

REPORT FOR:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:

22nd September 2011

Subject:

Heart of Harrow Area Action Plan –
Spatial Vision

Key Decision:

No

Responsible Officer:

Andrew Trehern
Corporate Director Place Shaping

**Scrutiny Lead Member
area:**

Keith Ferry.
Portfolio Holder for Planning,
Development and Enterprise

Exempt:

No

Enclosures:

Appendix 1 – Plan of sub areas and
key sites (colour copy circulated to
Members of the Committee only)
Appendix 2 - Role and objectives for
sub areas and key sites
Appendix 3 – Draft Spatial Vision
(A3 colour copy circulated to
Members of the Committee only)
Appendix 4 - Draft infrastructure
schedule – to follow

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report updates the Committee on the Issues and Options consultation for the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan and presents a draft Spatial Vision for the Heart of Harrow and key supporting documents that will form the Preferred Option for the Area Action Plan.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to

1. Note the results of public consultation on the Issues and Options stage of the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan; and
2. Consider and comment on the draft Spatial Vision for the Heart of Harrow and the role and objectives for sub areas and key development sites, which are to be reported to Cabinet on 18th October

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The report presents the main component parts of an emerging spatial vision for the Heart of Harrow that will form the basis of a Preferred Option for the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan to be subject to consultation later this year. It outlines the role and objectives for identified sub areas and parameters for the development of sites within those areas, building on the responses to the Issues and Options consultation completed in June. A draft infrastructure schedule and indicative implementation strategy has also been developed. Each of these elements has now been brought together to form a draft Spatial Vision for the entire Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area for consideration by Cabinet in October.

2 Issues and Options consultation

- 2.1 Consultation on the four high level strategic options for the Intensification Area, outlined in the draft Issues and Options document considered by the Committee at its 5th April meeting, closed on 24th June. In addition to statutory notices and direct contact with the 1200 individuals and organizations registered on the LDF data base, a range of techniques were used to engage with a wider audience during the consultation period, including:

- A quarter page colour advertisement in the Harrow Observer on two occasions;
- A dedicated webpage on the Council's website with a direct link to the interactive online consultation portal;
- 5,000 colour leaflets promoting the Harrow & Wealdstone Intensification Area;
- Long and short questionnaires with a summary of the Area Action Plan four options;
- 12 'drop-in' sessions held in Harrow town centre, Wealdstone and selected other centres throughout the Borough;

- A stall at Under One Sky 2011 with interactive activities;
 - Presentations to the Major Developments Panel, Greener Harrow, Harrow Town Centre Forum, the Affordable Housing Delivery Group, the Community Engagement Forum, and the Agents Forum.
- 2.2 Over 400 face to face discussions were undertaken with members of the public and interested parties during the drop in sessions and Under One Sky event, and an estimated 200 hours of officer time was devoted to direct community engagement during the six week consultation period.
- 2.3 57 responses were received – from statutory authorities and local partners, developers and agents, interest groups and individuals - totalling 295 separate comments. A majority expressed support for Option 4 “High Road and Centres”, although support for Option 3 “Two Centres” was also well received.
- 2.4. Stage 2 of the AAP process commenced in June and East Architects were recommissioned to develop the masterplan into a Preferred Option. Each of the Engagement Forums that were established in 2010 to test and help shape the AAP - a Community Forum, Business Forum and Developers Forum – have met to consider components of the emerging spatial vision. A presentation has also been made to the Youth Parliament. A plenary session involving all Forum Groups is planned to take place in early October. In addition, the Director of Planning has held two “walkabouts” to encourage discussion on the potential impact of development within the Intensification Area on identified views of Harrow on the Hill or other sites of local sensitivity. Invitations were extended to individuals and groups who had responded to the Issues and Option consultation, and to members of the Community Forum.

3 Role and Objectives of Sub Areas.

- 3.1 The stage 1 masterplan and Issues and Options consultation has focussed on the three main parts of the Heart of Harrow - the two town centres and Station Road corridor - setting out their fundamental role and opportunities for change. However, the masterplan also recognised that the Intensification Area is comprised of a more complex mosaic of areas, subtly different in character, and facing different challenges and opportunities in meeting housing and employment targets and wider Core Strategy objectives. This will require a layered approach to the development of the Area Action Plan, setting out policies and objectives for the three main areas but also the more detailed design and development parameters that will guide specific proposals and other interventions, ensuring that the distinctive character of different parts of Intensification Area are maintained and enhanced. Proposals for development within these finer sub areas, on sites that have already been identified and other sites that may come forward over the next 15 years, will need to reflect their particular character and local distinctiveness.
- 3.2 Seven sub areas have therefore been defined for this purpose, as follows:
- Harrow western gateway
 - Harrow town centre
 - Harrow town centre east
 - Station Road
 - Wealdstone central

