

The Economy, Housing and the Arts Policy and Accountability Committee Agenda

Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 6.30 pm
Online - Virtual Meeting

MEMBERSHIP

| Administration | Opposition |
|---|---------------------------|
| Councillor Rory Vaughan (Chair) Councillor Rowan Ree Councillor Ann Rosenberg Councillor Helen Rowbottom | Councillor Adronie Alford |

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THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD REMOTELY

It will be streamed via YouTube on: <https://youtu.be/BF-vjrl8L8Q>

To ask a public question, you will need to register to speak at the meeting.

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by 12pm on Monday 9 November 2020 and joining instructions to the Teams
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The Economy, Housing and the Arts Policy and Accountability Committee Agenda

10 November 2020

| <u>Item</u> | | <u>Pages</u> |
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| 1. | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE | |
| 2. | ROLL-CALL AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To confirm attendance, the Chair will perform a roll-call. Members will also have the opportunity to declare any interests If a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest in a particular item, whether or not it is entered in the Authority's register of interests, or any other significant interest which they consider should be declared in the public interest, they should declare the existence and, unless it is a sensitive interest as defined in the Member Code of Conduct, the nature of the interest at the commencement of the consideration of that item or as soon as it becomes apparent. Where Members of the public are not allowed to be in attendance and speak, then the Councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest should withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is under consideration. Councillors who have declared other significant interests should also withdraw from the meeting if they consider their continued participation in the matter would not be reasonable in the circumstances and may give rise to a perception of a conflict of interest. Councillors are not obliged to withdraw from the meeting where a dispensation to that effect has been obtained from the Standards Committee. | |
| 3. | MINUTES To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020. | 4 - 13 |
| 4. | PUBLIC QUESTIONS For the Chair to invite those members of the public that have registered to speak, to ask questions on the reports within the agenda. To ask a public question, you will need to register to speak at the meeting. To do this, please send an email to charles.francis@lbhf.gov.uk by 12pm on Monday 9 November 2020 and joining instructions to the Microsoft Teams meeting will be sent to you. | |

5. PROGRESS REPORT ON SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC 14 - 23

This report details the measures taken by the council's business support team to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the borough's small business community during the ongoing pandemic

6. DEFEND COUNCIL HOMES POLICY CONSULTATION UPDATE 24 - 43

This report provides an update on the Defend Council Homes Policy and the boroughwide consultation with all council housing tenants and leaseholders.

Agenda Item 3

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
The Economy, Housing and the Arts Policy
and Accountability Committee
Minutes



Wednesday 9 September 2020

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Rory Vaughan (Chair), Rowan Ree, Ann Rosenberg, Helen Rowbottom and Adronie Alford

Officers: Prema Gurunathan – (Managing Director – Partnership for Growth and Innovation - LBHF & Imperial College), Yvonne Thomson – (Interim Strategic Manager, Economic Development, The Economy), Thomas Dodd – (Arts Development Officer, Economic Development, The Economy), Peter Hannon (Head of Neighbourhood Services) and Charles Francis (Committee Services)

Representatives from different Arts Groups

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lisa Homan and Andrew Jones.

2. ROLL - CALL AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

In relation to the action of the previous meeting, Councillor Rowan Ree highlighted he had not received information on the following: Action: *That Gerry Crowley provide the Committee with a copy of the Council's proposed response to the new Government Guidance on Housing Allocation for the Armed Forces.*

The Clerk confirmed this information would be circulated outside the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July were agreed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair confirmed that some general questions on the minutes of the previous meeting had been received from Marie Thomas, Resident Lancaster Court and a written response would be sent to her in due course.

No public questions were received on the Progress Report on Upstream. Five questions were submitted in advance by various representatives of Arts Groups on the Arts Commission Update and these were addressed during the meeting.

5. PROGRESS REPORT ON UPSTREAM

Prema Gurunathan, (Managing Director – Partnership for Growth and Innovation - LBHF & Imperial College) introduced the report which set out the progress on Upstream's work since it last reported to the Policy Accountability Committee (PAC) in September 2018.

The Chair thanked Prema Gurunathan for the overview and invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Rowan Ree referenced the September 2018 meeting, when the committee discussed working with large firms that were headquartered in the borough, and how transport links and the supply of affordable housing were proven ways of encouraging companies to locate within the borough. In turn, this influx of people created spending which supported local businesses. Councillor Rowan Ree asked if the Authority had considered how this might be affected with the current prevalence of working from home. In response, Prema Gurunathan explained Upstream had been in contact with some of the larger firms informally about their return to work plans (which varied). Laboratory based businesses had seen some staff return to work, but most other business were still working from home. Prema explained that Upstream were going to issue a survey to businesses shortly, to ascertain what their return to work plans were and what the implications of phased returns might be.

In the longer term, Councillor Ree asked whether the Authority had thought about how this behavioural change (of working from home) had affected the offer to larger firms. In response Prema Gurunathan explained that more residents commuted out of the Borough than came in, which was the net flow. Some larger firms based in Zone 1 in central London were looking at reducing their footfall and costs and so were actively looking at the opportunities provided by the borough (including its connectivity, availability of some affordable housing and reduced costs).

Highlighting some of the work which was being undertaken by the Industrial Strategy Board, Prema explained that a working group was currently investigating the opportunities to develop more neighbourhoods where residents worked, lived and played, which were also referred to as '15-minute neighbourhoods'.

The Chair thanked Prema for the report and commented that it was clear there were a great number of initiatives that Upstream had developed. Touching on the 2018 PAC meeting, the Chair commented that interesting and creative speakers had been encouraged to get in contact with science and tech-based businesses and he asked how this had developed. In response, Prema commented that Upstream ran two networking events per month (apart from August and only one in December) and highlighted the activities of the Deep Tech Network (research-based technology businesses) which Upstream had created in partnership with Imperial's Chemistry Department and Enterprise Division. Examples were also provided of the networking and funding opportunities which arose from the Deep Tech network.

The Chair asked if examples could be provided of those businesses which had engaged with the Deep Tech Network and subsequently decided to relocate to the borough or whether this was still in its infancy. Prema confirmed that developments were still in their early stages, but Developers had provided feedback which been particularly positive about the draw of White City.

In relation to Upstream's forthcoming business survey, Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked if this would also collect soft intelligence, such as partnerships which had formed, networks, the connectivity the Upstream brand had in the borough, and finally, the digital connectivity around place rather than a geographical one. In response, Prema confirmed that Upstream had captured some of the connectivity data and surveys did contain a tracker element to evidence those businesses which had been brought together.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg asked about broadband connectivity within the borough and especially the patchy performance in Sands End. She highlighted there were some businesses which were having significant problems and wondered whether these types of issues had been reported to Upstream. In response, Prema explained she was aware there had been problems.

Action: Prema Gurunathan to contact Councillor Ann Rosenberg outside the meeting to discuss broadband performance in the borough.

The Chair highlighted that he had listened to a recent Upstream Podcast on prosthetics for children which he had found interesting and informative and asked how other Podcasts had been received. Prema provided details on the Podcast work which had been conducted so far and some of the firms which had benefited.

Referencing the Oxford Economics report and the future proofing of businesses, Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked how the current climate had impacted upon SMEs. Prema confirmed the impacts had been varied and cited several examples of how firms were reacting and adapting. Asking a supplementary question, Councillor Helen Rowbottom suggested it would be interesting to see at a future meeting what impact the £2.4 million central government grant funding stream had had on the businesses which received it. Further questions included: whether this funding was sufficient, did the Authority need to ask for more and had the grant been instrumental in saving businesses during the freeze period.

The Chair asked Prema if she could provide some feedback on the some of the recent events which Upstream had hosted and also some thoughts on what Upstream might do in the future (in light of London Tech Week). Prema provided details of London Tech week and it was noted that this involved seven boroughs (one of which was H&F) for an eleven day period. Information and examples were provided on recent collaborative work, including work with Scale Space and a showcase events entitled Tech for Impact which involved four different companies. Further work streams included a fireside chat with a Tech Influencer, various networking opportunities and how social supporting work (with companies agreeing to display their logo on London Tech Week events) operated. Prema explained that Upstream had received a significant amount of positive feedback within the borough for the work it had done.

In terms of the future, (Prema explained that Upstream was jointly funded by the Council and Imperial College 50 / 50) the intention was to develop the business model (looking at a number of possible models, including that of the Knowledge Quarter). In doing so, additional funders would be brought to the table and the funding burden could be spread wider than the two current parties, as Upstream brought benefits and value to companies which did not currently fund Upstream.

