London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Policy and Oversight Board
Agenda

Monday 12 December 2022 at 7.00 pm

Main Hall (1st Floor) - 3 Shortlands, Hammersmith, W6 8DA

Watch live on YouTube: youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham

MEMBERSHIP

Administration	Opposition
Councillor Lisa Homan (Chair) Councillor Jacolyn Daly Councillor Natalia Perez Councillor Helen Rowbottom Councillor Nikos Souslous Councillor Nicole Trehy Councillor Rory Vaughan	Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler

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Reports on the open agenda are available on the Council's website:
www.lbhf.gov.uk/committees

Members of the Public are welcome to attend but spaces are limited. To register for a place please contact Bathsheba.mall@lbhf.gov.uk. Seats will be allocated on a first come first serve basis. There is disabled access to the building.

Shortlands

3 Shortlands,
Hammersmith,
London W6 8DA

Closest Underground Station
Hammersmith

Closest Bus Stop
Latymer Court (Stop G)

Date Issued: 02 December 2022

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Policy and Oversight Board
Agenda

12 December 2022

If you would like to email a question about Item 4, The Cost-Of-Living Crisis: Working Together to Improve The Local Response please email bathsheba.mall@lbhf.gov.uk by Friday, 9 December

Item **Pages**

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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.

At meetings where members of the public are allowed to be in attendance and speak, any Councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest or other significant interest may also make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter. The Councillor must then withdraw immediately from the meeting before the matter is discussed and any vote taken.

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 4 - 10

a) To approve as an accurate record and the Chair to sign the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Oversight Board held on Monday, 12 September 2022; and

b) To note the outstanding actions.

4. THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS: WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE LOCAL RESPONSE

This report has been commissioned by Hammersmith and Fulham Council's Policy and Oversight Board to provide an update on the delivery of H&F's Cost of Living (COL) Response Programme.

With the help of our guest speakers, the Board will explore the biggest impacts their organisations are seeing from the Cost of Living crisis on residents, service users and businesses in the borough, and to identify opportunities to strengthen the Council's current response.

Guest speakers and contributors:

- Derec Craig, Chief Executive Officer AgeUK
- Stephen Wiedmer, Branch Manager, Crosslight, Hammersmith
- Business representative organisation – Alan Rides, West London Local Chamber

5. DEVELOPING OUR DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

This report provides an update on ongoing work to develop the Hammersmith and Fulham Digital Inclusion Strategy following a report to the Policy and Oversight Board in September.

6. POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE

This report covers the areas of work and reports considered by each of the policy and accountability committees, examining and exploring emerging themes in the context of the committee's individual work programmes.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

To discuss board's work programme for 2022/23.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 17 January 2023

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Policy and Oversight Board

Minutes

Monday 12 September 2022

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Lisa Homan (Chair), Jacolyn Daly, Natalia Perez, Nikos Souslous, Nicole Trehy, Rory Vaughan and Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler

Other Councillors: Rebecca Harvey, Bora Kwon, Patricia Quigley (V) and Rowan Ree

Officers: Veronica Barella, Chief Digital Officer; Jennie Bayliss, Programme Lead; David Isaac, H&F Coproduction Coordinator; Darren Persaud, Reap Programme Delivery and Support Manager (V); Stefan Robinson, Head of Policy and PMO; and Matthew Sales, Assistant Director, Programmes and Assurance

Guests: Lisa Howie, Community Fibre; Elisabeth Petts, resident co-Chair of the Resident Digital Accessibility Group; James Prowse, Hyperoptic; Simi Ryatt, Chief Executive, Citizens Advice HF; Catherine Tyson, Managing Consultant, Agilisys

((V) indicates online attendance)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Helen Rowbottom.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lisa Homan declared a non-pecuniary interest due to her position as a trustee of Citizens Advice, H&F, in respect of agenda item 4. Councillor Nikos Souslous declared a non-pecuniary interest due to his position as co-founder and secretary of Ready Tech Go, a local charity.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That minutes of the 20 June 2022 were agreed.

4. DEVELOPING OUR DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

Officer Presentation on Council's developing Digital Inclusion Strategy

The Board welcomed officers and guest speakers which sought to explore emerging themes on digital inclusion informing the council's developing digital inclusion strategy. Veronica Barella outlined the council's vision which aligned closely with the mayor's vision on digital inclusion to 2025 and to work with LOTI (London Office of Technology & Innovation). The aim was to develop a digital ecosystem working with residents, local volunteers, and business partners, to deliver a joined up, accessible digital inclusion strategy for H&F. Challenges included identifying and removing barriers such as lack of skills or awareness, or prohibitive tariffs and to source robust data that would help identify the range of needs and priorities.

Cathy Tyson described the work undertaken by the Digital Maturity Assessment which informed and developed a set of best practice measures benchmarking digital standards for accessing online services. Work to date with the public sector and community groups was recognised as an unstainable model and it was suggested that the public sector needed to use its power to leverage provision. Darren Persaud described the work Resident Experience Access Programme which supported the provision of online services that residents may access, and identified 6 pillars of digital inclusion: devices, infrastructure, connectivity, data, skills, jobs and related projects.

James Prowse, Regional Manager – Local Authorities, Hyperoptic

Hyperoptic was founded in 2011 to bring connectivity to urban areas (flats), and provides broadband services to 900k homes, most of which were in London. They had worked with H&F to bring connectivity to those in social housing and about 20-25% of those who could access the provision did so through Hyperoptic. James Prowse state that their intention was to build links with partners across the borough so that by 2024, 80% of residents in flats (and individual homes) could access the hyperactive network. He recognised that there was considerable fear and confusion about digital space and the digital maturity assessment offered opportunities to identify resident touchpoints in accessible locations. It was important to raise awareness of market choices and the range of tariff options so that people were not locked into long term contracts and could switch when it was cost effective to do so. 50% of H&F residents needed financial help so a public service message raising awareness of 'Fair fibre tariff' was suggested.

Lisa Howie, Landlord Success Manager, Community Fibre

Community Fibre had worked with H&F since 2018 rolling out connections for residents in social housing and working with private landlords and local business. The roll out included houses of multiple occupation and single use dwellings. Community Fibre had worked with other local authorities and referenced their work with WCC which had been recognised with a nomination for an award.

Community Fibre were currently recruiting and training four H&F digital ambassadors or champions and was being offered to Disclosure and Barring Service checked volunteers with skills and knowledge (e.g., university applicants) to provide digital skills training to residents. One digital ambassador had already been trained and more were needed. Typically, support was needed to set up email accounts or

resolve related issues, password resets, completing online forms, and help with CVs to access employment opportunities, and practical help with devices. There was limited access to online discounts which were inaccessible to those who were digitally excluded.

Simi Ryatt – Chief Executive Officer, Citizens Advice H&F (CAHF)

CAHF saw about 12k clients per year with 30k issues and who were some of the most vulnerable in the community. Most were aged over 50. 60% were aged over 60 and experienced significant barriers. CAHF had delivered digital skills support for 10 years, with the support of skilled volunteers. 42% of clients were male, 60% were white, the remainder were from Black and Asian ethnic minority communities. 75% were retired, and 6% worked part time, and 35% of respondents were in social housing.

