

Appendix 3

Funding Proposal for Harrow Weald Common Conservators

(Proposal to support the maintenance of Harrow Weald Common)

Background:

Section 25 of the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866 states that:

“The Local Authority may in relation to any metropolitan common for which they are the Local Authority ... contribute such amount as they see fit (in a gross sum or by annual payment or otherwise) towards the expenses of executing any scheme under this Act of Parliament.”

Following this, an Act of Parliament was passed in 1899 followed by a Bye-Law in 1900 stating that Harrow Weald Common should be conserved and maintained by Harrow Weald Common Conservators (HWCC).

Although Harrow Council owns the Harrow Weald Common, it does not have a legal obligation to maintain the land. However it has supported the Common maintenance for over 20 years by awarding a grant to HWCC and would like to continue to support the bio-diversity of this land. For the last 4 years HWCC has received a grant of £28,500. In recent years, HWCC have commissioned Harrow Council's Public Realm Department to develop and implement a management plan. In 2007/08 HWCC experienced a number of financial difficulties that led to the council setting up a special account for them within the Council's financial systems, and therefore all their transactions are managed and monitored by the Council.

Proposal:

Although there is no legal obligation to maintain the common, the 1866 Metropolitan Act gives the Council the power to make a discretionary contribution to the maintenance of the Common. As the maintenance plan for the Common is developed and implemented by Public Realm, it is proposed that:

- Funding, which is determined by the management plan, is transferred directly to Public Realm each year. This would reduce bureaucracy and enable officers to access funds more readily to undertake the work.
- During 2008/09 and 2009/10, the maintenance of the Common cost £9,065 and £14,893, respectively. Although it has been agreed that the balance will be used to install a nature trail this is considered as a special project. Therefore it is recommended that a contribution of £18,000 be made to support the maintenance of the Common in 2010/11.

Section 17 of the Metropolitan Common (Harrow Weald) Supplemental Act 1899 states that:

“The Conservators shall be at liberty to receive and apply for the purposes of the scheme or any of them subscriptions or donations applicable thereto that may come to their hands”

Therefore it is also proposed that in fulfilling this role, HWCC be encouraged to raise funds and involve volunteers to enhance the status of the Common.