 to 11 key hot spot transport junctions in the borough would be investigated.

- The Council was investigating best practice from other authorities and had studied Core Strategies previously approved by the Planning Inspectorate. It was important to note however that issues to be contained in the Core Strategy varied from borough to borough.
- The Core Strategy was an evolving document.
- The Government may have intended to simplify the process, but in reality the extra demands on local councils had proved to be problematic.
- The recommendation proposed to Cabinet could be re-worded to ensure that the revision to the Local Development Scheme reflect the new timeline.

The Chairman commended officers for their work.

The Panel unanimously **Resolved to RECOMMEND (To Cabinet):**

That (1) the Local Development Scheme (LDS) be revised to

- (a) Reflect the new timeline.
- (b) Better reflect the time needed to prepare and update the evidence base for the Core Strategy.

(2) A Harrow Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document be prepared to help manage the development pressure in the town centre.

Reasons for Recommendation: (1) To ensure the Council stood the best possible chance of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy being found sound by the Planning Inspectorate at an examination in public and avoid unnecessary delays in the adoption of the Core Strategy by allowing more time to prepare a robust evidence base.

(2) To ensure interim controls were developed to help manage development pressure on Harrow Town Centre, whilst the Local Development Framework Core Strategy was being prepared for submission to the Secretary of State.

(3) To ensure the Council received the maximum possible amount of funds from the Government through the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant for the plan-making, by having an up to date local development scheme.