Summarising the item, the Chair explained the Committee were impressed by the way

Upstream had developed over the last few years and there were lots of examples where Upstream had provided input and support to numerous start-up businesses. The Chair confirmed the Committee would like a further update to be provided in 12 months' time.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note and comment on the report.

6. ARTS COMMISSION UPDATE

Thomas Dodd (Arts Development Officer, Economic Development, The Economy) introduced the report. He explained that since the Committee's last update, the Council's Arts Commission had transitioned online with a revised programme to address the sector wide impacts of Covid-19. It was noted that two sessions had been held online, with the Commission's remaining five sessions projected across the next quarter and its findings due for publication by the end of 2020.

On the 26th May 2020, the Commission met to explore the theme of 'Arts & Culture in Extraordinary Times'. Commissioners were asked to report on their observations of the impact of the crisis on Hammersmith and Fulham, and the wider arts and cultural sector.

The Chair thanked Thomas Dodd for the overview and invited questions from the Committee.

Referencing the 2018 EHA PAC meeting on the Arts Commission, Councillor Rowan Ree explained that the Committee had highlighted the need to involve young people in the arts / cultural offerings (in terms of access or providing them). He commented that the report before the Committee suggested that none of the Arts Commission evidence gathering sessions had focused on young people and none of the Commissioners appeared to be representing young people or youth groups / schools. Specifically, he asked what was being done by the Commission to harness the enthusiasm of young people. In response, Yvonne Thomson (Interim Strategic Manager, Economic Development, The Economy), explained that several people on the Arts Commission worked with young people and in terms of the expert witnesses, the Bush and Lyric theatres had been involved, which did lots of work with young people. The Commission had also spoken to the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA). Yvonne highlighted that Hammersmith and Fulham had been successful in gaining a London Borough of Culture Impact Award which was based around young people, using music as a medium. One of the Commissioners is involved in music production, taking music from the bedroom scene into studios, and overall, the Culture Impact Award meant that the borough was working with hundreds of young people, so the Arts Commission had been mindful to involve young people. Councillor Rowan Ree thanked Yvonne for the update and asked that future reports include these types of updates.

The Chair mentioned the timetable of the Arts Commission, its reporting schedule and requested that the Committee have sight of the Arts Commission's final report

Action: That officers ensure the Committee considers the final report of the Arts Commission at an appropriate EHA PAC meeting, early in 2021.

With regards to the timeframe for the Arts Commission, Yvonne confirmed there were five further Arts Commission meetings planned. Pre-Covid, the Commission had hoped to hold a large public consultation meeting where the draft recommendations could be considered, but given current circumstances, these plans had needed to be altered. As a result, the next meeting would involve about fourteen community representatives which had been nominated by members of the Commission and this group would provide their feedback on the draft recommendations. This would be followed by a further meeting of Arts professionals who would also review the draft recommendations, before these were then refined or amended. Yvonne confirmed that the final meeting of the Arts Commission would be used to sign off its report.

Councillor Adronie Alford commented she was disappointed the report highlighted there had been several Arts Commission meetings, but it did not provide details of any of the outcomes. Councillor Adronie Alford also questioned the timescale to produce the final Arts Commission report by the end of the year (2020) and whether this was realistic.

Yvonne explained that all the reports were produced by People Make It Work (an organisation commissioned to manage all the work of the Arts Commission), so when officers and Councillor Andrew Jones attended Arts Commission meetings, they attended as observers and all the reports were produced by a Doctor and his

colleague, David Micklem, who also produced the research papers. Yvonne stated that the research papers would be published on the Council's Arts Commission website link. Yvonne confirmed that all the papers for the Arts Commission had been produced in a timely fashion and she had no concerns about the timescale for the production of the final Arts Commission report.

Action: That officers ensure the research papers to the Arts Commission sessions are published on the Council's Arts Commission website link.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg asked where the venues would be located for small events (theatre and music) for young people to attend and use in the future. Yvonne confirmed that venues had been discussed by the Commission and some new venues were in the pipeline through existing Section 106 agreements. Yvonne highlighted that there were numerous small venues in White City as well as adaptive space at the Riverside Studios where filming was currently taking place, but which could perhaps be used differently in the future. She explained that a mapping exercise (of venues) had been undertaken by the Commission and, as a number of smaller organisations were represented on the Commission, they had an expertise which could be tapped into.

Asking a supplementary question, Councillor Ann Rosenberg enquired whether these new venues would be affordable to small organisations to use. In response, Yvonne confirmed that the Arts Commission had taken a holistic approach to the resources / venues in the borough and taken the needs of different sized organisations into account. Yvonne explained that she was not able to share the draft recommendations of the Arts Commission at this stage, but she hoped the Committee would be pleasantly surprised by these when they came into the public domain.

Through the Chair, Ros Scanlon, Cultural Director Irish Cultural Centre provided an overview of the activities which had taken place at the Irish Centre since March 2020 (including concerts, films, music and story-telling) and how ICC Digital had been used to produce and air new content to over 50,000 viewers. Ros highlighted the devastating impact of Covid on performance venues and the efforts which were being made to support those which had lost their incomes. Ros explained it was important to recognise that the internet meant global audiences could be reached and it was vital that some good emerged from the pandemic.

The Chair asked Yvonne if she could comment on how the Arts Commission were considering the issues posed by Covid. In response, Yvonne confirmed that there was a national programme called Culture Reset and Hammersmith and Fulham was integrated into this programme. The Committee noted that some smaller venues had started to reopen, such as the Bridge and prominent residents such as Vanessa Redgrave had been petitioning outside the National Theatre (and as a Borough, Hammersmith and Fulham were supporting them) in their campaign to ask the private sector to bailout the arts in some shape or form. The Council were also working with the GLA to address the ramifications of Covid.

Yvonne explained that in her view, it was the financial impact which would be felt most keenly and how business models allowed venues to survive with such reduced

footfall. Yvonne confirmed that the Arts Commission was aware of these issues and were actively investigating these. The Chair welcomed this response and reiterated it was important the Arts Commission recognised a national and local cultural reset was required.

Echoing the sentiments of Ros Scanlon, Councillor Helen Rowbottom underlined it was important to know what was happening to the Arts now, given the degree of uncertainty created by Covid. Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked if a comedy festival was still going ahead and secondly, in relation to the Arts Commission report, whether once the recommendations were formed, what the different nodes would be for its dissemination, including where the report would be sent after it had been approved.

Yvonne confirmed that the Leader of the Council was steering the comedy festival, supported by his Team, which might be virtual, given the current social distancing constraints. In terms of how quickly the Arts Commission recommendations could be translated into an action plan, Yvonne explained that draft action plans based on the draft recommendations had already been prepared so the 'agreement to action' phase should be quite swift.

The Chair explained that he had received several written questions in advance and these were read out as follows:

How can residents share the insights the Commission are gaining and either contribute their own experience to the process or learn from it?

In response, Yvonne explained that the extensive research papers which accompanied each Arts Commission session could be published on the website and as previously mentioned, as large public consultation meetings are currently prohibited, then the commission would actively seek feedback from resident representatives and (arts) professionals. The Chair confirmed that if residents which wanted to feed into the Arts Commission contacted the Council, then officers would pass the resident's details to the Arts Commission.

What are the priorities the Commission is going to pursue, for example does it see itself focusing on participation or on audience experience or on gap filling or things that are working well – community or professional artists or the needs of specific sectors of the population?

Yvonne explained that one of the largest work areas had been ensuring equality and diversity ran across all themes and was effectively a golden thread through all recommendations. Yvonne confirmed that the Commission had been looking at building on the strengths of the borough, as well as the shift towards citizen led decision making around the Arts and looking at the Local Authority as an enabler.

In terms of finance, whether its conclusions focused on reshaping of existing investment or a different approach?

Yvonne confirmed there would be a recommendation which focused on finance.

How is it anticipated that that the strategy which comes out of the Commission will be implemented and managed?

As previously mentioned, Yvonne confirmed an action plan would be implemented on the recommendations which would include SMART objectives to ensure these were strategic and could be measured. Yvonne confirmed that the action plan would be the document within the borough which illustrated the Council's commitment to the strategy and provided details of how this would be delivered.

