

**REPORT FOR: MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS  
PANEL**

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**Date of Meeting:** 27<sup>th</sup> July 2011

**Subject:** Strategic Development

**Key Decision:** No

**Responsible Officer:** Andrew Trehern  
Corporate Director Place Shaping

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder  
for Planning Development and  
Enterprise

**Exempt:** No

**Decision subject to  
Call-in:** No

**Enclosures:** Appendix 1- Schedule of strategic sites

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report updates the Panel on the progress with the Area Action Plan for the Heart of Harrow Intensification Area and provides the context for a series of presentations on the outer London Fund and development proposals for Kodak and College Road, Harrow.

**Recommendations:**

The Panel is recommended to:

1. Note and comment on the actions that are being taken to progress the strategic development of the Heart of Harrow Intensification Area:
2. Note and comment on proposals for round 2 of the Outer London Fund

Bid

3. Note and comment upon the recent consultation on the proposals to improve the network of public spaces in Harrow town centre and adjacent to the Intensification Area; and
4. Comment on any issues arising from the presentations on the development of the Kodak and College Road sites.

**Reason: (For recommendation)**

To enable the Panel to maintain its over sight role for the preparation and delivery of a development strategy for the Heart of Harrow Intensification Area.

## Section 2 – Report

### Introduction

This report serves to update members of the Panel on progress with regards to both strategic and site specific projects. The report provides an overview of progress on the Area Action Plan (AAP) since the earlier report to the Panel in May and provides for an update on the development of the Kodak site. The report also serves to introduce the emerging proposals for redevelopment of the former Post office site on College Road. With the launch of the Outer London Fund, promising additional funding for projects that contribute towards the vitality and renewal of town centres, the report also serves to inform the panel about Harrow’s round one bid (worth some £870K), and enable further discussion on the second round bid, currently under development.

### Strategic Development Context

Consultation on the strategic options for the AAP closed on 26 June 2011. The consultation exercise involved formal letters, press articles together with 14 “road shows” and a competition event at Under One Sky. As a result of this activity, the Council received some 57 representations, making some 295 comments on the document. These are scheduled to be reported to the Local Development Framework Panel (LDF) at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

The following table sets out a summary of responses received to the four strategic development options put forward for consultation:

Option	Support	Not support
Option 1 – One centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Offers most balanced approach to growth which is spread across both centres</li><li>▪ Makes the most efficient use of both transport hubs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Wealdstone and Harrow Town Centre are two distinct communities with different priorities and problems and must be treated separately</li><li>▪ Would reduce quality of life with too</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proposes high levels of balanced residential development - this sector is likely to recover more quickly and more fully than commerce and industry</li> <li>▪ Most likely to provide the initial momentum and confidence to "kick start" the wider economic recovery of the Borough</li> <li>▪ Providing buildings are not too high to be detrimental to the view of Harrow-on the Hill and that the Headstone Manor area is enhanced along with other surrounding green spaces and some of Wealdstone's Victorian characteristics maintained/ matched</li> <li>▪ Harrow and Wealdstone have always been linked (also because of the railway lines) and a good balance is achieved either side of the Civic Centre, between the two</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ much housing in such a small area.</li> <li>▪ Rob the distinctiveness of the town centre and Wealdstone, potentially watering down the different offers of both.</li> <li>▪ Potentially destroy the 'High Street' businesses along Station Rd.</li> <li>▪ Presents significant challenges in terms of retaining the differential character of the various regions within the intensification area identified in Chapter 3, and the baseline report</li> <li>▪ Option 1 tries to cram far too much into the area for there to be any hope of providing an attractive sustainable environment. It would be a recipe for traffic congestion pollution and environmental degradation</li> <li>▪ Represents an approach that is too uniform for such a large area; and would query whether it would be possible, and critically whether it would be the right thing to do, to seek one homogeneous character for the Intensification Area</li> <li>▪ Is heavily reliant on significant investment in to the Borough, and there is concern this may be overly ambitious</li> </ul>
Option 2 – Harrow Plus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Directs more vulnerable uses to locate outside flood zones 2 and 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would lead to further deterioration of Wealdstone, which in turn could impact on viability of the Kodak site.</li> <li>▪ Unrealistic expectations for employment growth and will result in a surplus of under utilised sites and premises</li> <li>▪ New growth should be directed to both Harrow and Wealdstone centres</li> <li>▪ Ignores the potential of Wealdstone especially benefit of Wealdstone's transport links as outlined in section 3.21</li> <li>▪ The opportunities arising from the significant potential development sites in Wealdstone would not be realized</li> <li>▪ Harrow Town Centre would become over-burdened to accommodate the projected jobs and homes.</li> <li>▪ Wealdstone &amp; Station Road would become even more deprived and this is not acceptable</li> <li>▪ Option is likely to sterilise the land to the north Harrow Town Centre to the detriment of the local economy and local environment</li> </ul>
Option 3 – Two Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support but note need to consider that interventions to improve traffic flow on Station Road does not have an adverse impact on businesses</li> <li>▪ Wealdstone and Harrow Town are two distinct communities with differing priorities as therefore must be treated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would result in "lop-sided" growth which would be to the benefit of Harrow and detriment of Wealdstone</li> <li>▪ Would result in Wealdstone continuing to be the focus of industrial/commercial development which would result in the Harrow being</li> </ul>

