

Policy and Oversight Board Agenda

Monday 11 December 2023 at 7.00 pm

3 Shortlands, Hammersmith, W6 8DA

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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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Date Issued: 01 December 2023
Date Updated: 04 December 2023

Policy and Oversight Board Agenda

If you would like to ask a question about any of the items on the agenda please email David.Abbott@lbhf.gov.uk by: 12 noon on the 8th of December 2023

<u>Item</u>	<u>Pages</u>
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Councillors are not obliged to withdraw from the meeting where a dispensation to that effect has been obtained from the Standards Committee.</p>	
3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	4 - 18
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record and note any outstanding actions.	
4. UPDATE ON YOUTH VOICE	19 - 33
This report provides an update to Policy and Oversight Board on recent developments to strengthen the reach and impact of youth voice in Hammersmith & Fulham. It explains the approach adopted by the Youth Council (with support from officers and community partners) to research, define, and action the priorities of our young people on their key areas of focus:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusion• Mental health and emotional wellbeing	

- Life skills (preparation for adulthood)
- Staying safe
- Work experience and work readiness

The report also outlines progress to date and next steps.

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| 5. | CONTINUING RESPONSE TO THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS | 34 - 46 |
| | <p>This report shows the continued priority the Council is giving to supporting residents and businesses through the Cost-of-Living crisis. It describes the range of new and continued statutory, discretionary and partner schemes that form part of our response programme under a six-point plan. This includes building blocks to develop a longer-term strategic approach to prevent poverty and its impacts, one of the key priorities in the Council's new Corporate Plan for 2023-26.</p> | |
| 6. | POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEES' UPDATE REPORT | 47 - 55 |
| | <p>This report outlines the areas of work and reports considered by each of the Council's six Policy and Accountability Committees at their meetings in November 2023.</p> | |
| 7. | WORK PROGRAMME | 56 |
| | <p>For the Board to note the draft work programme and suggest any amendments.</p> | |
| 8. | DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS | |
| | <p>To note the following dates of future meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 Jan 2024 • 29 Apr 2024 | |

Agenda Item 3

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Policy and Oversight Board Minutes



Monday 18 September 2023

PRESENT

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

Other Councillors

Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier (Lead Member for European Co-operation and Digital Innovation)

Officers

Matthew Sales (Assistant Director, Programmes, Assurance and Analytics)

Julius Olu (Assistant Director – Commissioning and Partnerships)

Nicola Ellis (Strategic Director Chief Operating Officer)

Tina Akpogheneta (Chief Digital Officer)

Darren Persaud (Assistant Director Resident Experience Transformation)

David Abbott (Head of Governance)

Guests and other attendees

Jazz Browne (Chief Executive of Nubian Life)

Precisa Getsevich and Adam Semar (Youth Council)

Shad Haibatan (SOBUS)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Helen Rowbottom, Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety), and Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Nikos Souslous noted a non-pecuniary interest in item 4 as a Trustee of both the Creighton Centre and Hammersmith United Charities. He also noted a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 as the founder and Director of ReadyTechGo.

Councillor Natalia Perez noted a non-pecuniary interest in item 4 as a Trustee of Hammersmith United Charities.

Councillor Jacolyn Daly noted a non-pecuniary interest in item 4 as a Trustee of the Urban Partnership Group.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair noted the action sheet attached to the minutes and highlighted that all but one of the actions from the previous meeting had been completed. The final action was in progress – the Board had been sent the Electoral Commission’s interim Voter ID report and the final report would be circulated once it was available.

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICE IN HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Julius Olu (Assistant Director – Commissioning and Partnerships) introduced the report that set out the current status of intergenerational practices in the borough and opportunities for developing and embedding intergenerational activities to address loneliness and social isolation. He was joined by Jazz Browne (Chief Executive of Nubian Life), Precisa Getsevich (Youth Council), and Adam Semar (Youth Council).

Julius Olu highlighted some of the key examples of existing intergenerational practice in Hammersmith & Fulham and opportunities for the development of activities to combat social isolation and loneliness. He praised the borough’s diverse third sector, supported by the Council’s Third Sector Investment Fund, that met a wide range of resident needs. He noted the inter-generational work that was already happening, but said there were opportunities to expand it further.

Jazz Browne addressed the Board and explained that Nubian Life was a care provider for older Afro-Caribbean and Asian people with complex health and social care needs. Nubian Life believed it was important for older people to remain connected to their community and intergenerational work was an important part of achieving that. Intergenerational activities could provide a creative approach to community development and helped challenge systematic ageism. She then discussed two successful projects – a sewing club and a gardening club that brought together people aged 5 to 87. She noted that intergenerational activities worked best when they were mutually beneficial and suggested developing activities around mutual interests.

Julius Olu highlighted some of the intergeneration work in Children’s Services from the report. International Baccalaureate had an intergenerational component with older people mentoring young people. Family Hubs presented opportunities for intergenerational practice. Community spaces, including Family Hubs, provided spaces for older people to care for grandchildren and meet other grandparents. Children’s Services were reviewing options for intergenerational practice as part of the Family Hub programme including grandparent-friendly Family Hubs,

grandparent-specific sessions, services and information for grandparents/older carers, and identifying the school's offer in intergenerational practice.

The Chair welcomed Precisa Getsevich and Adam Semar from H&F's Youth Council to the meeting. Adam Semar said the Youth Council had discussed intergenerational work and put forward the idea of skill sharing between different generations – for example, younger people could share their digital skills with older people. Another area for the Youth Council was around better understanding democracy. Many younger people didn't understand the inner workings of local councils and other democratic institutions and he suggested this was an area that older people could share their knowledge and experience. Lastly, he noted that a priority for the Youth Council was around expanding volunteering opportunities and to that end, they were looking to implement an online platform to facilitate and reward volunteering in the borough. Precisa Getsevich spoke about the valuable experiences she had taken from her grandparents but noted that many children didn't have grandparents around to pass on their skills and experience. She felt intergenerational schemes could help bridge that gap.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler noted she had heard of a London-based charity that matched young people looking for somewhere to stay with older people who had a spare room. The younger people would pay minimal rent in return for providing some practical help around the home and companionship. She suggested the Council could promote those types of schemes in the borough. Julius Olu said he would investigate.

ACTION: Julius Olu

Councillor Natalia Perez asked if there were specific communities that the Council would like to engage further in this area. Julius Olu said this work was still at an early stage. Officers had identified need, but further work was required. Councillor Perez highlighted the challenges for first generation migrants, particularly older populations who may suffer from increased instances of isolation and loneliness. She felt there were opportunities to bridge gaps.

Councillor Jacolyn Daly asked Jazz Browne what she thought made the gardening and sewing clubs work so well. Jazz Browne said they took a genuine interest in what people wanted to achieve and created the space to let them follow through. She added that the willingness and commitment of their volunteers was also key to their success.

Councillor Daly noted the borough had some great youth services and clubs and felt there was an opportunity for them to deliver some intergenerational activities. She also suggested some of the unspent money from the King's Coronation fund for youth services could be used for this work.

Councillor Rory Vaughan said he was pleased to see such a rich base of projects already in borough. He asked what the Council could do to support them to prosper, and what infrastructure was necessary to enable people who have ideas to take them forward.

Julius Olu agreed the Council needed to be a bridge to support the borough's third sector. He noted the Council had a small grants application process whereby groups could bid for money. The Council was also around the mid-point of its Third Sector Investment Fund strategy. Intergenerational work was already in the service specification, but it could be strengthened further.

Jazz Browne suggested that we could make better use of the Volunteer Centre in the borough. She noted there were a number of forums in place, including Community Connect started by People Arise Now, that could be used to further the conversation. Councillor Vaughan commented that we seemed to have people wanting to do this work, but they needed the room to put it into practice.

The Chair noted that young people had regularly talked about a lack of volunteering opportunities for under 16s and asked if this could be an area for improvement. Jazz Browne agreed. She said Nubian Life had provided work experience placements for secondary schools, but she felt only the schools closest to them knew about it.

Councillor Nicole Trehy suggested going to Youth Centres to see what type of activities people were most interested in. She also noted that there were large numbers of young people from schemes like the Duke of Edinburgh's Award looking for volunteering placements but few places to go. More work needed to be done to align these groups.

Councillor Nikos Souslous said he regularly heard from charities that they didn't know what services were already available and suggested the Council needed a way to highlight them. He also asked if there were any programmes where students went into care homes to spend quality time with older people. The Chair noted that Hammersmith Academy had a scheme, which stopped during the pandemic but was due to restart this year, where students could volunteer at the Elgin Centre next door to the school. Julius Olu said he would take these suggestions to colleagues in Children's Services.

ACTION: Julius Olu

Councillor Nicole Trehy asked if the local voluntary sector was still healthy given the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis. Jazz Browne said it was a mixed picture. Fulham Good Neighbours had retained roughly the same number of volunteers, but they had less time to give. They were planning a recruitment drive shortly.

Precisa Getsevich said they should allow children to volunteer. Younger people were keen to volunteer, had the time, and didn't have the same financial pressures as adults – but they were often restricted from volunteering opportunities.

