

**BOARD MEETING**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 March 2008, 5pm**  
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Harlow

**Board members present:**

Tony Durcan	Harlow Council	John Lewis	English Partnerships
Nicholas Falk	Independent Director	Chris Millington	Harlow Council
Eddie Johnson	Essex County Council	John Spence	Chair
John Keddie	Independent Director	Jackie Sully	Independent Director
Dearbhla Lawson	GO-East Observer		

**Apologies:**

Steve Cox	EEDA	Andrew Johnson	Harlow Council
Stephen Castle	Essex County Council	Martin Reynolds	Independent Director
Steve Hammond	Independent Director		

**Others present:**

Chris Beasley	Development Director	Louisa Martland	Office Manager
Nicky Bowland	Communications Manager	Mike Seager	Policy Manager
Andrew Bramidge	Chief Executive		
Simon Bishop	English Partnerships	Malcolm Morley	Harlow Council
Jennifer Burns	Harlow Council	Cath Shaw	Harlow Council
Ian Hatton	Essex County Council	Richard Waterhouse	Essex County Council

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**1. Welcome, introductions and apologies**

The Chairman welcomed Simon Bishop, who will replace John Lewis as English Partnerships representative on the Board. Thanks were given to John for his insight, breadth of view and the help he has given Harlow Renaissance. We wish John luck in his new role as Chief Executive of the Milton Keynes Partnership.

**2. Declarations of conflicts of interest**

John Keddie declared an interest in item 5 as reference is made to GlaxoSmithKline in relation to the GAF III proposals. This interest is noted for all future agenda items relating to the GAF III scheme.

Jackie Sully also declared an interest in item 5 as there is reference to Rainbow Services. This is noted for all future agenda items relating to the GAF III scheme.

Chris Millington declared an interest in item 7 regarding the Local Development Framework (LDF) as he is Chair of the Council's LDF Working Party. It was noted that any comments he and other Councillors made in the discussion were in their role as a Harlow Renaissance Board members and not in their Council roles.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be a true record.

#### 4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

##### *Business Plan*

An amendment was proposed to the Business Plan for next year since it was felt that Harlow Renaissance's (HRLs) various roles should be identified:

- project delivery on behalf of partners
- prompting discussion on the future of Harlow as an independent company
- acting collaboratively as a catalyst/agent for all parties

The Board agreed the change as a formal amendment.

#### 5. GAF III – Expenditure Profile

The Board were asked to give their support to the content of the GAF III bid and to confirm their support for the proposed role of HRL.

##### *Content*

£7.3m has been allocated for projects in 2008/09 (not £6.7m as detailed in the Report). The outline proposals are being taken to Harlow Council's Policy and Resources Committee tomorrow for approval. There are three major projects:

- **Water study**
  - This will identify parameters for the future growth of Harlow in relation to water supply and sewage disposal. Following a scoping study completed in 2007 this study will undertake work to identify potential constraints and solutions to them. Sewerage is as much of an issue as water supply, so the capacity of Rye Meads will also be examined.
- **Electricity Sub-station**
  - The development of a new electricity sub-station at The Pinnacles to deal with existing shortfall in supply as well as deal with future growth.
- **Transport Model**
  - The impact of housing and employment growth on routes in and around Harlow will be studied. Essex County Council is in the process of commissioning the study, the first phase of which will complete in the autumn.

There are also a range of smaller activities including:

- **Priority Estates**
  - Critical to the future regeneration of the existing town. £1m is a notional figure subject to other funding secured. A bid will be submitted to EEDA for support to fund the sub-station which might free up funds for other projects.
- Much of the remainder of the work will be taking place in other local authorities.

The Board gave their support to the content of the Report.

The role of HRL has been agreed in principle by the partners. HRL will manage the programme, with Harlow Council retaining ultimate responsibility as budget-holders, reporting to the wider sub-regional partnership. HRL will also oversee the non-Harlow projects with a more arms length monitoring approach, rather than a decision making function.

The Government has announced opportunities for additional Growth Area Funding across the country. £172m was held back from the initial allocation in December 2007 to allow time to assess bids in more detail. Further bidding will take place in the coming months with decisions being made in the autumn. Making good early progress on agreed projects will be critical to Harlow's chances of receiving additional funding. All agreed the importance of pursuing these funds.

To undertake the GAF III work HRL will need to recruit an additional post, (replacing the current GAF II post seconded from Harlow Council, in place until the end of March 2008).

The Board agreed to the role of HRL as set out in the report and the additional post required.

*Key points from the Board discussion:*

Apart from the congestion busting programme the projects are largely reports. Money should be set aside to fund some 'early wins' to generate confidence, particularly in the town centre e.g. painting the concrete bright colours to improve the environment. The Chief Executive said this may be possible with the new system of funding as an annual budget will be paid to Harlow Council at the beginning of year and there will be increased flexibilities to allocate money to new initiatives. Harlow Council is also looking at a European Funding bid for the town centre.

The Board were concerned whether work on GAF III could commence while there was no one in post for the new role. Andrew Bramidge assured the Board that work is already being undertaken using existing team members.

