

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS PANEL

29 SEPTEMBER 2010

REFERENCE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8 SEPTEMBER 2010

Harrow Magistrates' Court Challenge Panel Report

The Committee received a report outlining the findings and recommendations from a Harrow Magistrates' Court Scrutiny Challenge Panel which took place on 19 August 2010. The Committee noted that proposed amendments from the Challenge Panel had been circulated to Members. The Chairman explained that, in his view, the Challenge Panel had been effective with a number of interesting conclusions reached.

The Chairman of the Challenge Panel commented that the Panel had thoroughly analysed the business case put forward by Her Majesty's Court Service (HMCS). Additionally a representative from HMCS had attended the Panel meeting. One of the main conclusions of the Panel was that the proposed closure would push huge costs onto other public sector organisations in the borough, such as the Council and the Police. Residents would also be severely inconvenienced. The Chairman of the Panel concluded by thanking the report author for his work.

A Member of the Committee commented that an estimate of additional cost relating to expenses for witnesses was still to be provided. It was not yet clear if this had been taken into consideration by HMCS.

Members of the Committee also expressed some concern at the perceived lack of publicity on opposition to the proposed closure. The Chairman commented that the Council would do what was required to raise its profile.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Challenge's Panel's report forming part of the Council's corporate response to the consultation, be recommended to Cabinet and all other Councillor colleagues;
- (2) the report be presented at Cabinet on 14 September 2010, prior to submission to Her Majesty's Court Service, as another way to raise public awareness of the proposed closure of Harrow Magistrates' Court and specifically, to formally demonstrate to Her Majesty's Court Service the Council's clear determination and commitment to retain local justice for local people.
- (3) **The following recommendation of the Challenge Panel be referred to the Major Developments Panel for deliberation:**

'Consideration to be given to alternative proposals, such as co-locating Harrow Magistrates' Court at Harrow Crown Court and, in the medium-

longer term, whether Harrow Magistrates' Court might become part of a larger co-location of public services (police, council and courts) on the Kodak site'.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Background Documents:

Report considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 September 2010.

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