

HARROW TOWN CENTRE FORUM

WEDNESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2009

PRESENT:

Councillor Narinder Singh Mudhar (Vice-Chairman)	Harrow Council
Councillor Rekha Shah	Harrow Council

ORDINARY MEMBERS:

Pat Carvalho	Harrow College
The Reverend Bob Gardiner	Harrow Baptist Church
Bernard Segal	Roxborough Residents' Association
Anthony Wood	Harrow Public Transport Users Association
Suzy Wood	St Ann's Shopping and Leisure Centre

OFFICERS:

David Sklair	Regeneration Project Manager
Matthew Paterson	Senior Professional Policy and Research

9. Apologies for Absence:

Received from Councillor Marilyn Ashton, Mr Steve Kent, St. Georges Shopping and Leisure Centre, and Mr Alan Emm, GE Money Home Finance Limited.

10. Minutes of Meetings:

AGREED: That (1) the notes of the informal meeting of the Harrow Town Centre Forum held on 26 February 2009 be noted; (2) the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2008 be considered at the next meeting of the Forum.

11. Matters Arising:

AGREED: To note that there were no matters arising from the minutes.

12. Harrow Local Development Framework - Core Strategy Preferred Option:

The Forum received a presentation from an officer on the Harrow Core Strategy Preferred Option, and the context and main drivers for change in Harrow, which included:

- the existing environment and an emerging evidence base;
- changes to national policy;
- changes to the regional planning context;

- responding to previous consultation.

The officer stated that the aim of Core Strategy was to promote and encourage the transformation of Harrow by 2026. He added that the existing plan was outdated, and that legislation required special planning relating to when the transformation should occur, and which specific locations would grow and expand throughout the course of the Core Strategy.

In response to a question, the officer stated that the Core Strategy differed from the Local Development Framework (LDF), as it was a high level strategic document that development management policies could follow. He reported that the purpose of having an up to date Core Strategy was to prevent any inappropriate developments, and prohibit the obligation to build upon specific locations in Harrow.

The officer added that Harrow's demography was constantly changing. The officer stated that Harrow was required to build 5000 new homes, approximately 3000 of these would be classed as affordable housing. He advised that if Harrow failed to build 5000 new houses, it would lose the ability to reject inappropriate development. He added that green belt land could possibly be built on if that target was not met.

In response to questions, the officer informed the Forum that:

- the Core Strategy was a process by which change would be managed, and that the proposed growth and intensification areas would be Station Road and Wealdstone, as Wealdstone was only 14 minutes from the centre of London by public transport;
- it was key that Harrow played a part in London as a prosperous city;
- in attempting to give the public a greater understanding of what Harrow could potentially look like, Design For London would create a 3D image of how Harrow would look with 5000 new homes, and re-engineer Station Road with gateways to neighbouring boroughs and improved transport links.
- the Design For London creation would incorporate good design principles whilst creating greater connections to Harrow College and Harrow's open spaces.

Clarification was sought on how much input the community would have on the design proposals. The officer confirmed the Greater London Authority (GLA) and partners were looking to create neighbourhoods and to engage with the community. He added that by using bio efficient materials and sustainable urban design, locations such as Harrow Tube Station could be brought up to a 21st century standard.

Proposals within the Core Strategy included plans to relocate Harrow Civic Centre. The officer stated that moving it towards a central location in the Town Centre could help revitalise the area. He added that as another of Harrow's largest employers, Kodak, which was located in Wealdstone, was one of the last strategic employment sites left in Harrow. In light of this, he stated

that it was essential to maintain Kodak as a key employment location. In response to questions, the officer confirmed that the Core Strategy was a document comprising of broad locations within the borough, and that further details on specific locations would follow.

Members of the Forum sought clarification on how Harrow would cope with increased demands on schools and healthcare. The officer advised that the Core Strategy included the following proposals:

- the site where Tesco's supermarket on Station Road was situated could become a new Primary School. He added that the development could proceed if it was matched by strategic provisions;
- that the development of residential sites would need to be offset by developers providing key services, such as a GP surgery within the housing development;
- to improve the car parks for St Ann's and St George's Shopping and Leisure centres'.

In response to a question, the officer advised that to address public safety and retail trade, Harrow Tube and Bus Station would be redeveloped to cope with the increasing levels of capacity.

In summary, the officer stated that the Harrow Core Strategy Preferred Option was being considered until 11 January 2010, and would be submitted to the Secretary of State in 2011.

AGREED: That the presentation be noted.

The Meeting having started at 4.00 pm, finished at 5.20 pm.