Could the Commission share a few key insights which have been gained through evidence sessions to date, and does the Commission see these insights as leading towards radical change in the council's approach to the arts or gradual change or something else.

Yvonne commented that for any change to be successful, it needed to be incremental, but she also explained that she was unable to comment on the Arts Commission recommendations at this time.

In relation to funding, Ros Scanlon, Cultural Director Irish Cultural Centre asked whether the fast track funding which had been used to great effect in Hammersmith and Fulham in the past, could be adopted, given the current situation. And whether an emergency fund could be created to support all the artists / projects in the borough.

In response, Yvonne confirmed that the Arts Commission had already looked at the Covid period and the implications of the cultural reset. However, she explained she would take a note of the points Ros had mentioned and raise these with the consultants at the next Arts Commission meeting.

Lucy Pittaway, Director Scariofunk Dance asked about the music workshops and whether anyone had been appointed to lead these and push them forwards or whether these were just a concept at this stage. Lucy explained that music, comedy and an arts gallery had been mentioned, but asked what support was available to the other arts sectors. Asking a final question, she noted she had attended the PAC meeting in 2018 when engagement with young people had been discussed, but she had heard nothing further on this and wished to know what steps the Commission were taking to publicise its work and engage with young people directly.

Yvonne explained the as part of the London Borough of Culture Impact Awards, the Borough had been working with HQI (a music organisation) and key for life (an organisation reducing knife crime) to engage with young people. In terms of dance, Yvonne confirmed there was a broad representation of all art forms. Natalie Carrington – dance, Becca Pelling-Fry – art curation and UK TV was on board. Yvonne explained she was interested in Lucy becoming more involved in the work of the Arts Commissions and so she agreed to take this forward with Richard Watts of the Arts Commission.

Melanie Nock, Project Manager Hammersmith & Fulham Arts Fest asked about the implementation process of the Arts Commissions' recommendations and how long

these would take – six months, a year / five years, and whether there was scope for the Arts Commission recommendations to evolve. Yvonne acknowledged that Melanie had been invited as a part of a professional body to review the Arts Commission draft recommendations and to provide feedback. In terms of implementation, she envisaged this would be an incremental process which might span 12 months. Yvonne acknowledged that Covid would have an impact, and some of the recommendations which had been at the forefront earlier in the year would slip down the list.

Ros Scanlon, Cultural Director Irish Cultural Centre congratulated the borough for all its community care work and assisting residents with food during the pandemic. She explained that the Irish Cultural Centre had established a culture hot line, which was a phone line for elderly residents, which provided music, stories and people's reaction to these down the phone. She hoped that the borough would be able to publicise this facility as it helped engage people with the arts and also reduced loneliness and a sense of isolation which many people had felt during the pandemic.

Helen Rowe, Interim Chair Hammersmith & Fulham Arts Fest, explained that during the festival this year, Hammersmith & Fulham Arts Fest had established a partnership with Hammersmith Bid, where street performers provided doorstep performances for people who were isolated or immobile. Helen explained this had been very successful and would continue into the autumn. She underlined the importance of H&F Arts Fest and other festivals as a means of creating employment for artists.

Lucy Pittaway, Director Scariofunk Dance highlighted that she had been offering online dance workshops and inspiring interviews to inspire the local community . She asked whether an online element could be added to the Arts Commission in view of the uncertainty created by Covid.

The Chair asked how proactive the borough had been in advertising the online arts events / offerings through the Council's website or through the weekly emails that were sent to residents, and if this had not been done, whether there was an opportunity for the Borough to help advertise future events.

Yvonne welcomed the comments that had been made and confirmed she would contact Ros outside the meeting and help promote the Irish Cultural Centre's hotline. She also confirmed that maximising the impact of local arts and culture was regularly discussed by the Arts Commission when she attended as an observer.

Helen Rowe highlighted that an online platform was being produced for the H&F Arts Fest and confirmed that she and Yvonne would need to discuss how this could be developed further with the Council outside the meeting.

Summing up the discussions, the Chair thanked everyone in attendance for their contributions and reiterated that Yvonne would be in contact with a number of the contributors to see how they could engage with the Arts Commission or to otherwise be involved in providing further information which could be fed into the Arts Commission. The Chair explained it had been a useful exercise to learn what

activities and events had been taking place and was reassured by Yvonne's comments that the Arts Commission had been undertaking a wide breadth of work.

outside the In terms of the Arts Commission's report, the Chair explained the committee hoped to see working with children and promoting young people, the issues surrounding venues / supporting music and the impact of Covid-19 and the recovery from that for our arts institutions and community arts. Further points which the Committee were keen to see incorporated into the Arts Commission's report were improving and promoting the Council's online offerings for the arts and enhancing overall access and engagement. Concluding, the Chair explained the Committee looked forward to considering the Arts Commission's report early in the new year and he asked for the supporting papers from all the Arts Commissions meetings to be published on the website .Yvonne encouraged the participants or their contacts to get in touch with her with further questions which she would be able to provide fuller answers to outside the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Committee reviewed and commented on the report.

Meeting started: 6.30 pm
Meeting ended: 8.21 pm

Chair

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Agenda Item 5

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

**Report to: THE ECONOMY, HOUSING AND THE ARTS POLICY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE**

Date: 14/10/2020

**Subject: PROGRESS REPORT ON SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Report of: Karen Galey (AD, Economy)

Responsible Director: Tony Clements (Strategic Director Economy)

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report details the measures taken by the council's business support team to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the borough's small business community during the ongoing pandemic. The report details the work currently being implemented by the service to support businesses from the initial response into the recovery phase.

2. The impact of Covid-19 on the local economy

- 2.1. To date, 24,000 residents have been furloughed and a further 10,490 are now claiming out of work benefits which is double the pre-Covid figure of 4,600. Workplace employment figures have contracted by 3% with a loss of 5000 jobs.

The baseline scenario estimates suggest that the H&F economy will contract 7% in 2020 with a strong return to growth in 2021. The downside scenario sees a larger contraction in 2020 of nearly 13% with growth subdued to just over 3% in 2021. Workspace employment estimates are a fall of 4% in 2020 with the rate reaching 6.1% in 2021.

- 2.2. Despite these headline figures, H&F inherent economic strengths make the economy more resilient than many of our neighbours. The borough ranks particularly well regarding connectivity due to good broadband speeds and has a solid level of home working supporting business continuity. The presence of high growth sectors and lower levels of manufacturing, transport and self-employment also places H&F in a stronger position to weather the crisis. This is reinforced by growth in the information and communications sectors due to the switch to digital platforms and home working.
- 2.3. However, there are areas of the H&F economy that are vulnerable to the ongoing pandemic:

- Over 90% of the borough’s business are micro businesses who are far more likely to be exposed to the effects of the crisis than larger businesses.
- The severely impacted wholesale and retail sector make up the largest employment sector accounting for 18% of total employment.
- The presence of many large office spaces which are currently empty due to home working are having a knock-on effect to the wider retail and hospitality industry.
- The arts, entertainment and recreation sector which is very well-represented in the borough has been badly damaged by the crisis.
- The economic hardship caused by the pandemic, coupled with the borough’s pockets of deprivation are of concern as evidence suggests that poorer communities are at far greater risk than wealthier ones.

2.4. Overall, the borough’s highly qualified workforce dominated by managerial and professional occupations coupled with a higher than average capacity for homeworking has meant that despite the unavoidable hit to growth, the H&F economy has remained broadly resilient to the ongoing pandemic. However, there are areas of vulnerability such as an overexposed hospitality and retail sector and large number of micro businesses and these areas will need addressing as the economy begins to bounce back.