CAHF worked closely with the council to advertise services through multiple channels, promoted through community groups. They sought digital support for day-to-day issues about devices, online forms, password resets, email set up, the basics that most people took for granted. They also sought support with confirming or making medical appointments or paying online fines. There was a distinction between digital literacy and digital inclusion. Barriers included being gifted devices that were too sophisticated for inexperienced people to use, many did not have Wi-Fi at home and were often fearful or felt overwhelmed about going online. Feeling safe online because of e.g., online scams was a concern. People were suspicious about online systems and many clients returned for repeat advice.

Simi Ryatt suggested that online access to the council website could be improved by consolidating credentials across all departments to create a single access account. She emphasised that alternative access through multiple face to face channels other than digital should be maintained. It was harder to recruit digital ambassadors or champions as the digital divide was increasing and there was an absence of data about the number of people who relied on friends and family to help them. H&F online forms were not intuitive and needed to be refined to allow easier progression and navigation where information was incomplete. The holding time for responding to residents by email or telephone required a quicker response time and the council's website could be more streamlined for easier navigation. Digital literacy aligned with the need for financial literacy, so support was needed to get people online safely. As a trusted brand CAHF was keen to work with the council to support residents

David Isaac, Co-production co-ordinator – supporting the Digital Accessibility Group (DAG)

David Isaac reported that the DAG had met three times since commencing work in May 2022. Currently within phase one a three-phase project a key objective was to help co-produce the development of the digital inclusion strategy. This required a long-term plan to be funded by the council across five key departments. The group consisted of 22 members, with a 50% split of officers and residents working collectively. A DAG sub group worked with the communications colleagues to help design a Cost-of-Living crisis webpage which had implemented most of the group's recommendations to produce an accessible design. DAG aimed to ensure a wider focus on digital accessibility and social inclusion which extended beyond practical competency skills. Aspirations included Wi-Fi access in libraries (the first hour was

free), develop digital inclusion charter and setup principles for connection, ensure H&F and partners were all fully inclusive and matching council standards, and ensure that H&F residents should not be isolated from accessing essential services by digital barriers.

Elizabeth Petts, Resident Co-chair, Digital Accessibility Group (DAG)

Elizabeth Petts explained that a consequence of digital exclusion was less choice, for the digitally excluded, who paid up to 13% more for products and services not online, and unable to make fully informed choices. Disadvantages included not benefiting from time savings that were available by visiting websites instead of telephone calls and waiting in person. 90% of employment opportunities required digital skills or experience and those in work earned about 10% less in earnings than those that were digitally skilled. There was greater isolation, lower communication, and interaction skills for those who were digitally excluded. Elizabeth Petts felt that a digital strategy was necessary to combine systems and welcomed the suggestion of a single input of credentials for digital access. There was a recognition that being online was not everyone's preferred method of interaction or communication, but digital systems required improved signposting. DAG was holding an open day on 27 September 2022, with support from Hyperoptic and other voluntary sector providers which members were invited to attend.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked how residents could be supported in learning the skills to be online and to use different devices, how much had take-up of Adult Learning courses increased by and could the costs of these be reduced to encourage take up. Commenting on the website which could benefit from improved navigation, Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler suggested that Wi-Fi could be freely accessible in libraries, together with digital champions located in libraries.

ACTIONS: Data to be sought to identify trend patterns in adult learning course take up and if it was viable to incentivise improved take up through discounted cost; to explore if free or more accessible Wi-fi be offered in libraries; and digital champions be available in libraries to support residents.

Councillor Rory Vaughan asked what work could be undertaken immediately, for example, simplifying log in credentials and unifying them across multiple access points, and how could data protection protocols could be improved to offer less digitally skilled individuals greater security. It was acknowledged that the council was responsible for adhering to data protection protocols however, there was an issue about how data could be safely sourced and used. Simi Ryatt explained that completing online forms could be challenging and hard to navigate, citing specific examples that Citizens Advice (CAHF) had helped residents with. Councillor Vaughan also asked about the potential revenue raised by Wi-fi in libraries and whether there was evidence to indicate the level of demand and if people would use a free Wi-fi service.

ACTION: Councillor Rowen Ree to find out the amount of revenue raised using library Wi-fi and what the evidence was for take up of this provision, to understand the feasibility of making the service free and the potential take up of this.

Councillor Natalia Perez asked about online consultation with GPs or making appointments for treatment and referrals which were increasingly digital. Vulnerable groups found this difficult to navigate, and she asked what support could be offered to address these barriers and if there a project to develop this. Councillor Perez also sought information about how residents whose first language was not English could be better supported as language presented a further barrier. Veronica Barella responded that digital related health issues were not within the remit of the council, but this could be further explored with NHS partners through the Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee (HASCPAC).

ACTION: HASCPAC to explore improved digital inclusion regarding access to primary and acute are services.

Councillor Jacolyn Daly asked CAHF about how the focus of their digital hubs on skills and safety could be utilised and could they identify funds or pathways to identify help and support for residents so that they could learn to use their devices. David Isaac added that an expansion of digital champion network would be key e.g., help with ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). He added that the different systems used in GP practices needed to be consolidated into one system. In exploring the issue further, Elizabeth Petts added that websites for GP practices were not easy to navigate with multiple questions. Teaching digital skills was critical but people were time poor and found it hard to access opportunities for adult learning.

ACTION: The council to explore and implement improvements to its website and online services incorporating single account credentials, clearer signposting, and easier navigation.

In the context of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) Councillor Nicole Trehy asked how people and community touchpoints could be linked and signposted. Simi Ryatt explained that residents who were digitally included were tricky to identify and required patience and support, and given the fear factor, this learning process could become overwhelming. Councillor Trehy asked about safeguarding practices that officers could follow regarding the use of resident's data. Residents could become vulnerable with different providers coming into their homes, Councillor Trehy also asked how residents could be sensitively identified as digitally excluded and asked if was possible to host an accessible and inclusive digital hub at the civic campus, supported with co-ordinated assistance. While there had been a strong movement to digital, accelerated by the pandemic, a significant channel shift away from face-to-face access was a concern. Digital for some meant less face-to-face contact, exacerbating social isolation and loneliness. Simi Ryatt explained that CAHF was funded to setup four mini hubs across borough. It was possible to identify those in most need via different pathways, but this required funding. CAHF volunteers had installed Wi-Fi in Avonmore library themselves at a cost of £500, compared to a council quote of £25k but this was not a sustainable model. It was reported that a request to the Leader to allow the CAHF to be co-located at the new civic campus site had not received a response and the Board was urged to facilitate a response to support the request.

ACTION: To facilitate a response from the Leader to the request to co-locate CAHF advice services at the civic campus, and the feasibility of offering free Wi-fi at the site.

Councillor Patricia Quigley commented as the Lead Member for Inclusive Community Engagement and Co-production that the DAG was the only group that consisted equally of members who were disabled and non-disabled residents who collaborated for the benefit of all residents. Councillor Quigley encouraged officers to connect with the community through effective and co-produced engagement.