The Chair noted that many Councillors were on the Boards of voluntary groups and in her experience turnover was high. Given the financial climate, more people needed to be economically active and finding long term volunteers was difficult. She thought there may be opportunities for young people and said she would take it away and develop the idea further.

ACTION: Councillor Homan

Shad Haibatan (SOBUS) welcomed the focus on intergenerational projects. He noted that the number of volunteers was reducing. Regarding allowing children to volunteer, he said there were potential safeguarding issues and organisations would need support and training around that. He also suggested there should be more investment from the health sector towards intergenerational projects as they improved health and wellbeing.

Councillor Vaughan noted there had been a long-standing issue with young people in year 10 looking for work experience opportunities, but many companies weren't able to get insurance so there weren't enough places. He suggested perhaps they could consider voluntary opportunities instead.

Katrina Getsevich addressed the Board and noted that she had benefited greatly from being a part of the Youth Council and H&F Volunteer Centre. When she was younger there were a range of projects where older people shared their skills – including producing radio shows and magazines. The skills she learnt helped her build a career. She felt volunteering was important but there should be more of a focus on the benefits for volunteers such as training and qualifications.

The Chair thanked everyone for participating in the discussion and sharing their ideas. She noted that the Council did not have a lot of additional money to invest but there was work to do to ensure the borough was getting the best of what was out there, working in the most productive way. She highlighted the following areas for further investigation:

- Intergenerational housing arrangements.
- Voluntary sector grant funding and building intergenerational work into future funding commitments.
- Sharing life skills across generations.
- The Council's role as facilitator.
- Identifying less engaged communities.
- Ensuring we are not boxing people into restrictive age categories.
- Intergenerational wealth inequality, as highlighted by the Resolution Foundation.

RESOLVED

1. The Board discussed what further opportunities there were for intergenerational practices in H&F and provided a steer on the way forward.

5. DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Nicola Ellis (Strategic Director Chief Operating Officer) introduced the report which outlined the new co-produced Digital Inclusion Strategy for the borough. Tina Akpogheneta (Chief Digital Officer) and Darren Persaud (Assistant Director Resident Experience Transformation) gave a presentation on the strategy that aimed to make Hammersmith & Fulham a more digitally inclusive borough, where residents have access to the digital skills, devices, and support they need to achieve their aspirations.

Darren Persaud discussed the importance of co-production, through the involvement of the Digital Accessibility Group – made up of residents who reflected the diversity of the borough. He noted that input had also been obtained from other Council departments and the voluntary and community sector. Darren Persaud also spoke about the feedback that had been incorporated from the Policy and Oversight Board meetings in September and December 2022, detailed in paragraph 26 of the report.

Darren Persaud said the next steps for the strategy included further feedback from the Board, further conversations with the Cabinet Member, then sign-off from the Digital Accessibility Group, and final approval at Cabinet.

Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier thanked officers for their work on this important area. He noted the pandemic had accelerated digitalisation of many areas of life and hoped the pace of support and regulation would keep up. He said he could attest to the quality of work in the Digital Accessibility Group and that it was inspiring to see. He spoke about the importance of looking at services early to ensure they worked well for all residents from day one.

The Chair asked how outcomes would be measured. Nicola Ellis said they wanted data to validate the approach but there was still a lot more work to do on measuring outcomes.

Councillor Natalia Perez thanked officers for the update. She asked if the Council would support residents to access digital services like Universal Credit. She also asked if the Council's plans for free Wi-Fi access included safeguards for younger users to ensure they weren't exposed to inappropriate material. Nicola Ellis said the Council had welfare support teams to help users access benefits. As part of the cost-of-living Alliance, officers were also looking at a platform to highlight groups that provided additional support. Tina Akpogheneta added that online safety was not just for children. It was important that people felt safe online regardless of their age or level of experience. When the Council worked with third-party providers that needed to be built-in to the offer.

Councillor Daly asked, in reference to the Council's public website and online services, if there was a trade-off between accessibility and security. Tina Akpogheneta said security was a priority for the Council and all services were held to the same high standards and all suppliers were vetted for their security controls. She noted that accessibility as it related to the public website was more a design issue than a security issue.

Councillor Nikos Souslous asked for more information on the Good Things Foundation scheme to supply residents with devices. Darren Persaud said either services like Libraries or Housing would proactively identify people in need of devices, or people could make a direct request. They would be considered, then if successful, they would collect the device from a local library and be given advice about how to use it. The scheme was administered by Council officers, but the devices were supplied by the Good Things Foundation.

Councillor Souslous expressed concerns that some people could fall through the cracks if the criteria were too strict. He also asked if the Council was donating older

devices to the Good Things Foundation. Tina Akpogheneta said the Council was doing a device refresh in the next financial year and was planning to donate all reusable devices to be repurposed.

Councillor Souselous noted internet access in libraries used to be free and asked if it was possible to offer free Wi-Fi again. Darren Persaud clarified that Wi-Fi in libraries was free, and the first hour of desktop internet was free, but the second hour was paid. Officers were looking at the impact on revenue though and expected a decision in the next few weeks. The cost of printing had been raised previously, and that would be made free shortly.

Councillor Souselous noted the term 'elderly' had been used, but the sector preferred the term 'older people' instead. Officers said they would use the new term in future.

Following a question from Councillor Souselous, the Chair confirmed the Council did offer free Wi-Fi in sheltered housing.

The Chair noted that the Board had asked Community Fibre and Hyperoptic to make their social tariffs more widely known at the meeting in September 2022 and asked if progress had been made. Darren Persaud noted officers added text to the Council's website about this issue. He said colleagues were meeting with them soon about Wi-Fi in community centres. The Chair asked officers to circulate a list of sheltered housing schemes and community halls with free Wi-Fi.

ACTION: Tina Akpogheneta / Darren Persaud

Councillor Rory Vaughan said he would like to see clear measures to track progress. He also suggested member involvement would be useful to prioritise this work.

ACTION: Tina Akpogheneta / Darren Persaud

Shad Haibatan (SOBUS) addressed the Board and noted the Council needed to be aware of people and groups who could fall through the gaps of online only services. He believed every home should have basic access to internet given how many aspects of modern life relied on the internet. He also touched on the benefits and dangers of Artificial Intelligence, the threat of online scams, and the mental health consequences for young people spending so much time online.

Councillor Chevoppe-Verdier said the strategy went together with in-person delivery of services. It was not designed to replace in-person services. In response to the other points raised, he noted some exciting work being trialled in the pest control service to respond to questions from residents. He also recognised the concerns around fraud. He said the strategy aimed to give people the skills to use their devices with confidence. He also noted that an upcoming update to the Council's website would allow automatic translation of all content into the most common languages spoken in London.

Jazz Browne (Chief Executive of Nubian Life) asked if there was a drive to use assistive technologies for older people. Darren Persaud said the Council had an expert on technology enabled care and they were looking at provision in some care

homes. They were aware that some older residents were wary of these technologies though.

Jazz Browne noted that day centres weren't connected to the Council and suggested officers explored how to use assistive technology in day centres. The Chair said this sounded like an area for co-production – Adult Social Care could explore how they could develop the service in partnership with users. Councillor Perez suggested it could be discussed at Health PAC as item.

ACTION: David Abbott

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions.

RESOLVED

1. That the Board reviewed and commented on the new Digital Inclusion Strategy and accompanying action plan.

6. POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEES' UPDATE REPORT

The Chair introduced the report outlining the areas of work and reports considered by each of the Council's six Policy and Accountability Committees, from April 2023 to September 2023.

RESOLVED

1. The Board noted the report.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair introduced the draft work programme for 2023/24.

The Chair noted that the Youth Council had been invited to attend in December to discuss their manifesto and policy development work. She also requested an update on the Fuel Poverty Strategy and the Council's response to the cost-of-living crisis.

RESOLVED

1. The Board noted the draft work programme for 2023/24 and suggested additions or amendments.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates of future meetings were noted:

- 11 Dec 2023
- 23 Jan 2024
- 29 Apr 2024

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 9.16 pm

Chair

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Policy and Oversight Board Action Sheet 2023/24

20 June 2023

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
1.	Item 4 – Update on Co-production	Jane Wilmot said the Council wrote a statement for every (Civic Campus) contractor that set out its expectations around inclusivity. The Chair suggested these elements could be written into a range of contracts and activities undertaken by the Council. She asked officers to investigate potential areas where this could be done.	<p>Response from the procurement team:</p> <p>When we seek to buy goods, works and services, the specification identifies the context and requirements. Co-production allows for joint development of the specification. Engagement supports understanding of requirements and formal consultation may also be involved for some regulated areas.</p> <p>Any contractual requirements will be derived from the specification and align with H&F contractual clauses regarding equalities.</p> <p>Based on the specification, our procurements can then include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific questions relating to inclusion in the evaluation of tenders for goods, works or services we are buying. • social/added value for contracts over £100k, where some measures are aimed 	Julian Eccles	Done

