

Committee:	Cabinet
Date:	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2008
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Development of Town Centre Infrastructure.
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Trehern - Corporate Director Community and Environment
Portfolio Holder:	Marilyn Ashton – Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise
Exempt:	Part I with Part II Appendix only Exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) on the grounds that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: School sites in the Central planning area

## Section 1 – Summary

The report summarises current steps and future action to ensure that the infrastructure required to support the development and regeneration of Harrow town centre is in place or has been identified.

### FOR INFORMATION

## Section 2 – Report

The redevelopment of Harrow town centre is a long standing Corporate Priority and reflects established planning policy to direct development to town centre areas, particularly those that are well served by public transport, and actively plan for town centre growth and expansion. It also recognises the need for the Council and its partners to respond positively to the increasing challenge posed by competing town centres such as Brent Cross, Watford and Uxbridge, and the imminent opening of the

Westfield centre in Shepherds Bush on 30<sup>th</sup> October, which will be London's largest shopping centre and the third biggest in the UK. The construction of a new rail station at Shepherds Bush, which opened on 28<sup>th</sup> September, will provide a direct link to the centre from Harrow and Wealdstone station, making it easily accessible from much of Harrow.

The LDF Core Strategy builds on this priority and both draft Preferred Options that have been subject to public consultation over the summer make provision for significant development in and around the town centre and the Wealdstone corridor over the next 15 years, to meet identified population and housing growth targets. Although the scale, type and timing of development is uncertain, given the current global financial situation, it does need to be planned in a coordinated way to ensure that the supporting infrastructure – school places, health facilities, transport and utilities – is sufficient to meet future demands.

This report provides a position statement on proposed infrastructure improvements in and around Harrow town centre and current work to assess other infrastructure needs.

A number of sites are crucial to the regeneration of Harrow town centre. Subject to planning permission, these have the potential to be developed in a way that will help to achieve Council priorities. Some have been subject to recent planning proposals, others are likely to come forward in the medium to long term. Their current status is as follows:

#### **Current schemes**

Gayton Road	383 flats (including 102 affordable units) and replacement public car park. Planning permission granted 14/05/08 subject to completion of a S106 agreement and stopping up order.
Harrow College	Replacement, consolidated College on part of Lowlands Recreation Ground and remodelled open space. Planning permission granted 14/05/08 subject to completion of a S106 agreement.
Lowlands Road	Outline application for approx. 400 dwellings. Planning permission refused on 25/06/08. At its last meeting Cabinet approved the purchase of the site by the Council.
Travis Perkins	147 flats (43 affordable), 3500m <sup>2</sup> supermarket and parking. Planning permission refused on 10/09/08.
51 College Road	Planning application received for 407 flats (65 affordable), 1700m <sup>2</sup> of retail and food/drink uses and new footbridge over the Metropolitan Line.

**Future opportunities  
(subject to planning approval)**

Greenhill Way car park and adjoining land	Potential for a mixed use, retail based scheme, unit shops, residential and replacement parking.
Havelock Place	Potential for a retail or leisure led scheme on the St Anns service yard and College Road frontage.
Lyon Road	1970s offices with potential for redevelopment for commercial/residential use, following the expected relocation of the Land Registry from Lyon House in 2010.
Queens House	1970s offices and multi storey car park with potential to be developed comprehensively fro a commercial led mixed use scheme.

**Transport**

Harrow town centre is well served by public transport. 15 bus routes use the bus station, providing 160 services an hour to all parts of the borough. Harrow on the Hill station provides access to both the London Underground Metropolitan Line and the National Rail network via Chiltern Rail. The Metropolitan Line operates at a frequency of one train every three minutes during peak periods with Chiltern Rail providing one train every thirty minutes. Around 30,000 passengers use the station during an average weekday. Current service provision is reflected in a public transport accessibility rating of 6, the highest available and on a par with much of Central London.

Despite this, there are operational problems at the bus station due to the volume of buses and passengers, peak hour congestion is experienced within the rail station, steep steps to both entrances and down to the platforms severely restrict accessibility, and the interchange between the different transport modes is not ideal.