As a co-founder and trustee of ReadyTechGo, Councillor Nikos Souslous welcomed the report and the positive progress and actions undertaken by the DAG as group of residents. ReadyTechGo received many referrals from Adult Social Care (the charity had worked with residents during the pandemic to install free Wi-Fi) however, there was a need to work cross-departmentally to understand how services could best identify those who were most at risk of digital exclusion. Councillor Souslous queried whether free Wi-Fi could be offered to families and children. It was Important to look at the trend patterns of using Wi-fi services at the libraries, linked to the cost of free Wi-Fi, compared to potential revenue, but Councillor Souslous felt that the cost of the implementing such a policy should not be prohibitive. It was confirmed that desktop computers were installed in libraries. Councillor Souslous felt that digital policies should extend beyond internal council processes to help people more widely e.g., Imperial College could help the council recruit student volunteers to work as digital champions.

ACTION: Councillor Rowan Ree to consult with Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm regarding the potential use of public spaces such as libraries to host digital community support hubs.

Councillor Bora Kwon articulated many of the points touched on during the discussion around the development of hosting tech support hubs. She suggested that printing stations could be offered (limited to one or two sheets) or allow residents to access free charging points in libraries. Councillor Kwon observed that the difficulties of ensuring that the council website was accessible and inclusive was not limited to H&F, however this had significantly improved with the input of the co-production team. Two step authentication, Captcha and other security features presented barriers and challenges for the digitally excluded and Councillor Kwon suggested these be removed or adjusted to allow easier access. On the issue of digital health, Councillor Kwon commented that NHS hospitals were increasingly automating appointment systems and digitised processes would require login credentials to access these online. Digital skills e.g., providing free Wi-fi or skills training and support was needed to help residents to access services.

ACTION: The council to consider and explore the feasibility of offering access to printing stations in libraries, aligning with other suggestions as to the accessible use of library spaces to facilitate the delivery of digital community support.

Councillor Homan led a discussion that summarised key points which included improved promotion of cost-efficient social tariffs and a greater awareness of how residents can be supported in accessing better deals online. There was a need to work cohesively and engage with residents and community organisations to pool knowledge and resources, for example the co-location of community digital support services or offering free Wi-fi at the civic campus. The Board welcomed news that CAHF received national funding to deliver an energy advice project co-located in

Avonmore library. Libraries are 'not warm', and it was unsafe to install extra power points as these could trip power circuits. CAHF offered to work with the council and DAG to provide feedback on how the council's website could be made more accessible, both in terms of layout and the terminology used.

The Board noted that Community Fibre delivered 34 Wi-fi spaces in community centres offering up to 1GB, with 18 of these located in sheltered housing, delivering on the intention to provide this in easily accessible public spaces. Hyperoptic observed that tariffs would potentially increase but had committed to not increase these during the duration of a contract. It was also important that the council use its position as a trusted community platform to leverage support and funding. Digital touched every aspect of modern life, and the council was faced with complex challenges. Hyperopic also offered to work with CAHF and DAG to find ways to offer support, recognising that there were barriers to accessing Wi-Fi through set tariffs.

ACTION: Cllr Harvey asked Hyperoptic to mention the cost of their social tariffs offer in their leaflets and to further explore the option of free Wi-Fi offer for community centres, both of which could be added to the council website.

5. POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE CHAIR'S UPDATE

Councillor Lisa Homan highlighted the importance of identifying emerging, cross-cutting themes. In discussing the cost-of-living it was recognised that this was an important issue affecting residents. The council was keen to ensure that services worked collaboratively to mitigate against the financial impact of the cost-of-living.

RESOLVED

That the report was noted.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED

That the cost-of-living be the focus of the next meeting of the Board, on 12 December 2022.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday, 12 December 2022.

Meeting started: 7pm
Meeting ended: 9.21pm

Chair .....

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LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to:	Policy and Oversight Board
Date:	12/12/2022
Subject:	The Cost-of-Living Crisis
Report author:	Stefan Robinson, Head of Policy and PMO Matt Sales, Assistant Director
Responsible Director:	Lisa Redfern, Strategic Director of Social Care
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Councillor Rebecca Harvey, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion & Community Safety

SUMMARY

1. This report has been commissioned by Hammersmith and Fulham Council's ('H&F') Policy and Oversight Board to provide an update on the delivery of H&F's Cost of Living (COL) Response Programme. We are working with partners to deliver a bespoke and targeted programme of support to help residents and businesses though this crisis, building on an already successful track record of compassionate local government and keeping the cost of council tax and services low. This includes being the only council to have abolished charges for home care.

2. In response to the crisis, H&F is building a strategic alliance with local voluntary and community sector organisations, resident groups, businesses and partners to deliver a community response, as was done so successfully during the Covid-19 pandemic. This report frames the key activities of the COL response programme through a Six Point Plan:

    - We've launched a funded package of support and kept costs down
    - We are building alliances across the borough to help tackle this crisis, together
    - We are targeting our resources to residents and families most in need
    - We've ensured residents can access help to maximise their income
    - We are building economic resilience and an inclusive local economy
    - We are pioneering new approaches to help residents beyond this crisis.

3. H&Fs values underpin all of the work, including doing things with, rather than to residents and listening to the views of residents across all that we do.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. That the Policy and Oversight Board note this report and provide comments and feedback to help shape and improve H&F response programme going forward.

WARDS AFFECTED: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	The COL Response Programme features a strategic ambition to build economic resilience and inclusion and draws on a wide range of activities to progress this.
Creating a compassionate council	H&F's Businesses Intelligence Service is working to ensure that we are targeting our resources to residents and families most in need, in line with our 'Six Point Plan.'
Doing things with residents, not to them	The ambition to build a strategic alliance between local partners will place resident's voices at the centre of the Council's long-term approach to tackling the COL crisis.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	H&F's Response Programme has been delivered with very limited additional expenditure, making best use of existing resources to work flexibly across the organisation.
Taking pride in H&F	H&F's Response Programme focuses on helping our most vulnerable residents and strengthening partnerships locally to build a stronger, happier and more resilient borough.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Home retrofitting and efficiency improvements form a key part of the programme, which helps residents manage through energy price changes, and keep emissions low.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report: None

BACKGROUND

5. Since late 2021, the UK has experienced a significant rise in the cost-of-living for people and businesses that has not been witnessed since the 1980s. Inflation currently stands at 11% and is the top issue of concern for the public.[1] The cost of essentials such as food, energy and fuel have increased sharply, and are predicted to remain high. The rising costs for essential goods are outstripping many people's income growth, causing a crisis where many residents are having to make difficult choices about how they spend their income.

6. Ninety percent of Londoners reported an increase in their cost of living in recent months,[2] and although the crisis will impact everyone, research shows that it will be felt most severely by lower income households. Households with lower incomes typically pay more for essential goods and services and spend a larger proportion of their income on energy, transport and housing, meaning the rate of inflation is often higher for them. Consequently, there is a risk that some people may fall into food insecurity, fuel poverty and debt, and the broader challenges that come with it.[3]

7. HM Government has provided limited funding for local government to help tackle the crisis, but H&F is doing everything it can to support residents. We have moved

[1] Ipsos Mori, 2022. Ipsos Issues Index: August. Available here.
[2] Watson, J. Leeser, R. Smith, Y. Rock, C. Fong, B. Wilson, M. 'The rising cost of living and its effects on Londoners', *London Datastore,* (August 2022). Available here
[3] 'Cost-of-living crisis threat of 'pandemic proportions' to mental health, warns UK's leading psychiatrist' *Royal College of Psychiatrists*, (June 2022). Available here

quickly to use our limited powers and resource to deliver a wide-ranging package of support. New initiatives have been developed to help residents, and we are building a community response though a local alliance of local people and partners. This is in addition to the continued long-term provision of wide ranging statutory and discretionary services, helping to keep costs and taxes low, whilst delivering high quality services for all.

