

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 March 2009, 6.30pm**  
Civic Centre, Harlow

**Board members present:**

Steve Cox	EEDA	Eddie Johnson	Essex County Council
Mike Evans	Homes & Communities Agency	Chris Millington	Harlow Council
Nicholas Falk	Independent Director	John Spence	Chair
Richard Inman	GO-East Observer	Jackie Sully	Independent Director
Andrew Johnson	Harlow Council		

**Apologies:**

Simon Bishop	Homes & Communities Agency	Martin Reynolds	Independent Director
Stephen Castle	Essex County Council	John Keddie	Independent Director
Steve Hammond	Independent Director	Mark Wilkinson	Harlow Council

**Others present:**

Chris Beasley	Development Director	Richard Denney	Town Centre Partnership
Nicky Bowland	Communications Manager	Louisa Martland	Office/Project Manager
Andrew Bramidge	Chief Executive		
Graham Branchett	Harlow Council	Cath Shaw	Harlow Council
Daniel Grindey	Essex County Council		

**1. Welcome, introductions and apologies**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mark Bensted and Mark Blackwell from British Waterways.

In addition to the Board members noted above, Ian Hatton, Essex County Council (ECC); Mandy Hood, Town Centre Partnership; Malcolm Morley, Harlow Council and Richard Waterhouse, ECC gave their apologies.

**2. Declarations of conflicts of interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting**

All agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were a true record.

**4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere**

*John Spence to write to Richard Ellis, Chief Executive, EEDA and the Regional Director of GO-East regarding the apportioning of the Regional Funding Allocation.* - Letters received from EEDA and GO-East were circulated with the Board Papers. Andrew Bramidge, Cath Shaw and EEDA met Michael Hargreaves, GO-East, to brief him on transport infrastructure developments in Harlow. We will continue discussions with regional bodies to seek to secure additional funding on the basis that Harlow is contributing to the growth agenda.

This summer the Department of Transport (DfT) will launch their Delivering a Sustainable Transport System funding programme for 2014 onwards which should make further funds available for Harlow. Bill Rammell has also been taking to the DfT regarding this.

The Transport Board is meeting next week and John Spence and Andrew Bramidge are meeting with Cllr Stephen Castle and Cllr Norman Hume, ECC, to talk about funding in advance of that.

*Steve Hammond to contact Harlow Education Employer Partnership (HEEP) to discuss potential collaboration on employer engagement.* - Steve Hammond has met with HEEP and the Employer Engagement Unit at Harlow Council to discuss how they can collaborate on employer engagement and had produced a report.

Andrew Bramidge and Jackie Sully attended the HEEP Advisory Board last week. The Advisory Board recognised the need to bring all partners together and Harlow Renaissance will host a round table discussion in April to achieve this.

## **5. The potential of waterside developments**

Mark Bensted, Director of British Waterways (BW) gave a presentation to the Board.

### *Key points from the presentation:*

- BW view the Stort river as one of the 'green lungs' of London and a premier waterway
- The riverfront should become the 'heart' of the town and a high quality destination
- Thinking regarding flood plains should be challenged
- Active water creates dynamic environments
- Water is a flexible space that can be used for parking, housing and employment
- Master planning is very important
- Water shouldn't just be a boundary, it should be part of a development with equal status to land
- Waterways should be connectors not dividers
- Planning permission has just been granted for a 300 berth marina at Roydon
- Harlow's visions and aspirations for the River Stort area need to work with or without the Harlow North development
- Floating executive homes, eco businesses or marshland habitat for wildlife
- The river can be an iconic major gateway to Harlow
- BW are engaged in the whole regeneration agenda

### *Key points from the Board discussion:*

- The proximity to the station is an advantage and the opportunities presented by the commercial value of the location for a destination hotel complex with meeting/conferencing facilities should be explored
- There is a natural catchment area around waterways which don't recognise county boundaries and help to link places together. Water often makes separate counties/boroughs work more closely together

### *Summary:*

BW have offered to work with Harlow to create an Water Space Strategy for the town. They are already partners on the GAF III Programme of Development.

*Action: Andrew Bramidge and Cath Shaw to take to GAF III POD Partnership Board a request for funding for a Water Space Strategy.*

## **6. Harlow Renaissance Business Plan 2009/11**

The new Business Plan puts a greater focus on how we achieve our key deliverables over the next two years – whilst recognising the economic difficulties we face at the moment. This is a tighter document focused on our core actions/objectives and strategic actions which will aim to take Harlow forward in the longer-term.

Andrew Johnson, in his role as Leader of Harlow Council has sent Harlow Renaissance a letter setting out his challenges for the company. The letter is consistent with the direction, spirit and detail of the Business Plan.

*Key points from the Board discussion:*

- It was reported that Harlow College is concerned that some of the funding for the new Anglia Ruskin University building has been stopped
- The Business Plan should reflect the importance we put on the nature of what ARU deliver in Harlow and not just on the physical development of the university
- Work on the Integrated Development Programme should be included in the Key Deliverables, Collaborative section
- A statement about our strategic housing aspirations should be included
- More detail needed about the emphasis on building a mix of housing types and the importance of housing growth since this is the agenda of DCLG, one of our core funders
- The interim use of empty shops as a mechanism to promote the image/branding message to be included

The Board agreed in principle to the Business Plan.

