

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS PANEL MINUTES

29 SEPTEMBER 2010

Chairman: * Councillor Bill Stephenson

Councillors: * Tony Ferrari * Barry Macleod-Cullinane
* Keith Ferry * Joyce Nickolay (1)
* Thaya Idaikkadar * Phillip O'Dell

* Denotes Member present
(1) Denotes category of Reserve Members

6. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Susan Hall

Reserve Member

Councillor Joyce Nickolay

7. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members.

8. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2010 be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

- Minute 5, paragraph 1, a final sentence be added to the end of the paragraph, to read: "The Chairman added that the Panel would work cross-party with residents towards building a long term future for Harrow".

9. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions or petitions were received or deputations put at this meeting.

10. Harrow Magistrate's Court Challenge Panel Report

The Panel received a reference from the Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on 8 September 2010 referring to the findings and recommendations from the Harrow Magistrates' Court Scrutiny Challenge Panel.

The Chairman stated that the reference would be discussed with the substantive report on the Kodak site at agenda item 10.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

11. Major Developments Panel Operational Arrangements

The Panel received a report of the Corporate Director of Place Shaping which set out proposals for how the Major Developments Panel might operate with respect to hearing external advisors and the giving of pre-application comments.

An officer outlined the proposals in the report and stated that, if implemented, they would provide for effective engagement and participation with the Panel. Members were informed that as the Major Developments Panel was a constituted body of Cabinet it was also subject to provisions set out in the Council's constitution. However, given the scope of the Panel's interests and the need to ensure local views were taken into account, additional provisions would allow the Panel to hear submissions or receive advice from external bodies or special interest groups.

The officer informed the Panel that support to the Major Developments Panel would be provided from existing staff resources within Place Shaping and Democratic Services. In addition, £80,000 had been made available to finance the appointment of consultants to oversee the development of the Area Action Plan.

The officer stated that the purpose of the Panel included an opportunity for the Council to comment on strategic development proposals. Importantly, the remit of the Panel was such that it would not duplicate any functions of the Council's Planning Committee which remained the decision making body for planning applications. The Chairman added that the operational arrangements of the Panel would ensure that planning applications were not pre-determined.

Following questions from Members, officers clarified the following points:

- in order to establish a list of interested parties, officers would write to individuals and organisations held on the Local Development

Framework (LDF) database. This database included organisations ranging from local community groups to potential developers;

- resources to support the work of the Panel already existed and the aforementioned £80,000 would ensure that the first phase of the Area Action Plan was carried out as agreed. Work was ongoing to identify funds for the second phase. Any additional projects commissioned by the Panel would need to be fully resourced prior to implementation and the Panel would be provided with full details beforehand.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise) That

- (1) the proposed operational arrangements described at paragraph 15 of the report and the pre-application protocol attached at appendix A be agreed;
- (2) the arrangements detailed in paragraph 15 and the pre-application protocol be implemented with effect from the Major Developments Panel meeting on 8 November 2010.

RESOLVED: That officers provide the Major Developments Panel with a list of the organisations included in the LDF database at the next meeting of the Panel on 8 November 2010.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Major Developments Panel is able to better perform its role and function in overseeing the development of the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area and proposals for individual major development sites across the Borough.

RESOLVED ITEMS

12. Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan - Consultant's Introduction

The Panel received a report of the Corporate Director of Place Shaping which provided an update on the appointment of masterplanning consultants for the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area. The appointments were as follows:

- East Architects, responsible for masterplanning, urban design and public realm;
- GVA Grimley, responsible for regeneration, viability and infrastructure;
- Alan Baxter & Associates, responsible for transport planning and heritage analysis;
- Formation Architects, responsible for providing support on housing studies.

An officer explained that in order to oversee the project, a Project Board had been established, chaired by the Divisional Director of Planning. The Project Board would meet monthly and included officers from the Greater London Authority, Design for London and Transport for London (TfL). In addition, a project team comprising of senior officers from the Council would meet once every fortnight and had responsibility for the day to day activities associated with delivering the project.

The Panel received a presentation during which Members were informed of the following:

- the key objective of the masterplan was to set the scene for Harrow's future development by providing a clear, ambitious and deliverable strategy;
- the project team would test various scenarios of development to better understand the potential impact on the area;
- consultation would take place with various stakeholders including developers, local communities, young people, businesses and service and delivery partners. The purpose of the consultation was to understand local concerns and demands, and incorporate these into subsequent development choices;
- from a development perspective, Harrow was in a strong starting position. The Borough had good educational attainment, high levels of employment, strong economic activity and good access to central London and the surrounding area;
- one of the challenges facing Harrow was the need to raise its profile and visibility. This was made difficult due to the fact that other nearby shopping centres such as Uxbridge, Watford, Ealing and Shepherds Bush had grown significantly in recent years;
- the Area Action Plan would aim to create strong new neighbourhoods, a new generation of family housing and fill gaps in retail and entertainment;
- whilst the purpose of the Intensification Area was to promote controlled development, it was important that the masterplan acknowledged Harrow's green areas and incorporated them into any proposals;
- the draft analysis and key findings would be completed in early October 2010, with an assessment of initial development options undertaken by early November.