The Board were pleased to see that HRL will be taking on a wider role as they felt the team have a lot of experience which would be valuable to share with neighbouring authorities. However, they were concerned that other local authorities should be clear about HRL's role and that this was not taking on any decision making functions. Cath Shaw advised that at officer level other authorities were happy as long as HRL was being directed by the partnership.

Richard Waterhouse volunteered to scrutinise the process to ensure that effective management processes were established. Thanks were noted for this offer.

*Actions: Andrew Bramidge and Cath Shaw to look at quick win options should funds become available.  
Andrew Bramidge to amend the report to show the budget as £7.3m.*

## **6. Business Plan 2008/09 – Risk Analysis**

In relation to the funding risk, Andrew Bramidge reported that CLG have advised that although they cannot yet give firm figures the level of funding given to HRL over the next three years won't be less than current sum (£400,000 per year). There is a discussion to be had in due course as to degree of funding that other partners will contribute.

*Key points from the Board discussion:*

- GAF III – although the new funding system gives increased flexibility, the risk of the funding being secure may increase as priorities elsewhere change. A fair allocation of funding relies on the strength of the Partnership.
- The name 'Market Square Quarter' needs to be re-visited as it is misleading.
- Whilst the loss of staff is recognised in the document the key role played by the Chief Executive should also be recorded and identified as a potential risk.

*Actions: The Chairman and Chief Executive to initiate post 31 March 2009 funding discussions with partners once the East of England plan is published.  
Security of funding to be noted as a risk.  
Discussion to take place with developer about a name for the Market Square Quarter scheme.  
Risk of losing the Chief Executive to be added to the Risk Analysis document.*

Subject to the changes noted above the Board approved the Risk Analysis section of the Business Plan.

## 7. Local Development Framework

Harlow Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) was presented to help develop an understanding about how HRL can best add value to the process. The document sets out the core strategy and is focussed around five main themes:

- Place-shaping (townscape)
- Housing
- Prosperity
- Infrastructure
- Lifestyles

*Key points from the Board discussion:*

- The Board felt that the Place-shaping heading was good and summarised the purpose of the LDF, and thought the idea should also be applied to the neighbourhoods. Jennifer Burns explained that the Place-shaping section had been written in such a way so that growth outside existing built areas could also be considered.
- A separate heading for Community and Cohesion might be included as it is unclear which of the current headings this fits under. Lifestyle might be the wrong label?
- Consistency with the Community Strategy is important.
- Prosperity and housing are integral to the entire document although the Estates Renewal programme could be highlighted in more detail.

The Chairman proposed a workshop session be held in conjunction with Harlow 2020 to ensure the quality of the debate around the LDF was not compromised. Jennifer Burns advised that other workshops, for example on infrastructure, would be taking place facilitated by an external consultant.

The Board agreed to seek to operate a workshop in tandem with Harlow 2020 in order to develop HRL's input into the consultation process. The timing of the event is to be decided at a later date. ***(Following the meeting it was agreed between HRL and Harlow 2020 that the workshop would be held on Wednesday 11 June.)***

## 8. Harlow Town Station

HRL have secured the interest of five adjacent land owners regarding future development in and around the station and have tried to manage aspirations regarding the LDF process. Technical proposals will be drawn up with the help of Essex County Council and Harlow Council to identify opportunities and constraints and then produce a vision statement within which the landowners may submit planning applications. A three strand approach will be looked at:

- Short-term – liven up station
- Medium-term – improving transport access (dependent on the East of England Plan)
- Long-term – wider development opportunities (dependent on the East of England Plan)

*Key points from the Board discussion:*

The Board expressed concern for the length of time this process will take (possibly 3-4 years). Chris Beasley advised that a vision statement will be presented to the Board in June. The vision statement will enable land owners to submit schemes to Harlow Council for planning approval before the LDF process is finished. It is expected that before the end of the year developers will put in applications based on the Framework.

The Board felt that in general the services in and around the station were poor. It is difficult to get to the Moorhen pub across the river, the toilets are not sufficiently looked after and the facilities to drop people off are inadequate. New ideas for the station should be generated in consultation with users. Chris Beasley advised that consultation would happen following agreement from the land owners.

Concern at the lack of improvements to the station was raised, especially the delay to the painting scheme due to take place at the beginning of 2008. The Board felt that One Railway (now National Express) hadn't delivered on the commitment made at a previous Board meeting and that they should be challenged over this. Mike Seager advised that the station improvements timetable had been delayed due to re-branding of the network and that the platforms would be re-painted, but not external parts of the station (a commitment which differs to their original proposal since the Board were advised the painting programme would happen throughout the station). Discussions are on-going regarding improvements to take place over next 12 months and all involved are enthusiastic about opening up unused space on footbridge and the area downstairs. These discussions are being taken forward separately to HRL's work through discussions facilitated by Harlow Council.

