

BOARD MEETING
Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 May 2008, 5pm
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Harlow

Board members present:

Steve Cox	EEDA	John Keddie	Independent Director
Nicholas Falk	Independent Director	Dearbhla Lawson	GO-East Observer
Steve Hammond	Independent Director	Chris Millington	Harlow Council
Eddie Johnson	Essex County Council	John Spence	Chair

Apologies:

Simon Bishop	English Partnerships	Andrew Johnson	Harlow Council
Stephen Castle	Essex County Council	Martin Reynolds	Independent Director
Tony Durcan	Harlow Council	Jackie Sully	Independent Director

Others present:

Andrew Bramidge	Chief Executive	Richard Denney	Town Centre Manager
Nicky Bowland	Communications Manager	Louisa Martland	Office Manager
		Mike Seager	Policy Manager
Ian Hatton	Essex County Council	Cath Shaw	Harlow Council
Malcolm Morley	Harlow Council	Richard Waterhouse	Essex County Council

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Apologies are noted above.

2. Declarations of conflicts of interest

John Spence declared an interest in Item 10, as a Non-Executive Director of Revenue and Customs.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

A change was requested to Item 10 by Dearbhla Lawson with reference to the M11 review to reflect the fact that this is to give consideration to the long term capacity of the motorway rather than extending the scope of the widening proposals as had been reported in the minutes.

4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

Business Plan Risk Analysis: Discussions around funding will commence following the publication of the East of England Plan. A meeting has been arranged with Henry Cleary in early June to begin this process.

GAF II – English Partnerships Claw backs: Agreement has been reached between HRL, EP and Harlow Council on a joint appointment of GVA Grimley to undertake site valuations to enable a shared view of the issue and grant funding required.

Transport: National Express have confirmed Harlow Town Station will be painted, but no timetable has been given. Andrew Bramidge has written to National Express asking for clarification, with no response to date. The Board suggested the use of bright colours might benefit the station.

The Cycle Town bid was submitted at the end of March. Thanks were given to individuals and organisations which had helped with the bid, particularly Essex County Council, Harlow Council and Harlow 2020. We should find out by the end of month if the bid was successful. Also, ECC have

submitted two Harlow bids for the Community Infrastructure Fund – widening of the A414 between the M11 and the Southern Way roundabout and improvements to First Avenue. Both of these have now been included in the ‘top priority’ category for the regional recommendation by EERA/EEDA to central Government.

The recent Harlow-Stansted Gateway Transport Board expressed concern at the conflicting signals around the M11 consultation. It was felt that the Highways Agency was not being as cooperative as possible in joining up their work with the modelling work being undertaken by ECC. The Chair of the Transport Board, Norman Hume will be writing a letter to DfT Ministers expressing the Boards concern.

Action: Andrew Bramidge to follow up letter sent to National Express.

5. Education Work Programme

The paper reports the outcomes of the event held in March. Since then, HRL has met main stakeholder organisations to develop specific actions for implementation by the partners. A correction to the report has been noted; in the summary of Cath Shaw’s presentation it should state that 20% of the work force has no qualifications.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- Delighted this initiative is starting at Primary level.
- Has the issue of lifelong learning been considered - a relevant issue for Harlow?
- Currently the focus is to engage young people but teaching parents by getting them involved with their child’s education is also being considered.
- Importance should also be placed on vocational education and we should be looking to countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden and German for inspiration. We need to consider the value and respect given to vocational training and explore whether there is any trade-off in performance and aspiration with sixth forms in schools?
- This work will help to foster a debate around the long-term organisation of the schools in Harlow. What ground-work needs to be undertaken for the Schools Building Programme?
- How do we gather evidence? Methods for measuring the success and achievements of the project must be considered. How do we ensure all learning providers take part? Who is accountable?
- Targets and dates on the action plan need to be reviewed. Are we being too ambitious?
- To engage businesses a strong business case must be developed. How do we incentivise schools to participate?
- Existing and new governors should receive training and development highlighting the importance of business engagement.

