

## LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

<b>Meeting:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> July 2004
<b>Subject:</b>	Developing and Resourcing the Local Development Framework in Harrow
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	Executive Director (Urban Living)
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development, Housing and Best Value
<b>Status:</b>	Part 1
<b>Ward:</b>	N/A
<b>Enclosures:</b>	N/A

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Cabinet with a wider understanding of Local Development Framework requirements and processes, together with anticipated resource requirements for delivering a quality Local Development Framework in Harrow.

### **2. Recommendation (for decision by Cabinet)**

- 2.1 To note the corporate implications of, and anticipated resource requirements for, the various facets of producing the new Local Development Framework in Harrow.**

**REASON: To ensure that the Local Development Framework is developed to a high quality and within specified timescales.**

### **3. Consultation with Ward Councillors**

- 3.1 None.

### **4. Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)**

- 4.1. The Council agreed on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2004 to proceed to adopt the replacement Harrow Unitary Development Plan (HUDP). Adoption is programmed for early August. If there are no challenges, publication will follow as soon as possible. The UDP Advisory Panel at its meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2004 considered a report on developing the Local Development Framework (LDF) in Harrow, and requested officers to prepare the draft Local Development Scheme (the project plan) for Harrow for clearance by the Portfolio-

Holder or Chair and nominated member for informal discussion with Government Office for London, and to submit the final version of the Local Development Scheme to the next appropriate meeting of the Panel.

## **5. Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 The LDF for Harrow will eventually supersede the replacement HUDP and will be central to strategic planning in Harrow, closely linked to the Community Strategy, and provide the spatial context for delivery of the Council's strategic corporate objectives.

## **6. Background Information and Options Considered**

- 6.1 Local Development Frameworks introduced as a result of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the accompanying Town and Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2004 Act and Town and Country Planning (transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2004. Local Development Frameworks will replace the existing system of Local, Structure and Unitary Development Plans. The Government requires Local Development Frameworks to be in place by March 2007.
- 6.2 The LDF will be central to strategic planning in Harrow and will provide the spatial context for delivery of the Council's strategic objectives. The LDF has the potential to provide a clear, coherent and deliverable framework for future development via generic development control policies, but will require a sea-change in the way planning policy is developed, implemented and reviewed.
- 6.3 Successful production and implementation of the LDF will require extensive community and stakeholder buy-in, which is to be secured through involvement in LDF preparation from an early stage in the process.
- 6.4 The Government has specified that policies and proposals in the LDF must be justified against comprehensive, sound and reliable information and data. Each part of the LDF will be separately assessed at independent examination stage and is expected to form part of the Local Authority Comprehensive Performance Assessment

## **7. The Local Development Framework (LDF) - its importance for delivering corporate strategic objectives, the Community Strategy, and sustainable development**

- 7.1 Local authorities are required to consider five key spatial planning principles in preparing LDF's:
- A mechanism for delivering sustainable development objectives by addressing social, economic and environmental issues and relating them to the use of land;
  - Considering the needs and problems of communities and the key spatial drivers of change within an area;
  - An integrated approach which informs and takes account of other strategies and policy;
  - Facilitating and encouraging new forms of partnership with a range of bodies including communities, stakeholders and commercial interests; and
  - Focusing on implementation, setting out agreed delivery plans that have regard to the investment and operational plans of relevant infrastructure and service providers.

7.2 The Local Development Framework (LDF), which will provide the context for determining the use, development and management of land and buildings in the Borough, is a series of documents and will comprise the following:

- A Core Strategy;
- Clear guidance on Site-specific Allocations of land;
- Area Action Plans for key areas of change or conservation where development requires specific guidance and co-ordination;
- Generic development control policies; and
- A Proposals Map illustrating the policies and proposals contained in all the development plan documents.

7.3 Relationship between the LDF and Community Strategy: The Government intends that the LDF will give spatial expression to those elements of the Community Strategy that relate to the use and development of land. The ODPM guidance document 'The Relationship between the Community Strategy and Local Development frameworks' advises that there should be integration between the two where possible, with shared vision, objectives, community engagement and action plans. The Council is therefore required to identify the most effective mechanisms for optimising the relationship between the Community Strategy and LDF in Harrow, in terms of content, implementation and review. Of particular importance will be the expectation of securing effective and continuing community engagement.