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
			at enhancing inclusion e.g. care experienced residents, lone parents, those with poor mental health etc.		
2.	Item 4 – Update on Co-production	Cllr Nikos Souslous asked if there were lessons from working with organisations like the police. The Chair suggested inviting the police and the co-production team to a future meeting.	Item added to the Social Inclusion and Community Safety PAC long list for consideration.	David Abbott	Done
3.	Item 4 – Update on Co-production	Cllr Nicole Trehy noted that the Met Police wouldn't be responding to mental health calls beyond September 2023 and raised concerns about the impact on neurodiverse people. The Chair suggested this could be considered at a future meeting.	Item added to the Social Inclusion and Community Safety long list for consideration.	David Abbott	Done
4.	Item 4 – Update on Co-production	It was agreed that each PAC receive a quarterly update on previous and planned co-production activity. And the Board would consider a summary of such reports biannually.	The first updates have been scheduled for the November PAC meetings.	Julian Eccles	Done
5.	Item 5 – Introduction of Voter ID Requirements	Re producing elections materials in different languages - Kayode Adewumi said if members were aware of community organisations the team	Cllr Perez emailed the Elections team with community group contacts.	Committee Members / Kayode Adewumi	Done

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
		could work with, they could send him the details.			
6.	Item 5 – Introduction of Voter ID Requirements	Cllr Jacolyn Daly thought Voter ID awareness needed a Council-wide approach and asked PAC Chairs to think about how different departments could respond.	PAC Chairs have been contacted to think about how different areas of the Council could respond.	PAC Chairs	Done
7.	Item 5 – Introduction of Voter ID Requirements	Elections officers to work with the co-production team to ensure all materials being sent out were accessible.	Actioned. Elections send all public materials to the co-production team for comment prior to circulation.	Zoe Wilkins	Done
8.	Item 5 – Introduction of Voter ID Requirements	Officers to circulate the Electoral Commission's report to members.	The EC's interim analysis report was circulated by email on 26/03/2023. The full report was circulated on 23/11/2023.	Zoe Wilkins	Done

18 September 2023

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
9.	Item 4 – Intergenerational Practice	Officers to investigate London-based charity that matched young people looking for somewhere to stay with older people who had a spare room. Suggested the Council could promote.	In Adult Social Care a scheme that is similar to this is Shared Lives Plus (sharedlivesplus.org.uk) and officers are in the process of developing a business case for starting this in H&F. Shared Lives is a care and support service which is for people aged 16+ (in England and Scotland) and 18+ (in Wales and Northern Ireland) who want to live independently in their community, with the support of a family and community network. It's an alternative to supported living or residential care. Shared Lives carers use their own home and family life to share it with someone who needs support around the UK.	Julius Olu	Done
	Item 4 – Intergenerational Practice	Officers to explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the Council could highlight services available to charities and other groups. • programmes where students helped out in care homes (see Hammersmith Academy and the Elgin Centre). 	Officers are working on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infusing intergenerational practice into relevant developing strategies or strategies under review – e.g. the draft 3SIF strategy. • Turn the policy team's research briefing into a 	Julius Olu	Done

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
			<p>guidance document for third sector organisations to consider as part of the future 3SIF investment programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Sobus about actions following their meeting with the Youth Council. 		
11.	Item 4 – Intergenerational Practice	Chair to develop idea around engaging young people in voluntary work.	Made links between the Youth Council and Nubian Life. Third sector programme lead tasked with exploring how to better promote young people volunteering through discussion with The Volunteer Centre and linking them to the Youth Council.	Cllr Homan	Complete
12.	Item 5 – Digital Inclusion Strategy for H&F	Officers to circulate list of sheltered housing schemes with free Wi-Fi.	List circulated on 25 Oct 2023.	Tina Akpogheneta / Darren Persaud	Complete
13.	Item 5 – Digital Inclusion Strategy for H&F	Officers to provide clear measures to track progress and include member involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers have contacted key internal stakeholders to pull together their specific key metrics. Digital Accessibility Group workshop 18/10/23 – to get views on key measurements. 	Tina Akpogheneta / Darren Persaud	In progress

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Sector workshop on 22/11/23 at Shortlands with 15 orgs attending to review work to date, and firm up key measurements. There will also be a stakeholder workshop with internal colleagues on 30/11/23. • The final strategy with key measurements will then go through internal governance before Cabinet approval on 12/02/24. One of the recommendations is a delivery group to be chaired by Cllr Chevoppe-Verdier. 		
14.	Item 5 – Digital Inclusion Strategy for H&F	Item for Health PAC – Connectivity and assistive technologies in day centres.	Item sent to Health PAC Chair / added to work programme long list for consideration.	David Abbott	Complete

Last updated: 01/12/2023

Report to: Policy and Oversight Board

Date: 11/12/2023

Subject: Youth Voice Update

Report author: Brenda Whinnett, Youth Voice Coordinator

Responsible Director: Jacqui McShannon, Strategic Director Children’s Services

SUMMARY

This report provides an update to Policy and Oversight Board on recent developments to strengthen the reach and impact of youth voice in Hammersmith & Fulham. It explains the approach adopted by the Youth Council (with support from officers and community partners) to research, define, and action the priorities of our young people on their key areas of focus:

- Inclusion
- Mental Health & Emotional Well Being
- Life skills (*preparation for adulthood*)
- Staying safe
- Work experience and work readiness

The report also outlines progress to date and next steps.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Board to note and comment on the approach and progress and agree how to support the next steps.
2. For the Board to identify a link Policy and Accountability Chair to support the young people with each of their priority areas.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Creating a compassionate council	Through youth voice opportunities we aim to expand opportunities and possibilities in young people’s lives so they feel valued, connected to their community and acquire transferable skills.

Doing things with local residents, not to them	Youth Voice in H&F means truly valuing the voices and lived experiences of our young residents to shape a happier, healthier and safer borough.
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Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Background

1. A collaborative youth voice strategy was launched in July in 2022. Co-produced with our Youth Council, Children’s Services Colleagues, and community partners – including the Young Hammersmith & Fulham Foundation – it aimed to streamline and strengthen the reach, influence and impact of youth voice and embed co-production with young people as *‘the way we do things’*.
2. Key priorities included:
 - Having an evidence-base of young people’s priorities that could be the driver for our strategic boards and partnerships.
 - Expanding the reach, visibility and impact of our Youth Council, further developing its diversity and representation of all of our young people.
 - A fun, inclusive, creative youth voice programme and calendar of activities, linking with our youth providers and targeted services.
 - To develop clear governance arrangements, feedback mechanisms and evidence of the impact.
 - A borough wide approach to driving forward the young people’s priorities with increased collaboration across our departments and community partners.

Progress to date

3. Following an outreach programme and open events throughout the borough, we have a thriving and more diverse and representative Youth Council, with over 50 active members. We continue to host outreach sessions throughout the borough and have an inclusive calendar of youth voice activities.
4. Evidence based policy training was delivered to the Youth Council by the Industrial Strategy Lead - Tom Perrigo.
5. The Youth Council have delivered a creative and inclusive borough wide research project in collaboration with our youth providers, targeted services,

and community partners. This has included arts and drama-based sessions, focus groups, online polls and surveys, social media, and video projects.

6. We have captured the views and experiences of over 2000 young people and have developed a core set of priorities for the key areas of focus.
7. Matt Sales, Assistant Director, Programmes, Assurance and Analytics, assisted with identifying strategic leads to support the young people from across all our council departments.
8. There have been two well attended meetings with the young people and strategic leads on 19 and 24 September 2023. The leads have shared the work already being delivered and proposed in relation to the young people's priorities and together we have identified any outstanding gaps.
9. Additional workshops are planned on Community Safety, Healthy Relationships & Volunteering for Young People, areas we feel need further discussion with the young people.
10. Youth Council presented this approach to Full Council on 1 November 2023.

Next steps

11. A report is being produced detailing the young people's priorities and the services, support and initiatives currently being delivered or upcoming that support these priorities and the identified gaps.
12. This will be shared with the young people and strategic leads at the next session on 12 December 2023, which will enable us to start to co-produce collaborative actions.
13. Strategic leads will be responsible for ensuring that the views of young people are taken into account within strategic priorities and service delivery. This will be monitored through present governance structures to ensure that actions are implemented.
14. Further sessions are planned in early 2024 to develop an action plan which can be presented at the next Policy and Oversight Board meeting.

Proposed involvement of the Policy Oversight Board

15. Youth Council will explain the approach to Policy Oversight Board and present their slides at the December meeting.
16. For the Board to identify a link to support the young people with each of their priority areas.
17. The strategic leads could give updates on how they are supporting with driving the young people's priorities forward at Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee or other relevant meetings.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Youth Voice Update Presentation

Youth Voice Update

Presentation to Policy Oversight Board

11th December 2023

Presented by:

Niamh (Youth Mayor)

Vince (Deputy MYP)

Albi- (Youth Councillor)

Ealaf- (Youth Councillor)

Precisa (Youth Councillor)

Adam (Youth Councillor)



H&F_YOUTH

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Purpose of Youth Voice

Valuing the voices of our young residents to shape a happier, healthier and safer borough.

Expanding opportunities and possibilities

Deciding with us not for us..

Young people as influencers, co-producers, & agents of change

Feeding into all levels of decision making

Young residents feel valued, connected to the community & gain transferable skills

Development Areas

Strengthen

Inclusivity,

Diversity &

Reach

**Improving
Communication**

Creative &

FUN!!

Evidence of

Impact

Young people's

priorities as

the 'driver'

Just some of the highlights...