The Board supports the work programme.

Action: Ian Hatton to provide the Board with information on the Schools Building Programme.

Richard Waterhouse and Ian Hatton to provide the Board with information about what Essex County Council are mapping for the future of the schools in Harlow including the timescale for decision making.

Harlow Renaissance to liaise with partners to clarify targets and to establish accountability.

6. Branding Work Programme

Nine months of activities have led to the production of the core branding messages for Harlow. A Design Guide setting policies and standards will be produced alongside an active marketing

campaign. A slow-burn campaign will be developed, identifying core messages for all partners to use. HRL are now seeking consensus from Harlow Council, Harlow 2020, the Olympic Stakeholder Group and Harlow and District Chamber of Commerce. A public launch is proposed for the Town Show with a business and media launch linked to the launch of the Incubation Centre. A budget of £30,000 has been set for this year to put the marketing messages and a design guide together. For a longer-term marketing campaign a more significant sum of money will need to be secured.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- The desired outcome of this campaign should be clear including process and rollout.
- A risk assessment should be undertaken to see what could go wrong with the campaign.
- Slow-burn and mass marketing roll out needs to happen before 2009/10.
- Current projects already demonstrate the direction of travel we wish to achieve; e.g. Newhall, GAF II and III.
- We need to prove to people outside Harlow that change is being made.
- Partners such as Stockland Halladale will need to be encouraged to use the branding.
- It is important that we don't rush the branding campaign before fully understanding the marketing mix. If we are generating new expectations and perceptions of Harlow we need to ensure deliverability.
- The challenge is to find something that resonates with people now and in the future.
- "Harlow - see something different" is a good slogan, perhaps with an eye as a logo.

Summary

There is recognition that we must proceed with pace but with caution. We need to be clear of the purpose of the branding and wider issues we are seeking to address. In the context of a slow-burn campaign we have got to understand who the campaign is aimed at, with clear goals and measures so that during the second half of the financial year we can develop a clear marketing campaign, underpinned by a business case with goals and methodology.

Action: Short-term; to develop a risk analysis and greater clarity of aims, messages and audiences then embark on consultation. In the longer term, to come back to the board early next year with the details of a proposed marketing campaign.

7. Entrepreneurship Work Programme

The findings of the research project commissioned in 2007/08 to look at entrepreneurship in Harlow are set out in this report, including a set of actions in paragraph 20. There is now the opportunity to bid for funding from EEDA's Investing in Communities programme, potentially £100,000 over the next two years, for which we now need to set priorities.

It will be important to link with the branding campaign. The message we are presenting should also be simple to understand e.g. the Incubation Centre should be called a Business Centre.

There are 7 specific targets identified for the next 12 months:

1. By May 2009, the Incubation Centre to be open with at least 50% occupancy.
2. Three branded access points to enterprise services to be open by May 2009 in different locations around the town.
3. Anglia Ruskin University to be actively recruiting for courses to commence in autumn 2009.
4. An enterprise engagement programme is in place with local schools and the College.
5. A programme of mentoring sessions for new businesses is in place.
6. A regular enterprise feature is in place in one of the local newspapers.
7. The role and recruitment process for an Enterprise Champion have been identified.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- Proposals sound good and measurable and should help to begin breaking down barriers.
- There are similar themes emerging from all three papers presented to the Board; raising expectations and aspirations is also key to the branding messages.
- There is a lack of SMEs in Harlow. We need to ensure residents are supported when opening new businesses.
- There are lots of empty shops and offices in the town centre. Could these spaces be used to help small business start-up? Harlow is a town that was based on manufacturing. The established culture in Harlow is not going to be turned round quickly but will take a number of years. As a result Harlow has fallen behind some other towns of the same ilk.
- Kevin Horne, from NWES (managing agents for the Incubation Centre) is keen to get a presence in town centre to help bring in new businesses.
- Figures from Harlow Council indicate that there is a problem with 18-24 year olds in the town. The numbers in this age group claiming job seekers allowance is the highest in Essex. We need to work with schools to address this issue.
- We should also bear in mind that housing growth in itself will create demand for new businesses e.g. hairdressers, florists, newsagents etc.

