

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

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



Monday 20 November 2023

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Rory Vaughan (Chair), Liz Collins, Adam Peter Lang, Ashok Patel and Jackie Borland

Other Councillors:

Councillor Sharon Holder (Cabinet Member for Public Realm)

Officers:

Jon Pickstone (Strategic Director of Economy)
Andrew Munk (Assistant Director Economic Development)
David Pack (Strategic Head – Industrial Strategy)
Logan Smith (Visitor Economy Officer)
Bram Kainth (Strategic Director of Environment)
Annie Baker (Assistant Director – street environmental services)
Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm)
Daniel Waller (Assistant Director Cultural Services)
Emma Jerrard (Senior Events and Filming Manager)
Charles Francis (Committee Coordinator)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

As an external speaker was present, the Chair proposed that the running order of the agenda was amended so that the Visitor Economy item was considered first. This was agreed by the Committee.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Economy, Arts, Sports and Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee meeting held on 24 July 2023 were approved.

4. AN EMERGING APPROACH TO DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING OUR VISITOR ECONOMY

Jon Pickstone, Strategic Director of the Economy made some introductory remarks. He explained the visitor economy provided services to tourists and visitors, as well as to businesses either locally or from abroad; which were an essential element of Hammersmith and Fulham's wider economy. It was noted that the borough had many attractions. It had a diverse cultural scene, rich heritage and was home to sports events. It also had a strong retail scene, as well as its prime riverside location. It was noted that visitor numbers had recovered to near pre-Covid levels and details were provided on how this benefitted the local economy. Many Councils were considering how to develop their visitor economies and strengthen that sense of individual place.

Jon Pickstone confirmed that the Council was developing its visitor economy from a strong position, as it was well placed geographically, but also through ongoing workstreams such as the Industrial strategy, the Arts Commission and the Cultural Strategy. A key question focused on the value and role of the Council in helping institutions make the most of their offer, helping residents to engage and value the visitor economy to help promote it more widely.

David Pack (Strategic Head – Industrial Strategy) provided a presentation which covered the following aspects:

- The rationale behind developing the Visitor Economy.
- The current position and the Council's strong and established offer covering:
 1. culture and heritage.
 2. sport and leisure.
 3. retail and dining.
 4. green spaces and parks.
- The challenges faced by the Borough in both attracting and managing visitors.
- Exploring new initiatives and quick wins such as:
 1. establishing a new tourism network.
 2. engaging with London level agencies.
 3. focusing on key places, such as the Civic Campus/King Street and North End Road.
- Reviving the Shepherd's Bush Comedy Festival.
- Leveraging large events such as London Tech Week (held at Olympia in June 2024).

- Proposals setting out what more could be done to develop the Visitor Economy.
- The next steps: committee feedback and producing a 3-year strategy.

The Chair invited Elaine Ranahan - Director of Sales and Marketing at the Novotel London West to make comments on what had been said. She explained that Hammersmith as a destination was extremely important to the Novotel as a business, as well as everything that it offered as ancillary services to their guests. It was noted that the hotel was a conference and events venue, dealing with the US and Canada, as well as pan European businesses. The hotel had a strong leisure and tourism market and events such as those held at Olympia, The Apollo and Lyric Theatres were important (hotel) client destinations. She explained that the hotel was affiliated with London and Partners and worked with them. It was noted that hotel guests valued the strong transport links and used local services such as the large retail centres (Westfield) and so the hotel supported those initiatives that backed Hammersmith as a destination.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang welcomed the work which was being done. He highlighted several points including: the diversity with Hammersmith, the sports venues including the football teams and the cultural walks within the borough. He underlined there was a need for a balance to be struck between ideas from residents and what residents needed, as well as ideas stemming from focus groups (i.e., those staying overnight to go to a match or the theatre).

Adding to Councillor Lang's comments, the Chair asked what the profile was of visitors to Hammersmith and Fulham in terms of those staying overnight in the borough and the differences between the short-term stay market and the longer term, such a summer holiday period. He asked what types of data officers held about visitors to the borough. In response to Councillor Lang's comments, Andrew Munk (Assistant Director Economic Development) confirmed he agreed with a place-based approach and thinking about what assets were located in specific areas. And the need to work with residents to develop a shared vision of how a particular location could be developed further in the future.