*Action: Mike Seager to share the Board's concerns with National Express regarding time slippage and plan alterations, and to seek their written response.  
HRL and Harlow Council to join together the various strands of work on the Station*

## **9. GAF II – Project update**

Across the town English Partnership (EP) have covenants in place relating to the release of land which affect the GAF II schemes. If Harlow Council develops the land then payment (claw-back) needs to be made to EP as a proportion of the uplift in land value. To try to alleviate this problem HRL propose that an approach is made to EP asking if they would consider providing grant funding to Harlow equivalent to the claw-back sum. It is also suggested that all the GAF II land be considered as a whole, rather than individual sites which would enable the net effect to be looked at.

John Lewis advised that this issue had been highlighted by EP early on in the scheme. A feasible solution to the problem would be to look at the sites as a portfolio to develop a solution. EP reiterated their commitment to making sure development is possible.

*Action: HRL to enable a discussion between EP and Harlow Council to finalise the details of an agreement on the proposal.*

## **10. Transport – short and long term options**

### *M11 additional junction and A414 bypass*

An announcement has been made by Ruth Kelly regarding plans for DfT and Network Rail to take forward work to consider the long term capacity of the M11 motorway and enhance the West Anglia Mainline. Norman Hume (Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Transport) has written to Ruth Kelly regarding the inclusion of junction 7a in this debate. It is HRL's intention to write to the Minister separately setting out in greater detail the case for junction 7a. Andrew Bramidge and John Spence will also be attending an Essex Business Consortium (EBC) event at their request, which will look at traffic issues in west Essex. Support from EBC will be sought for transport issues in and around Harlow.

The Board gave approval for John Spence to write to Ruth Kelly on behalf of HRL. This letter should be submitted via the Harlow Stansted Gateway Transportation Board who should also be invited to lobby. It was agreed that a strong business case needs to be put forward to achieve the desired outcome. Modelling work will be taking place in the autumn which will contribute to this debate.

*Key points from the Board discussion:*

- Modelling information needs to be available by end of 2008 to enable proposals to be put forward in early 2009. The business case needs to be significantly developed by then. As modelling happens in phasing the initial information can be used while other data is gathered.
- It was felt that EERA may have a view. It was agreed that we need to seek to influence the influencers to make sure our case is put forward for current infrastructure needs and not just future needs.

*Action: The Chairman and Chief Executive of HRL to draft a response/outline business case to Ruth Kelly in consultation with partners and to obtain support of the Transport Board.*

#### *Community Infrastructure Fund*

The Government has announced the next round of the Community Infrastructure Fund. £200m is available for designated growth areas to fund transport projects over the next three years. Background work has been done with Essex County Council, the Transport Board and in the production of the GAF III bid. Initial ideas will be circulated to the Board in early April as expressions of interest have to be submitted by 21 April.

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

- Previous studies undertaken should be used to help the business case.
- A new junction on the M11 and A414 bypass are needed, regardless of Harlow North, to support the current infrastructure deficit.

*Action: Andrew and Harlow Council and Essex County Council Officers to work on expressions of interest document and to circulate to Board members.*

#### *Cycle Network*

There is an opportunity to bid for 'Cycle Towns' money from the Department of Transport and Cycle England. HRL are looking to submit a bid in conjunction with Essex County Council and Harlow Council. The deadline is March 31 and approximately ten projects will be funded across the country. Mike Seager will be leading on the production of a bid.

*Action: Mike Seager to produce a bid in conjunction with other partners.*

## **11. Employment Land Review and Infrastructure Study – Verbal update**

### *Employment Land Review*

This will be completed in five months time. A phone survey has been completed and field surveys are currently taking place. Results of the base-line case will be received in the next four weeks.

### *Infrastructure Study*

An audit of the current situation (cross-border) is taking place. HRL should receive the plan and programme shortly. This will be a 6-9 month study. The base-line case will be available in eight weeks time.

Interim reports on both studies will be brought to the July meeting of the Board.

Until the RSS is published there may be a delay to some of the work. Dearbhla Lawson advised that the RSS will be available in late spring.

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

*Inspire East Winter School – Harlow Town Centre*

The Chairman thanked everyone who was involved with the Inspire East Winter School especially Nicholas Falk and Steve Hammond who gave up time to make presentations and attend the panel session. Feedback from the session was hugely positive and will help us to understand some of Harlow's issues. There was a lot of good quality input which we expect Stockland Halladale will be able to use as they attended the event. Inspire East will produce a report to be circulated.

#### *Market Square Concert*

The Animals will be playing live in the Market Square on 30<sup>th</sup> March. This event is free and is the first event to be put on by the Town Centre Partnership as part of the programme of bringing more people into the Town Centre.

#### *Harlow Town Show*

This year it will take place on 31<sup>st</sup> August. It is likely that HRL will have a significant input the event and thoughts on this will be developed over the next couple of months.

### **13. Rolling Agenda**

A new draft of the rolling agenda was presented to give an indication of items coming up over the coming months. This was tabled for comment and Board members are invited to make suggestions. Some of the timings may have to change due to publication of the East of England Plan and subsequent LDF processes.

### **14. Any other Business**

None

### **15. Date and time of next meeting**

Wednesday 7 May 2008, 5.00 – 7.00pm