The Board gave its endorsement for the proposed approach and the inclusion of the seven deliverables into the business plan.

8. Eco Towns Consultation

The Government has announced its chosen 15 short listed Eco Town locations which are now being consulted upon. There are four shortlisted developments in the east of England, including Elsenham, north of Bishop's Stortford. Up to 10 Eco Town sites will be chosen by the autumn.

Key points from the Board discussion:

- Viability will be a major issue since any additional dwellings built will be in addition to existing housing targets. CLG will also be undertaking a sustainability study.
- Further increased housing will place an addition burden on the M11.
- The proposed Eco Town at Elsenham may provide competition and challenge to Harlow, particularly in relation to employment creation. There will be good access to Stansted Airport and increased road and rail usage.
- Case studies of successful Eco Towns in Europe have been undertaken and all of these have been linked to expansion of existing settlements rather than new ones.

Action: Harlow Renaissance will submit a response to the proposed development at Elsenham based on the comments made at the meeting.

9. LDF Workshop; 11 June Objectives

The next board meeting will be just one hour long, preceding a two-hour workshop to be held jointly with Harlow 2020. The objective of the workshop is to provide a considered view to Harlow Council about their LDF process and the vision to be established. The existing community strategy will be looked at and the impact of the East of England Plan on the timeline for development. The five themes of the LDF will be discussed and breakaway groups will be formed to debate in detail. We are looking to be able to give Harlow Council a piece of bold thinking, setting out what the best might be whilst remaining framed in reality. Ahead of next board meeting a 'thought piece' will be produced.

10. Audit Committee Report

The Audit Committee met to review existing systems, confirm the audit timetable and discuss the company's VAT status.

EEDA have recently undertaken an audit and HRL have received feedback prior to the publication of their official report which states that our systems are consistent with the nature and size of our organisation. However, we need to start to implement a clear risk management strategy and consistent project management record keeping in advance of any future expansion of the company's work programme. We also need to establish a Gifts and Hospitality policy.

The Board were happy to accept the Audit Committee report.

The Chair of the Audit Committee, Ian Luder, has advised that he will be resigning from the Audit Committee this autumn since he becomes Lord Mayor of the City of London in November. We are looking to recruit two accountants to the Committee, one of whom will be invited to be the independent Chair. Ideally we would like to recruit the other from staff within our member organisations who would be willing to undertake this. We are also seeking to appoint an additional Board Member to the committee.

11. Quarter 4 Report 2007/08

The Business Plan update was noted.

12. Town Centre Partnership Update

The Board were given an update on the current Town Centre Partnership activities including a second music event due to take place in the Market Square on June 22nd featuring Martin Taylor, an internationally renowned, Harlow born Jazz Guitarist.

Initial drawings for a series of murals to be mounted on Redstone House were presented. Approval and funding for the scheme is currently being sought from the property owner.

13. Chief Executive's Report

The Finance Report identified that a larger than forecast surplus had been created in 2007/08 which is being put into project activity in the current year. This had enabled the project budget to be increased from £190,000 to £270,000 for 2008/09.

14. Rolling Agenda

The Rolling Agenda will be updated to reflect the discussions that will now need to take place following the publication of the East of England Plan.

15. Any Other Business

Two Board members have requested we change the time of the Board meetings – one to an earlier time and one to a later one. Board members will be canvassed to identify preferred times for agreement at the next meeting.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 11 June 2008, 4.30 – 5.30pm. To be followed by a joint workshop with Harlow 2020 on Harlow's Local Development Framework. This will take place 5.30 – 7.30pm at The Study Centre, Harlow.