OUR STRATEGIC RESPONSE

8. In summer 2022, H&F's COL response was rapidly mobilised, drawing in services from across the Council. The programme is steered by a Working Group, chaired by the Strategic Director of Social Care and includes senior officers from across the Council. H&F's response is being led by the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety, with close collaboration with several other cabinet members.

9. Following a systematic review of best practice approaches to tackling the crisis, and engagement with other organisations, H&F has based its response on building local financial resilience and helping residents to maximise their income, minimise costs, and reduce debt; in many cases, working together with partners. Within this overall mission, five strategic objectives were developed to drive delivery:

    - Build a place-based alliance that creates a financially resilient and inclusive borough for everyone, drawing on our shared strengths across community, business, and anchor organisations.
    - Increase access to support through a 'no wrong door' and integrated approach to the provision of advice and support, to help people make the most of the income they have.
    - Promote uptake of key support services and grants by residents
    - Build economic resilience and financial inclusion across the borough to drive a thriving economic recovery.
    - Pioneer a bespoke programme of council led interventions and initiatives to support residents through the crisis, building on our strong track record of delivery for residents.

10. H&F's response has been underpinned by the effective use of business intelligence and data insight. Officers are utilising a strategic evidence base and monthly data dashboard to track key indicators relating to the COL crisis, and this is regularly reviewed to ensure activities continue to deliver in a bespoke and targeted way.

11. Programme delivery has also been supported by good governance practices, with lead officers for key workstreams, terms of reference, regular reporting, and project specific task and finish groups. Good project and programme management practices have been supported through the Council's Corporate Policy and Programme Management Office.

12. H&F cannot tackle this crisis on our own. We are therefore proactively engaging and working with the community, local businesses and anchor institutions to co-produce a response together. H&F must be outward facing, and listen to the needs of residents, and that principle will sit at the centre of the response going forward. The Council is, and will continue, to work with the extraordinary and diverse community and business

sectors to consolidate strengths, knowledge and resources to build holistic and community led solutions to the crisis.

13. The powers and resources H&F has to help residents through the crisis are limited. Central government support is welcomed, but it does not go far enough or promote the long-term planning that this crisis requires, as government schemes and grants are often for just a few months ahead. Additional initiatives that the Government requires the Council to administer also need to be fully funded upfront. An example of this is the Council Tax Energy Rebate where the Council has received limited administrative funding for the scheme which does not cover its additional costs, and to date there has been no commitment to provide additional funding.

14. Building in feedback from recent workshops, H&F will assess the scope for undertaking lobbying efforts for improved support from HM Government. A few areas for example might include; doing more to ensure HM Government energy bill support is reaching households on pre-payment meters, providing councils with greater fiscal freedom and control over local spending, and strengthening local powers to retrofit buildings to improve energy efficiency and save households money.

OUR SIX POINT PLAN

15. Beyond many of the long-term initiatives that the Council leads to support residents, we have gone further to bolster our support, and developed additional interventions following engagements with partners. A Six Point Plan, set out below, identifies some of the key activities within the response programme.

POINT 1: We've launched a funded package of support and kept costs down

16. H&F has a strong track record of keeping costs down, tax and rents low, and being ruthlessly efficient in managing expenditure. In 2022, H&F froze Council Tax, one of only two London boroughs to do this, following years of low or no tax rises. This year, H&F also froze charges in adult social care, children's services and housing to protect residents' incomes, and distributed £2.8m worth of household support funds (HSF) from central government to residents most in need. HM Government recently committed to extend HSF for a further year to March 2024.

17. Our Council Tax Support scheme provides 100% support towards Council Tax for those on the lowest incomes. This is a more compassionate offer than many other local authorities who offer 80% support. H&F operates a discretionary housing payment scheme for people suffering hardship and provides one-off Local Support Payments (LSP) to help residents in crisis. The average LSP in October 2022 was £500 across 50 residents in that month. H&F's Welfare Benefits Team provides welfare rights and debt advice to council tenants, referring people to support where necessary.

18. Our partnership with the Fuel Bank Foundation provides fuel top-up vouchers for households on pre-payment meters who are at risk of disconnection. This partnership provides £49 fuel vouchers to top-up meters, up from £30 from earlier in 2022. From December 2021 to October 2022, 759 vouchers have supported 2,037 people.

POINT 2: We are building alliances to help tackle this crisis, together

19. Local communities want to help, and H&F is building new partnerships and learning from the successes of the community response during the Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure there is a joined up and robust network of support across the borough. To start building an alliance of support, H&F held a conference on 30 November with voluntary and community organisations and businesses, and a workshop on 7 October, to get widespread input and co-production of the way forward. This has also been supported by separate engagements with the H&F Business Network, the Borough Resilience Forum, Faith Forum, Housing Forum, health partners and local voluntary and community sector organisations to help inform H&F's early response.

20. H&F provides £3m in grants to local third sector organisations each year to provide services that local people rely on, many of which provide support to those most severely impacted by the COL crisis. A further £2.3million was recently invested into the Nourish project which opened in 2021 and has served over 27,000 meals and provided 463 food education and community events, including learn to cook and bicycle repair services. Officers are working with the H&F Foodbank to develop a Social Supermarket, and H&F continues to fund the Foodbank so residents and families can get emergency food parcels, balanced meals, advice and help.

21. Financial stability has been provided for advice services through the Council's 10-year grants to H&F Citizens Advice, H&F Law Centre, and Action on Disability, so they can focus on providing support. H&F has partnered with Green Doctors, who provide a one stop advice shop for home insulation, energy efficiency and support to pay bills – with hundreds of free home energy consultations for residents.

22. A new network of warm welcoming spaces has been set up in partnership with local organisations, where residents can go to keep busy, rest, socialise and cook. Our network of warm hubs, set out online and in the forthcoming winter booklet to all households, features four warm spaces with food and activities, in addition to our five libraries which are open to anyone, and several other partner led warm hubs. Demand will be monitored closely to assess uptake and gather feedback to ensure our warm hub provision can remain flexible to the needs to residents. The H&F managed hubs include:

    - Sands End Arts & Community Centre
    - Our Lady of Fatima Church
    - Old Oak community Centre
    - Earls Court Community Hub.

23. Officers are soon also commencing outreach into the community with partners through pop-up advice stalls in different locations.

24. **POINT 3: We are targeting our resources to residents and families most in need**

25. Research shows that families and single parents on low incomes are being hard hit by the COL crisis. H&F has targeted support by providing free school meals and clothing grants to alleviate costs for families who are financially strained. The number of students receiving free school meals has risen by more than a third over the past five years. Holiday hunger is being tackled by H&F providing vouchers to families in need over Christmas, supporting over 6,700 children and young people with the cost

of food. This builds on the council's Holiday Activity and Food programme providing over 3,600 spaces of free engaging activity and food. Furthermore, H&F is providing £11k of funding though the HSF to support up to 500 of the borough's elderly and vulnerable residents with a meal and small present this Christmas, working in partnership with H&F Giving.