*Action: Andrew Bramidge to find out what funding Harlow College believe has been stopped and circulate an update note to the Board.*

**N.B. Post Board meeting update: Following a discussion between Andrew Bramidge and the principal of Harlow College, it was confirmed that the concern expressed was in relation to the cessation of capital funding from the Learning and Skills Council for further education and was entirely unrelated to the provision of funding for the University.**

*Harlow Renaissance to circulate Andrew Johnson's letter with the minutes.*

*Andrew Bramidge to arrange a bi-lateral meeting with HDC to clarify who is leading on projects.*

*Andrew Bramidge to amend the Business Plan in line with the discussion and re-circulate.*

## **7. Branding – baseline study and campaign**

Over 700 people were interviewed in a robust baseline study to determine views of Harlow from residents, non-residents and businesses. The study will be conducted again next year to identify progress made against the baseline as a result of the branding work.

*Key findings:*

- Residents rated the sporting facilities much lower than non-residents – *the town currently has no swimming pool which may have affected these results*
- Residents and visitors thought that travelling around the town was good. Businesses rated this poorly – *this may be due to the time of day when travelling*
- Harlow was not rated a good place to work - *this is probably due to a lack of job diversity and low wages*
- Having a university located in the town was thought to be positive and was one of the strongest scoring indicators.
- People think that Harlow lacks a distinctive identity

HRL will now use the findings to begin planning a programme of branding activities for the town. This will include event-based activity with targeted marketing to key stakeholders. GAF III money has been made available to help this process.

*Key points from the Board discussion:*

- The sums of money available for this project are small so we need to be clear about who we wish to influence
- We must get current residents engaged with the positive messages as they will act as ambassadors for the town. This will be difficult because a lot of Harlow residents talk the town down

- Focus should also be on how the town is portrayed externally.

The Board supported the proposed direction of travel and would like to see a detailed programme of activities.

*Action: Nicky Bowland to create a programme of branding activities to bring back to the Board.*

## **8. Chief Executive's Report**

GAF II – Moat are aiming to start public consultations in April with detailed planning applications to be submitted late summer.

Town Centre – A document was sent out with the Board papers. A programme of work has been outlined and it is hoped that planning applications can be submitted by the end of this year or early in 2010. HRL is seeking Board endorsement for Harlow Council to sign the legal agreement with Stockland.

*Key points from the Board discussion:*

- Essex County Council can't endorse the process until the proposal has been considered by its Regeneration Board the following day – *Andrew Bramidge and John Spence will be meeting Cllr Castle later this week following ECCs Regeneration Board and will update the Board on the outcome*
- HCA confirmed that they will part-fund the next stage of the work and assist with the 'value engineering process' that would be inevitable
- EEDA can't commit funding at this stage but are happy with the process and confirmed that Harlow Town Centre is one of the organisations' top reserve projects.
- A clear programme of publicity needs to be in place

PR consultants will be appointed to run the public consultations and media relations.

In principle the Board are content with the process for HDC to sign the agreement with Stockland by the end of March. Partners have also committed to ensure that the scheme remains deliverable.

Old Harlow Conservation Scheme – work is due to start in the next financial year.

Hotspots – An artist has been appointed to create a new sculpture in the town park paddling pool.

Procurement Policy – the final version has been proposed by the Audit Committee who had requested formal endorsement from the Board. The Board agreed the Procurement Policy.

## **9. Harlow Town Station update**

Andrew Bramidge and John Spence met with senior representatives from Network Rail and National Express. National Express have developed a specification of works, costed at c£450,000, to undertake a major upgrade to the internal appearance of the station. However, they have no money available to deliver the works with the ending of their franchise in 2011. Network Rail have said that they will seek to identify if there is any money available and will respond to us within two weeks. This funding would not include the external re-decoration of the station unless work is necessary to ensure the building is not at risk.

*Key points from the Board discussion:*

- The appearance of the station is crucial to the whole town. The Railway Heritage Trust should be contacted to see if they can help.
- The Development Framework for the area around the station has been completed which can now be used to create a supplementary planning document.

- Network Rail have gone out to tender for work on the expansion of the carpark. HDC/HRL need to intervene quickly to get their agreement to work with us on the design to insure it can be integrated into any future development in the area.

*Action: A meeting to be set up between National Express and Harlow Renaissance to discuss their car park plans.  
Harlow Council to explore whether there are any traffic implications which might have a bearing on the planning situation.  
Letters to be written to English Heritage and CABE to obtain support for upgrading the station – Andrew Bramidge and Cath Shaw to liaise.*

**10. Quarterly Business Plan Report**

A paper was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. No further discussion took place.

**11. Rolling Agenda**

A paper was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. No further discussion took place.

**12. Any other businesses**

Empty shop units in the town centre – Empty units could be used to promote key messages to the public; design guide, branding etc. This week Andrew Bramidge met with Lindsey Strange from the Arts team at Essex County Council to discuss how artists could use the empty shop and office accommodation in the town centre as temporary studio space. Richard Dennery has made contact with the property owners on Broad Walk to establish which empty shops can be utilised.

*Action: Richard Dennery to follow-up with shop owners to ensure more usage of empty units.*

**13. Date and time of next meeting**

Wednesday 6 May 2009, Committee Rooms 2a&b, Civic Centre, Harlow; 6.30pm

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**Approved by the Board of Directors**

Chairman: .....

Date: .....