Recommendations

1. For the Committee to note and comment on the report.

Wards Affected: All

H&F Priorities

Please state how the subject of the report relates to our priorities – delete those priorities which are not appropriate

| Our Priorities | Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Priorities |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building shared prosperity | <p>Ongoing provision of the council’s range of business support services using on-line platforms as well as the dissemination of vital information to businesses using all the council’s comms platforms.</p> <p>Weekly business engagement meetings with important stakeholders across the borough in order to shape immediate policies that directly impact on the local area.</p> <p>Implementation of the Our Space is Your Space initiative supporting hospitality businesses to increase their outdoor footprint and trading opportunities.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | 252 businesses financially supported with grants of up to £10k through the Discretionary Grant Scheme. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing things with residents, not to them | The council's Business Network has proved an important tool in consulting directly with local businesses in order to shape our plans. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being ruthlessly financially efficient | <p>Working with our external partners such as Hammersmith and Fulham BIDs we have shared the costs of safer shopping initiatives to build consumer confidence.</p> <p>The Discretionary Grant was delivered using a financial formula to ensure that sustainable businesses most in need of a grant would benefit.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking pride in H&F | <p>The "Shop Local, Shop Safe" campaign was launched with the key messages of safety and sustainability.</p> <p>Shop safe: boosting consumer confidence that businesses were open and following Covid safe guidelines and to avoid public transport and to walk or cycle to shop.</p> <p>Shop local: support your local businesses, invest in your economy.</p> |

Contact Officer(s):

Name: Karen Galey

Position: AD, Economy

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Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

3. Team structure and resources during the pandemic

- 3.1. The council's business support team is made up of 4 full time officers: Business and Enterprise Manager, Business Engagement Officer and two Economic Development Officers- one for enterprise and one for high streets and town centres. The team is responsible for delivering a service including

business and enterprise advice and support, stakeholder engagement, extended markets and other place making initiatives.

- 3.2. Like with other departments across the council, the Government enforced national lockdown earlier this year brought around a fundamental shift in the way the team operates, with much of the team's services moving online and with staff members working from home. Despite this the service has managed to stay largely resilient throughout this period with much of the team's work continuing in a virtual capacity.
- 3.3. Due to the fast-moving nature of events since March, there has been a pressing need for a rapid response when dealing with business enquires and innovative thinking to keep the local economy moving during the pandemic. Therefore, the council have taken a more business focused approach by finding cross-departmental solutions as conditions and levels of restrictions on businesses have changed. This has included setting up a Town Centre Recovery Group which brings together officers from across business facing departments within the council in order to streamline decision making and pool resources and expertise. This has led to successful outcomes such as the Our Space is Your Space initiative which outlined in further detail later in this report.

4. Addressing the crisis response phase- steps taken

- 4.1. On March 16, 2020, the Government imposed a nationwide lockdown forcing the closure of all but a select number of essential businesses such as supermarkets and pharmacies. Those businesses permitted to trade had to apply a range of strict safety measures.

The council's first response was to implement at pace an extensive communications plan to inform and provide safety guidance to businesses along with sharing national, regional and local support available to them. For those forced to close, an economic stimulus package was put in place to support businesses through the initial lockdown period. This included a three-month rent holiday for H&F commercial tenants and market traders.

- 4.2. A webpage on the LBHF website was created to act as a central landing page to help simplify messaging and content. This was supported by distribution of the borough business newsletter and business social media across a range of platforms. The council wrote to all business associations, large landlords and shared workspaces to request their support in cascading information to their members and tenants as well as asking how we might be able to support them directly.
- 4.3. The H&F Business Support Desk and helpline became an important tool for businesses advice and support. The team have responded to 2653 Covid related phone calls and emails since lock down.
- 4.4. To support food-based business operating a takeaway service or to encourage other static food businesses to increase their offer through a

delivery service an **H&F Food Guide** was produced distributed and promoted across all council digital media along with the distribution of hard copies to residents.

- 4.5. In North End Road market stewards were employed to enforce social distancing, whilst PPE and hand sanitiser were delivered to the traders. This supported essential traders in the market to stay operational during the lockdown.
- 4.6. The H&F Business Network began to meet on a weekly basis with relevant professional speakers including public health, environmental health, financial institutions, lawyers and TFL to provide important updates on new guidance and support. This information would be disseminated by the stakeholders for wider distribution to their own networks.

The Business Network is a borough wide stakeholder engagement group consisting of representatives from the borough Business Improvement Districts, business associations, shopping centres, higher education and other interested business representatives. The group is administrated by members of the Hammersmith and Fulham Business Support team and chaired by the Borough Business Champion, Cllr Guy Vincent. The group has worked collaboratively throughout the pandemic to deliver outcomes that will support and facilitate the economic recovery, business retention and town centre /high street resilience.

- 4.7. Business support services including the H&F Enterprise Club and 1-2-1 Business Advice clinics continued as planned, with meetings moved to online platforms. The Enterprise Club is a free service to residents and businesses in H&F offering training and seminars across a wide range of topics including accountancy, marketing and social media and provides the opportunity to meet and network with fellow local entrepreneurs and receive advice and guidance from experienced business owners.

The councils free 1-2-1 business advice clinics offer guidance and support on everything from starting a business to marketing strategies and more. The clinics are usually held five times a month and are only available to residents and borough-based businesses. Since lock down 169 individuals have attended on-line enterprise clubs and 125 businesses attended a 1-2-1 advice clinic.

5. Re-opening of the economy safely

- 5.1. The Business Network continues to meet on a fortnightly basis and has produced a range of initiatives aimed at supporting business through the recovery This has included:
 - **“Shop Local, Shop Safe”** promoting local safe shopping with the campaign complimenting steps already in place such as social distancing posters and pavement widening. The campaign has produced and distributed a range of

online and offline marketing collateral to promote the scheme including localised branded high street posters, window stickers, lamppost banners and digital signage. An accompanying video produced by H&F Circles celebrates how buying locally benefits the community.

- **“Our Space is Your Space”** allowing hospitality businesses to apply for a temporary 3-month licence to extend their business floorspace outside using public highways and space. This was delivered through a cross departmental project which brought together officers from highways, licensing, planning, environmental health, parks, parking and led by economic development. Weekly meetings and short application process meant straight forward inquiries were dealt with in days. To date there have been 77 applications and more complex initiatives have included the suspension of parking bays to create outdoor seating areas.
- The council made a commitment to support any business having a dispute with their landlord over rent by writing to them to encourage flexibility. Furthermore, an agreement was struck with **Woodford’s Solicitors** in Fulham to provide free informal legal advice to any business looking for support in relation to their rights as tenants.
- Similarly, an agreement was struck with **Metro Bank Hammersmith** who offered to provide free informal advice to any business looking to access one of the Government coronavirus loan schemes namely the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme.
- In partnership with Upstream, the business mentorship programme. **H&F Patch** launched to give local residents and businesses the chance to use their skills and experience to mentor local businesses struggling due to the COVID-19 crisis. The innovative business support service matches mentors with businesses which need financial, legal and digital marketing guidance. The UK’s leading digital venture builder, Blenheim Chalcot, based in Hammersmith Broadway, is one of the first local businesses to have joined the initiative, and will be offering legal guidance.
- The popular street **food market at Lyric Square** reopened on a scaled back basis in order to maintain social distancing. Currently running with a reduced number of 11 traders on Thursday’s and Friday’s it has more recently increased to operating a further day on a Wednesday on a temporary basis to allow all traders an opportunity to trade once a week.
- Steps are being taken to safeguard festive activities during the **Christmas period** in our town centre’s and high streets. A range of proposals are currently being explored including digitalising events such as carol singing by utilising technology like big screens in public spaces, allowing pop-up markets in specific high streets away from main shopping destinations and widening our charitable activities. The Shop Local Shop Safe campaign messaging will put an emphasis on doing Christmas shopping earlier than usual in order to maintain safe numbers of people using shopping destinations at any one time

and avoiding a rush as Christmas Day approaches. The branding for the campaign will also be updated to give it a festive feel.

- 4.2. The team were directly responsible for administering the Government's Discretionary Grant launched in order to provide a financial injection to those businesses that had been ineligible for the previous two grant schemes (The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant, Small Business Grant.) Due to the finite amount received from the Government and the huge oversubscription of applications the team pulled resources and expertise from other departments including the finance and fraud and designed a scoring system in order to ensure those businesses most in need received a grant. In all the council received £2.4m and issued a total of 252 grants of up to £10k to businesses.

The council is currently waiting for further information from the Government on the new Business Grants and Job Support Scheme and will seek to get grants out as quickly as possible to struggling hospitality businesses.

6. Future workings- futureproofing the borough

- 6.1. The team have started to look ahead at workstreams that will help the borough tackle to challenges/opportunities caused by the pandemic. These include:

- **Upgrading the borough's broadband infrastructure.** The likely outcome of the pandemic is that continued home working will become the new normal even when the country comes out of the current crisis. Therefore, the council has partnered with a company called G-Networks in order to identify and upgrade all weak spots across the borough. So far, the project has seen work completed in Avonmore and Brook Green ward with proposals to extend borough wide.