26. Pension age residents are particularly vulnerable, and that is why home care continues to be free; the only Council in the country to do this, saving residents on average £13,000 per year. We are also promoting the uptake of pension credit, which despite eligibility, often goes unclaimed, and acts as a gateway to other types of support. H&F's Adult Social Care offers a range of free day services (by referral) for adults with learning difficulties, mental health issues and disabilities, giving residents opportunities to develop skills for independence, including managing finances.

27. Our Business Intelligence Service has developed a 'COL risk index' to help identify areas within the borough most at risk (Appendix 1), and this will inform interventions such as where warm activity hubs and pop-up advice stalls will be located. Insight is also being used to identify households on housing benefit that are not entitled to central government support, and H&F has launched a local £200 COL Payment targeted specifically at those households.

28. Similar data was also used to identify households eligible for the Greater London Authority's (GLA) Warmer Homes Scheme to improve home efficiency. A taskforce was established to knock on nearly 1,000 doors to raise awareness and encourage applications to the scheme.

29. Following the lifting of the Government's ban on evictions, many councils are seeing an increase in homeless presentations compared to pre-pandemic levels, which is worsened by the supply of affordable privately rented homes decreasing across London. H&F has helped to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by over 20% in the last four years through our Temporary Accommodation Reduction Strategy.

30. We are also continuing our long-standing policy of not placing children and their families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The H&F Link team, the commissioned single homeless pathway, the 'Get Connected' pilot, discretionary housing payments and the vulnerable renters funding all provide additional support for residents at risk or in need. Outcomes from this work so far in 2022/23 include 71 private tenants whose tenancy was at risk have had their homelessness prevented, and 32 private tenants whose tenancy was at risk are sustaining their tenancies.

PART 4: We've ensured residents can access help to maximise their income and keep costs down

31. H&F is undertaking a coordinated campaign to boost access and uptake to key services through social media, printed materials, and face to face engagements. This outreach is being spearheaded by a comprehensive online support hub on H&F's webpage which has a catalogue of support services, and a winter booklet with COL advice that will be sent to all 95,000 households in the borough in December.

32. We have also redirected officers to support a new COL advice team, with a new freephone advice line (0800 917 6994) for residents, who are helping residents to

access the support they need. These advisors are working closely with key partners, and the service will soon be promoted via the pop-up advice stalls and online support hub. Officers are liaising with local advice providers to explore new processes to refer residents between support services. For those who prefer it, residents will be able to speak with the advice team via drop-in appointments at 145 King St in the new year.

33. Library staff are being trained to signpost residents to key services, and broader awareness training is being rolled out to Council staff, to help staff identify when and how to support residents. Housing Officers are engaging with residents in their homes to carry out fire safety checks, check on wellbeing, and signpost to services.

PART 5: We are building economic resilience and an inclusive economy

34. The COL crisis is also impacting on local businesses and their staff. Footfall and spending within key business districts has reduced compared to last year. Businesses have seen large increases in their energy costs, together with supply chain challenges and rising interest rates. H&Fs Economic Development service has taken immediate action to provide support and advice to local businesses. A Cost of Doing Business webpage has been created to act as a central landing page for businesses. This is being supported by a Cost of Doing Business edition of the Business Connects Newsletter, communication across social media, and through a new guide for SMEs, with advice on how to lower energy use.

35. A partnership has been set up with Advantage Utilities who offer free energy efficiency assessments for any business in the borough, to help reduce consumption and costs. H&F is also investing in recruiting new *Climate & Business Engagement Officers,* who will take an active role working with businesses to support their transition to low-carbon energy, saving energy and the environment.

36. Economic Development is also increasing the 1-2-1 business advice offer with two additional advisors along with training to build business resilience and navigate the cost of doing business. This includes professional expertise in debt management, business continuity planning, carbon reduction, marketing, and digital skills. The H&F Business Desk and helpline remain the first port of call for all business enquiries.

37. H&F is also taking forward a range of initiatives to build economic resilience:
    - providing a course on digital marketing training for businesses.
    - investing in the Online High Street e-commerce platform which provides an eco-friendly home delivery service aimed at helping local independent businesses.
    - offering free monthly networking opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the borough
    - providing knowledge and skills to help businesses submit and win tenders through the Ready to Supply Programme.
    - providing pre-employment support to help connect local people to local jobs
    - continuing the successful Shop Local campaign, to support high streets.

38. Capacity within H&F Works (previously WorkZone) has been increased using European Social Fund funding to provide additional support for residents. The team are delivering face to face activities across the borough including at Job Centres, Libraries, the Adult Learning Centre and Housing Associations. H&F Works has

launched a website to provide residents with improved access to job opportunities, apprenticeships, and training, with the ability to request employability support.

39. The Adult Learning & Skills Service's (ALSS) are continuing to help our most vulnerable residents access Adult Learning courses, using the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) and Hardship Funds. ALSS will also continue to support our residents to upskill, gain national qualifications and progress into employment.

40. ALSS has been allocated an extra £214,000 by the GLA over 3 years to deliver the national Multiply Programme in mathematics and numeracy. ALSS are currently recruiting a Multiply Programme Leader, which will be a critical role in leading our Multiply Programme, delivering skills to both staff, residents, and the wider community. H&F will also work with local organizations such as Citizens Advice to provide 'Money Matters' and Financial Capability courses.

PART 6: We are pioneering new approaches to help residents beyond this crisis.

41. In the longer term, H&F will work with partners to plan for a different future, using data insight and resident engagement to help shape new innovative strategies that will build prosperity across the borough. The ambitions set out in the recently published H&F Business Objectives 2022/23 report demonstrates H&F's broader commitments in this area.

42. As part of the COL response programme, H&F will be working with partners across different sectors in developing a new Financial Inclusion Strategy that will boost residents access to affordable credit, financial services, and advice. This will involve taking a strategic approach to build financial understanding, capability, and resilience across the borough, and directly tackle illegal lending, barriers to employment, and the premium that many residents pay for being unable to access the financial support they need.

43. We are also taking forward a new Fuel Poverty Strategy to tackle the rise in local fuel poverty, which sits above the national average, and has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the COL crisis. This strategy will focus on helping residents to maximise the efficiency of their homes, and secure wider grants and support. To help tackle food inequality, a new Food Strategy is also being co-produced with partners to ensure no-one goes hungry and everyone can eat healthily. This strategy builds on H&F's broader support for the H&F Foodbank and Nourish Hub project.

44. The Council will soon renew our ground-breaking Industrial Strategy and continue to support businesses in the emerging economic eco-system to deliver new jobs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) industries, medicine, media and the arts in the borough.

45. H&F is also committed to having housing assets that residents can be proud of. The next 12 years will see significant investment in the housing stock following agreement of the Housing Revenue Account Asset Management Capital Strategy. The programme includes over £100m investment in improving the efficiency of residents' council homes, cutting carbon emissions in the process. Additionally, the long-term housing development programme will enable through the planning system 3,000 new

energy efficient affordable homes to be built or underway in the next 4 years, paving the way for a more resilient future that is less affected by energy markets.