Over the course of the last few years, the Council has been working closely with Transport for London and key stakeholders to increase the capacity and quality of public transport in the town centre. Government policy to reduce reliance on the car, or tackle growing congestion by improving the road network, means that public transport will need to expand if the town centre is to cater for future growth. The Planning Brief for land at Harrow on the Hill station highlights the need for improvements to the bus and rail stations, and the provision of better links over the railway, as part of any comprehensive development of land in this area.

There are a number of current initiatives to improve the transport infrastructure of the town centre. Some are dependent on financial contributions from developers, and therefore on viable, acceptable schemes, subject to being granted planning permission and then implemented. Recent market conditions will clearly affect the potential to fund improvements in this way. Others will be funded through the Council's own Capital Programme or by Transport for London, as follows:

- An outline design has been prepared for the redevelopment and expansion of Harrow Bus Station and agreed in principle with London Buses. The design

almost doubles the current bus stop capacity and provides for up to 6 additional bus stands (S106)

- Planned works to provide step-free access to Harrow on the Hill station are expected to take place in 2009/10, subject to confirmation of TfL's business plan later this year. The works will provide, as a minimum, lift access to each of the platforms, improvements to the concourse, and the refurbishment of platform buildings, the underpass and stairs (TfL) A programme of additional works, funded through S106 contributions, is also being investigated.
- A new pedestrian bridge link forms part of the application to redevelop the former Post Office site in College Road ( S106)
- The St Anns Road "facelift" will commence in January 2009, improving the town centre's main shopping street. This will include new seating, litter bins, and lighting. The scheme will also provide a Police "kiosk", which should help to reduce crime and anti social behaviour and improve community safety. (LBH Capital)
- Outline designs are well advanced to allow two-way bus working on Station Road, improving access to the main retail and office parts of the town centre and reducing journey times for buses. Funding is subject to TfL approval, which should be announced in November (TfL)

In addition, there is a wide range of small scale safety, bus priority, walking and cycling schemes that will take place throughout the town centre/Wealdstone corridor in 2008/09 and 2009/10 funded through the annual TfL settlement.

To inform the LDF evidence base, the Council is also working with its strategic partner Enterprise Mouchell to investigate the impact of future development growth on the existing transport infrastructure network, and to identify capacity issues and areas in need of improvement.

In total there are 3,260 off-street parking spaces within the town centre in 11 off street car parks (including Tesco which provides for 2 hours free parking). In addition, there are approximately 257 on-street parking spaces that are controlled by pay and display. 2,492 spaces (70%) are allocated as short stay and 1,038 (30%) are allocated for long stay parking.

Surveys indicate that typical weekday use of car parks is sufficient to meet current demand. Of the total available, demand is likely to be on average around 56% (1,406) for short stay parking and 90% (926) for long stay parking, although this will clearly vary according to time of day and time of year. At weekends and busy periods such as Christmas utilisation is considerably higher and often is likely to be around 90-100% for short stay car parks

### **School Places**

An evaluation of present and future projections of pupil numbers has demonstrated that any increase in demand for additional places over the next ten years can be met by expanding existing schools. Harrow needs to have its own arrangements in place, as there is no slack in the number of surplus places available in neighbouring boroughs

Additional capacity, if required, could be provided by the use of "bulge years", and by increasing the number of forms of entry on those school sites that have capacity to

do so, either on a temporary or permanent basis. A bulge year allows for an additional class into a school for one year only, thereby meeting short-term demand whilst providing additional time for more permanent and long-term arrangements to be put in place. The bulge year would then work its way through all the year groups in the school until the pupils completed that school phase.

Further information on the six Primary sector school sites closest to Harrow Town Centre, and an overview of the options for those sites, is set out in a confidential appendix to this report. The information presented is based on what would happen if the proposals in the present School Reorganisation Consultation to change the ages of transfer proceed.

