

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

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

## **Minutes**



**Tuesday 29 April 2025**

### **PRESENT**

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

### **Other Councillors:**

Councillor Sharon Holder (Cabinet Member for Public Realm)

Councillor Frances Umeh (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness)

### **Officers:**

Bram Kainth, Executive Director - Place

Mark Raisbeck, Director of Public Realm

Val Birchall, Assistant Director, Culture Tourism & Sport

Nigel Court, Interim Lead for Sport and Active Wellbeing

Labab Lubab, Head of Partnerships, Investment and Assurance

Charles Francis, Committee Coordinator

### **External Speaker:**

Harris Bokhari, Chair of the Cultural Compact

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Liz Collins, Andrew Jones (Cabinet Member for the Economy) and Zarar Qayyum (Cabinet member for Enterprise and Skills).

## **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 3 February 2025 were agreed.

## **4. CULTURAL COMPACT UPDATE**

Harris Bokhari, Chair of the Cultural Compact introduced the item and provided an overview on the development of the Cultural Compact. He began by congratulating the work done so far by the Council, in particular Councillor Holder and over 80 local partners who were giving their time and energy on a voluntary basis to ensure culture was at the heart of everything that was done in the borough. He explained that as Chair, his key focus from day one was ensuring the council was maximising the return for taxpayers and ensuring the Compact was focused on delivering maximum impact for residents.

In the short term, the Compact had focused on 3 deliverable strands: 1. Cultural education / young people, 2. Destination management and 3. Infrastructure mapping. In the medium and long term, the Compact aspired for Hammersmith and Fulham to be known for something nationally, in a particular cultural field, similar to other boroughs. Harris Bokhari concluded his initial remarks by saying it was an extremely exciting time for anyone who cared about culture and cultural impact and the Compact sought to make a lasting legacy for all residents.

Val Birchall, Assistant Director, Culture Tourism & Sport, provided a presentation on 'Where Culture Connects' Cultural Compact Update. This included the following information:

- A definition of a Compact
- A chronology detailing how the Compact had developed.
- Details of the Compacts' membership.
- Connecting Culture and Innovation - Information on how the Compact connected with Upstream.
- Details on the role and function of the Cultural Forum.
- Information of the Destination Management Partnership – including new campaigns, current and future priorities.
- The role of the Heritage Partnership. Noting potential partners included:
  1. *Fulham Society & William Morris Society*
  2. *LBHF parks team / LBHF archives and libraries team /LBHF Planning/conservation*
  3. *Local heritage and history projects*
  4. *Centres such as Nubian Life and Pepperpot*
  5. *Theatres / Football Clubs / Schools.*
- Details on Future Plans including:

1. *Capacity building programme*
2. *Destination campaigns*
3. *Youth culture festival*
4. *Civic Innovation Unit*
5. *Pay it Forward project*
6. *Wayfinding and welcome*

Councillor Ashok Patel commented that culture was a difficult concept to describe as it was a subjective issue. In relation to the launch of the Cultural Compact at a meeting of the Cultural Forum, he asked if there was a written definition of culture? In response, Val Birchall, Assistant Director, Culture Tourism & Sport explained that the Council had taken the definition used in the Borough's Cultural Strategy which primarily focused on arts and culture and not food or sport. However, officers had also included heritage and softer forms of culture including community culture, as well as professional culture.

In relation to paragraph 14 of the report, Councillor Ashok Patel noted that the Destination Management Partnership had a campaign to promote Christmas in Hammersmith and Fulham, and asked what this entailed. In response, Val Birchall explained that it was called Countdown to Christmas, and was essentially a campaign for those organisations that had activity or hospitality businesses that wanted to get involved, to use the Countdown to Christmas branding to encourage people to enter online competitions and sign-ups. In doing so, they would better understand what the offer was over Christmas, and by joining the mailing list, the Destination Partnership gathered information it could use to promote and to encourage people to come back.