46. The strategic approach to community and third sector engagement will be renewed, focusing on making community engagement and co-production even more central to decisions affecting residents, and making better use of the knowledge, skills and assets within the borough. The new COL Alliance itself will be a key part of this.

OUR PLAN GOING FORWARDS

47. H&F will deliver the Six Point Plan over the 2022/23 winter period as set out in this paper, and tackling this crisis will remain a priority beyond this. H&F's response programme will continue to be guided by data insight, resident engagement and co-production principles, and be supported by robust governance, scrutiny, and councillor oversight.

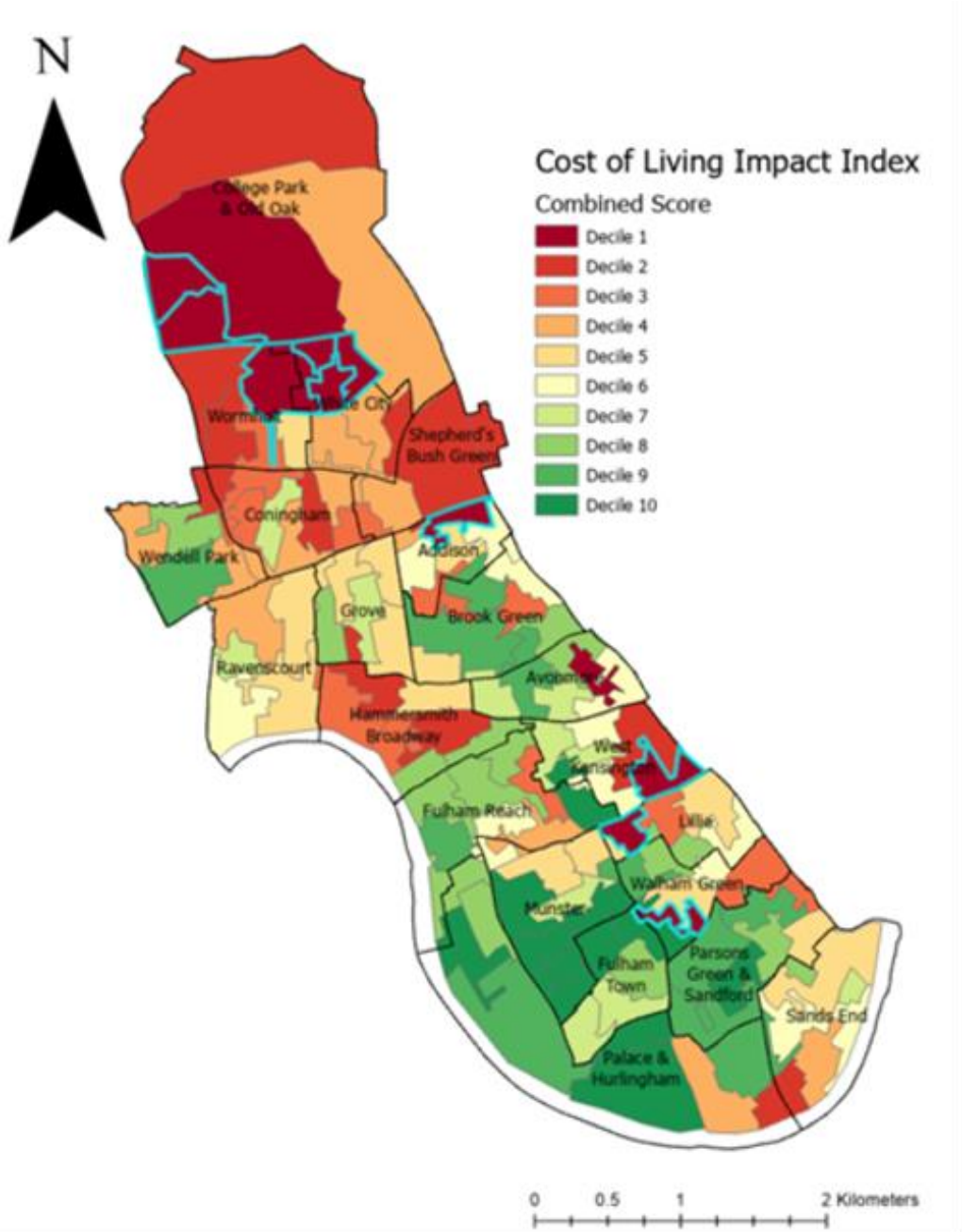
48. Officers will work with lead Cabinet Members to formally review delivery of the programme before April 2023 and plan for the future. This will provide an opportunity to reflect on the changing national economic picture, evaluate delivery of the response programme over the winter, and identify any lessons to inform future work. It is also expected that the Alliance between local partners would have developed further, and feedback can be sought through that forum to shape next steps.

Appendix 1 – COL Impact Index

Appendix 1

COL Impact Index

The Council's Business Intelligence Team have developed an impact index which combines a range of national and local data to estimate levels of average risk within the borough, with respect to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. This index draws on indicators including rates on claimant counts, universal credit, fuel poverty, deprivation and children in receipt of free school meals



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Report to:	Policy and Oversight Board
Date:	12/12/2022
Subject:	Developing our Digital Inclusion Strategy
Report author:	Nicola Ellis, Assistant Director Resident Services, Veronica Barella, Chief Digital Officer
Responsible Director:	Bram Kainth Strategic Director Environment Jon Pickstone Strategic Director Economy
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform

Summary

This report provides an update on ongoing work to develop the Hammersmith and Fulham Digital Inclusion Strategy following a report to the Policy and Oversight Board in September.

Recommendation

That Policy and Oversight Board note the content of this report and provide any comments to help shape and inform the development of the Digital Inclusion Strategy.

Wards Affected: All

H&F Priorities

Our Priorities	**Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Priorities**
Building shared prosperity	*Digital exclusion is linked to deprivation. Improving digital inclusion across the Borough will enable us to support our residents to increase opportunity to prosper.*
Creating a compassionate council	*Understanding difficulties and barriers our residents face in dealing with our services and gaining wider digital access where residents are experiencing their most difficult circumstances or have complex needs*
Doing things with local residents, not to them	*Learning from our residents' feedback enables us to ensure that we are delivering services that meet their needs. This strategy is being co-*

	produced with our Digital Accessibility Group including resident representation.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	*Ensuring that the strategy and actions that result deliver value for money and positive outcomes for our residents and community.* *Providing residents with more efficient digital access to services frees up council resources for other priorities.*
Taking pride in H&F	*Promoting and supporting a Borough that is digitally inclusive.*
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	*Digital engagement supports the climate change agenda reducing reliance on paper and unnecessary journeys to complete transactions in person.*

Background

1. The September meeting of the Policy Oversight Board focussed on development of our Digital Inclusion Strategy and a briefing report was provided giving details of the work to date and planned for the future. At that meeting, some useful recommendations were made to support the development and the board asked that an update report be presented to this meeting to update on progression since the last meeting.

H&F's proposed Digital Inclusion Vision and Mission statement

2. By 2025, Hammersmith & Fulham shall be a more digitally inclusive borough; a place where residents have the digital skills, access, and support necessary to help fulfil aspirations.