Co produced youth voice strategy, priorities & principles

Calendar of Inclusive Youth Voice Activities

YP involved in interviews, strategies and Commissioning

Reaching out in creative ways.

**Youth Achievement Awards- Over 200 nominations and community sponsorship
March 23**

Increasingly diverse & representative Youth Council

Views of 1000s of young people

**YOUTH
VOICE
Research**

Our Focus

Inclusion

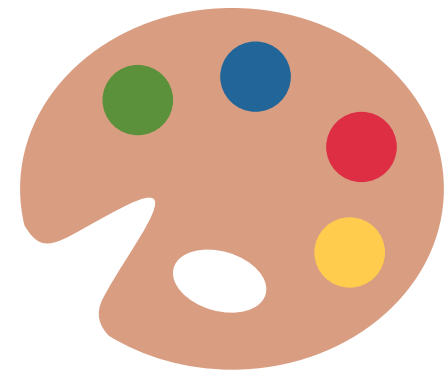
Staying safe

Life Skills

Mental Health

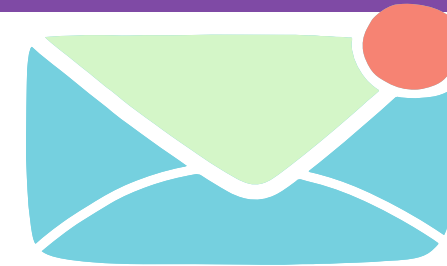
**Work Readiness &
Work Experience**

Borough-wide research June-October 23



Summer in the City - Youth Voice Art & Picnic in the Park- 30th August 23

Reaching out - focus groups and arts-based sessions:
William Morris Sixth Form, Masbro Youth Club; Sulgrave Youth Club; Action On Disability and HF Mencap



Collaboration
YH&FF Peer Researchers & Youth Board;
Action on Disability Youth Board

Launched in CHS newsletter

Youth Justice Service
Disproportionality - Stop & Think Survey



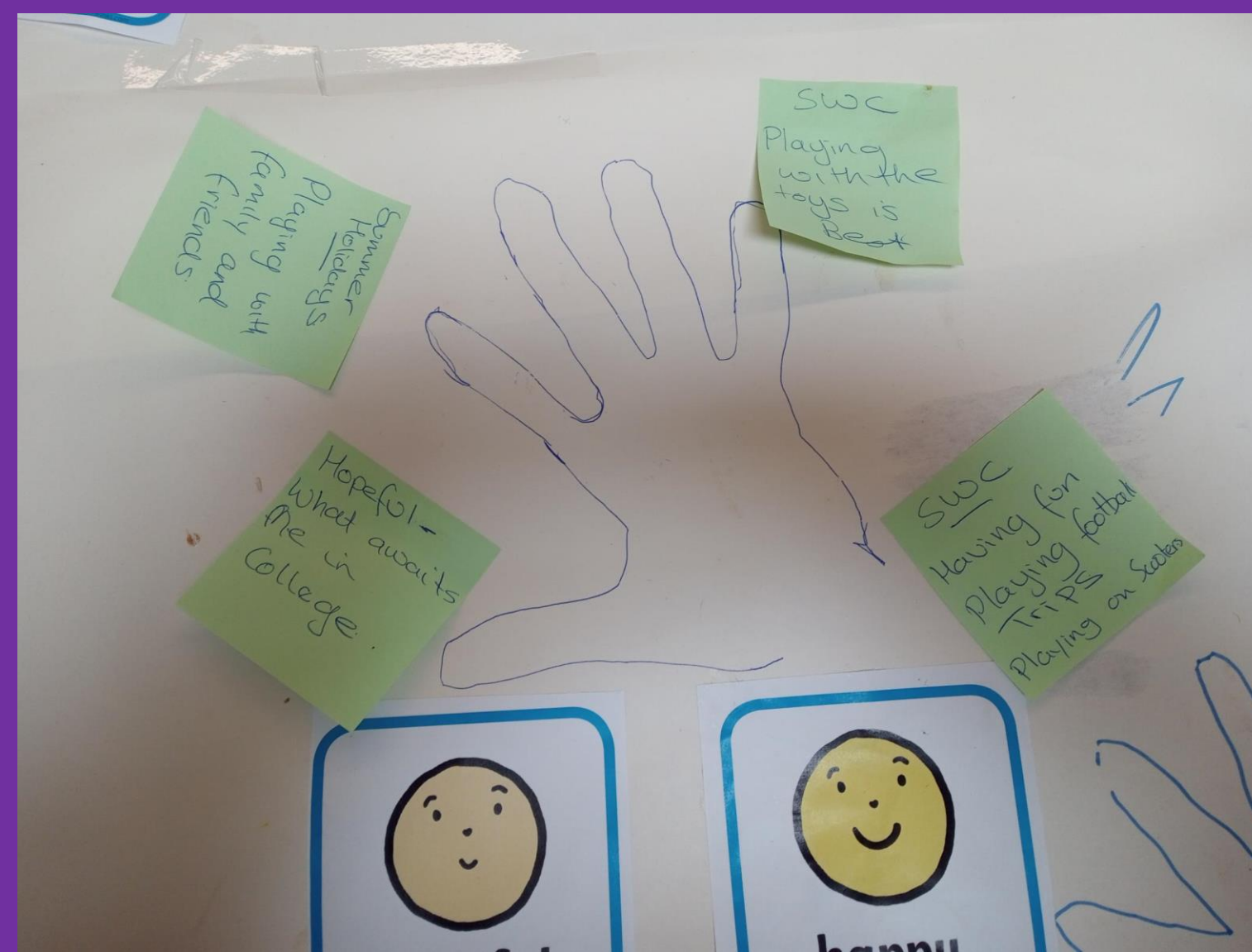
Multiple methods - Videos, Menti-meter, social media polls and in person

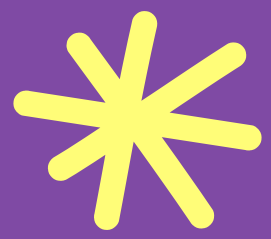


Youth Voice Well Being Week at Stephen Wiltshire Centre and Old Oak (August 21st to 25th)

School drop-ins and PHSCE sessions







Next Steps- Analysis of Findings



Following our evidence- base training with the Industrial Strategy Lead and a borough wide inclusive research project,

We have:

- **Captured the views and experiences of over 2000 young people.**
- **Clear priorities emerging from the research.**
- **Identified next steps to drive our priorities forward.**



Next Steps- Continued



We have identified strategic leads supporting us from across council departments:

- **Children's Services & Commissioning**
- **Education & School Improvement**
- **Economic Development,**
- **People & Talent,**
- **Public Health**
- **Cultural Services and**
- **Community Safety.**

We are also working with the Young Hammersmith & Fulham Foundation, Sobus and the WEST Youth Zone.



Next Steps- Analysis of Findings



- ✓ **2 successful well attended meetings on 19th September and 24th October 2023!**
- **Leads have shared work already being delivered and proposed and together we have identified the gaps.**
- **Additional workshops planned on Community Safety, Healthy Relationships & Volunteering for Young People.**
- **Next meeting on 12th December to discuss the gaps and start to identify actions.**
- **Report of findings- Identified gaps and 3- year action- to be shared at next POB!**



Agenda Item 5

Report to: Policy and Oversight Board

Date: 11/12/2023

Subject: Continuing response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis

Report author: Samuel Baldock, Policy Officer
Matthew Sales, Assistant Director

Responsible Director: Sukvinder Kalsi, Director of Finance

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Rebecca Harvey, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion & Community Safety

OVERVIEW

1. This report shows the continued priority the Council is giving to supporting residents and businesses through the Cost of Living (COL) crisis. This follows previous reports to the Policy and Oversight Board in December 2022 and April 2023.
2. The Council's COL crisis response has been strengthened in 2023/24, with a strategy guiding additional investment made by the Council as well as the allocation of the government's Household Support Fund (HSF). We have built on our successful track record of compassionate local government and keeping the cost of council tax low for residents. Our COL Alliance has drawn together voluntary and community sector organisations, resident groups, business representative organisations and public sector partners to work together as part of our response.
3. This report describes the range of new and continued statutory, discretionary and partner schemes that form part of our response programme under a six-point plan. This includes building blocks to develop a longer-term strategic approach to prevent poverty and its impacts, one of the key priorities in the Council's new Corporate Plan for 2023-26. Our ambition is that every citizen in H&F can live a healthy, happy, and dignified life, free from poverty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. That the Policy and Oversight Board note the report and provide comments and feedback to help shape and improve H&F's response to the COL crisis 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	Our COL funding strategy for 2023/24 was developed to target our resources to residents and families most in need, informed by H&F's Businesses Intelligence analysis, policy research and engagement with partners.
Doing things with residents, not to them	We have built the COL Alliance with voluntary and community sector organisations and other local partners to help guide priorities as part of our response, share resources and knowledge and place residents' voices at the centre of the work.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	We have taken a ruthlessly financially efficient approach to the management and delivery of support, through making best use of existing resources to work flexibly across the organisation, so more resources reach those that need it.
Taking pride in H&F	The COL Response Programme focuses on helping residents most in need and strengthening partnerships locally through the COL Alliance.
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. The COL crisis continues to cause financial hardship for local residents. Inflation remains high, rent and mortgage costs have increased, and the prices of essential items such as food have frequently and continuously risen. The broader economic outlook is more positive than a few months ago. The forecast recession has not occurred, and headline inflation has decreased from 11.1% in October 2022 to 4.6% in October 2023. Whilst interest rates remain high, impacting on mortgaged homeowners as well as local businesses, the base rate has stabilised at 5.25%.

