

APPENDIX A
BEST VALUE SCOPING PAPER
HARROW'S ECONOMY

OBJECTIVES:

1. The objectives of the review are to:
 - Carry out a business mapping research project
 - define the council's role in relation to the business community
 - draw up a detailed action plan for engaging with business over the next 2-3 years
 - build relationships with key representative groups in the business sector
 - review the council's relationship with Harrow in Business
 - develop the new business portal
 - plan the route for establishing the Single Business Account which is an ODPM target
 - consider the impact of tourism in Harrow on business activity

BACKGROUND:

2. At present there are three parts of the organisation involved in business activity.
 - i] The Director of Strategy in Urban Living is responsible for economic development, regeneration and capacity building. This includes management of the council's "incubator" for new businesses, next step premises, social enterprise, and a web based facility which provides information on funding opportunities for business.
 - ii] The Director of Financial and Business Strategy is responsible for procurement and community links (business and voluntary sector). This covers contact with businesses on an individual basis and includes the development of the new business portal.
 - iii] The communications team produce an electronic newsletter for businesses on a regular basis.
3. Representatives from all these areas have been meeting regularly to start to co-ordinate activity.
4. Earlier this year a firm of consultants, Agilisys, were commissioned to conduct a review of business engagement. They identified five key areas of activity:
 - internet

- physical support (eg. Incubators)
 - communication
 - policy development and consultation
 - single point of contact
5. Following the review, work began in the first area (internet) to develop a business portal. A tender was conducted and a contract awarded to Hedra/Agilisys to develop the portal in partnership with the Council's website supplier, Run Time collective.
6. The portal will provide:
- an e-directory
 - e-tendering facilities
 - a discussion forum
 - general information about council services which are of interest to business (eg. Economic development and regeneration, planning, business rates, waste collection)
 - links to representative bodies such as HIB
 - a link to the existing funding opportunities package
7. The portal will be established in a way that will enable new modules to be added over time.
8. The best value review will build on the initial work conducted by Agilisys.

SCOPE:

9. The review will be fairly wide ranging, covering all existing areas of activity with business and some of the initial work on tourism. The review will also reflect the role of the West London Alliance which has developed an economic development strategy and the emerging Local Development Plan.

ACTIVITIES:

10. The main activities will include:
- A mapping exercise to gather data about the business community.
 - Consultation with the business community, specifically in relation to the portal and more generally.
 - Meetings with business representatives such as HIB, Chamber of Commerce, Business Connection, Asian Business Initiative etc.
 - A review of government requirements and guidance in this area
 - Visits to other Local Authorities to compare their economic development and business engagement functions with Harrow.

- Benchmarking on inward investment
- A review of social enterprise and social firms support
- Development of an Action Plan.
- Launch of new business portal.

11. The mapping exercise will both collect useful data about Harrow's business community and provide some core data for the e-directory on the portal.

12. The development of the action plan should identify any possible areas of tension between business needs and residential needs.

PROJECT TEAM:

10. The project will be led jointly by the Director of Strategy, Urban Living and the Director of Financial and Business Strategy. The team will include representatives of the regeneration, procurement and communications teams. The Head of Communications will lead on the tourism aspects.

TIMETABLE:

11. The proposed outline timetable is as follows:

Data gathering	Apr 05 – Jun 05
Consultation	Apr 05 – Jun 05
Portal Launch	Mar 05
Interim Report	May/ Jun 05
Development of Action Plan	Jun 05
Final Report	Sept 05

COST:

12. Funding will be required for the survey activity. This cost will be met from the existing regeneration budget.