In terms of visitors, David Pack explained there were three specific markets. Firstly, residents and their friends and family. Secondly, leisure tourists and lastly, business and conference visitors which were increasingly coming to London and often opted to stay in Hammersmith. David Pack explained that at the moment, officers did not have specific data, but were in the process of developing this with London and Partners. What was required, was more in the way of granular data about where visitors came from, how long they stayed and what tactics could be used to encourage visitors to extend stays e.g. for a day visitor to become a weekend visitor.

Councillor Ashok Patel commented that he had lived in the borough for 40 years. He catalogued a series of sporting and cultural events throughout the calendar year and commented that he was surprised that a visitor website had not been built, given a basic version was a relatively simple task. He mentioned that a website with a chronology of events running from January to December informing the public of what was on, would draw a significant number of visitors to the borough. In response, David Pack confirmed the Economy had discussed this with Corporate

Communications colleagues (and it was a task that could likely be easily done). He commented that the monthly What's On Newsletter could potentially be translated into a webpage. He explained that stemming from conversations with Corporate Communications, the advice had been that if the Council were to invest in any kind of website, then officers needed to explore what types of cut throughs it could have to ensure that any content did not stagnate.

Action – David Pack to work in conjunction with Corporate Communications to develop a static visitor web page as an interim measure.

Jon Pickstone confirmed that a successful website would be just one element of a wider engagement through social media and other types of channels. It was important that a website considered the user experience and took on board the different types of ways a user might search – by place, theme, sports related or perhaps by a chronology throughout the year. So, to be successful, it was necessary to collate information, but also to ensure it was searchable and sortable in a way that was user defined.

The Chair agreed that the What's On Newsletter could be developed into a website, but asked what information visitors found useful as there were different types of consumers of that information. Did visitors see events information and were they pointed to it, and how could it be enhanced further such as linking events to transport links (i.e., what bus routes to use). The Chair suggested that this was an aspect that could be developed within the Tourist Network piece of work.

In response, Andrew Munk confirmed that the Economy, Economic Development and Public Realm Teams worked closely together and agreed that with a place-based approach, it was important to ensure the way-finding aspect was right, so that a web presence and Events management could work in synergy to be most effective.

In terms of the different types of visitors to Hammersmith and Fulham (either from abroad or internal), Councillor Jackie Borland asked who the Council was trying to target specifically, or whether it was a case of seeking to encourage all types of visitors to stay longer in the Borough? In response, David Pack confirmed that this aspect required more consideration to ensure the Council was segmenting as cleverly as possible. There were also questions about how much the Council led this process or enabled progress through the convening of third parties. Jon Pickstone commented that officers were also investigating the opportunities presented by linked trips, so for example, a night at the Appollo, might be followed by dinner and then an overnight stay, and in doing so, it was looking at ways of deepening the visitor experience. Members noted that a database of visitor types and numbers needed to be constructed so that the strategy could adapt iteratively to the evidence. In doing so, to reinforce where the Council had been stronger and also sign post those areas that required further work.

Councillor Jackie Borland highlighted the opportunities presented by the redevelopment of Fulham Football Club, and in particular the opening up of the riversides and the river walk. She asked if the Council had any particular plans for how the river could be used as a catalyst for redevelopment. In response, David Pack explained that this was dependent on what the role of the Council was, so the

niche might be through enhanced communications, as well the wider night-time economy as possible avenues. Logan Smith, Visitor Economy Officer, confirmed that the Council had been working closely with the Football Club in the past few weeks and they had ambitious plans in relation to the opening and it would be a case of ensuring the right Councillors attended the event to maximise its profile in the borough. The hope was that the riverside development could effectively become the town square of Fulham.

Councillor Liz Collins welcomed the ideas which had been raised in the meeting, but explained she could not see a distinctive brand emerging. In her view, some of the concepts seemed disconnected (which reflected there were a number of different communities at play). She explained that East London had a distinctive brand and an authenticity to it. However, if developing the visitor economy rested, to a large part with the night time economy, she highlighted that her constituents in Ravenscourt Park had highlighted safety concerns and the impact this might have on crime rates.