6. Nonetheless, high inflation has eroded the spending power of all residents. For lower-income residents it has been particularly punitive, as a higher proportion of their income is spent on essential living costs such as food, clothes, energy, and rent, so their lived rate of inflation is often higher than higher-income groups. The Resolution Foundation¹ reports that following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2023, households will, on average, be £1,900 poorer at the end of this UK Parliament than at its start (December 2019 to January 2025). Nationally, 22% of the UK's population (an estimated 14.5 million people) now live in poverty.²

¹ [A pre-election Statement • Resolution Foundation](#)

² [Tackling Child Poverty 2023 | IGPP](#)

7. Inflation is expected to remain above the Bank of England's 2% target until into 2025. Energy bills for typical households will also rise by another 5% to over £1,900 in January 2024.³ Last winter, most households in the borough benefitted from the £400 national energy grant. The latest increase means households will pay more this winter than any winter before, with the price cap almost 60% higher than winter 2021/22⁴. In Hammersmith & Fulham, 12,870 emergency food parcels were provided to residents in need between April and September this year, up from 6,074 in the same period the year before.⁵ Locally, one in four households have a combined income of under £30,000.
8. Residents of H&F, especially those hit hardest, therefore continue to remain in need of support from the Council and local partners, and COL remains a key priority of the Administration.

OUR STRATEGIC RESPONSE

9. Since the summer of 2022, H&F has provided a wide range of COL support. The total package is worth £10m across 2022 and 2023. This does not include the Council's long-standing commitments as a compassionate Council, such as free homecare to older and Disabled residents, the only Council to do this, and free breakfasts to every primary school child, with over a million free breakfasts provided to primary school children since 2019.
10. The response programme is steered by the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety and supported by a cross-departmental officer working group. The working group meets frequently, bringing together various Council services to progress actions related to our response.
11. For 2023/24, the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety agreed a strategy to guide the Council's investment. This was extended by £1m of Council resources for COL support and £150,000 of Public Health Grant to support public health objectives. The strategy has also directed the use of £2.83m of HSF we received from the government. The additional investment made by the Council has allowed us to enhance existing schemes, as well as introduce a range of new schemes and grants to support our local communities. The strategy is made up of over 25 schemes across statutory, discretionary and partner services.
12. We believe, based on limited communication from government, that the HSF will be cut in 2024/25 and will not be extended beyond March 2024. The government's Autumn Statement made no reference to the HSF, and the government's proposed benefits changes will mean Disabled residents will have to look for work or risk losing their benefits even if they are unable to work, and Universal Credit claimants will face tougher restrictions.⁶ This reduction in accessibility to benefits, and cut of the HSF which supports people through the COL crisis, means that poverty will increase, and our residents will suffer. As a Council, we will be left to plug the gap, following the

³ [Energy price cap: What is it and what will happen to bills in January? - BBC News](#)

⁴ [What is the energy price cap? | MoneySavingExpert](#)

⁵ [More food parcels handed out in Hammersmith and Fulham this summer \(londonworld.com\)](#)

⁶ [How the 2023 autumn statement will affect disabled people | Disability charity Scope UK](#)

ongoing cuts in local authority funding from central government, with H&F's net expenditure budget now 56% lower than it was in 2010 (amounting to £652m in funding cuts from central government).⁷ We are currently considering the implications of central government cuts of HSF to supporting residents through the COL crisis and addressing the causes and impacts of poverty.

13. We have made extensive use of our Business Intelligence service to monitor and respond to the impacts of the crisis. This includes monitoring the support provided to residents through our dedicated COL Advice Team and COL webpages to identify how many residents are contacting us, and the reasons for the contact. Key statistical highlights are included in a quarterly COL infographic, presented to the working group to better target our response.

OUR SIX POINT PLAN

Point 1: We continue to fund a package of support to help keep costs down

14. Whilst costs of essentials have soared, we have kept down costs where we can. We have a proud record of keeping Council Tax low, despite the continuous large cuts in our funding by central government since 2010. Despite double-digit inflation, our ruthless financial efficiency has meant we have only marginally increased Council Tax by 2.99% to ensure that our services remain the best quality. We are proud to have the fourth lowest Council Tax in London, and the seventh lowest in the UK. Furthermore, our Council Tax is structured so that only 53% of residents this year had to pay the full amount, with our residents who face the greatest hardship not having to pay anything.⁸ Moreover, we are committed to ethical debt collection; connecting those in debt with advice and support, ensuring bailiffs are not sent to residents that cannot afford to pay and instead agreeing affordable repayment plans.
15. This winter we have launched the Winter Ready Homes scheme (see Figure 1 overleaf). This scheme is helping residents in fuel poverty (including residents in the private rented sector and Registered Social Landlord housing) to access and afford improvements to their homes' energy efficiency. By helping to insulate residents' homes, we can help reduce the costs of bills. This scheme includes funding to carry out small energy efficiency measures, as well as support in accessing government funding to carry out larger efficiency works through schemes like the Energy Company Obligation and Great British Insulation Scheme.
16. Beyond this scheme, the Council is delivering an ambitious programme to improve the energy efficiency of Council homes and buildings. So far, we have retrofitted homes in the borough through upgrading windows, installing additional insulation, and adding solar panels where we can. Furthermore, this October we opened applications for free whole-house retrofit plans (which usually cost £540) to 100 homeowners and landlords in Hammersmith & Fulham via Ecofurb.⁹ These measures can have a significant impact on energy bills, with loft insulation in a mid-terrace house saving the average household £225 annually. This work is expanding,

⁷ [H&F Annual Report 2023-24 \(lbhf.gov.uk\)](#), p.2, p.4

⁸ [H&F Annual Report 2023-24 \(lbhf.gov.uk\)](#), p.2

⁹ [Climate change and planning | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham \(lbhf.gov.uk\)](#)

for example using air source heat pumps at the Gibbs Green Estate which will reduce energy bills by 60%.

Figure 1: Winter Ready Homes scheme



The banner features a background image of modern apartment buildings. On the right side, there is a logo for 'h&f hammersmith & fulham' with a blue wave graphic. The main text 'Winter Ready Homes' is in large, white, bold font.

Winter Ready Homes

Save money and stay warm this winter

Winter Ready Homes is a free scheme that offers H&F residents small grants to cover low-cost and renter-friendly energy efficiency upgrades.

These improvements are intended to be quick and easy, helping you to save money and stay warm this winter.

You may be eligible for a grant if you are:

- Currently receiving means-tested benefits
- Living on a low income
- Over 65
- Have a long-term health condition or disability
- Living with children under the age of 5



A large, white radiator is shaped like a house, with a square cutout in the center representing a window. A smaller, similar radiator is positioned above and to the right of the main one.

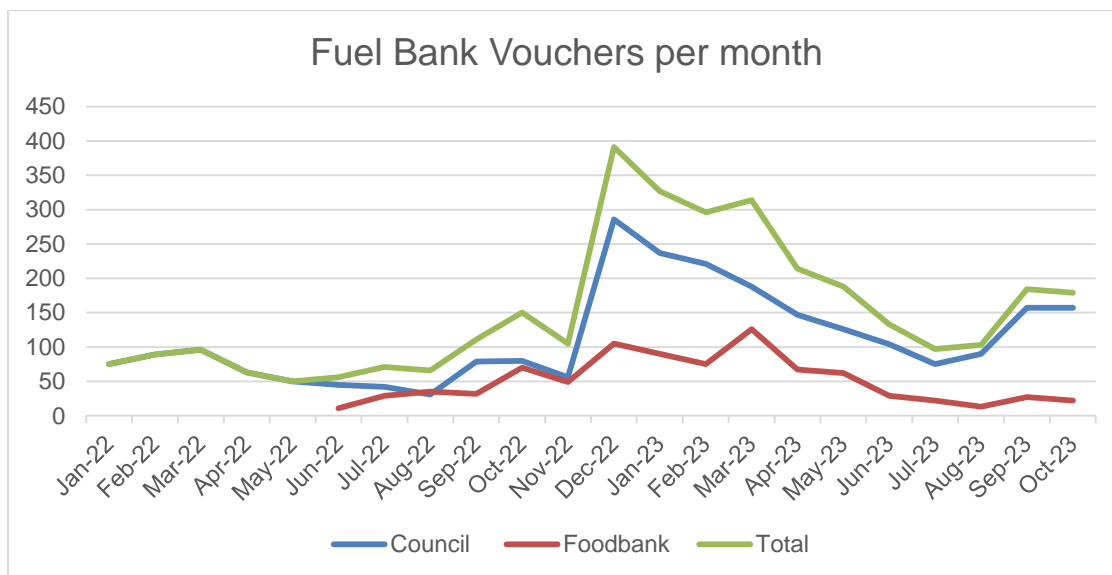
For further information and help, please contact our Green Doctors:

- 📞 0300 365 5003
- @ greendoctorsldn@groundwork.org.uk
- 🌐 www.lbhf.gov.uk/winter-ready-homes



17. Residents with pre-payment meters have been particularly impacted, partly because of the rise in standing charges. We welcome the planned levelling of standing charges from April 2024 with the same rate of standing charges as direct debit customers. The unfairness with higher standing charges for pre-payment meter customers is effectively penalising some of the poorest residents of the borough.
18. Given the financial challenges pre-payment meter residents often face, we have continued to provide £49 fuel top-up vouchers, for households who are at risk of disconnection, via the Fuel Bank Foundation (FBF). The graph below shows the number of vouchers issued per month to residents from referrals by the COL Advice Team or the Foodbank. Almost 1,100 vouchers have been issued this financial year, double that for the same period in 2022/23. These vouchers have provided a lifeline for residents, including families with children, the Disabled and older residents, who have no heating, light or power because they have run out of credit or are at imminent risk of running out of credit. Residents can receive support three times over a six-month period, though we have provided discretion for additional support to be provided depending on the circumstances.

