

Item 10
Tabled.

Ideas for presentation to Major Developments Panel on 8th November 2010

by the Campaign for a Better Harrow Environment

1 Transport and Parking

This needs to be sorted before anything else if the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area (HWIA) is to be developed as more than a dormitory for commuters.

Problems

There is very little to attract shoppers to the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area because:

- i) the road system in central Harrow and between the town centre and Wealdstone is inadequate;
- ii) Harrow-on-the-Hill station needs lifts;
- iii) there is little parking in central Harrow apart from St Anns and St Georges which are difficult to access.

Likewise the poor access by car and lack of parking deters businesses from setting up in Harrow.

Guests of the new hotels will need long term and overnight parking. Many of them will arrive by car. If they can't park they won't revisit.

Parking for residents is inadequate.

Cycling in Harrow is dangerous and unpleasant. The flattened cycles painted on roads or cycle lanes with cars parked across them are of little use.

Suggestions

The key to success of the intensification zone in the view of our traffic expert, Gerry Devine, is a high quality 'boulevard' between St John's Church at Station Road/Sheepcote Road and Wealdstone Town Centre, or even Harrow Weald.

This should be a public transport spine, with high quality pedestrian and cycle paths, bus lanes and a single lane for cars in each direction. Parking should be limited to disabled, delivery bays and very short stay car parking outside business premises. If coupled with a high quality of urban design, this could be an attractive feature which would reduce pressure to accommodate ever increasing numbers of cars.

There would be many practical obstacles to creating such a boulevard.

The town centre could be closed to motor vehicles other than buses and taxis.

Moving the bus station to the Old Post Office site would allow access from both Station Road and College Road.

We need to consider ways of improving traffic flow at the complex junctions between Headstone Road, Greenhill Way, Pinner Road, College Road, Bessborough Road, and Lowlands Road. For a start the useless bus lane on the southern roundabout could be removed!

Park and ride using existing and improved public bus services could help to reduce congestion. Car parks on the A404 in the vicinity of Northwick Park and on the A410 near the Oxey Lane/Uxbridge Road junction would be ideal except that siting car parks on green space is not desirable.

The Kodak site and the Civic Centre site are alternatives where car parks would be on brown field sites but the access to these sites is not good.

Any scheme should benefit non-car users too and we suggest that paying for parking with an oyster card would encourage use.

The public car park should be kept at Gayton Road which could also serve as park and ride if a bus service ran in both directions along Gayton Road.

Larger new residential developments should include car clubs. Membership should be cheaper than parking permits. Adequate off-road parking space is also needed. Making smaller spaces cheaper to rent and providing electricity charging points could encourage the move to smaller and to electric cars.

Even with good local and London wide public transport many residents will need cars.

Pedestrians, cycles and motorised traffic should be separated. Increased use of areas restricted to pedestrians, cycles and buses might help. Otherwise it is difficult to see how cycling can be encouraged in Harrow.

2. Other **infrastructure**, physical, medical, educational, social, cultural, leisure (including activities for young people) needs to be planned in advance and to be completed at the same time as new developments.

3. Residential

Putting huge numbers of tiny flats on a few larger sites is not a desirable solution to the need for housing in Harrow. Nor would we favour sub-dividing existing family houses or building new dwellings in gardens, or building on open spaces such as St George's playing fields in Pinner View or Kodak sports ground.

Rather, a mixture of small and larger developments could provide the required number of units without destroying the character of Harrow or forcing people to live in cramped or unpleasant accommodation. The difficulty is to identify suitable sites. Some existing office space might be converted (e.g. Aspect Gate).

We need family sized housing, owner occupied, private rental and social rental. What we have should be kept and improved.

Town squares with road access along all four external sides and a central garden can provide high density without the need for high-rise.

4. Business

Affordable facilities for small businesses, both manufacturing and service, are needed.

There is potential for training craftspeople to renovate existing housing and creating small businesses that can fit wall insulation, solar panels, heat pumps etc.

Several new hotels are currently being planned. These will require infrastructure including provision for parking.

5. Retail

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6. Civic and Educational

The **Civic Centre** could remain where it is or could be moved to a site nearer the Harrow-on-the-Hill train and bus stations.

With the introduction of sixth forms in Harrow **secondary** schools there may not be a demand for **Harrow College** to expand. Could it move to the Harrow Weald site?

The current bulge in **primary** school admissions, together with the proposed expansion of

Harrow's population will require new classrooms. It may be necessary to buy new land rather than to build on the already inadequate playgrounds.

7. **Green open spaces:** should be incorporated into the Intensification Area and linked to help form a Green Grid.

8. Large sites

Kodak: small business units, tree nursery, 4 or 5 storey residential "town square" (without lifts) with central garden, 3 storey car park, supermarket (e.g. Tesco could move there and release current site for road widening and housing). The sports ground should be protected apart from allowing pedestrian access to the Harrow Heritage Museum

Gayton Road: keep the car park, new Civic Centre and/or library and cultural centre on site of library?

Lyon Road: currently the office blocks are being converted or developed in a piecemeal fashion to flats or hotels. Some overview might be appropriate.

Debenham's car park:

Civic Centre (current site): if the Civic Centre is retained the car park in front could be used to widen the road and create a pleasant open space.

If it is demolished any new development should be placed so that the protected view of Harrow Hill from The Bridge (George Ganges Way) is fully restored. This site is large enough for an attractive "town square" development.

Old Post Office/ Dandara: The opportunity for opening views towards Harrow Hill should not be lost. We would favour using this site for a modern transport interchange, but failing that, mixed leisure, retail and residential use.

Harrow College site, Lowlands Road: If this site on the side of Harrow Hill were to be redeveloped the buildings would need to be low. It would not be ideal for the new Civic Centre because it is hard to approach by car or (currently) by public transport (the steps over the railway are a barrier).

Current Tesco site: if Tesco moved, Station Road could be widened, the junction between Hindes Road and Station Road could be improved, and the site could be used for a mixture of small retail and low-rise residential housing.

8. Finance

The short term-funding problems should not be allowed to prevent good long-term planning.

9. Over-riding principles:

Roads and transport are a priority.

Tall buildings are not appropriate for Harrow. High density housing can be achieved with 4 or 5 storey buildings.

Preserve and improve buildings, streetscape, green and other open spaces and views.

Ensure high quality of new build for those who will live or work in it.

Design for present climate and possible future climate.

Design for a future with good public transport and easy access to a car for those who wish to use one.

Post Script

The Core Strategy and SPDs must be strong enough to prevent unsuitable development.

CABE issues guides for Councilors and others on urban design and planning.

~~no~~ Contrary to the opinion expressed in the Major Developments Panel minute 12, 29 September 2010, significant changes would be needed to Station Road to avoid excessive congestion.