The council are also part of **Fibre West** in partnership with the West London Alliance, Greater London Authority and Transport for London. The project aims to transform the sub-region into a global leader in 5G technology by building state of the art connectivity infrastructure across the 7 West London boroughs.

- **Digital Training.** The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the importance of having a visible online offer, with those businesses with a strong online presence performing far more strongly than those without. With the threat of a second lockdown a very real one, the council will be providing a **course of digital marketing** training sessions to equip businesses with the relevant knowledge to integrate business recovery planning with online marketing.
- **High Streets Recovery Group** Building on the cross-departmental approach taken when forming the "Our Space is Your Space" initiative the council has formed a **High Street Recovery Group** led by Economic Development in order to continue building a joined-up strategy platform to help create safe

and sustainable high streets ready to face the inevitable changes to the way we use our town centre's due to the pandemic.

- **Reopening High Streets Safely Fund.** The council has received funding from the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**. The funds will help build upon the work already completed so far to create safer town centre's including widening pavements and footpaths and information and signage to promote safer shopping. The team are currently looking at acquiring the services of a footfall counting business to help us identify the current trends in terms of footfall traffic and demographics in our 3 main town centres along with employment of High Street Ambassadors to engage with businesses on a daily basis to ensure businesses have introduced and are following all Covid19 recommended guidelines to keep their staff and customers safe.
- **Local Supplier Support Project** to facilitate local SMEs' to access new business opportunities through major local developments, section 106 Employment and Skills obligations and key council contracts to maximise local social and economic value.
- **An Increased Business Support Offer.** This will include an employment project supporting and encouraging residents to establish their own micro enterprises or into self-employment. The project will also be geared to enhancing opportunities for disadvantaged individuals and supporting people with complex needs into secure self-employment.

List of Appendices:

All exempt information must be placed in an exempt appendix. As much information as possible must be in the open report, exempt appendices should therefore contain as little information as possible.

Appendix 1

Economic Overview of Hammersmith and Fulham

Hammersmith and Fulham is an inner London borough situated the centre-west. Bordered by six London boroughs (Brent, Ealing, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond, Wandsworth) and covering just 1,640 hectares, it is the 3rd smallest local authority in London. Despite this, the borough's population of 187,600 makes it the 6th most densely populated borough in England with this projected to rise to 198,000 by 2027, an increase of 6%. Females (51%) make up slightly more of the resident population than males (49%) meaning the borough has a young, diverse and mobile population with fewer people near the retirement age and has a corresponding lower level of younger children.

Over 40% of residents were born outside of the UK with the northern part of the borough being the most ethnically diverse and with the greatest number of young

people. In all the Hammersmith and Fulham has the 7th largest population of short-term migrants in the UK (9% of population) making it one of the most polarised local authorities in the country. 80% of residents are economically active, with a healthy average household income of £50,260pa, and high educational attainment with 63% of the population educated to degree level. However, the borough does still retain pockets of deprivation, ranking as the 112th most deprived local authority in England with 1 in 4 residents living in poverty.

In terms of economic performance, Hammersmith and Fulham has the 5th most competitive economy in the UK and ranks in the upper quartile on economic resilience. The borough has 12,755 VAT / PAYE registered businesses, employing over 129,000 people (+20% since 2011) and over 6,000 self-employed sole traders & VAT-exempt enterprises. 97% of businesses are classes as small (<50 employees) and nine out of ten businesses are classed as micro enterprises (<10 employees.) The local economy is predominantly service led with key sectors being in Professional, Scientific and Technical services (27%), Wholesale and Retail (18%,) Information and Communication (15%,) Business Administration and Support (10%) and Accommodation and Food Services (7%). A high proportion of the businesses in these sectors tend to correlate with economic strength and growth, namely knowledge-based businesses in entertainment and creatives industries, tourism and life sciences. Major employers in H&F include: L'Oreal, BBC, Metropolitan Police, Imperial Healthcare, Omni Facilities Management, Walt Disney, Advanced Childcare Services - 3 football clubs in H&F employ more than 2,000 people. The borough also ranks 20th nationally for business density.

Notwithstanding the borough's inherent strengths, Hammersmith and Fulham does still have some areas of economic fragility. Business survival rates are low in comparison to London and England averages, with a low level of adaptive businesses i.e. businesses that can react to negative market changes. Indeed, the borough has a relatively low proportion of businesses in sectors considered to be resilient to economic shocks. H&F also has one of the lowest proportions of employees who work in the low carbon sector, identified as one of the fastest growing industrial sectors and levels of self-employment for women are almost half that of men and almost half the rate, they were 5 years ago.

Hammersmith and Fulham also make up part of the West London Alliance public sector partnership alongside the West London local authorities of Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow. The partnership delivers initiatives in the sub-region, working across borough boundaries and focussing on the priority areas of: economy and skills, employment support, mobility and transport, housing, health and care, and digital.

Industrial Strategy – background (four themes)

The Council's Industrial Strategy was launched in July 2017 with the aim of making the Borough "the best place in Europe to do business" and ensuring that all residents and businesses benefit from economic growth within the Borough.

The Industrial Strategy is underpinned by four key themes:

West Tech, which aims to establish an innovation district around White City, focusing on an Innovation and Growth Partnership between the Council and Imperial College

Encouraging Enterprise, which aims to deliver more affordable workspace, drive superfast broadband and take an 'economic and social value' approach to procurement to create new opportunities for local firms and jobs and training for residents

A Great Place in London, which is aimed at improving town centres, promoting and developing the Borough's Arts, Culture and Leisure scene; taking steps to improve the reputation of Hammersmith & Fulham internationally; and building 10,000 new homes

People – Economic Growth for All, which aims to ensure that all residents share in the Borough's economic prosperity by leveraging relationships with anchor institutions, improving local supply chains and developing tailored apprenticeship and employment and training and business start-up support packages.

H&F Shop Local Shop Safe Video <https://www.hfcircles.co.uk/post/shop-local-to-help-out>



Shop Local Shop Safe logo



Agenda Item 6

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Report to: THE ECONOMY HOUSING AND THE ARTS POLICY & ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

Date: 10/11/2020

Subject: DEFEND COUNCIL HOMES POLICY CONSULTATION UPDATE

Report of: Daniel Miller, Resident Involvement & Service Improvement Manager

Responsible Director: Fiona Darby, Assistant Director Place (Economy)

Summary

This report provides an update on the Defend Council Homes Policy and the boroughwide consultation with all council housing tenants and leaseholders. The report highlights the key areas and proposed next steps to implement the Policy. This report is intended for information for the committee. A Cabinet report will be presented on 4 January 2021 with a recommendation that the Defend Council Homes Policy is signed off and implemented. We would welcome any feedback from the committee in advance of this.

Recommendations

For the Committee to note and comment on the report

Wards Affected: All

H&F Values

Please state how the subject of the report relates to our values – delete those values which are not appropriate

| Our Values | Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Priorities |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating a compassionate council | Policy will ensure that residents who live in council housing will be informed and listened to and will provide extra protection if a redevelopment proposal would significantly affect their homes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doing things with local residents, not to them | Policy promotes a strong resident voice in decision-making and representation through the formation of local Steering Groups for the proposed area of redevelopment. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being ruthlessly financially | Policy will ensure the council's approach to any future redevelopment proposals on |

| | |
|---|---|
| efficient | council housing land have resident involvement and buy-in, reducing the risk of protracted and expensive decision making |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking pride in H&F | Policy promotes strong communities and that the council follows Good Practice at all times in terms of redevelopment proposals. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency | Policy will promote sustainable and responsible future redevelopment proposals. |

Contact Officer(s):

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Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

Draft Defend Council Homes Policy – final version being prepared for Cabinet, so may be subject to further amendments.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1. In 2017 the Leader of the Council commissioned the Defend Council Homes Unit (DCHU) to find a way of safeguarding the Council’s housing stock against unwarranted and unwanted redevelopment now and in the future.
- 1.2. The DCHU is made up of a resident Chair, Shirley Cupit, and independent advisors, Peter Bevington and Anthony Mason. They were supported by independent legal advice to explore the legal possibilities for safeguarding Council homes. The Leader of the Council appointed the members of DCHU on the basis of their expertise in housing, policy, legal and financial matters and their previous experience as members of the Residents’ Commission on Council Housing, established by the Council in 2015.
- 1.3. The DCHU made its initial report to the Council’s Cabinet in February 2018, recommending the development of a Defend Council Homes Policy. With the Cabinet’s approval, DCHU and council officers have worked collaboratively as part of a project group since then to develop the Policy. The Policy has been produced in consultation with the Housing Representatives Forum, which is the central body for resident involvement in council housing. It comprises elected representatives from tenants and residents associations (TRAs), sheltered housing schemes and small blocks.