The funding of additional school places through the expansion of existing sites could be funded through the Primary Capital Programme (PCP), which comes on line in 2009-10. This funding, valued at between £30M and £40M, will be available over 14 years and is given to the Authority on a rolling annual programme. Funding of £9.3M could be available to Harrow over the first two years of the PCP. Each authority's plan has to be approved before the funding is released and the DCSF timetable for approval is autumn 2008. Additional funding could also be made available from S106 contributions from developers.

### **Health Facilities**

The Council is working closely with the PCT to ensure that future health facilities are provided in those growth areas identified in the final LDF core strategy. To inform this process, the PCT is currently auditing health facilities throughout the Borough, to identify gaps in provision, areas of greatest need and where new or upgraded facilities should be located. Development in and around the town centre is likely to emerge as a priority as there is a high proportion of single practitioners in this part of the Borough, a number of whom are approaching retirement and unable to offer the full range of primary care from their current facilities that the PCT now seeks to provide. This will increase the demand for replacement facilities, even if new residential schemes do not come forward, in order to meet the needs of the existing population. This in turn will inform the new PCT Primary and Community Care Strategy which sets out Harrow PCT's vision for development of these service areas over the next five years and details how it will be implemented.

### **Social Care**

As part of the Council's Adults and Housing transformation programme, three new Neighbourhood Resource Centres (NRCs) are currently under construction and will provide a range of facilities to people with severe learning and physical disabilities as well as local residents and visitors. Two, at Byron Park and Vaughan, are located within 1.5 miles of the town centre.

Byron Park NRC is located in Wealdstone, next to the Harrow Leisure Centre. Its location allows it to offer people with disabilities an opportunity of enjoy a range of activities on a single site. In addition, this NRC is within easy reach of the Wealdstone Centre and library and has good bus links to the town centre. The central location enhances its benefits to people with disabilities and other NRC users as this centre has longer operational hours and will remain open up to 10.00 pm on weekdays and 5.00 pm at weekends.

Vaughan NRC will offer similar facilities to the west of the town centre but with shorter, weekday opening hours to 8.00 pm. People with disabilities will be able to move between Vaughan, the town centre and other amenities relatively easily using public transport as West Harrow tube station is close by and good bus links are a short walk away. People with more severe disabilities, who are unable to use public transport, will be supported with disabled transport facilities to allow them to access the town centre amenities.

Increasing the voluntary sector is central to support for vulnerable people. Key voluntary organisations are located close to the town centre.

### **Police**

The Council's Corporate Plan and Budget for the next 2 years includes a joint funding arrangement with the Metropolitan Police that has established a permanent Police presence in the town centre. The team, which was created in April 2008, and is an addition to the existing Greenhill Safer Neighbourhood team, comprises 1 sergeant, 6 constables and 2 community support officers, with the Council contributing £210,000 towards the costs over each of the next 2 years.

As indicated above, the St Anns Road improvements include the provision of a small Police base, to be located close to the BHS entrance. Although this will not be an operational Police Station, it will nevertheless be in constant day time use, providing a visible Police presence and ensuring officers will be seen on the street throughout the day.

Other Council initiatives include the recruitment of 'enviro-crime' officers to concentrate on tackling such things as crime in hot-spot areas; areas with high levels of fly tipping, graffiti, and commercial waste and by extending CCTV monitoring to 24 hours per day, 5 days per week and targeting the extended night time economy in and around the town centre.

### **Utilities**

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) of the Borough is nearing completion, carried out in partnership with the Environment Agency and Thames Water. This will identify and classify existing and future flood risk across the Borough and inform decisions about the suitability and sustainability of future development. In particular, the availability of a SFRA will identify the level of risk for a specific site or area, enable the Council to direct inappropriate development away from locations at risk of flooding and help it to develop policies and measures to mitigate the impact of development that may be allowed in areas of higher risk.

The SFRA will be an invaluable tool in planning the future of the town centre and its infrastructure needs, and in assessing the flood risk of specific development proposals.