Figure 2 – Pre-payment vouchers issued by month



Point 2: We’re taking action through our Cost of Living Alliance to help tackle this crisis, together

19. Over the past year, H&F has built and coordinated partnerships to help communities navigate the COL crisis. We are maintaining a strong and capable third sector that is well-equipped to support our rapidly changing communities.
20. Early on, we worked with local partners to form the COL Alliance. This partnership draws together over 60 local voluntary and community sector organisations, resident organisations, business representative organisations and public sector partners to collectively respond to the crisis. The Alliance acts as a forum to share information and resources and discuss priorities for the borough.

21. Since it was formed, there have been two workshops and two conferences of the COL Alliance. The latest conference took place on 30 November 2023, to launch a number of the schemes in this year's strategy, including the £200,000 Winter Support Fund, a small grants scheme for voluntary and community service (VCS) organisations. The engagement of partners in the Alliance exemplifies the positive trajectory of community engagement which we anticipate will continue to strengthen how the Council works in partnership with our community organisations.
22. A core group of partners meet as the Alliance Steering Group. This group has helped shape and take forward priorities agreed at the workshops and conferences. This includes developing a business case for the procurement of a digital signposting platform for the borough. The platform will signpost residents and organisations to support services available through a searchable online database. Similar platforms form part of community services in other boroughs. As well as assisting in developing responses in times of crisis, the platform will ensure better connectivity between organisations and the Council and give residents better access to the support services they need. The procurement of a platform is well underway, with implementation from April 2024.
23. The signposting platform will amplify the richness of services available through the VCS and community organisations in the borough. We invest over £3.3m annually through the third sector investment fund to improve outcomes in communities. This includes commissioned advice services such as Citizens Advice, the H&F Law Centre and Action on Disability, grant funded projects, fast track small grants and support to the third sector itself to develop and excel.
24. Working with Alliance partners, we have developed an enhanced approach to Warm Welcomes this winter. Last year, Warm Welcomes supported 1,450 adults and children, providing residents with a welcome respite, warmth, food, activities, and support. This winter, we are offering grants of up to £5,000 to local organisations that host a Warm Welcome. Support will also be available at the Warm Welcomes through advice on debt, housing, and COL support. This will increase the quality and quantity of services provided by the Warm Welcomes. We already have 6 organisations signed up in the first month, with discussions underway with other interested organisations.

Point 3: We're targeting our resources to residents and families most in need

25. A key component of the success of our COL response has been tailoring it to ensure that our residents faced by the most hardship are prioritised. Over the full year, we anticipate making over 49,000 awards of help, reaching over 17,000 households.
26. This winter we are making one-off energy support payments to over 2,000 households, including families of Disabled children. This includes direct support to around 700 low-income working households in receipt of housing benefit that were not eligible for the government's national COL payment. We are also making one-off energy support payments to around 700 low-income Disabled residents because of their higher reliance on energy. Similarly, we are making a one-off energy payment to families of over 600 Disabled children in the borough, including higher payments for children that rely on equipment to help manage their conditions.

27. Beyond this, the COL response programme is prioritising the following support:

- Extending the Holiday Activity and Food Programme, which supports families on lower incomes, and children who are at-risk. The programme provides engaging activities for school-aged children for free over the school holidays, as well as nutritional education and a healthy nutritious meal. This provision has engaged over 3,400 children, with 22,560 meals served.
- Providing funding for care experienced young people because of the disparity and inequality they face. This builds on 'Care Experienced' being recognised as a protected characteristic at H&F and the opening in October this year of a Care Leavers' Hub in Shepherds Bush. The COL funding is being used to provide a one-off energy support payment to care leavers living independently, as well as help with furniture and furnishings and food provision via the hub.
- We are also supporting the Big Christmas Lunch donation appeal, which is looking to raise £40,000, partly to help pay for a free two-course Christmas meal at Novotel London West, Hammersmith, for 500 older residents.

28. The COL has meant some families have fallen into crisis. This year we are providing an additional safety net through the Crisis Prevention Fund (CPF). This scheme is open to any resident who faces a crisis which causes them to face financial difficulties and where they have no other financial support available, meaning, for example, that they have no money for food. Launched in October 2023, in the first few weeks £21,000 worth of payments have been made to 35 residents who have been most hard-hit by the COL crisis.

29. The CPF builds on other discretionary local welfare assistance support. Local Support Payments (LSP) support residents who have experienced a one-off emergency event or crisis and have no money available, largely relating to the replacement or provision of furniture and appliances e.g. to purchase a fridge to store medicine where the resident can't afford to buy one given their income and benefits. So far this financial year, £340,000 has been allocated of the £678,500 budget. In situations where residents cannot be helped by the CPF, the LSP can help. For example, a resident who was a new mother and had to leave their accommodation after recently losing their job was referred to LSP and received £374 to cover the costs of bedding and furniture for their newborn.

30. A key impact from the COL crisis locally has been a rise in homelessness, with the number of homelessness 17% higher than 12 months ago. Building on support last year, we have continued to provide additional funding to prevent homelessness through sustaining tenancies amongst tenants in the private rented sector, housing association tenancies and temporary accommodation (TA), as well as helping residents to navigate out of a cycle of debt and financial hardship through addressing their circumstances. In the first two quarters of 2023/24, 130 households were assisted to prevent homelessness, through financial help with rent, energy and utility costs, setting up homes and with clothing and uniforms for children.

Point 4: We're ensuring that residents can access help to maximise their income

31. By providing clear guidance and direction, we have been able to help residents engage with services that aid with budgeting and income maximisation.
32. The COL Advice Team was set up in 2022 and has continued to provide support to residents who are concerned about the COL crisis. So far in 2023/24, they have handled over 7,600 calls and almost 800 emails requesting support. The team has also undertaken assessments with 350 residents on their circumstances and what additional financial and other help they need, where almost 2,600 issues were raised. Ninety percent of these residents are in receipt of benefits, with a high proportion of women and single person households with or without dependents. The COL Advice Team has been well received by residents with lots of positive feedback.
33. This year, we have increased community engagement through the delivery of 26 COL Pop Ups, where residents receive advice or are signposted to support services. The Pop Ups have been delivered in areas of high footfall (such as shopping centres) and co-located as part of housing and health focused community events, recognising the importance of these agendas to wellbeing. So far, 821 residents have been engaged.
34. Nationally, personal debt is rising. We have recognised the impacts of this locally, to fund additional debt advice services for 2023/24 through increasing the capacity of specialist services and increasing access to debt advice. Additional funding has been provided to provide enhanced welfare assistance to Council tenants, helping over 130 social housing households with budgeting, financial support and maximising their income. Finally, we have also supported 235 working and other families with Council Tax arrears, supporting them onto re-payment plans alongside advice on financial planning and budgeting.

Point 5: We're building economic resilience and an inclusive local economy

35. H&F is home to major multinational corporations, attracted by our Industrial Strategy and the potential of our White City Innovation District. We are also committed to promoting and growing budding entrepreneurs and local small and medium businesses. These types of business have been most impacted by the COL crisis, and by providing support and guidance, we have helped them to engage customers and new business connections to be better equipped to grow and thrive.
36. The COL crisis has seen business costs soar, and many small businesses do not have the expertise, experience, and knowledge to identify cost-savings to combat this. Our Cost Reduction Programme works with local businesses to help do this. In the first quarter of 2023/24, 47 businesses have been supported, with £53,000 of savings identified. Beyond this, in the first six months of this financial year, our business advice centre has supported 351 local businesses, with 85 accessing free one-to-one business advice clinics with professional advisers. Furthermore, 58 businesses have engaged with our online training workshops.

