

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

Tuesday 6 April 2021

PRESENT

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

Other Councillors: Councillors Lisa Homan, Andrew Jones and Sue Fennimore

Officers: Yvonne Thomson - (Interim Strategic Manager, Economic Development), Thomas Dodd – (Arts Development Officer), Karen Gale – (Assistant Director for the Economy), Kamal Montalib - (Head of Economic Development), Glendine Shepherd – (Assistant Director, Housing Management) and Charles Francis (Committee Services)

Representatives from the Arts Commission, H&F Arts Fest and BEAM.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Ann Rosenberg

2. ROLL-CALL AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 10 November 2020 and 25 January 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair confirmed that no public questions had been received.

5. ARTS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Yvonne Thomson – (Interim Strategic Manager, Economic Development) provided an overview of the report, which sets out the eight recommendations made by the Arts Commission in its final report, for consideration by the Council for adoption.

The Chair thanked Yvonne Thomson for the overview and invited Councillor Andrew Jones, Cabinet Member for the Economy to address the committee. Councillor Andrew Jones expressed his thanks to Jonathan Church, the Commissioners and all the participants in the Arts Commission review which had taken over two years. He acknowledged the degree of adaption which had been required to overcome the challenges posed by Covid in producing such a comprehensive document.

Turning to the report itself, Councillor Andrew Jones highlighted that it outlined a set of early successes and the process the Commission had followed. He explained that there was a significant amount of work to do to build on the recommendations set out in the report. However, the report was a tremendous achievement which put the Authority in a strong position to develop the Arts in the future.

Chair introduced the Commissioners and invited Jonathan Church, Chair of the Arts Commission, to speak. Mr Church thanked Richard Watts, Consultant and his organisation for providing the research and documentary backbone for the Commission. He explained the reason everyone participated in the Commission was the belief they had in the Authority to take what was already excellent in the borough and develop it further.

Jonathan Church provided details of the report and explained that recommendations 1 and 7 were significant. Recommendation 1, which focused on the new knowledge base and making the new strategy and recommendation 7 which centred on building capacity and developing the economic growth of the Arts sector, alongside the Cultural Strategy. Richard Watts, Consultant, highlighted the importance of the new Cultural Strategy, its ability to address the challenges posed by Covid, the inequities (of opportunity) across the borough and the need for additional investment to amplify and leverage all the (arts) activities in Hammersmith and Fulham. He highlighted that it was important that a representative group of people had contributed to the Arts Commission's report but underlined the importance of Recommendation 1 and developing a Cultural Strategy to further enhance (cultural) representation across the borough.

Victoria Brignell, Arts Commissioner, commented the Commissioners had been drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds. Numerous in-depth evidence-gathering sessions were held, and these informed a number of

underlying principles. She explained that the challenge was not only how the Borough nurtured excellence in the arts, but also how to ensure it was as inclusive as possible. She felt that the Arts worked best when the Authority was seen as an enabler rather than as a producer. Highlighting Recommendation 5, it was noted this focused on joining up arts events across the borough.

The Chair invited Melanie Nock, H&F Arts Fest, to explain how arts organisations had been involved and contributed to the Arts Commission's work. Melanie Nock commented that the work had been invaluable in starting conversations about the Arts and underlined that H&F Arts Fest hoped to be heavily involved in the implementation of the recommendations. She commented that a considerable amount of culture occurred in the borough but lots of it was hidden and not seen (and so not supported).

Melanie listed the types of activities which had occurred during the pandemic and highlighted the life changing impacts these activities had for residents. She underlined the importance of children and young people and how arts competitions had energised those schools which had participated. She hoped that H&F Arts Fest could continue to work in partnership with the Authority to enhance and publicise the arts in the borough as widely as possible.

The Chair invited Councillor Andrew Jones to comment on what the next steps were in the overall process. Councillor Andrew Jones acknowledged the impact of the pandemic, the level of challenge in relation to resources and the need to integrate the arts into the Authorities overall recovery programme, linked to the industrial strategy. He reiterated it was important the Authority acted as an enabler, joined activities together and championed the arts. He confirmed the Authority needed to absorb and think about how the Arts Commission recommendations could be taken forward and ensure a continuing dialogue was maintained with arts organisations in the future.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom noted the section in the Arts Commission's report entitled art and extraordinary times and asked if arts organisations required assistance to pitch for funds / business plans to assist with their financial sustainability. And secondly, she asked whether arts / artists felt aligned with objectives of the industrial strategy or whether additional work was required in this area to make arts more explicit within the strategy. In relation to the linkages with the industrial strategy, Jonathan Church confirmed that one of the Recommendations sought to integrate, small local organisations to the strategy and in relation to the first aspect, Richard Watts explained needs included: space, connection with communities, skills sharing and highlighted the role the borough could play in commissioning. He suggested one of the best ways to gauge the effectiveness of assistance provided to arts organisations was through impact assessments. Adding her thoughts, Melanie Nock commented that micro-organisations did not affiliate themselves with the industrial strategy and assistance needed to have an arts tag.