Proposed objectives of the H&F Digital inclusion strategy

3. The business collaboration has resulted in an agreed set of objectives upon which the H&F Digital inclusion strategy should be built:

    - Digital public services need to be accessible, reliable, and designed around the needs of the user
    - Staff can effectively understand the digital needs of service users
    - The borough has world-class digital infrastructure necessary for the prosperity of economy and the growth of local employment opportunities
    - All residents have the opportunity to gain the digital skills, knowledge, and access to thrive in education, work or socially in the borough
    - None of our residents are disadvantaged by the lack of digital awareness, skills, or access to equipment

- Using data in an insightful way to design better interventions and prevent escalation and negative outcomes
- H&F has created and is helping to orchestrate an ecosystem with our partners and businesses in the borough that continue to improve and deliver digital inclusivity when or wherever is needed

Update on work to develop the Hammersmith and Fulham Digital Inclusion Strategy to date

4. Since the last meeting, work has been ongoing with our residents' Digital Accessibility Group (DAG) to deliver the strategy, and two further meetings have been held at the end of September and October. DAG have been continuing to look at the barriers for digital inclusion and have identified their priority areas to address in the strategy. These are shown below:

    - **Devices**
        - Not everybody has access to a device.
    - **Infrastructure**
        - Impartial advice on the best solution to meet needs:
            - Products -laptop tablet or smart phone
            - Specialist equipment for those who need it
            - Broadband packages
    - **Connectivity**
        - Cost for digital services is high. Provide ways to, and advice in reducing and managing costs.
        - Libraries / Public spaces, hostels, Supported Living accommodation. Experience varies place to place. Also, free / access to Wi-Fi in public spaces
    - **Skills**
        - Lack of self-help guides / online help videos, etc
        - Knowing what is available online and what residents can get help with over the phone and what skills staff need to support residents.
        - Digital Champions Network – lack of / need for more across the borough at accessible points residents.
        - Digital Champions Network – lack of / need for more across the borough at accessible points
        - Guidance for using tech, developing skills and the knowledge needed. (safe use and risk)
    - **Jobs**
        - Apprenticeships-supporting residents to develop skills.
    - **Data**
        - Understanding capabilities and needs of residents

5. In addition, DAG has looked at some potential solutions to address these areas and has evaluated these for feasibility and impact. This will be used as we develop the final strategy and associated delivery plan.

6. On 27th September DAG held an event in Lyric Square which enabled wider engagement with residents to gain their views in respect of the barriers they face. This helped inform the key priority areas and it was valuable in reinforcing the views of the DAG. The event was also attended by other parties such as Citizens Advice who were available to support residents. Residents were also asked for their views on a digital champions network and were supportive of this approach with some expressing interest in being involved.

In the middle of December DAG are holding a workshop with voluntary and community sector organisations to develop our engagement with them in the development and delivery of the strategy. The aims of this workshop are:

- To ensure VCS recognise the barriers identified and the priorities and understand if they think there are others.
- To understand what the sector is currently doing to address the barriers and what support is available.
- To identify where the gaps are and what we can do to address these.
- To discuss how we work together to deliver the strategy across the borough and how we can measure outcomes as a result. This is a key building block to help us deliver our Digital inclusion eco-system.

7. Following this we will move on to develop the strategy for approval and recommendations for the development of the delivery plan.

Update on actions from the last meeting.

8. Some actions were identified at the last meeting that relate to the delivery of the strategy and so will feed into the strategy as it is developed. Additionally, there has been progression in the following areas.

Improvements to the website

9. There is an ongoing project to improve the Council's website and to allow more flexibility to improve its accessibility ease of navigation and the user experience. This work has continued throughout this period and the website is moving to a new operating platform in the new year. As part of the Resident Experience and Access Programme, website content is reviewed for each service as they work through the programme as well as online forms. DAG will be coproducing this for future services.

10. In the period since the last meeting, we have been focussing on the Council's response to the cost of living crisis and DAG has reviewed the associated webpage and made recommendations which have led to change. As we migrate to the new platform, we have the facility to create micro-sites and DAG are currently working with our web team to develop this. This micro-site has an improved format which is much more accessible and easier to navigate than the current format.

11. At the last meeting a concern was raised with regard to multiple sign-ons for different online portals. We have fed this in to the REAP programme and are

working with our technology providers to ensure that single sign-on will be the preferred solution when using multiple portals.

Access and support in libraries

12. There were concerns raised at the last meeting about access to wi-fi in libraries and this being chargeable after one hour. We have clarified this and the wi-fi in libraries is not chargeable and is available free of charge. The charge mentioned applies to the use of the public computers within libraries which are currently chargeable after one hour. This was introduced to prevent overuse by individuals which would prevent access to other residents. We need to do further work with libraries to understand if this is a current problem and to analyse if there is demand for over an hour and what impact removing the charge would have.

13. Similarly, the request was made at the last meeting to investigate free printing at Libraries. Currently a charge is made to cover cost of consumables and to help manage demand. Unfortunately, there have been some GDPR issues with the technology in libraries over this period which has required a lot of work with Digital Services to remedy. This has meant that access has been more limited than usual, although now resolved.

14. Libraries were identified as a valuable resource to provide support to residents with digital accessibility. Since the last meeting we have been working on developing this as part of the response to the cost of living crisis. It was identified that residents could be supported through our libraries in a number of potential areas such as: identifying what potential support is available, completing online applications and identifying better value deals for example in relation to broadband and mobile phones. We have carried out awareness training with our Library staff to enable them to support this and have developed a schedule for when one to one support will be available across all our libraries. We are aiming to work with our volunteer network to recruit volunteers to deliver support to residents within this schedule and we are hoping that this will be available early in the new year.

Social tariffs for broadband

15. We have included information and advice in respect of these on our website on the cost of living page. We have also included this in our training of the new Cost of Living Team who are a dedicated team supporting residents through the current crisis.

Face to face access to services

16. On January 9th 2023 we are opening 145 King Street to enable residents who require assisted service to be able to drop-in and receive support face to face. Resident advisers will be available to support residents to self-serve or, where this is not possible, they will be able to advise and if necessary make contact with the relevant service area to discuss in more detail.

17. We are also exploring the possibility of Citizens Advice and potentially other VCS organisations delivering services from this location at specific times.

Adult learning courses

18. We have not yet explored the potential to further incentivise the take-up of adult learning courses to improve skill development but have identified skill development as a priority for the delivery plan in respect of the strategy.

Partnership opportunities - London Office of technology and Innovation (LOTI)

19. Digital services are working closely with LOTI on new initiatives to help get London residents online. A pilot is being launched with Good Things Foundation, an existing national charity, who provide support with devices and technical skills.

20. LOTI is working with lots of businesses and public organisations to build a sustainable pipeline of devices.

21. Participating in these initiatives will help to build the digital inclusion ecosystem.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Policy and Oversight Board

Date: 12/1/2/2022

Subject: Policy and Accountability Chair's Summary Update

Report author: Bathsheba Mall, Committee Coordinator

Responsible Director: David Tatlow, Director of Corporate Resources

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SUMMARY

This report covers the areas of work and reports considered by each of the Council's Policy and Accountability Committees, examining and exploring emerging themes in the context of the committees' individual work programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the updates of the Policy and Accountability Committees and discuss any areas for future review or collaboration by the Policy and Oversight Board.