37. The COL crisis has reduced residents' disposable income, with consumers buying fewer items, favouring cheaper own-brand products, and using loyalty schemes for supermarkets, as they are struggling to afford even essential items such as food.¹⁰ Smaller businesses struggle to compete with the cost-saving economies of scale open to multi-national corporations to attract unconfident buyers. Therefore, to promote great local businesses, we hosted two traffic-free street festivals, enabling 116 local businesses to promote their products and services to thousands of customers. The festivals boosted trade in North End Road and King Street, with footfall averaging 13,000 visitors in both areas. We are also working closely with high street associations to deliver initiatives that boost footfall and trade.
38. To listen to business views, H&F has a bi-monthly Business Network. This has helped businesses raise their concerns about the COL crisis and the Council to respond to these concerns. The H&F Local Supply Chain Project helps local companies access and win work from major property developments in the borough, as well as from the Council and its framework contractors. In the first six months of 2023/24, eight businesses secured £3.3m in new business from these opportunities.

Point 6: Building a strategic approach to tackling poverty

39. Whilst inflation is beginning to fall, the high cost-of-living and poverty are likely to continue for the longer term. H&F is committed to tackling these issues at a local level through a joined-up strategic approach, in the absence of any coherent central government strategy.
40. Our new Corporate Plan for 2023-26 identifies tackling poverty and its impacts as a key priority. Our ambition is that every citizen in H&F can live a healthy, happy, and dignified life, free from poverty. This ambition will provide a long-term golden thread that will filter into the design and delivery of all future strategic work. In tackling poverty, we are using our levers of influence across health, housing, employment and other settings, to drive action. Our ruthless financial efficiency means we will progress this commitment in spite of the government's cut of the HSF and real-term cuts of 56% in our funding since 2010.
41. For example, our draft Food Strategy is helping to improve local food security, and our updated Health and Wellbeing Strategy will aim to ensure that fewer people live in poverty and residents will be more energy secure. The next stage of our Industrial Strategy will seek to boost employment opportunities for everyone and ensure growth in the borough is inclusive and shared. Our new emerging Digital Inclusion Strategy aims to help local residents to gain the digital skills, knowledge and access they need to navigate an increasingly digital world. All these strategies are plans are underpinned by our commitment to work in partnership with local residents, businesses and community groups, to ensure we do things with residents, not to them.
42. Furthermore, our new Fuel Poverty Strategy is leading the way to drastically reduce rates of fuel poverty within the borough by helping residents improve their energy

¹⁰ ['Massive shift' in food shopping habits as prices soar - BBC News](#)

efficiency, alongside heating their homes. The strategy will extend beyond COL and help residents to save money on fuel costs in the long term through various support mechanisms including the Winter Ready Homes scheme discussed above and support in accessing government funding. Improving the energy efficiency of our buildings is the most effective way to reduce energy demand in homes, both reducing resident energy bills and reducing the carbon impact of heating.

43. We will also keep our focus on supporting residents with the COL this winter. The opening of our Warm Welcomes, launch of our new CPF and schemes such as Winter Ready Homes will help to offset some of these pressures, but are now at risk because of the cut of HSF from 2024/25. We will build on our co-production work talking directly with residents on the support they need to feed into our future plans.
44. We will continue to work with partners in the COL Alliance to listen to how residents are being impacted. Our response will carry on being guided by data, strong governance and scrutiny, and Cabinet Member leadership. We will continue to reflect on the changing national economic picture, evaluate delivery of the response programme over the winter, and identify our plan of action for the future.

APPENDIX A – COST OF LIVING SUPPORT SCHEMES

Workstream	Description of activity	Support schemes
COL Alliance	Alliance Steering Group (ASG) progressing agreed priorities.	Digital signposting platform.
		Strengthening training for VCS and volunteering opportunities.
Third sector support	Our strategy includes funding for targeted grants/ support to voluntary and community sector organisations against key COL priorities.	COL Alliance Conferences and workshops.
		Tackling food poverty – Foodbank and Food for All Partnership Co-ordinator.
		Specialist debt advice – Crosslight.
Essential Costs - Low Income Households	Funding for 2023/24 offers support for residents who are struggling with essential living costs and to provide direct financial assistance to groups particularly impacted by the crisis.	Winter Support Fund small grants scheme (H&F Giving).
		Council Tax arrears scheme.
		Local COL payment to Housing Benefit claimants.
		Extending holiday activity for children.
		Essential living cost support - Children in need and Care experienced young people.
Crisis Prevention	Direct financial support to residents who do not have access to other funding.	Big Christmas Lunch for older residents.
		Crisis prevention fund.
Community Support	Direct help and advice to residents to maximise their income and access services. Available on phone, online and on estates, shopping centres and other locations.	Local Support Payments extension.
		COL Advice Team – telephone, online and in person.
		Live Well Team – Warm Welcomes and COL Pop-Ups.
Housing and Homelessness	Support to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies and provide direct welfare support to social housing tenants.	Communications and promotion – COL Advice and Guidance Booklet for 2023/24.
		Homelessness prevention and Temporary Accommodation.
		Rental Income - discretionary support.
Energy Cost Support	Energy cost support and grants to most impacted groups.	Discretionary Housing Payments.
		Disabled residents & families energy support.
		Winter Ready Homes scheme.
		Prepayment meter vouchers.

Report to: Policy and Oversight Board

Date: 11/12/2023

Subject: Policy and Accountability Committees' Update Report

Report author: David Abbott, Head of Governance

Responsible Director: Nicola Ellis, Strategic Director of Corporate Services and Chief Operating Officer

SUMMARY

This report outlines the areas of work and reports considered by each of the Council's six Policy and Accountability Committees at their meetings in November 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the updates of the Policy and Accountability Committees and discuss any areas for future review or collaboration.
2. To approve the request from the Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee for a Task and Finish Group on improving vaccination rates in the borough.

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.

POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE UPDATES

Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee

The Committee considered the following items at its meeting on 13 November 2023:

- Virtual School Annual Report 2022/23
- Hammersmith and Fulham Local Area Outcomes Framework
- Implementing the Industrial Strategy in Education
- Summer in the City 2023

Members expressed appreciation to the work of the Virtual School, including the collaboration with University College London in enabling care experienced young people to access opportunities made available by local business matched by the local authority. It was noted that through the “Attachment Aware Schools’ programme”, centralised training and individual support had been provided to schools to enable the provision of a clear bridge between education and social care. On capacity for expansion, it was understood that the duty of the Virtual School Head had been extended to include promoting the education of children who had had a social worker within the last 6 years. It was hoped that the stretched efforts could be articulated into sustainable values to shape future service delivery.

On the development of the 5 key outcomes under the second item, the Committee noted that detailed in-person focus groups with children and young people (CYP) with SEND across H&F schools had co-produced an annual survey for schools, parents and other CYPs to respond. The Framework was developed and refined based on the survey outcomes. It was also noted that after setting up the Framework and gaining a clear picture from the data, the local authority would measure the performance against the outcome framework for the two to be more closely aligned with each other. As regards how the performance measures would impact on the education outcomes, the local authority undertook to provide a sample of scorecard which had captured the performance of the CYP with SEND for information.

For the third item, members received briefing on the events held after the conference with teacher co-hosted by Imperial College to kick off the Industrial Strategy in Education, such as interviews of young people with local businesses in White City, and curriculum mapping and delivery by schools and businesses matched to work together. As regards strengthening the accredited teacher training to provide career guidance early, the local authority indicated intention to start industrial education for students at Key Stage 2/3 and develop bespoke curriculum involving new internship and work experience opportunities which shall enable H&F’s CYP to envision a future that might be quite different from now. More information on the oversight of the Industrial Strategy in Education would be provided when the Committee considered the Annual Education Report.

For the last item, members commended the success of the Summer in the City 2023 which aimed to deliver enriching activities and food across the school holidays, despite encountering some difficulties like ghost booking and bad weather. It was noted that a breakdown in attendance would help the local authority to understand the uptake interest among children that might not benefit from summer vacations. There were a lot of promotion of the programmes in social media, including those

posted by the Mayor to motivate young people to join. It might be helpful to encourage the schools to distribute the information leaflets to the parents early to help boost the attendance.

Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs

- Matching young people with local businesses for interview and work experience opportunities – Economy Department

Work programme

29 January 2024:

- 2024 Medium Term Financial Strategy

Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee

The Committee considered the following item at its meeting on 21 November 2023:

- Circular economy strategy outline and the introduction of food waste recycling and wheeled bins

The Committee discussed the Council's circular economy strategy which aimed to keep materials in use through improved product design, repair, reuse, sharing and recycling, to reduce the borough's reliance on extraction of new materials. Members heard how the Council was embedding circularity as an organisation and delivering it within the borough. This included examples of future projects and initiatives that could be implemented within the Council to embed circular economy principles.

The Committee highlighted the importance of effectively conveying this message across to residents, including the need to progress community engagement initiatives. Officers would continue to promote what the Council was already offering, including the monthly repair events held within the borough. In addition, residents would be encouraged to participate in workshops and surveys to provide feedback in the overall design of the circular economy strategy and how it was delivered.

In relation to construction and the amount of carbon emissions emitted, members enquired if there was any scope to condition the materials which could be used by developers on new builds. It was noted that currently under the London Plan, only operational carbon emissions were regulated. In the longer-term, Officers confirmed that the intention was to move towards embodied carbon within the construction phase.

Members were keen to learn more about the recycling hubs available to residents within the borough. The Committee discussed the use of Livat Hammersmith as its main circular economy hub which offered many opportunities for circularity. Residents also had access to 'library of things' allowing them to rent out useful items. In addition, Officers were in the process of exploring a more permanent space within the borough 5 days a week.

