

# **REPORT FOR: MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS ADVISORY PANEL**

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**Date of Meeting:** 22 July 2010

**Subject:** Working arrangements and priorities for action

**Key Decision:** No

**Responsible Officer:** Andrew Trehern, Corporate Director Place Shaping

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

**Exempt:** No

**Decision subject to Call-in:** No

**Enclosures:** None

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

The report sets out a range of matters for consideration at the Panel's inaugural meeting and suggested priorities for action for the remainder of the municipal year.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. note that officers will investigate the appointment of non voting special advisors to the Panel for the 2010/2011 Municipal Year, the results of which will be reported to the next Panel meeting;
2. note and comment on arrangements for a master planning exercise for the "Heart of Harrow" Intensification Area; and
3. note the list of major development sites outlined in the report, and comment on priorities for action and any issues that the Panel consider should be taken into account in progressing these projects.

**Reason: (For recommendation)**

To enable the Panel to consider its working arrangements and priorities for action and ensure the prompt commencement of a master planning exercise for the Heart of Harrow Intensification Area in accordance with Corporate Plan priorities.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **1 Introductory paragraph**

- 1.1 The creation of the Panel and recommended terms of reference were considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2010. Subject to the Cabinet's decision, the Panel will be the Council's key Member level body providing oversight of the development of the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area, and initial, strategic consideration of significant development opportunities across the borough, particularly those where the Council aim to deliver corporate and community objectives.
- 1.2 The main purpose of this report is to outline arrangements for the Panel's conduct, including the appointment of special advisors, and to give Members the opportunity to consider its workload and priorities over the coming months. To assist the Panel, the report provides an overview of the strategic planning context that will guide proposals for the "Heart of Harrow" Area Action Plan, and lists a number of key projects and sites that officers would expect the Panel to express an interest in, as part of its oversight and review function. Subject to Member agreement, officers will prepare a monitoring framework for a future meeting to enable the Panel to review progress against its agreed priorities.

### **2 Options considered**

#### **2.1 The appointment of advisors**

- 2.1.1 The report considered by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> July, referred to the potential appointment of non voting specialist advisors, including input from young people, to assist the work of the Panel. The use of advisors is not unusual, bringing with it a wealth of expertise and knowledge, and there are various models in practice across the country. In Harrow's case, the remit of the Panel is such that Members may want to draw on a wide range of advice, from outside bodies and other service providers as well as officers from Council Directorates, to reflect the complex nature of the Intensification Area and the specific issues and constraints affecting the development of individual sites. The advice required will vary in each case and particular issues may require independent specialist input. The Panel would also expect to receive representations from specialists on behalf of a wide span of interests from across Harrow. This would enable the Panel to take account of a full range of views and advice, improving the quality of debate and discussion and ensuring that public confidence in the Panel is maintained.
- 2.1.2 In addition to special advisors, it is suggested that officers explore the potential for the Panel to engage with young people, building on the

relationship already established through such things as the Youth Council and My City Too initiative.

- 2.1.3 If Members consider that the work of the Panel would be assisted by the presence of external advisors, officers will canvass prospective appointees over the summer recess for consideration at the Panel's next meeting.

## **2.2 Strategic planning context**

- 2.2.1 The recommended terms of reference for the Panel, as indicated in the Cabinet report, include over sight of the development of the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area, as a focus for growth and change over the next 15 years and beyond. This important role will help to ensure over sight of the Council's Flagship Action – to prepare an Area Action Plan for the "Heart of Harrow" by December 2010.

- 2.2.2 The proposed Intensification Area designation and its strategic objectives have been supported in principle through the recent public consultation of the Harrow LDF Core Strategy preferred option and through representations to the draft replacement London Plan. In summary, the purpose of the designation is to:

- provide an impetus for the regeneration of Wealdstone and the rejuvenation of Harrow town centre, to both support and benefit from business development and investment in infrastructure;
- fulfil a potential to accommodate a significant proportion of the Borough's future housing need on a range of sites with scope for higher density and mixed uses;
- increase the retail, hotel and residential capacity of the town centres within the intensification area;
- retain and improve the Wealdstone industrial area (a strategic industrial location) with potential intensification of employment and other uses; and
- deliver development to a high standard of design and sustainability.

- 2.2.3 Preparation of a successful (and technically sound) Area Action Plan will require that the technical and environmental studies are married with a clear understanding of the community's aspirations and needs into the future. The exercise is expected to require choices, and the Panel will be expected to debate these key strategic choices as part of its oversight role. Subject to appropriate master planning advice being secured, it is anticipated that this stage will be need to be advanced significantly by December 2010 to inform and guide the Council in its preparation of the AAP and enable formal consultation with the local community to commence in the early part of 2011.