	<p>as such</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Believe individual development sympathetic to each location is preferable to the other options</li> <li>▪ Station Road should not be overdeveloped</li> </ul>	<p>redeveloped at a greater pace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunity for wider redevelopment along this Station Road would be missed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 4 – High Roads and Centres</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Achieves more benefits than the other three Options</li> <li>▪ Would provide the best mechanism for delivering the overarching objectives of the Intensification Area, and achieving the objectives clearly set out in the AAP and indeed within Policy CS2 of the emerging Core Strategy</li> <li>▪ Delivers the London Plan objectives for the two town centres, as well as stimulating the renewal of Station Road</li> <li>▪ Station Road must also give the "right impression" coherent with re-development of the 2 centres</li> <li>▪ Allows both centres to develop their own identity and character whilst regenerating the station road corridor making journeys between the two centres an attractive proposition and experience.</li> <li>▪ There is no point developing Harrow centre and leaving Wealdstone and Station Road as they are</li> <li>▪ Gives the highest amount of family housing and the best prospect of improving the environment of Station Rd for pedestrians and cyclists. It will, however, only avoid problems of increased traffic congestion and pollution if new flats in Station Road are planned as a car-free development</li> <li>▪ Welcome the outcomes for Harrow Town Centre that would be delivered via this option, whilst ensuring a balanced approach throughout the Intensification Area</li> <li>▪ Would best support delivery at key sites and could potentially generate the greatest outputs</li> <li>▪ Would achieve the investment and development that would be achieved in Option 3, but with the additional benefit of focusing this principally on the areas with specific need</li> <li>▪ Most appropriate and sustainable option, ensuring the acknowledged 'opportunity' that the important Station Road corridor offers is not missed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would result in Wealdstone continuing to be the focus of industrial/commercial development which would result in the Harrow being redeveloped at a greater pace</li> <li>▪ Require significant intervention (e.g through CPOs etc) and investment in Station Road to be achieved, diverting money, time and resources away from the key centres of Harrow Town Centre and Wealdstone</li> <li>▪ Further expansion of Station Road will lead to a one centre if unchecked.</li> <li>▪ Station Road has serious congestion issues and strengthening the links between Wealdstone and Harrow along this corridor only will only worsen this</li> </ul>

On the basis of the responses received Option 4 received the most support as the option on which to develop the more detailed Area Action Plan proposals. Option 3 was a close second preference for most respondents. Option 1 did receive some support, especially from developers due to the fact that it sought to maximise the potential of all sites. Option 2 received the least support – in fact the only

respondent supporting this option was the Environment Agency due to the fact that it directed development away from areas in Wealdstone subject to flooding risk.

In terms of the raw numbers and the range of consultees Option 1 received support from five respondents, 4 of which were developers and the Hatch End Association; Option 2 only the representation of the Environment Agency in support but numerous comments in opposition; Option 3 received 6 representations in support, with three further consultees ranking this equal with Option 4. Option 4 received the most support with 15 selecting this as their preferred approach and a further 3 supporting both this option and option 3. The LDF Panel have been asked to comment on the development of a detailed masterplan (as part of stage 2) based upon an evolution of option 4, having regard to the comments received supporting option 3.

Given some concerns around the time available for further consultation on the detailed masterplan, officers have also re-visited the programme in order to introduce a further phase of consultation (on this emergent option), in the autumn. The formal, pre-submission consultation will then take place in early spring, alongside consultation on the other two planning policy documents, which are progressing alongside the AAP, through the statutory process.

At the panel, members will receive an update from the consultancy team on progress of the AAP, including details of the vision and key outcomes currently envisaged.