Much of the existing utility infrastructure in Harrow is old, despite recent investment by both the Gas and Water providers, and the consequences of not 'expanding' the infrastructure accordingly could limit or restrain future development opportunities. The condition and capacity of the existing infrastructure to accommodate significant additional volumes created by large scale development will need to be addressed in consultation with the utility companies in advance.

## **Funding - Section 106 Contributions**

Contributions from developers to mitigate the negative impacts of their development, and ensure the provision of any supporting infrastructure, can be sought through binding legal agreements under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act. As a result of the Secretary of State's review of UDP saved policies in September 2007, there is no specific Harrow guidance in place that sets out the type or level of contribution that developers will be expected to make, and the Council has to rely on general Government guidance in its negotiations with developers.

Following a recommendation by the LDF Advisory Panel on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, the Portfolio Holder for Planning Development and Enterprise has approved a Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation. This sets out local formulae and standard charges covering ten separate service areas, which, if relevant, will be sought from developers. Although the final SPD will not be adopted until the end of 2009, the work completed to date will assist in negotiations on all future proposals within the town centre and help to secure contributions to infrastructure improvements.

## **Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document**

At its last meeting, Cabinet approved the preparation of a SPD to help manage development pressure in the town centre. The benefit of a town centre SPD is that, unlike the current HUDP, it will allow the Council to set out its detailed vision for the town centre and, in addition, could contain detailed guidance about the scale, type, height and design of development, and future infrastructure needs. A SPD will also enable the Council to better integrate other initiatives such as the business improvement district and public realm plans.

Work on this important document has already commenced and preferred options should be completed for public consultation in April 2009. This will ensure the availability of robust planning guidance for the town centre much sooner than through the core strategy and other LDF documents, which will not be ready until 2011 and beyond.

## **Legal Issues**

There are no legal issues beyond those referred to in the report.

## **Financial Issues**

This report is for information, therefore there are no financial implications at present.

## **Performance Issues**

The development of the Town Centre Infrastructure will ultimately lead to improvements in the following indicators:

### **Direct impact**

National Indicator (NI) 3 Civic Participation in the local area (baseline to be established after the Place survey)

NI 4 % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (baseline to be established after the Place survey)

NI 159 Supply of Ready to Develop Housing Sites (percentage improvement assessed after initial scoping of options)

NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling (TfL to issue targets and baseline, local targets in development)

NI 185 CO2 Reduction from Local Authority Operations (annual reduction of 3.5 % against baseline)

NI 188 Adapting to Climate Change (year on year improvement against levels 1-4)

NI 194 Level of air quality. Reduction in Nox and Primary PM10 emissions through local authority estate and operations (baseline to be established)

**Indirect impact**

NI 167 Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak (TfL to issue targets and baseline)

NI 14 Avoidable contact: The average number of customer contacts per received customer request

***These indicators are all part of the National Indicator set that will be assessed as a part of the CAA process.***

It is expected that improvements to the Town Centre Infrastructure would also achieve a wide range of qualitative benefits which contribute to furthering our Vision, Corporate Priorities, Council Improvement Programme and our ambitions for Place / MORI survey results i.e.

- Regenerating Harrow
- Better supporting the community
- Improving the way we do business
- Providing a better environment for staff
- Enabling better public sector and voluntary partnerships
- Promoting leadership on sustainability
- Delivering employment and economic benefits
- Supporting Harrow's brand
- Providing affordable housing

As indicated within the body of the report the programme will involve the strategic management of our resources and assets and therefore this programme will positively impact upon

(1) Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE)3.2 The organisation manages its assets effectively and sustainably to help deliver its strategic priorities and service needs **under the Use of Resources** assessment.

(2) And also upon **Value for Money** profiles and **Direction of Travel** that will form part of the CAA process.



### Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name:	Sheela Thakra	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date:	26 September 2008		
Name:	Helen White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date:	26 September 2008.		

### Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name:	Anu Singh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Divisional Director (Strategy and Improvement)
Date:	23 September 2008		

### Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Phil Greenwood. Senior Professional Major Projects. 0208 424 1166  
Josephine Mahaffey. Projects and Development Manager. 020 8736 6783