In relation to the timescales for the visitor economy strategy to be developed, David Pack confirmed that by the Spring /Summer of 2024 a much firmer strategy would be in place. By which time, the ideas which had been mentioned by Councillor Liz Collins would have been developed into strategies and plans. With regards to brand promotion elements, David Pack confirmed this stood with Corporate Communications and the website, as could inform and be part of a destination management plan. With regards to what the brand might be, there were questions as to whether this was the borough as a whole or specific places within the borough.

Councillor Ashok Patel commented that he thought it was dangerous to leave the development of the visitor economy in the hands of the market, as there was a duty to listen to needs and aspirations of local residents. Visitors came and went but residents remained. He cited an example of recent local football match he had attended, where it was evident from the lack of ethnic diversity in the crowds, that local residents had been priced out of the market.

In response, Andrew Munk confirmed he was aware how gentrification schemes had worked elsewhere. Hammersmith and Fulham needed to be bold, ambitious and encourage groups to attend venues they did not normally attend and also to work with community engagement groups to ensure the visitor economy strategy was successful.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang stated it was important that the strategy set out what the benefits and economic benefits would be for residents. He asked officers if they had investigated changed patterns of living (work and travel) both in Hammersmith's central business district (CBD), elsewhere and also abroad since the pandemic. He added that it was important that jobs and services were created where there was a specific demand. In response, Andrew Munk confirmed that the Council had subscriptions to various data sources, such as Mastercard Data in order to track footfall and was developing international partnerships with other smart cities such as Barcelona. In relation to visitor numbers post pandemic, David Pack confirmed that Council was looking at data from London and Partners to steer what the Council did in future. David Pack confirmed that the Council had been twinned with Anderlecht for a number of years as part of the boroughs efforts to rejuvenate, and one of the

key areas they were interested in, and were pursuing knowledge on, was tourism and the visitor economy because of their proximity to Brussels.

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan confirmed he was keen that the strategy was brought back to the Committee. He commented that a branding already existed around Shepherd's Bush, Hammersmith and Fulham as distinct locations and it was an interesting question as to whether the borough was viewed as a whole or as separate areas from a visitor perspective. Developing the branding theme further, the Chair questioned whether officers saw the borough as the home of a particular person or club i.e., the home of William Morris or several football clubs.

In terms of diversity and taking on board what residents wanted, it was noted that numerous blue plaques had been erected in the past few years to celebrate the lives/achievements of prominent persons from ethnic minorities. Island Records was cited as a particularly important influence, and so the Chair highlighted there was a diversity and heritage trail that officers could explore as a mechanism to increase visitor numbers to the borough. It was noted that Hammersmith and Fulham was competing with central London for visitors, but apart from its unique mix of theatres and venues, the Chair reiterated that officers needed to capitalise on the draw of the river. He also supported the proposal to revive the Shepherd's Bush Comedy Festival.

Jon Pickstone reiterated a number of aspects including celebrating diverse communities, demand, heritage and the need to link these themes together to increase visitor numbers. He explained that officers were also exploring a 'histories event' (historical buildings, as well as people) which might take place over several weeks and which would also feed into the Cultural Strategy. He added that it was important residents celebrated local history and a sense of local connection to help bring communities together. Adding a further comment, Andrew Munk confirmed that officers were making a list of what the Boroughs key strengths and assets were, to make sure the Council was making the most effective use of these.

Councillor Liz Collins commented on the importance of music, how it connected communities and the number of clubs and venues the borough used to have. It was noted that musicians, performers and audiences would travel to visit these. She also underlined the importance of cost and to ensure residents were not priced out of venues.

Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm, agreed with Councillor Liz Collins view that the current thinking (on the Visitor Economy) required further work, however, she provided reassurance that as the strategy crystalised, these concerns would be addressed. She welcomed the suggestion of gathering businesses, hotels and conference centres together to inform the strategy by harnessing their international business connections. Councillor Sharon Holder provided details on the types of venues the Borough had and underlined the importance of advertising these to visitors.