- 1.4. The draft Policy was the subject of a section 105 consultation (i.e. on matters of housing management) with council tenants throughout September 2020. The consultation was widened to seek the views of all residents of council housing in the Borough. Following the consultation, which demonstrated significant levels of support from residents, it is now for the Council to adopt the Policy formally and take the necessary steps for its implementation.

2. Policy Aims and Scope

- 2.1. The Policy represents a major landmark in delivering a 2014 manifesto commitment of the present administration, namely, to “protect council homes now and in the future”. The Policy has three main aims:

- To make sure residents are fully involved from the outset in any redevelopment proposals that are likely to affect their homes.
- To commit the Council to meet the most up-to-date standards of Good Practice when consulting residents about any redevelopment proposals and when carrying out any redevelopment that affects residents.
- To give residents effective protection against the Council failing to meet its commitments and obligations under the Policy.

- 2.2. The Council’s obligations under the Policy will be to:

- Fully involve residents in any Redevelopment Proposal in accordance with the most up-to-date standards of Good Practice at the time.
- Ensure that a Residents’ Steering Group is set up for each Redevelopment Proposal.
- Provide each resident affected with full information at every stage if a Redevelopment Proposal goes ahead, explaining what they can expect from the Council.
- Provide residents with effective means of appeal and redress if the Council should fail to meet any of its commitments and obligations under the Policy.

- 2.3. The Policy will effectively create a lawful ‘legitimate expectation’ for residents that the Council will comply with the Policy. Residents will be able to rely on this and take action in the courts if the Council fails to comply with the Policy.

- 2.4. As a key safeguard, the Policy requires the Council to register a Restriction on Title on all titles within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) where the Council owns the freehold. The wording of the restriction on title will be: “No disposition of the registered estate by the proprietor of the registered estate is to be registered without a certificate signed by the Hammersmith and Fulham Council [or their conveyancer] that the provisions of the Defend Council Homes Policy (in the terms in effect as at the date of certificate) have been complied with or that they do not apply to the disposition.”

- 2.5.. The effect of this restriction will be to require the Council to certify that it has complied fully with the Policy before any of its registered titles can be disposed of as part of any redevelopment.
- 2.6. As a further safeguard, the Policy provides for residents to make a Compliance Referral to the Council if they believe that the Council has failed or is failing to comply with the Policy. If dissatisfied with the Council's initial response to their Compliance Referral residents may then refer the matter to the Council's Monitoring Officer.
- 2.7. To ensure the Council always continues to work transparently with residents, the Policy requires the Monitoring Officer to make an annual report to the Housing Representatives' Forum, or any successor body set up to represent the interests of residents of council housing, on the activities carried out by the Monitoring Officer during the year under the provisions of the Policy.
- 2.8. Once the Policy has been adopted, its provisions, including the obligations on the Council and the legal safeguards for residents, will continue into the future and may only be altered or withdrawn after full consultation with residents

3. Consultation Approach

- 3.1. Since the outbreak of coronavirus, Hammersmith & Fulham has seen an amazing response from residents to support their communities and become volunteers. Mutual Aid Groups (MAGs) formed in the majority of the borough's sixteen wards.
- 3.2. H&F has worked in partnership with the MAGs, tenants and residents associations, and other third sector organisations to deliver help and support to those who need it most. It has been driven from grass roots ideas and involvement and is a powerful example of community empowerment.
- 3.3. What it means to be part of a community has taken on a very practical new purpose. Despite the separation of social distancing and the stay at home advice, many people now feel closer together and better connected.
- 3.4. **Connecting and protecting communities**
The Defend Council Homes Policy consultation connected with this message of what it means to be part of a community and the importance of nurturing and safeguarding this.
- 3.5. The Defend Council Homes Policy is about protecting communities by giving residents a voice and a key role to work with us to deliver change as and when there is an identified need for this in a particular area.
- 3.6. The consultation reflected the council's aim of working with residents and key stakeholders to co-produce new approaches and to keep listening and responding to feedback.

3.7. Consultation channels

Consultation activities included:

- A consultation pack was sent to all 17,500 council housing households with freepost return envelope for hard copies of the survey.
- A consultation page was launched on Commonplace, with links from the Council's website. This page contained all of the key documents, such as the policy, one-page summary, frequently asked questions, Residents Voice meeting videos, and consultation survey.
- Dedicated telephone helpline and facility to provide consultation feedback by phone
- Promotion through the Get Involved mailing list and TRA and service improvement group mailing lists.
- Promotion through housing notice boards and on Nextdoor
- Four online information sessions
- Online attendance at Housing Representatives Forum meetings

3.8. The Defend Council Homes Policy consultation was open for feedback between 1 September 2020 – 2 October 2020. A consultation pack was sent to every council housing household in Hammersmith & Fulham.

3.9. The Housing Representatives Forum, central body for resident involvement, endorsed the consultation process that was used to consult residents about the Defend Council Homes Policy

3.10. The Housing Representatives Forum requested that the council involved third sector organisations who support our residents. In response to this request, we contacted over one hundred third sector organisations that are active in the borough to ask them to promote the Policy consultation and support residents they work with to complete any feedback.

4. Consultation analysis and outcomes

4.1. Consultation responses

1003 individual responses were received either directly online to the Commonplace consultation platform, or by postal return which was then inputted onto Commonplace.

4.2. Three of total responses have not been included as part of our analysis because the respondent has declared they are not a council tenant, leaseholder, freeholder, or private tenant of a council leaseholder.

4.3. An analysis of the 1000 responses showed:

- Over 75% of the consultation responses were by postal return.
- 78% of respondents like living in their council home.

4.4. We asked residents four key questions around the Policy – these were decision-making, accountability, confidence in terms of implementation, and overall support for the Policy. The responses showed:

- 99% of respondents stated that it's important that the council involve them in decisions that affect their home
 - 91% of respondents were satisfied that with the Defend Council Homes Policy in place, the council would be held accountable to always involve residents in decisions that could affect their home.
 - 87% of respondents felt confident that the Defend Council Homes Policy will protect residents' homes and ensure the council meets very high standards in any redevelopment proposal.
 - 92% of respondents supported the introduction of the Defend Council Homes Policy
- 4.5. Survey respondents were also invited to provide written comments on the Policy. An analysis of these 160 comments shows:
- 121 positive sentiment responses (76%)
 - 9 questions about the Policy and its implementation (5%)
 - 8 negative sentiment responses (5%)
 - 22 comments that cannot be classified in relation to the Policy (14%)
- 4.6. **Online information sessions**
 Questions raised and responded to at the four online information sessions during the consultation period included:
- How the Policy would be implemented and followed by officers
 - The impact of a redevelopment proposal on market values and any potential effect on leaseholders. It was explained that, subject to the Council's adoption of the policy, a redevelopment proposal were to affect a leaseholder's home, the Council would be obliged by the policy to meet the standard set out in whatever Good Practice was in force at the time. Currently Good Practice is as set out in the Mayor's Guide above, and we would expect this or a similar standard to apply in the future.
 - The definition of good practice in relation to the Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration published in February 2018
- 4.7. At the first online meeting of the Housing Representatives Forum on 7 July 2020, resident representatives requested that an easy read version is produced, subject to the Policy being agreed by Cabinet.
- 4.8. At the online meeting on 15 September 2020 during the consultation period, The Housing Representatives Forum strongly endorsed the Defend Council Homes Policy and recommended its introduction by H&F Council.
- 4.9. The following endorsements were received from the Chair of the Housing Representatives Forum and Tenants & Residents Associations:
- *Dear Fellow Residents, it is with real pride that I express my wholehearted support for the **Defend Council Homes Policy** as presented and distributed on 4th August 2020. Significantly this policy was the culmination of years of consultation and discussion throughout the many Resident Working Groups within the Borough's commitment to involve residents in any future policies that would affect the Leaseholders and tenants in the Borough.*

As Chair of the Housing Representative's Forum, I can confirm that the DCH Policy is unique in that it protects us all for the future whereby no administration can impose a policy of purchase, change in our estates without our agreement and approval, and this is enshrined with legal protection for us all.