Responding to some of the points made by Richard Watts, Councillor Andrew Jones agreed space was important. The changing face of highstreets and

retail space meant there was an opportunity to look again at how to use this, as well as the boroughs' outside space.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg raised concerns about performance space and the need for venues across the borough as this was not explicit in the Arts Commission's report. In response, Jonathan Church explained the Commission had discussed the changing usage of the Bush and Lyric Theatres and how the fringe had tended to disappear. He explained that enabling space that was affordable was a challenge, but performance and space were interlinked factors which had been explored in some detail by the Commission.

Councillor Adronie Alford noted the report stated it was envisaged there would be a Director and several members of staff and she asked how likely this was and when this might happen. And, given the current economic climate, where the Council foresaw receiving the funding from to enact these ideas. And secondly, in relation to the creatives – the painters, potters and jewellers, Councillor Adronie Alford commented that the report had not addressed how these groups would be assisted and helped. In response, Councillor Andrew Jones explained that in relation to funding streams, the Authority had been looking at best practice across the country and was in conversation with larger venues such as Olympia about how further funding opportunities for the Authority might be generated. While there were financial challenges, Councillor Andrew Jones explained there was scope to look at how the Authority was organised, to ensure the best use of resources, as well as its current communications strategy to improve its outreach.

In relation to creatives, Richard Watts explained the Arts Commission had taken a very broad view of what culture was and these groups needed to be considered against the backdrop of the Cultural Strategy. The Committee noted that the Arts Commission had never attempted to reflect every art form or backdrop within its report. Music, theatre and dance was better reflected in the borough, as historically, they had seen more investment than the visual arts in the past. However, projects such as Slung Low, in which a lamp post gallery was created for residents, was cited as an example of an innovative and creative way of expanding the visual arts.

Councillor Andrew Jones agreed there was an opportunity surrounding the visual arts to look at reimagined retail space, including the use of the high street, post-pandemic.

The Chair thanked all the contributors whom had fed into the Arts Commission's report and for the road map which had been produced to develop the arts in the borough in the future. The Chair drew a parallel with the types of work which had been conducted on the Industrial Strategy, in the way in which businesses had been brought together and saw this approach could be used to further the arts offering.

Councillor Rory Vaughan noted one of the recommendations focused on the creation of an African Cultural Centre and asked how this idea came about and how it would be developed. In addition, he asked about the role of

children and young people and how they would be integrated within the report recommendations. In response, Jonathan Church commented that the concept of an African Centre stemmed from a desire to bring diversity to the centre of the recommendations and appreciated that the borough needed to have further conversations about its adoption (or not). In relation to children and young people, Jonathan Church explained that organisations across the borough already appreciated that young people were the future of arts and were already doing lots of good work at grass roots level. Richard Watts added that fostering 'a cradle to the grave' approach to support the arts was important.

Victoria Brignell reiterated that a strong foundation in the arts (for young people) already existed within the borough, but there were always opportunities to enhance this. Arguably, there were other groups which were less well represented in the arts, such as those residents with learning disabilities, young parents, and older residents whom faced greater barriers to access.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg highlighted that a new community centre in (Sands End) Fulham would be opening in the summer of 2021 which had space for performance and visual art, but there was also the intention to establish a pottery, jewellery making and stained-glass mosaic activities.

Closing the item, the Chair confirmed the Committee welcomed the Arts Commission's report and the effort which had gone into producing such a comprehensive body of work. After the recommendations had been fully reviewed, he hoped the Authority would be in a position to take many of these forward and that H&F Arts Fest and other Arts organisations were heavily involved in doing so. The Chair characterised what had been achieved so far, as 'the end of the beginning , rather than the beginning of the end'. The Chair commented there was scope for further investment to bring organisations together and the committee wished to monitor the progress of the report in the future.

In relation to the next steps, Councillor Andrew Jones confirmed the Arts Commission's recommendations needed to be digested and the Authority had to consider how these could be implemented and progressed. It was also important that the Arts Commission's report was brought to a wider audience and steps were taken, as Covid restrictions lifted, to share this more widely with residents across the borough.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note and comment on the report.

6. TACKLING HOMELESSNESS WITH BEAM

Councillor Lisa Homan, Cabinet Member for Housing, made some opening remarks. Given the significant challenges posed by homelessness and unemployment, she confirmed the borough sought to utilise innovative ideas to support its statutory services and help residents through challenging times.

Beam had been extremely successful, and she commended its work to the Committee.

Kamal Montalib - (Head of Economic Development), confirmed Beam was a ground-breaking initiative and the Authority was the first council in the country to work with Beam from April 2019. Kamal provided an overview of the current economic climate in the borough (to provide the context in which Beam was operating), before asking Chloe Moore from Beam to provide her presentation.