Elaine Ranahan - Director of Sales & Marketing at the Novotel London West confirmed that the Novotel sold Hammersmith as a destination and were well aware of what Shepherd's Bush and Fulham had to offer as well. She underlined the

importance of letting visitors know what services / events were available locally (to avoid journeys into central London) and highlighted the strong transport links. It was noted that Hammersmith had a very diverse range of food, retail and events and therefore offered 'something for everyone'. She confirmed the Novotel would happily support any initiatives to bring business into the area.

Closing the item, the Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan confirmed the Committee were keen to ensure the visitor economy work benefitted residents as much as possible. He noted that officers would be looking at data in the next few months to improve their understanding of the types of visitors which would then inform a branding exercise. He confirmed the Committee looked forward to an update in several months' time when the strategy was more developed.

Resolved

1. That the Committee both note and comment on the report.

5. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE OF THE NEW HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTION CONTRACT / IMPLEMENTATION OF WHEELED BIN AND FOOD WASTE COLLECTION

Annie Baker (Assistant Director – street environmental services) provided a presentation which covered the new household waste collection contract, as well as the implementation of wheeled bin and food waste collection.

The presentation covered the following aspects:

- The background to the new waste contact and the procurement process.
- The benefits of the new contract which included:
 1. Increased recycling rates.
 2. Improved street cleansing (in particular fly tipping and weeding).
 3. Enhanced performance management (including a new digital management information system).
 4. Supporting climate objectives (aiming to achieve net zero and the flexibility to procure the right types of vehicles as technology developed within the lifetime of the contract).
 5. Providing improved social value outcomes.
- Performance to date (including missed collections data, noting that the contract began 9 months ago).
- Performance – Street Cleaning, including:
 1. Weeding – increase in activity and significant reduction in reports of issues.
 2. Litter and detritus –above expected standards.
 3. Fly-tip clearance –over two-thirds cleared within 24 hours and further improvement expected.
- Delivering New Services.
- New Service : Implementation.
- The roll – out so far and the next steps.

Councillor Jackie Borland asked if waste collection vehicles were able to collect various sizes of waste bin. In response, Annie Baker confirmed that several sizes of bins had been tested on vehicle hoists and these were safe to collect. Councillor Jackie Borland welcomed the improvements to recycling and asked if some statistics could be cited to underline the improved performance. In response, Annie Baker confirmed that in general terms, food waste was a significant contributor to increased recycling rates, there was increased recycling and the smaller recycling bins meant it was now easier to recycle. Annie Baker confirmed that detailed performance figures could be provided to the Committee.

Action – That Annie Baker provide the Committee with performance statistic in relation to improved recycling rates

Councillor Jackie Borland commented that the suitability of bins had been mentioned by residents, and asked what happened if a resident felt the bin was not suitable for their needs. Could the bin be refused? In response, Annie Baker confirmed that everyone's front garden was different and the use of it varied. During the prototype trials, it was found that when officers worked with residents and used either smaller bins or residents shared a bin, usually a solution was found. However, if bins caused access issues to bike storage or obscured floral displays then bins would not be delivered to those residents which opted out. Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm) added that having delivered about a thousand bins per week, there were only two or three instances where the Council was having challenging conversations to reach a compromise. It was noted that the Council was working through a period of encouragement and engagement rather than dictat and was also providing an assisted collection service.

Councillor Liz Collins commented that overall, her constituents were happy about the bin roll-out. However, there had been a number of mis-collections which had resulted in fines being issued. And in those cases of non-collection, this had attracted other residents to place their rubbish at these sites, so the problem had worsened. In response, Annie Baker asked Councillor Liz Collins to provide her with details outside the meeting, so that if there was an ongoing issue it could be investigated and addressed.

Councillor Ashok Patel raised the issue of bins not being returned to their collection points which highlighted those properties which were vacant and hence at risk of burglary. In response, Annie Baker confirmed that in all cases, bins should be returned to their collection point.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang felt that the messaging could be improved when there were issues with bin collections. He was aware that some residents were unclear who to contact and whether it was Veolia, the bin collectors or the Council. Annie Baker confirmed that in all cases, the Council should be contacted. There was a report app and email address that should be used. Councillor Lang also asked if the Council was confident there were sufficient Veolia staff to implement the contract. Annie Baker stated she was confident there were sufficient staff in place. Mark Raisbeck commented there was a detailed mobilization plan for the roll-out which included extra resources and took into account that additional communications would

be needed about the new bins and the new collection regime. He also confirmed that a new resident pack was being developed to centralise the key information all residents required. He explained that if recurrent problems remained, he would welcome feedback from Councillors so that these issues could be addressed.