I recommend this DCH Policy to all residents and ask for your support in making this a legally binding obligation on the Council, to consult with us as residents.

Adriaan van Zyl

Chair Housing Representative's Forum

- *To the London Borough of Hammersmith, We, on behalf of Wormholt Residents Association, support the Defend Council Homes Policy's adoption by Council as soon as possible. We are of the opinion that the Policy will provide residents with additional safeguards in the event of redevelopment proposals that affect their homes. It will also ensure that some level of essential, affordable housing is preserved for future generations in the borough.
Wormholt Tenants & Residents Association*
- *We, on behalf of Queen Caroline TRA, support the DCH Policy's adoption by Council as soon as possible. We are of the opinion that the Policy will provide residents with additional safeguards in the event of redevelopment proposals that affect our homes. As Resident and Vice chair of Queen Caroline Estate TRA, we have lived through the uncertainty and worry when our estate was offered to developers and I know that our Residents will whole heartedly welcome this policy if it provides some assurance that our homes and community will not be taken away and any needed redevelopment will be undertaken only after proper and thorough consultation.*

4.10. The following changes are proposed to be made to the draft Defend Council Homes Policy as a result of the consultation:

- The definition of the term "redevelopment" will be clarified in more detail in the Policy to reduce the risk of any future ambiguities. This was a concern of a number of consultation respondents.
- An amendment will be made to the Policy to require that a copy of the Policy and a plain English summary of the Policy be included with the First Notice to ensure that residents living in an area of proposed redevelopment are made fully aware of the Policy and how it is intended to operate at all times.
- A paragraph will be added to clarify the role of Residents' Steering Groups and the requirement for such groups to be properly trained and resourced to carry out their role.

5.11. Some concern was expressed in the consultation feedback about how the Policy would be implemented in practice. These concerns will be addressed in a Defend Council Homes Implementation Guide.

5.12. Demographics

The demographic make-up of respondents showed:

- Over 75% of respondents were tenants
- 12.5% of respondents were leaseholders
- The remaining respondents were either private tenants of a leaseholder or their status wasn't defined.
- 45% of respondents live on an estate
- 48% in a street property
- 16% in a small block
- 13% in a sheltered housing scheme
- Over 55% of respondents have lived in their home for 16 years or more
- The largest respondent group has lived in their home for 5-15 years.
- 70% of respondents were aged 55 or more
- A further 16% of respondents were aged between 45 – 54, the next largest category of respondents.
- Almost 55% of respondents were female and 37% were male. The remaining respondents either preferred not to say, or did not answer this question.
- Over 75% of respondents do not have children under the age of 18 in their household.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. We're finalising the Defend Council Homes Policy wording, taking into account the consultation feedback. Appendix 1 reflects the version used during the consultation.
- 6.2. We're in the process of drafting the Cabinet report for the meeting on 4 January 2021. Feedback from the Policy & Accountability Committee will be very helpful to support the final documents that are presented.
- 6.3. We're obtaining accurate costs in order to register the restriction on all of the freehold HRA titles with the Land Registry.
- 6.4. We'll be meeting with the Housing Representatives Forum on 17 November to discuss the consultation findings in more detail.
- 6.5. We're starting to consider the necessary steps to implement the Policy, subject to Cabinet approval.

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1



LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

The Defend Council Homes Policy

(draft dated 7 August 2020)

Introduction

This policy has been devised for the purpose of binding the Council to the following principle of good administration: namely, that residents of council housing in the Borough can expect the Council to honour its commitments and obligations to them under this policy, acting in accordance with Good Practice in any circumstances where their homes are significantly affected by redevelopment.

The Council will give residents further assurance that this policy will be upheld by registering a Restriction on Title on its Housing Land, preventing any disposals of Housing Land except where the Council certifies to the Land Registry that it has complied with this policy or that this policy does not apply to the disposal.

Aims of the Policy

The primary aim of this policy is to provide residents of council housing in Hammersmith & Fulham with extra protection if a Redevelopment Proposal would significantly affect their homes.

The extra protection consists of a set of written commitments by and obligations on the Council to follow certain procedures in the event of any Redevelopment Proposal that would significantly affect any council housing in the Borough. Any disposal of Housing Land required as part of a Redevelopment Programme shall be subject to formal certification by the Council that it has complied with this policy or that it does not apply to the disposal.

For the purposes of this policy, a resident's home would be significantly affected by a Redevelopment Proposal if the proposal would result in the resident's home being demolished or rebuilt or in the loss of amenities on Housing Land such as green space or other community facilities that directly benefit the resident's home.

Definition of Terms

Compliance Certificate: A certificate approved by the Monitoring Officer provided to the Land Registry to confirm that the Council has complied with the provisions of this policy

Compliance Referral: a formal representation made by a resident to the Council to the effect that this policy is not being or has not been complied with or that this policy should be brought into operation with respect to a Redevelopment Proposal significantly affecting their home. A Compliance Referral may also be made to the Monitoring Officer should the referrer not be satisfied with the Council's initial response

Exempt Disposals and Transactions: the disposals and transactions that this policy does not apply to, as described in Appendix 2

First Notice: a written communication by the Council giving residents relevant information about a Redevelopment Proposal

Good Practice: practice in matters of estate redevelopment or regeneration that conforms to the highest possible standards from time to time followed by or required of local authorities, for example, such as is set out in the Mayor's Good Practice Guide To Estate Regeneration published in February 2018 and in force at the time of the introduction of this policy

Housing Land: all land, houses and other buildings held and accounted for within the Council's Housing Revenue Account

Monitoring Officer: council officer appointed under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, responsible for ensuring lawfulness and fairness of decision-making in the Council

Redevelopment Proposal: an outline plan to redevelop housing land in which there is a realistic prospect of any resident's home being significantly affected

Option Appraisal: the formal evaluation of different options for delivering a redevelopment proposal or alternative plans for the housing in a given area

Redevelopment Scheme: an agreed plan (e.g. the preferred option emerging from an Option Appraisal) to redevelop housing land

Redevelopment Programme: the implementation plan and timetable for delivering a Redevelopment Scheme

Residents' Steering Group: a group of local residents who agree to work with the Council to shape the Redevelopment Proposal, participate in decision making on all aspects of the Redevelopment Proposal and provide support to residents with respect to the operation of this policy, having regard to Good Practice and residents' best interests

Restriction on Title: an entry in the land register that prevents a change in ownership being registered unless certain stipulated conditions have been met

Second Notice: a written communication by the Council containing a clear and unequivocal statement of commitments and obligations to residents in relation to a Redevelopment Programme that will significantly affect their homes

Scope of the Policy

This policy is intended to cover the full range of circumstances in which a Redevelopment Proposal may arise including, but not being limited to:

- *Strategic asset management considerations* – for example where factors such as low demand, poor condition, outdated housing type etc indicate that a block, estate or individual property may be reaching the end of its useful life and may need to be replaced
- *Strategic opportunities to provide more/better affordable housing* – for example where, perhaps in addition to asset management considerations, there is scope to redesign an estate or area to increase housing density and/or the overall supply of affordable housing
- *Health and safety considerations* – for example where structural or design problems indicate a health and safety risk to residents if they remain in situ
- *Infrastructure projects* – for example where a road or rail scheme requires a land acquisition affecting council homes
- *Commercially-driven development initiatives* – for example where a regeneration initiative affecting council homes is brought forward as a planning proposal by a private developer, a consortium of interests or even by the Council itself

This policy shall apply to all residents of Housing Land allowing for the fact that different types and levels of protection may apply in different tenures. For the purposes of this policy a resident is any council tenant or leaseholder of council housing included in the Housing Revenue Account and any tenant of a council leaseholder.

This policy shall not compromise or prejudice other protections available to residents such as those provided by their tenancy agreement or lease and those provided by law.

Policy Responsibility

The Cabinet Member for Housing shall hold political responsibility for this policy and its implementation. The Lead Director for the Economy Department shall hold executive responsibility for this policy and its implementation. The Council's senior officer responsible for housing shall hold operational responsibility for this policy and its implementation.