The Committee felt that the repair events were a fantastic opportunity for residents and were pleased to note the learning opportunities available as part of the offering at these events. Training sessions were available for residents to ask any questions and learn the skills to repair their own electrical goods.

The Committee were briefed on the Council's food waste recycling and wheeled bins service. The Council would introduce new food waste collections for more than 50,000 local households in the coming months. In addition, more than 16,000 local households would receive new wheeled bins. Bins would only be given for those with suitable and accessible space and an assisted collection service was available for residents that needed additional support.

Members were pleased to hear about the Council's plans to extend the prototype service and discussed the options currently available for the disposal of batteries and medical blister packs across the borough. It was noted that Officers were working in collaboration with the colleagues in the Communications department to raise greater awareness on the importance of correctly recycling batteries and separating these from general waste.

In relation to water fountains, the Committee were keen to encourage more water fountains in the Council's tube stations. Officers noted that the Greater London Authority was looking at introducing water fountains to public spaces within London. The Committee heard that the Council had relatively low levels of assisted collections within the borough. This was mainly due to the smaller layout and design of the properties. This area would be closely monitored by Officers and the Council would contact residents who used the assisted collection service to ensure that it was still working for them.

The Chair thanked officers for their presentation and provided a summary of the key points discussed. It was noted that further updates would be provided around the disposal of medical blister packs and lithium-ion batteries. The Committee was also keen to learn more about the garden waste scheme going forward.

Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs

- The introduction of food waste recycling and wheeled bins - Housing and Homelessness PAC/The Economy, Arts, Sports and Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee.

Work programme

- 2024 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Floods and sustainable drainage systems

Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee

The Committee considered the following items at its meeting on 15 November 2023:

- Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2022/23
- Vaccination Services in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Mike Howard (Safeguarding Adults Board Chair) joined to discuss the Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2022/23. The discussion covered a range of issues highlighted in the annual report including:

- Housing repairs issues in the public and private rented sectors.
- Fire safety training for frontline staff and training standards for partner organisations.
- Guidance for professionals and residents.
- Transitional safeguarding.
- Demographic pressures.

The Committee agreed actions around housing standards and domestic violence training.

For the second item on vaccination services, the Committee was joined by colleagues from the Council's Public Health team, NHS England, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, and the North West London ICB. The Committee discussed:

- Which populations were under-vaccinated and why.
- Efforts to improve the immunisation rate through targeted engagement programmes.
- The use of alternate venues and staffing issues.
- Vaccination rates in care homes and amongst care home staff.
- Why H&F's vaccinate rates were lower than its neighbours.

The Committee asked the NHS to consider Hammersmith & Fulham for a pilot to allow pharmacies to carry out childhood vaccinations and a dedicated vaccine coordinator for the borough. The Chair proposed a working group to look at improving vaccination rates in the borough.

Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs

- Housing standards (Housing and Homelessness PAC)
- Domestic violence training (Social Inclusion and Community Safety PAC)
- Policy and Oversight Board suggested item – the use of assistive technologies in day centres.

Work programme

31 January 2024:

- Budget 2024/25
- Dentistry services in H&F

Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee

The Committee considered the following items at its meeting on 14 November 2023:

- Homelessness Prevention Update
- Complaints Management in Housing
- Greening of the Housing Stock

For the first item, officers gave an update on the challenges faced by Housing Services, in particular the increasing number of people housed in temporary accommodation in London. The London Government Association was reporting that spending by councils on temporary accommodation had reached a record high in England placing financial pressures on many local authorities. Housing was working closely with the Finance team on an evidence-based approach around budget assessment and resources allocation from the General Fund for 2024/25, including monitoring of the wider situation in terms of homelessness and temporary accommodation across London. To tackle homelessness in the borough, the Council would be building more homes, including more affordable family-sized homes. Officers agreed to provide a demographic breakdown of homelessness approaches received in the current year and to revert after looking at the impact relating to a recent change to Section 21 Eviction Notice.

For the second item, members noted that a dedicated Complaints and Disputes Resolution Team had been set up to handle all housing-related complaints and deliver one-stop services through the Housing Hub. The Local Authority acknowledged that there had been backlog of repairs in H&F, but that the number of outstanding repairs cases, including aged cases, had been substantially reduced in recent months. The Housing team was working systematically to ensure the repairs were done more punctually and to a higher quality with improved customer care. Couple with the reduction in age profile of outstanding repairs, this should result in fewer complaints being made. The more focused approach to complaint-handling was improving the quality and timeliness of response once a complaint had been made.

On Greening of the Housing Stock, it was noted that the “Retrofit Strategy” developed so far would influence council policy in 4 key areas, namely Energy Efficiency, Low Carbon Heat, Fuel Poverty and Adaptation. It was believed that the capital delivery team was the most efficient vehicle to address the retrofit need at the required scale and pace. The low carbon heat networks were likely to be the cheapest option which needed detailed planning over several years, public and private finance and significant changes to Planning policy to be rolled out effectively. Once the approach was finalised, the residents concerned would be consulted on their preference in taking forward the retrofit works. The Local Authority undertook to brief the Committee again in the new year on other policy implications of the Strategy.

Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs

- The “Retrofit Strategy” under the item on Greening of the Housing Stock was being developed jointly with the Climate Change and Ecology team.

Work programme

30 January 2024:

- 2024 Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Housing Revenue Account Budget
- Private Rented Sector Policy Statement

Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee

The Committee considered policing in Hammersmith and Fulham following the Casey Review at its meeting on 22 November 2023.

Superintendent Craig Knight, joined by Chief Inspector Tom Orchard, presented the progress update of the 'New Met for London Plan'. £530 million had been invested into policing across London affecting every aspect, from reviewing response times and approach, strengthening local team structure, and increasing visibility by assigning more PCSOs to local areas. Recruitment for Police Community Support Officers and PCs continued to be a challenge, further complicated by the ongoing weekend protests in Central London.

Committee members questioned the Police on several issues, including:

- team structure and tenure;
- allocation of PSPOs and PCs to each ward and their composition in terms of ethnicity and gender;
- pay structure and difficulties in officers' recruitment and retention;
- H&F's asset sharing of the proactive teams reporting to the Basic Command Units;
- strengthening background checks and vetting procedures, and effectiveness of psychological assessments,
- positive promotion of Met and visibility in policing;
- feedback from the police's local engagement events in the North of the Borough;
- role of ward panels and attendances;
- VAWG 100 offenders and better support to victims and survivors to sexual assault;
- Intelligence gathering at Tactical Enforcement Group (TEG) and Tactical Tasking & Co-ordination Group (TTCG); and
- harassment to female colleagues.

Work programme

8 February 2024:

- 2024 Medium Term Financial Strategy
- LET Update including TEG/TTCG
- Third sector on social inclusion

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

The Committee considered the following items at its meeting on 20 November 2023:

- An Emerging Approach to Developing and Promoting our Visitor Economy
- Review of Performance of the New Household Waste Collection Contract / Implementation of Wheeled Bin and Food Waste Collection
- London Borough of Culture Bid

The Committee considered a report on an Emerging Approach To Developing and Promoting Our Visitor Economy. Themes to emerge from the meeting included: The need to engage with residents and harness ideas from within the community. The advantages of using a placed- based approach, referencing football clubs, theatres and events spaces.

For data to be gathered to determine the visitor profile to the borough. The need for a website to be created, providing an annual chronology of events being held within the borough and for this to feed into wider engagement through social media and other forms of channels. It was important that the 3-year strategy provided a strong steer to stakeholders, to ensure their actions actively promoted the visitor economy.

In addition, the strategy needed to spell out what the economic advantages of developing the visitor economy would be to residents. Further themes included branding (i.e., distinct themes - the home of Chelsea Football Club), a heritage / cultural trail (of blue plaques and their significance), and the need to utilise the river more. The Committee supported the revival of the Shepherd's Bush Comedy Festival. The committee suggested that businesses, hotels and the conference centre organisers should meet to promote activities within the borough.

The Committee examined a Review of Performance of the New Household Waste Collection Contract / Implementation of Wheeled Bin and Food Waste Collection. Themes to emerge from the meeting included: To make officers aware of missed collections and resultant fines. The issue of bins not being returned to their collection points which highlighted those properties which were vacant and hence at risk of burglary.

Further points included: the need to improve communication with residents so they knew that they needed to contact the Council if there were collection issues. The need for sampling / auditing of collections to assess how it the scheme was working. It was noted that the extended wheeled bin collection implementation had only been rolled out for 2 weeks, so its performance would need to be assessed in the future.

In relation to the London Borough of Culture Bid, following the introduction by officers, this was discussed as an exempt item.

Work programme

February meeting:

- Budget
- Civic campus general update – communications and affordable workspace
- Industrial strategy – childcare strand

LIST OF APPENDICES

None.

Agenda Item 7

Policy and Oversight Board – Draft Work Programme 2023/24

The Board is asked to note the draft work programme for 2023/24 and suggest any additions or amendments.

23 January 2024

- Council Budget 2024/25
- Voter ID Readiness

Items to be scheduled

- Resident Experience
- Co-production update
- Affordable and flexible childcare in H&F
- Corporate performance
- Third sector grants