2. To agree that any requests for Task and Finish Groups from the Policy and Accountability Committees should be considered and approved by the Policy and Oversight Board.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	**Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values**
Doing things with local residents, not to them	The Policy and Accountability Committees aim to amplify the voices and concerns of residents and to give them a mechanism to comment on, participate in, and determine Council policy.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The Policy and Accountability Committees were set up to hold the administration to account and scrutinise decisions in the interest of residents.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report
None.

PROPOSALS

Coordination and approval of Task and Finish Groups

1. It is recommended that any requests for Task and Finish Groups from the Policy and Accountability Committees be considered and approved by the Policy and Oversight Board to ensure the Council has the necessary level of resources available to support them through to their conclusion.

POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE UPDATES

Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee

2. The Committee considered the following topics at its meeting on 21 November 2022:

    - Youth Justice Service Inspection Outcome
    - Corporate Parenting Board Review
    - The Learning Partnership
    - Summer in the City Delivery Report.

3. The Committee commended the Youth Justice Service for achieving an overall 'Outstanding' rating in their most recent inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation in June 2022. Members asked officers to think about how the good news and the good work the service did could be spread through community leaders and resident meetings. Members also made suggestions to improve the Learning Partnership's offer by reaching out to the borough's big businesses and private schools. Finally, the Committee discussed the Summer in the City programme and recommended putting together a more formal offer for older young people with special educational needs and disabilities in future years.

Work programme

4. 30 January 2023:

    - Children's Services Department Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee

5. At the meeting on 14 September 2022, officers were requested to:

    - Engage with Housing Associations operating in the borough about their net zero plans
    - Share information on the work of the Climate Emergency Unit which seeks to prepare progress updates for individual challenges on a regular basis; and
    - Discuss items on the Housing Retrofit Survey and progress update on the Climate Emergency strategy at the next meeting scheduled for 29 November 2022.

6. The meeting originally scheduled to take place on 29 November has been postponed to 31 January 2023.

Work programme

7. 31 January 2023:

    - Departmental Medium Term Financial Strategy
    - Clean Air Neighbourhoods (TBC, item from postponed meeting)

Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee

8. The committee considered the following items at its meeting on 16 November 2022:
    - Western Eye Hospital and Ophthalmology Services
    - Plans for North West London Elective Orthopaedic Surgical Hubs
    - West London NHS Trust Update.

9. Western Eye Hospital and the proposals to improve this provision were very much welcomed. The committee explored the concerns of The Macular Society and the National Federation of the Blind UK and our residents who highlighted concerns about future provision, increasing rates of impairment that were preventable and access to local ophthalmology services. A proposal for Elective Orthopaedic Hubs was welcomed by all, but it was recognised that it was important to ensure that patients retained a choice in terms of treatment and were able to travel to the hubs. The improvement plans for West London NHS Trust and how this was progressing was considered and the impact of the loss of mental health beds in Ealing. Members will continue to monitor both issues closely and welcomed ongoing opportunities for further engagement.

10. **Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs**
    - The cost-of-living crisis – The impacts on the borough and actions the Council and partners could take to mitigate them – potential for excess deaths linked to fuel and cost of living.
    - Rough sleepers / homelessness – health inequalities linked to poor or inaccessible housing
    - Health and wellbeing support in the context of domestic violence and abuse, and violence against women and girls
    - Digital inclusion in primary health care services.

Work programme

11. 25 January 2023:

    - Public Health
    - Council's Budget and department Medium Term Financial Strategy
    - Model of care working group (end of life care plans for North West London).

12. Future items:

    - Immunisation and vaccination
    - Children and young people – mental health and wellbeing

- West London Trust – provision of North West London mental health services
- Dentistry services

Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee

13. The Committee considered the following topics at its meeting on 14 November 2022:
    - Introduction by Mark Lowthian, Interim Director of Housing & Transformation
    - Homelessness Partnership Update
    - Compliance Update - Keeping Residents Safe
    - Developing our Capital Works Programme.

14. The Committee discussed the need for high quality reports to fulfil their scrutiny role. Members made suggestions around reducing the number of voids in the borough's housing stock, improving the repairs service for residents and the way residents were engaged on works programmes. The Committee also requested progress reporting on long-standing repairs cases.

Work programme

15. 23 January 2023:
    - Housing Department Medium Term Financial Strategy and Housing Revenue Account report

Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee

16. The Committee considered the following items at its first meeting on 22 November 2022:
    - Law Enforcement Team update
    - Gangs, Violence and Exploitation Unit – Overview
    - Domestic Violence and Abuse, and Violence Against Women and Girls – Overview.

17. The committee welcomed an update from the Law Enforcement Team on their ongoing work supporting residents, ensuring that there is high visibility and continued co-operation with the Metropolitan Police. The committee heard from The Harrow Club and Violence Intervention Project that early intervention work with young people is critical in identifying need, support positive outcomes and break the cycle of violence and abuse. The need for long-term planning and support was also emphasised and the Council is committed to treating this issue as a priority. The committee commended officers on their work to secure further funding from the Greater London Authority on support services for survivors of abuse, the ongoing consultation by the Women and Girls Network and the much-needed work of organisations such as Advance and Refuge.

18. **Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs**

- Cost of living, in the context of community safety. There was a clear link to increased crime during economic uncertainty. It would be helpful to include the perspective of different community groups and communities.
- Development of a Food Strategy.
- Digital inclusion, looking into what the Council is doing both internally and with outside partners. Similarly, looking into what is happening more generally in the borough and how the Council can help.
- Mental health and wellbeing in the context of community safety.

Work Programme

19. 24 January 2023:

- Local Enforcement Team Update
- Corporate and departmental medium term financial strategy.

20. Future items:

- Look into the Council's procurement strategy and whether it funds goods produced using modern slavery.
- Discuss and scrutinise the work of the local Police. We will invite local community groups and organisations and encourage them to participate in the discussion.
- To work with residents to put on more neighbourhood events, whether regular or as a one-off. Invite people from the Better Brackenbury project to tell us about their work and how the model can be replicated.
- Monitor the creation of a new Community Engagement Strategy – in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

The Economy, Arts, Sports, and Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee

21. The Committee considered the following items at its first meeting on 28 November 2022:

- Update On The Development Of The Borough's New Ten-Year Cultural Strategy
- Wheeled Bin And Food Waste Collection Prototype Survey Results.

22. The Committee considered proposals to deliver a ten-year cultural strategy for the borough that would respond to key challenges and priorities for delivering the Council's ambition to transform H&F into a cultural hub and tourist destination. A key point made was that the work should be linked with priorities identified across the council and build a co-produced provision based on resident engagement.

23. **Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs**

- Street environment – Impact of the built environment linked to rough sleeping, community safety, health inequalities
- Cost of living – non-payment of rates, non-payment / withdrawal from council services, voids, potential impact on council revenue.

Work programme

24. February 2023 (date to be confirmed):

- Corporate and departmental medium term financial strategy

25. Future Items:

- The cost of fly tipping within the borough and the balancing act between prevention and reaction / response to the issue.
- The importance of managing parks and green spaces (given the paucity of private gardens) and the opportunities to improve the borough's Green Flag status.
- Street work inspections, its impact on residents and importance of publicising these works.

LIST OF APPENDICES

None.