Key Principles

This policy is based on a number of Key Principles that have been endorsed by the Council, as follows:

- That residents are entitled to expect the Council to comply with this policy with respect to any Redevelopment Proposal and throughout any of the subsequent stages in which this policy is in operation
- That disposals of the Council's Housing Land in respect of any Redevelopment Proposal will not be permitted unless and until the Council has certified to the Land Registry that it has complied with this policy or that it is an Exempt Disposal and Transaction
- That residents are entitled to full relevant information about any Redevelopment Proposal that could significantly affect their homes and throughout any of the subsequent stages in which this policy is in operation
- That residents are entitled to participate fully and in a timely manner in all decisions having a bearing on their interests that arise from a Redevelopment Proposal that could significantly affect their homes and throughout any of the subsequent stages in which this policy is in operation
- That residents are entitled to fair and equitable treatment throughout the stages in which this policy is in operation
- That the Council will follow Good Practice in all its dealings with residents throughout the stages in which this policy is in operation
- That any significant variations to this policy (including its full revocation) can only be made following full consultation with residents

Operation of the Policy

Restriction on Title

The Council shall, on adopting this policy, apply to the Land Registry to register a Restriction on Title on Housing Land where the Council is freeholder, using the wording of the non-standard form of restriction attached as Appendix 1. The effect of this will be to prevent any disposal of Housing Land except where the Council provides a Compliance Certificate to the Land Registry or certifies that it is an Exempt Disposal and Transaction.

A list of Exempt Disposals and Transactions is attached as Appendix 2.

Redevelopment Proposals

This policy shall not pre-empt or prevent initial discussions between the Council and residents about the possibility, for whatever reason, of redevelopment that may affect their homes. The policy shall only apply and come into operation when there is a Redevelopment Proposal.

For a Redevelopment Proposal to be deemed to fall within the scope of this policy the Lead Director for the Economy Department (or equivalent officer of the Council) will need to have reasonable cause to be satisfied that:

- there is a realistic prospect that the redevelopment could significantly affect residents' homes and
- there is a realistic prospect of the proposal becoming a Redevelopment Scheme within the following twelve months

Any resident who has reason to believe that a Redevelopment Proposal that could significantly affect their home exists and that this policy should be brought into operation may submit a Compliance Referral to the Council.

Within 30 days of a decision of the Lead Director for the Economy Department (or equivalent officer of the Council) that this policy applies, a First Notice shall be issued to every resident whose home could be significantly affected by the Redevelopment Proposal.

First Notice

The First Notice shall provide relevant information such as:

- Nature, scope and status of the Redevelopment Proposal
- A statement of current Good Practice guidance in relation to taking the Redevelopment Proposal forward and the identity of the source and authority for the Good Practice guidance
- Timetable and arrangements for determining the result of the Redevelopment Proposal, including any formal Option Appraisal process
- Arrangements for residents to be involved in determining the result of the proposal including arrangements for informal and formal consultation
- Arrangements for establishing a Residents' Steering Group and the role of the Residents' Steering Group
- The procedure for residents to make a Compliance Referral including the role of the Monitoring Officer
- Appointment of independent advisers (as applicable)

Redevelopment Schemes

If, following a formal Option Appraisal and/or consultation, a Redevelopment Scheme emerges as the preferred option, the Council shall carry out further discussions and consultation with residents as necessary to determine levels of support for the scheme.

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to determine levels of support for a scheme by holding an estate ballot. A note on estate ballots is attached as Appendix 3.

If the Council decides to proceed with a Redevelopment Scheme, a number of further stages will be involved. These will include such of the following as necessary to comply with this policy and the particular requirements of the Redevelopment Scheme:

- Development partner procurement
- Masterplanning
- Obtaining outline planning permission
- Developing a funding plan
- Drawing up an implementation plan for the scheme

Arrangements for residents to be involved in each of these stages shall be made in accordance with the Key Principles and agreed with the Residents' Steering Group and shall be set out in a communications and engagement plan for the Redevelopment Scheme in question. A copy of the communications and engagement plan shall be given to every resident whose home would be significantly affected by the scheme.

At the point where each of the above stages, such as may be required, have been completed and an agreed implementation plan is in place, the Redevelopment Scheme shall be deemed to have become a Redevelopment Programme.

Redevelopment Programmes

At least 30 days prior to the start of any Redevelopment Programme, the Council shall prepare and issue a Second Notice.

Second Notice

The Second Notice shall be issued to every resident whose home will be significantly affected by the Redevelopment Programme.

The Second Notice shall include a clear and unequivocal statement of commitments and obligations to residents in accordance with the Key Principles in relation to relevant matters such as:

- Timing and phasing of the Redevelopment Programme
- Programme management and resident involvement arrangements, including the role of the Residents' Steering Group
- The procedure for residents to make a Compliance Referral including the role of the Monitoring Officer
- Appointment of independent advisers
- Communications, engagement and consultation
- Rights and entitlements of tenants and leaseholders
- Temporary and permanent rehousing
- Rehousing, compensation and disturbance packages
- Decanting arrangements
- Health and safety, site conditions and security
- On-site communications and complaints
- Community support, community facilities and community legacy
- Programme monitoring, review and evaluation

The Second Notice shall also include a statement of current Good Practice guidance in relation to the above matters and the identity of the source and authority for the Good Practice guidance.

Implementation

If a Redevelopment Programme proceeds to implementation, the Council shall nominate a Programme Manager with overall responsibility for the Redevelopment Programme and the delivery of each of the Council's commitments and obligations under this policy.

Compliance Referrals

Any resident who has reason to believe at any stage that the Council may have failed or may be failing to comply with this policy shall be entitled to refer the matter

in the first instance to the Council and, if not satisfied with the Council's response, to the Monitoring Officer.

Annual Report

The Monitoring Officer shall make an annual report to the Housing Representatives' Forum, or any successor body set up to represent the interests of residents of council housing, on the activities carried out by the Monitoring Officer during the year under the provisions of this policy.

Consultation

This policy has been approved following full consultation with residents and in accordance with the requirements of s105 of the Housing Act 1985.

Variations to this Policy

Any significant variations and/or amendments to this policy may only be made following full consultation with residents on the nature and implications of the proposed variations and/or amendments.

Revocation of this Policy

This policy may only be revoked following full consultation with residents on its proposed revocation.

Appendix 1 (of Policy)

Wording of the Restriction on Council Freehold Title

“No disposition of the registered estate by the proprietor of the registered estate is to be registered without a certificate signed by the Hammersmith and Fulham Council [or their conveyancer] that the provisions of the Defend Council Homes Policy (in the terms in effect as at the date of certificate) have been complied with or that they do not apply to the disposition.”

Appendix 2 (of Policy)

Exempt Disposals and Transactions

- (a) exercise of Right to Buy
- (b) commercial leases, other than those relating to the development of housing land
- (c) statutory undertakings – utilities, highways authority etc and electricity sub-station leases
- (d) grant of a tenancy (e.g. in the context of shared ownership) by the Council
- (e) compulsory purchase orders
- (f) 'compliance' disposals (e.g. disposals to comply with legislation such as that which would have required councils to sell their higher value voids)
- (g) any other disposals or transactions required by statute
- (h) disposals for the "community benefit" (public land, sports facilities etc.)
- (i) lease extensions (voluntary and statutory)
- (j) collective enfranchisements (voluntary and statutory)
- (k) academy leases (leases granted to schools that have been converted to academies)
- (l) grant of a lease to a community building or amenity space
- (m) grants of deeds of easements and rights of way
- (n) 'de minimis' disposals and transactions with a monetary value below £10,000 assessed on an open market basis
- (o) deeds of variation and deeds of rectification relating to any of the above

Appendix 3 (of Policy)

Estate Ballots

Where it is reasonably necessary to do so, the Council shall ask residents to vote on a Redevelopment Scheme in a ballot.

In deciding whether or not a ballot is reasonably necessary the Council shall consult with the Residents' Steering Group.

In all cases where a ballot is held the Council shall follow the guidance on resident ballots set out in section eight of the Greater London Authority Capital Funding Guide (or any subsequent guidance).

Appendix 4 (of Policy)

Related Policies

Council-wide

- Planning policies
- Local development framework/local development scheme

The Economy Department

- Borough housing strategy
- Building homes and communities strategy
- Homelessness strategy
- Asset management strategy
- Procurement policy (e.g. procurement of development partners)
- Introductory tenancies
- Allocation scheme
- Other housing management policies
- Tenancy and lease agreements
- Resident involvement policy/strategy
- Policies on redevelopment/regeneration
- Policies on the rights and entitlements of tenants and leaseholders

Nation-wide & London specific

- The London Plan
- London Housing Strategy
- The Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration
- Greater London Authority (GLA) capital funding guide