7.4 Sustainable Development: The Government is currently undertaking a consultation on the UK Strategy on Sustainable Development. With the Community Strategy being required to demonstrate how sustainable development is being achieved in the Borough, producing a quality LDF will require specialist skills relating to sustainability. Such skills could also beneficially be applied to ensuring that sustainable development considerations are appropriately addressed in a range of other Council and partner strategies.

## **8. Resource Issues**

8.1 An officer steering group was established by CMT in June to identify the skills and resources required and to produce a comprehensive project plan for production of the LDF. This project plan, termed the Local Development Scheme, must be submitted to the ODPM for approval in December 2004.

8.2 A major difference between the LDF and the UDP processes is the large number of simultaneous processes in LDF production compared with the largely sequential production of the UDP. A wider range of skills and expertise is required over a much shorter time period and additional staff and consultancy resources will be needed to deliver a meaningful LDF to the required timescale. Some of these resources are required in the current financial year.

8.3 Importantly, guidance also highlights the need for authorities to ensure that dedicated resources are allocated to delivering the LDF. As a significant proportion of existing staff time is currently used in supporting production, delivery and monitoring of a range other Council, partner and Mayoral strategies and action plans, consideration will need to be given as to how such support will be provided in future.

8.4 The Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) for 2004/05 included £60,000 for two additional planning staff specifically related to progressing the LDF and recruitment to these posts

is currently under way. On-going recruitment problems in planning, particularly at a time when many other Boroughs are similarly seeking additional staff, will require an innovative approach to attracting the number and quality of staff required. Subject to continued good performance the Council expects to receive a significantly improved PDG award in 2005/06, however, much of this will go to resourcing existing posts, maintaining Development Control performance and the continuation of the e-planning roll-out.

- 8.5 Whilst measures are underway to address existing shortages of policy planners, an urgent need has been identified to recruit a community involvement co-ordinator to develop the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) element of the LDS and the community involvement mechanisms. This work needs to commence early in Autumn 2004..
- 8.6 The officer steering group has identified a range of enhanced skills and resources that will be needed early in the LDF production process. Although it is expected that these will be part-funded through Planning Delivery Grant, the timescales are not synchronised and we will need to resource the process before the 2005/06 PDG is determined.

The anticipated additional resource requirements, which will be quantified as the project plan is produced, are:

- Full-time researcher,
- Research/consultancy work between 2004-2006 to develop a sound evidence base,
- Legal advice at approx 30 days per annum,
- Full-time legal and secretarial administration support,
- Full-time Community Involvement Co-ordinator, as above,
- Specialist expertise on sustainability appraisals and sustainable development,
- Contributions from across departments, stakeholders and the local community.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1 Officers from the Government Office for London (GOL) have appraised Boroughs on the latest situation on legislation. More relevantly, however, since the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill was first introduced, GOL and ALG have chosen the regular meetings of the lead development plan policy officers in London to explain and discuss the practical implications of the new regime.

## **10. Finance Observations**

- 10.1 It is anticipated that the cost of the Community Coordinator post can be contained within the 2004/05 Urban Living revenue budget. If additional resources are required in 2004/05 a further report will be brought to Cabinet. The additional cost in 2005-2006 and subsequent years will form part of the considerations of the MTBS in the autumn.

## **11. Legal Observations**

- 11.1 Included in the report

## **12. Conclusions**

12.1 Positive implementation of the new legislation should ensure that the new development plan process is faster. The Government's intentions will be backed up by statutory requirements with rewards through PDG and sanctions for poor performers. Because of the importance of the inter-relationship between the LDF and the Community Strategy, including on community engagement, mechanisms need to be put in place to effectively secure this. The importance attached to securing effective community engagement in the LDF process, and developing and maintaining a sound and up-to-date evidence base that underpins the LDF also require additional skills and resources required to produce a high quality LDF. Development and monitoring of the project management plan for the LDF, together with effective annual monitoring of planning policies and implementation of specific proposals will also require appropriate systems to be in place and maintained. The resource requirements discussed in section 8 above reflect an early assessment of the needs.

13. **Background Papers**

13.1 Report to UDPAP 8 July 2004 Developing the Local Development Framework in Harrow  
Draft Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (October 2003)  
Consultation draft on the process of preparing LDFs (November 2003)  
Consultation draft Local Development Frameworks – guide to procedures and Code of Practice (October 2003)  
Community Involvement in Planning, and Draft PPS1.  
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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