In relation to weeding and not using chemicals, Councillor Adam Peter Lang asked if officers were confident there was sufficient manpower in place to conduct this effectively. In response, Annie Baker provided details of how the contract worked, made reference to the impacts of climate change and confirmed it would be reviewed annually.

Councillor Rory Vaughan commented on the reporting of mis-collections and noted there had been a spike of these in September and October 2023, but that performance had improved again.

At the invitation of the Chair, a representative of the Brackenbury Resident's Association addressed the Committee. He raised a number of points including: the suitability of some homes for bins (and those not), insufficient communications from the Council about the bin roll-out and concerns that wheeled bins would be forced upon residents irrespective of their suitability. Further points included: special consideration needed to be given to multiple occupation residences where elderly or infirm residents could not use the bins and that residents should be given the option of opting into the scheme. In response, Annie Baker acknowledged that not all properties would be suitable, or had space for the bins. Details of the roll-out and the anticipated improvements to the service were provided. She explained the Council would be in the Brackenbury area in the Spring of 2024, would write to residents in advance and welcomed the opportunity to meet with residents to discuss aspects of the roll out.

A resident asked a further question about the opt out or opt in nature of the scheme and whether it was the Council or the residents themselves which made the decision. Further questions related to the disposal of green and food waste and how this might be actioned in the most ecological way to reduce transport distances. In response, Annie Baker reiterated that officers would be willing to attend an organised meeting to discuss these concerns further.

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan provided his personal feedback on the scheme, explaining that he had recently received his bin and the scheme had worked well. He asked if there would be any form of sampling or auditing of bin collections to ensure how these were working and to check if bins had been returned to their collection point. In response, Annie Baker confirmed that monitoring was routinely undertaken, but in addition, that officers were conducting further checks while the roll out bedded in. The Chair asked about the plans in relation to garden waste, noting that this was probably an April to September / October initiative. In response, officers confirmed that this was being investigated and would hopefully be implemented in 2024.

Councillor Jackie Borland asked how the recycling scheme and delivery of sacks would work in Fulham. In response, Annie Baker confirmed that the Council was maintaining records as the scheme progressed and for those homes that did not

have space for the bins, they would receive the food waste collections and sack collections would continue as before.

Closing the item, the Chair welcomed the progress which had been made as well as the offer to work with Brackenbury residents. He noted that food waste collections had recently started, and the Committee looked forward to hearing the feedback about the roll-out and how recycling would improve as a result. The Committee would be watchful of the metrics the new initiatives generated and in particular, the cleaner streets and less street cleaning when the results were known in about 6-months' time.

Resolved

1. That the Committee both note and comment on the report.

6. LONDON BOROUGH OF CULTURE BID

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan, noted that a confidential appendix containing the draft bid had been circulated separately. Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm) advised that if the Committee wished to discuss aspects of the bid, then the Committee would need to pass a resolution at the appropriate time to move the meeting into an exempt session for the remainder of the item. He provided apologies from Mimi Findlay, Executive Director the Bush Theatre who was expected to attend and also summarised some supporting statements made by her about the bid.

Daniel Waller (Assistant Director Cultural Services) provided a brief presentation which provided the Committee with an update on the development of the borough's bid for the Mayor of London's Borough of Culture (LBoC) scheme 2025 / 2027.

The public presentation covered the following points:

- What the LBoC was and what it offered.
- Where Culture Connects and the 4 sub-themes of Hammersmith's Bid.

Mark Raisbeck explained the bid stemmed from the Cultural Strategy and provided details of the significant amount of work that had gone into this. The Committee chose to explore further aspects of the bid, but before doing so, the Committee unanimously agreed to pass the following resolution:-

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that they contain the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the said Act, as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The remainder of the item was exempt.

Meeting started: 7.02 pm
Meeting ended: 9.55 pm

Chair

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