Harris Bokhari, added that the Compact had a wide and diverse interpretation of what culture was and sought to reassure Members the Compact was not taking a narrow view. He accepted there was scope to articulate what culture was in a stronger way and to come back to the committee on this in the future.

Councillor Jackie Borland commented that she was impressed at the scope and ambition of the project. However, in relation to the Countdown to Christmas campaign, she asked how this fitted in with the arts and heritage aims of the Compact. In response, Val Birchall explained that the key concept was to consider what factors drove people to visit the borough. And as the borough has a stronger cultural offer at Christmas, the Destination Partners wanted to use this for a campaign. She explained that ongoing research had shown the main reason people visited a destination was to enjoy the leisure activities that were on offer, so the broad cultural offer was at the heart of the Christmas campaign. But as the Destination Partnership also entailed hospitality, the hotels and the Business Improvement Districts, there was a focus on increasing footfall, duration of stay and retail spend in the borough.

Harris Bokhari commented that the culture sector was under resourced and it necessary to look for funding opportunities where possible. Christmas was a nationally held festival and underlining how culture was important for Christmas was a win-win for residents.

Councillor Jackie Borland welcomed the latest infrastructure map as there was so much going on in the borough. However, she highlighted it was important the Council did not put all its focus online, as the digital divide (online accessibility for older residents) meant that some residents would struggle to access it. In response, Val Birchall commented that officers were investigating different ways of presenting this information, including using Library trails, potentially a visitor information centre with tear-off maps of the borough and speaking to hotels to ensure they were conversant with points of interest within the borough.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang commented that he was pleased by the enthusiasm which had been expressed despite the Council being unsuccessful in the recent London Borough of Culture Bid. He highlighted the three strands of the strategy and in particular Culture and Creative Education and underlined how important it was to continue working with schools and universities. He also stressed the importance of the Compact engaging with informal groups. In response, Val Birchall confirmed that engagement work was a work in progress and the report did not include a full list of everyone the Compact was working with, but she assured the committee that it was working with a broad range of groups associated with young people. She asked Committee members if they had further ideas of who else could be contacted.

Adding a further comment, Councillor Adam Peter Lang hoped that the Compact was sufficiently inclusive to ensure it engaged with as wide variety of groups as it developed in the future. Val Birchall explained that the Compact was intended to be a tight executive group, and the sub groups doing the work were completely inclusive. She noted that the Compact was working with HQL to ensure it engaged with young people entering the commercial music sector who had gone through unconventional or informal groups.

Harris Bokhari welcomed the committee's comments on inclusivity and underlined it was important the Compact had impact. He commented he was confident the way in which the Compact was set up meant it could make a real impact.

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan, asked about successes and how these could be demonstrated, as well as its impact in schools and the importance of using statistics to reinforce these achievements. He commented it would be helpful if future presentations could include this information. The Chair commented that he liked the partnership structure which had been set up, as this had a clear line through from the Arts Commission through to the Cultural Strategy. He welcomed the focus on destination management and how the Cultural Strategy and Visitor Economy work had been combined together and looked forward to seeing examples of how this had worked in future reports.

The Chair asked how the different work streams would learn from the campaign as they took these forwards. He also asked about Schools Arts Week, the breadth of the campaign, how it worked and what the lessons learnt were.

In response, Val Birchall explained that in relation to the Countdown to Christmas and those type of campaigns, there were a significant number of statistics as it was a part of the GLA funded High Streets Data Project which gathered information on footfall and spend. The Council had also engaged with London and Partners to talk

to them to help identify patterns of travel and visitors across the whole of London. Val Birchall explained that a raft of information was being sent to the Destination Partnership tomorrow and when that information had been dissected, officers would be in a position to identify what the next steps might be.

