

HARROW BUSINESS CONSULTATIVE PANEL MINUTES

25 JANUARY 2010

Chairman: * Councillor Manji Kara

Councillors: * Mrinal Choudhury * Mrs Myra Michael (3)
* Keith Ferry

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

55. 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 Mrs Myra Michael

56. Declarations of Interest

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

57. Appointment of Vice Chairman

Councillor Susan Hall and Councillor Mrinal Choudhury were both nominated to be Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2009/10.

The nominations were put to the vote.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Susan Hall be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Harrow Business Consultative Panel for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2009/10.

58. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

59. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rules 16, 14 and 15 respectively.

RESOLVED ITEMS

60. INFORMATION REPORT - Stakeholder Meetings on Budget

Members expressed concern at the role and function of the Panel. Members commented that if discussion had previously taken place with other stakeholders, details of those meetings should have been presented to the Panel. Officers explained that this meeting was part of a programme of consultation. There was a statutory requirement to consult the Business Community on the budget proposals. This was the purpose of the meeting. It was not the purpose of the meeting to receive feedback from other stakeholder groups. Business representatives had been invited to the meeting and the purpose was to present the key aspects of the proposed budget to them to seek any comments.

Members expressed that, in their view, the meeting did not feel like it was contributing to the consultation process and that the information was simply being presented. Members made a number of suggestions to address these concerns which included appointing a co-optee for future meetings and liaising with partner, such as Harrow in Business, to identify ideas on how the meeting is conducted.

RESOLVED: That the item be noted.

61. Business Rates in 2010/11

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the Panel received a report detailing a presentation on Business Rates, which was admitted late to the agenda as the Council was waiting for Central Government confirmation of schemes and figures which were only recently released.

Officers explained that the Council had created a fund for hardship relief, whose actual value was worth £200,000. Cases for hardship relief were usually identified by the Council either through referrals or through Council investigation. The Council would be publicising this facility much more widely

in the upcoming months. Additionally the officer explained that business rates were collected by the Council on behalf of the Government. These monies were not automatically obtained by the Council.

RESOLVED: That the item be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.29 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MANJI KARA
Chairman