Following questions from Members, officers and representatives of East Architects clarified the following points:

- the purpose of the masterplan was not to dictate what should be built but to reflect broad aspirations in a viable masterplan/framework;

- whilst other centres had developed large shopping areas in order to raise their visibility, Harrow should not try and emulate this. Instead, Harrow should concentrate on developing a unique identity and encourage residents to remain in the area, to use services or facilities in the town rather than elsewhere;
- whilst Station Road was a busy road, it was not felt that congestion would pose a significant problem once development had begun and it was unlikely that any significant changes to the road would be required;
- financial information would be provided to the Panel once figures were available.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the appointment of East Architects to undertake a masterplanning study of the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area be noted;
- (2) the Panel be provided with examples of other similar regeneration projects that had taken place in other areas;
- (3) financial information for any proposals would be provided to the Panel once figures were available.

13. Kodak Site Introduction

The Panel received a report of the Corporate Director of Place Shaping which provided Members with the policy context and background information required in order to consider the future of the Kodak site.

An officer explained that the purpose of the report was to set the scene for a presentation by Land Securities and to outline the main principles that should guide the Panel's deliberations. The officer stated that the future of the Kodak site needed to be considered within the context of the Area Action Plan for the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area.

The Panel received a presentation from a representative of Land Securities. During the course of the presentation, Members were informed of the following:

- Land Securities was a private property company which owned buildings used by private companies and public sector organisations. Approximately 50,000 people in London worked in a building owned by Land Securities. Land Securities also developed buildings to create new assets;
- the Kodak site consisted of 57 acres of land and had previously been fully occupied by Kodak. However, due to the changing circumstances within which Kodak operated, the company had dramatically reduced the number of staff working at the site. In January 2008, Kodak and Land Securities had signed a partnership agreement to work together in order to maximise the development potential for the site;

- the Kodak site was attractive for developers due to its size and scale which would allow investment to be made in community infrastructure and other amenities. Importantly, the Kodak site was deliverable, with a single land owner and partner;
- the development of the Kodak site would contribute to the wider area in a number of ways by opening up new connections, providing new community infrastructure and amenities, and strengthening the focus on Harrow and Wealdstone train station;
- in considering the future of the Kodak site, the Council would need to anticipate how people would want to live and work in Harrow over the next 10-20 years. The Council would also need to anticipate the market and its wider economic and demographic effects and be flexible enough to adjust its plans;
- it was important to engage with the local community when drawing up proposals.

Following questions from Members, officers and a representative from Land Securities clarified the following points:

- once development opportunities had been identified and agreed, the site could be delivered relatively quickly. At present no firm decisions had been made;
- the Kodak site consisted, in part, of sports field sites which were protected from development under government guidelines. However, this would not necessarily preclude development as the sport fields could be used to draw people in and help raise the profile of the site;
- the purpose of the consultation phase was to gather as much information as possible and to identify consensus. Once the views of the local area had been fully considered, proposals could be developed;
- the West London Waste Plan was due to be considered by Cabinet in November.

A Member of the Panel stated that he would like to see a copy of the PricewaterhouseCooper report that was referred to in the report. He stated that the report appeared to indicate that certain developments on the Kodak site would not be viable, but there was no explanation as to why. An officer undertook to provide the Panel with the relevant extracts from this report, which had been carried out as part of a feasibility study on the relocation of the Civic Centre.

The Member was disappointed that a fuller analysis of the current proposals for the Kodak site had not been available to the Panel. He added that cross-party agreement ought to have been sought on the Memorandum of Understanding which had recently been signed. An officer stated that he was sorry to hear that the Member did not feel the report was thorough enough.

He requested that, in the future, Members contact him to confirm exactly what they required.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the report and the principles for assessing the future of strategic sites be noted;
- (2) a further report be provided to the Panel detailing the outcome of the public consultation on development options for the Kodak site;
- (3) the reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee be noted;
- (4) the Panel be provided with the extracts of the PricewaterhouseCooper report that had considered the viability of developing on the Kodak site.

14. Dates of Future Meetings

The Chairman stated that a standing item be placed on future agendas to consider upcoming topics of discussion and presentations. He stated that it was important that the Panel planned ahead in order to ensure that it was able to engage with relevant interested parties. He agreed to ensure that the Leader of the Conservative Group was kept informed of any developments.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the dates of future meetings be agreed, as set out below:
 - 8 November 2010
 - 6 January 2010
 - 23 March 2010
- (2) a standing item be placed on all future agendas to consider upcoming topics of discussion and presentations;
- (3) an item of business be added to the next agenda to allow for discussion with interested parties on development, density and delivery in the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.45 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chairman