## **Outer London Fund**

On 13th June, the Mayor of London launched the “Outer London Fund.” The fund is a three-year initiative “...dedicated to strengthening the vibrancy and growth of high streets and their environs.” At the centre of the initiative is funding of up to £50 million, supported by the offer of advice that can be targeted at improving the character, quality and economic vitality of selected high street places.

Outer London Fund (OLF) will be allocated in two rounds; the first is geared towards providing an immediate opportunity to access funds and advice for clusters of readily deliverable projects. These should make a visible, if in some cases temporary, contribution to the vibrancy and self-confidence of high street places in the near future. The second round will continue the package of support, adding more places and shifting the balance towards more substantial physical projects that can deliver lasting improvement.

Harrow has engaged with the officers within the Mayors office tasked with supporting the bid process. Two bids, worth some £870K were submitted in time for the round 1 deadline; one for Harrow town centre, and a second bid for North Harrow centre. In parallel with the development of the bids, officers have also been working on bids for round 2 of the fund. Officers responsible for the bid will be providing a presentation and update at the MDP meeting on the Round 1 bid, alongside an over view of the round 2 proposals.

## **Implementation and Delivery**

### **Kodak site development update**

Members of the Panel have received ongoing updates from Land Securities on the development of their proposals for the site. Following recent community workshops and a third round of consultation, Land Securities will be reporting on the development of their emergent master plan and their proposals for the delivery of new job on the site, to fulfil the planning policy requirements arising from the development of designated industrial land.

### **51 College Road**

Panel Members will be aware of the proposals for Dandara Limited for a “tall building” comprising some 410 dwellings and 1,120 sq.m of commercial floor space at the site of the former post office on College Road. Members will be aware that following the Council’s refusal of their second planning application (the first being withdrawn) the planning appeal into the Council’s decision was dismissed on 22 July 2010. In concluding that a tall building (19 stories) was acceptable in principle on the site, the Secretary of State, in line with the appointed Inspector’s view, considered that the proposed development fell short of the policy tests applying to the design of tall buildings – which call for outstanding design quality.

The College Road site has remained derelict since the appeal and re-development of this prominent site continues to be important if Harrow is to reverse its current decline as a place for investment and as an attractive destination for residents and investors.

Officers from Harrow and Dandara have accordingly begun to discuss how, in the context of the appeal decision, the site might be developed in a way that contributes positively to the emergent spatial vision for the area. Dandara have attended the developers’ forums, as part of the AAP exercise and more recently have appointed a new firm of architects, following a design competition. For the Panel meeting, Dandara will therefore set out their emerging ideas for the site and seek comment from panel members on both constraints and opportunities from their development programme.

### **Strategic site development**

An updated schedule showing the status of key strategic development site projects is appended to this report. New to the schedule, having regard to representations received as part of the AAP, is the Colart site in Wealdstone.

### **Financial Implications**

The consultancy costs for Stage 2 of the AAP process are fully contained within the Planning Department’s budget allocation for 2011/12.

The estimated cost of the improvement schemes to St Anns Road and Lowlands Recreation Ground will be met from the Place Shaping allocation in the Capital Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The costs of ongoing engagement by officers on strategic planning applications are met through a combination of Planning performance agreement contributions and income from planning fees.

## Risk Management Implications

The risks associated with pursuit of the specific programmes are covered by specific risk registers. The report is not considered to result in any new risks arising to the projects.

## Equalities implications

The Area Action Plan for the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment. Site-specific development proposals will be assessed having regard to all material considerations. The OLF submission has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

## Corporate Priorities

The masterplanning study for the Heart of Harrow Intensification Area, grant funding from the Outer London Fund and the development of positive proposals for re-development on Kodak and College Road are consistent with the delivery of the following Corporate Priorities

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe – by developing a public realm strategy and urban design guidelines.
- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads –through the Engagement Forums that have been established to shape and test the master plan and the establishment of opportunities for participation in planning applications and the series of events in round 1 of the Outer London Fund Bids.
- Supporting our town centre, our local shopping centres and businesses – through the Area Action Plan that will guide the future development of Harrow town centre and Wealdstone and form one of the key building blocks for an inward investment strategy promoting business opportunities in the borough; through the investment facilitated by the outer London Fund and by long term transformation change in Harrow and Wealdstone facilitated by new development.

## Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Kanta Hirani	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 12 July 2011		
Name: Abiodun Kolawole	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 12 July 2011		

## **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Stephen Kelly, Divisional Director - Planning, Place Shaping  
020 8736 6149

**Background Papers:** None