- Wealdstone west
 - Wealdstone east
- 3.3 A Plan showing the boundaries of the sub areas is attached as Appendix 1. Key development sites within those areas are also shown.
- 3.4 The role and objectives for each of the seven identified sub areas, and the uses and spatial objectives for key development sites in these areas, is set out in Appendix 2. They will provide the basis for development management policies and design guidelines that will apply in each area. Details can be summarised as follows:
- 3.5 **Harrow:** Harrow Metropolitan Centre is divided into three separate parts. The Western Gateway and Town Centre East are essentially areas of transition between the town centre commercial core and the surrounding residential area, with the mix of uses, densities and scale of development gradually reducing towards the sub area boundary. In effect, these two areas form the shoulders of the town centre. Opportunities to improve the existing pedestrian and cycle connections to the main shopping area around Station Road, St Anns Road and College Road, and to create new links through development sites, are identified. The block of outdated offices towards the western end of College Road, Lyon House/Equitable House and land in Gayton Road, are key sites within these transitional areas.
- 3.6 The Harrow town centre sub area comprises the main retail and commercial core of the Intensification Area. It typifies Harrow's Metropolitan character and development here would be required to be of a type and scale that reaffirms Harrow's Metropolitan Centre role, by extending the retail and commercial offer and through the creation of a network of quality public spaces. It is the most appropriate part of the Intensification Area to locate a tall "landmark" building, marking the town centre's borough-wide role and importance. Improving the accessibility of Harrow on the Hill station and the quality and capacity of Harrow bus station are important objectives for the sub area, along with enhancing public use of Lowlands Recreation Ground. The Dandara site in College Road, TfL car parks to the south of Harrow on the Hill station, land at Havelock Place, and Lowlands Recreation Ground are shown as key sites within the Harrow town centre sub area.
- 3.7 **Station Road:** The main objective for Station Road is to improve its "High Road" character and to enhance its role in linking the two main shopping areas, especially for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users, utilising development sites as "stepping stones" along the way. Public realm improvements, allied to improvements to key junctions to smooth traffic flow, would strengthen the High Road character. Higher densities will be limited to the road frontage reducing where they meet the surrounding residential area.
- 3.8 Greenhill Way car park, Tesco and the Civic Centre are key development sites. An opportunity area, mainly to the east of Station Road has also been identified, where incremental re-provision of retail and mixed use development will be promoted, as well as site assembly by individuals (as opposed to the Council) to renew large street blocks.

- 3.9 **Wealdstone:** Wealdstone, like Harrow, can be subdivided into three sub areas. A common objective is to create an east west link across the area, improving the connections between Headstone Manor, Kodak, the District Centre and the Leisure Centre to the east. Within the central sub area, the aim will be to strengthen and diversify the current retail offer, creating a more specialist role, and refocusing activity around the Headstone Drive, High Street, Canning Road junction. Improving the public realm, particularly around the station and under the railway bridge adjacent to the Crown Court, will do much to improve Wealdstone's image and function as a local centre. A number of small infill sites are scattered throughout the sub area, especially around the junction of Palmerston Road and George Gange Way where development can signal a gateway to Wealdstone and where taller buildings would be appropriate, reflecting the significant change in site levels near The Bridge.
- 3.10 Wealdstone west comprises land on either side of the west coast mainline railway and includes some of the borough's longest established employment uses, most notably Kodak and Col Art. Development will be required to create better connections with the existing suburban street pattern and integrate sites with the surrounding Metroland, through a wider mix of employment, housing and community uses and new green links, The size of available sites, however, also creates the opportunity for a more distinctive built form and contemporary character.
- 3.11 Kodak/Zoom Leisure, Col Art, the Teachers Centre and Headstone Manor have been identified as development sites and, together, will make a significant contribution to meeting employment and housing targets and provision of new community and green infrastructure.
- 3.12 Byron Park and the Leisure Centre are the main landmark features of Wealdstone east. The main role here will be to improve and diversify the existing leisure offer, and to use development as a transition with the existing suburban fabric and Green Grid proposals.

4 Draft Spatial Vision

- 4.1 A draft spatial vision for the Heart of Harrow is presented in Appendix 3 drawing together the objectives for sub areas, proposals for key sites and improvements to the public realm/highway network and Green Grid. It shows the main components of the area – the Metropolitan and Local Centres, generous public green spaces, and new landmarks to complement existing special buildings and create new focal points. A “cartoon” style has been adopted to aid interpretation and increase its accessibility, although a more formal version will be prepared for the AAP itself.

5 Infrastructure Schedule

- 5.1 A draft infrastructure schedule is included in Appendix 4. It lists a wide range of required and desirable improvements - to the transport network, public realm and open spaces, community facilities (including schools, health facilities and replacement library), employment, leisure and energy provision. Where appropriate specific allocations are included in the development sites described in Appendix 2. Together with proposals for new homes and jobs,

this represents a potential investment of up to £1bn in the Heart of Harrow over the next 15 years.

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 The documents listed in the Appendices to this report comprise the main components that will form the Preferred Option for the AAP. Further reports will be presented to the next meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel with a view to the Preferred Option being considered at Cabinet and Council on 18th October and 3rd November respectively. Subject to Cabinet and Council approval, a 6 week public consultation on the Preferred Option will take place in November/December.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The consultancy costs for stage 2 of the AAP process are fully contained within the Planning Department's budget allocation for 2011/12.

8 Risk Management Implications

- 8.1 The risks associated with the preparation of the AAP are covered in a specific risk register.

9 Equalities implications

- 9.1 The Area Action Plan for the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification Area will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

10 Corporate Priorities

- 10.1 The Area Action Plan will inform and assist with the delivery of the following Corporate Priorities
- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe – by improving the quality and safety of public spaces throughout the Intensification Area
 - United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads – through the Engagement Forums that have been established to shape the AAP
 - Supporting our town centre, our local shopping centres and businesses – through the AAP 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.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Kanta Hirani	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 12 th September 2011		
Name: Matthew Adams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 9 th September 2011		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Phil Greenwood, Head of Major Development Projects. Tel 020 8424 1166. Internal ext 2166.

Background Papers: None