- 2.2.4 A procurement process has therefore commenced to commission consultants to undertake a master planning exercise of the area. This exercise will be guided by a Project Board, chaired by the Council's Divisional Director of Planning and supported by the GLA, Design for London, and Homes and Communities Agency, together with stakeholders representing business, community and young persons groups. Day to day liaison will be undertaken by a technical team, led by the Council's Head of Major Development Projects supported by appropriate officers. Regular reports will be presented to the Panel reviewing progress with the master planning exercise.

2.2.5 It is anticipated that the Consultants will be appointed by the end of August, which will enable the master planning exercise to commence in the first week of September.

## **2.3 Major Development Sites**

2.3.1 The Panel provides a forum that will enable Members to give early consideration to the use and potential of major development site across the borough and the opportunity to comment on significant planning proposals at the pre application stage.

2.3.2 A number of key sites have been identified where major development may be expected in the next few years. These are sites of strategic importance and, both individually and collectively will help to shape the future of Harrow, in terms of their use, physical presence and environmental impact. Several sites are owned by the Council or its HSP partners and most are located within the Heart of Harrow Intensification Area. These include:

- Kodak/Land Securities
- Civic Centre and new Corporate HQ
- Harrow College
- Former Post Office and adjacent land College Road
- Gayton Road
- Greenhill Way car park/Debenhams
- Byron Park and Harrow Leisure Centre
- Bentley Priory
- Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital

2.3.3 It is anticipated that the Panel will wish to consider some or all of these sites over the next few meetings. Given its size and development potential it is recommended that high priority is given to the Kodak/Land Securities site, which is the largest development opportunity in Harrow and is capable of delivering a wide range of strategic objectives. Land Securities, who have acquired an interest in the entire Kodak site, have already indicated a willingness to engage with Members to outline their ambitions for the site and to work with the Council on a collaborative basis to secure its long term future.

2.3.4 The Panel may wish to suggest other sites that they would like to consider, and the priority that should be attached to future progress reports. A programme of major development sites will then be prepared for agreement at the next meeting.

2.3.5 In addition to these strategic sites, the Panel may wish to consider specific proposals for new strategic projects, subject to process and timing considerations. The Divisional Director – Planning (or other nominated officers) would propose to identify potential schemes of interest in association with the Chair of the Panel, and to invite potential applicants to present pre-application proposals to the Panel for comment.

## **2.4 Operational and governance**

The Panel will require a set of agreed operational practices and standards in order for it to undertake its role effectively. This is particularly the case where pre application advice is sought and where parties may choose to make deputations to or address the Panel on matters pursuant to its remit. Accordingly, officers will prepare a suite of appropriate operational procedures to address these matters in time for the commencement of the Panel's activities in September.

## **2.5 Future meetings**

- 2.5.1 It is recommended that the Panel meet bi-monthly for the remainder of the Municipal Year, to ensure oversight of the master planning of the Heart of Harrow Intensification Area and enable early consideration of major development sites. It is suggested that the next meeting is held immediately after the summer recess, on or around the 20<sup>th</sup> September.
- 2.5.2 Members are requested to indicate a preferred date for the next meeting. A programme of dates for the remainder of the year will then be prepared for agreement at that meeting.

## **3 Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The costs of the master planning exercise for the Heart of Harrow Intensification Area will need to be met from existing budgets.

## **4 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 None.

## **5 Risk Management Implications**

- 1. There is duplication between the role of the proposed Panel and the LDF Advisory Panel – the Terms of Reference have been drafted to ensure clarity of responsibilities.
- 2. The probity of members' role in the pre application process may be subject to challenge – any Member involvement at the pre application stage will be subject to a robust Code of Conduct, in line with national guidance.

A separate risk reregister will be prepared for any specific projects considered by the Panel.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will need to be conducted for the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan, and for any other major project, proposal or site brief considered by the Panel.

## 7 Corporate Priorities

7.1 The masterplanning exercise will inform and assist with the delivery of Flagship Action 3.3, to:

“Prepare an Area Action Plan to deliver future prosperity for the heart of Harrow to help the Council, the community and developers understand and provide new development that improves environmental quality, vitality and economic prosperity”

### Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Kanta Hirani	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 14 July 2010		
Name: Matthew Adams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 14 July 2010		

### Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

**Contact:** Phil Greenwood, Head of Major Development Projects  
Tel: 0208 424 1166. Internal ext. 2166

**Background Papers:** None