Chloe Moore provided a presentation on what Beam did, as well evidencing its success through a series of case studies. The following key points were noted:

- Beam is a service for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- A summary of the process was provided:
 1. Client referral to Beam by the Council or charity partners.
 2. Caseworker assigned to each client.
 3. Beam crowdfunds all the resources needed to assist the client begin their new career.
 4. Each client is assisted to find stable work with in-work support provided for 6 months after entering employment.
- Beam's assistance cuts across users with multiple support needs.
- Partnership with Council begins in April 2019, January 2020 - £100K was donated (crowd funded) to fund training and work, July 2020 – Beam add Housing support to its service
- January 2021 – H&F submit external bid for Beam to support another 250+ residents over 3 years.
- Currently: 87 residents funding with Beam, £245,861 donated from public, 37 clients have entered work, 33 clients moved on / prevented from homelessness.
- Jobs provided by a diverse range of organisations including: NHS, Ocado, Football Clubs and Thames Water.
- Money Beam saves the Council: £10,300 costs saved per person who leaves homelessness, £6,500 costs saved per person who is prevented from becoming homeless, £1,600 increase in council tax paid per person starting work.

The Chair thanked Chloe Moore for her presentation and invited Councillor Sue Fennimore to address the Committee. Councillor Sue Fennimore confirmed that Beam worked and was about helping people to help themselves. The Committee learnt that the referral pathway had been an extremely useful mechanism to assist residents in numerous ways, to achieve sustainable employment and housing. Moving forwards, Councillor Sue Fennimore explained the Council would assist Beam where possible.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked if the social networking aspect of Beam's work was captured in its operating model. In response, Chloe Moore explained that with Beam's health foundation bid recently submitted, Beam hoped to do more direct tracking of well-being outcomes on the project in the future. Beam's own platform also currently allowed clients to view and interact with persons which had donated to their specific crowdfunding page.

The Chair commented that Beams' approach was very person-centric and clearly assisted clients to weigh up and assess their possible options to increase the likelihood of success. Councillor Rory Vaughan asked about the criteria which needed to be met for a referral to Beam, as well as how this worked, including the tracking element after 6 months had elapsed. In response, Chloe Moore explained that clients were often at very different stages of homelessness before they were referred by Council Housing officers to Beam. The main eligibility criteria was that the client was work ready, based on an honesty policy with the caseworker. In relation to tracking, Chloe Moore confirmed that milestone data was recorded at 13 weeks, and, if a client had sustained work for this duration, most clients (75%) remained employed. If the job was lost within 6 months, the client was able to refer themselves back to Beam for further support. Kamal Montalib confirmed that the relationship was starting to evolve, and the Council was starting to look at the life-long learning journeys of individual clients. Kamal reiterated that good employment and housing outcomes had a beneficial impact on other areas for the council such as public health, adult social care and the cost benefits were evidential with these types of projects.

The Chair confirmed the Committee were very encouraged by the progress which had been made and asked that the topic be revisited in the future. As a final remark, Councillor Lisa Homan, Cabinet member for Housing asked the attendees to spread the word about Beam and encouraged committee members to help make Beam bigger and better than it was, so more residents could be helped.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note and comment on the report.

7. OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT EQUALITIES PLAN, SETTING THE INCLUSION AGENDA FOR 2021-2025.

Karen Galey – (Assistant Director for the Economy) provided an overview of the report, which alerted members to the recently launched draft Equalities plan 2021-25, which was currently open to public consultation for a 12-week period until the end of April 2021.

Making some opening remarks, Councillor Sue Fennimore, Deputy Leader of the Council, commented that the Draft Equalities Plan was a longstanding piece of work which not only addressed the Council's Duty under the Equalities Act but went further and confirmed equalities and social inclusion mattered on all fronts. Councillor Sue Fennimore encouraged all Committee members to make individual submissions.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom explained that she had already provided feedback, as the Chair of Finance PAC, but commented that one of the pledges to continue to support people after the pandemic had ended, needed to be re-worded to make the pledge clearer.

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan, confirmed the Committee welcomed the statement and supported the objectives which had been set out in the Plan. Especially the aims of objective 4 (employment / training and improving opportunities), which dovetailed with the Beam agenda item the Committee had considered previously. He stressed the importance of supporting employment opportunities as a mechanism to improve equality within the borough.

The Chair asked Officers to provide further details on objective 5, in terms of becoming an employer of choice and fostering greater inclusion. In response, Karen Galey explained that in the past few years, the Authority had strived in its employment and recruitment activities to become a gold standard inclusive employer and to lead by example. And in doing so, to encourage employers throughout the borough to emulate the Authority in providing apprenticeships, work experience opportunities, mentoring and encouraging residents to become an integral part of the Authorities' workforce (which reflected the borough's communities).

Councillor Helen Rowbottom highlighted the importance of the Authority being very data driven in identifying vulnerable groups in relation to the way in which the economy was likely to be affected in the next year. She also commented it was important that actions were taken in 'live time' rather than taking a reflective approach. Karen Galey confirmed officers within The Economy were working closely with the Business Intelligence Unit to use real time data, so that an effective targeted approach to could be taken to provide support.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom highlighted that some vulnerable groups were invisible in the Authorities' datasets and it was important to cross reference other sources of intelligence to help identify these.

Concluding the item, the Chair thanked Karen Galey and Councillor Sue Fennimore for the opportunity to comment on the Plan.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note and comment on the report.

Meeting started: 6.30 pm
Meeting ended: 8.56 pm

Chairman

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