In relation to Schools Arts Week, this was a contained project which allowed the Compact to speak to education colleagues and act as a springboard for future projects. This offered a range of workshops schools could choose from, aimed at Year 5 classes and the feedback from this would inform other projects. Val Birchall explained that building partnerships from scratch was a long-term endeavour, as the Compact needed to get everyone together, agree what was needed, try a course of action and then assess the outcomes.

Recounting a previous Policy Accountability Committee meeting, when a hotel representative attended to talk about commercial ventures, the visitor economy and attracting visitors to the borough, the Chair asked about future funding opportunities stemming from commercial successes. In response, Val Birchall explained that by looking at the product strand, officers were currently examining when hotels were underoccupied and what opportunities there were to attract other visitors to increase footfall and promote the visitor economy.

The Chair noted the Summer Programme and asked if there was a specific theme this year. In response, Val Birchall confirmed that the Summer Programme was due to be discussed tomorrow by the Destination Partnership. She explained there was an idea to hold a festival over the summer period. And having spoken to partners it was noted that the riverside was under-utilised as a visitor attraction and there were ongoing discussions about how the Council could promote this more effectively.

Closing the item, the Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan confirmed that the Committee were encouraged by the progress which had been made on the Visitor Economy and joining up with the Upstream Industrial Strategy. The Committee looked forward to a further update on the development of the Cultural Compact and its impact in due course.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the Committee review and comment on the report.

## **5. ACTIVE WELLBEING STRATEGY**

Nigel Court, Interim Lead for Sport and Active Wellbeing, introduced the report which provided an update on the development of an Active Wellbeing Strategy for the Borough. This superseded the Sport & Physical Activity Strategy and included a national policy update.

The following points were noted:

- Details on the development of the Active Wellbeing Strategy.

- The strategic themes of getting people who were inactive or minimally active to become more active through:
  1. *Active People (and it's aims)*
  2. *Active Communities (and it's aims)*
  3. *and Active Environment ( and it's aims)*
- Local Public Health data and the specific challenges for Hammersmith and Fulham.
- Information on a life course to public health.
- The importance of physical activity and national recommendations.
- Key considerations: Barriers to participation (to physical activity) and the benefits of participation.
- Details on the Next Steps including:
  1. *Establish Governance (April 25)*
  2. *Develop key actions with Partners (May 25)*
  3. *Strategy draft and Action Plan ready for approval (July 25)*
  4. *Final Strategy (Dec 25 latest)*

Councillor Ashok Patel commented there were a significant number of positive points to take from the report, including the uptake of physical activity and 73% of residents achieving the recommended minimum of 150 minutes per week of physical activity. However, he remained concerned about the time spent by young people on smart phones / online gaming and asked what action could be taken to reduce this. He asked if there was a campaign whereby the Council went into secondary schools to explain the benefits of being active in sports and physical activity. In response, Nigel Court confirmed that part of the action plan was ensuring the best people delivered that message to pupils in schools. From the Council's point of view, it had the challenge of making the opportunity to be physically active something that young people wanted to do.

Nigel Court explained that young women at secondary school were a key a target group and the Council needed to listen to feedback, stakeholders and to select key role models from community groups to encourage the uptake in physical activity.

Councillor Jackie Borland commented on the life expectancy statistics and asked about the Playing Pitch Strategy which she urged was completed as quickly as possible. Speaking about the three parks in her ward, Councillor Jackie Borland commented that the all-weather pitch and some of the rugby pitches were in need of renewal (at Hurlingham Park). Although it was admirable to be reaching out to everyone to become more active, the Council needed to have sight of its current users and facilities that required attention. Councillor Jackie Borland highlighted that green spaces were limited and these had to contend with often conflicting uses, and it was a case of striking the right balance.

In response, Nigel Court explained that Hurlingham Park did have a Master Plan which had been developed to deliver improvements. Referring to other resources in the borough, he highlighted that the Linford Christie Stadium was being refurbished, and schools were already booking slots in April so they could use the facility from September 2025. Nigel Court also explained the Parks Team also actively explored Section 106 funding opportunities to ensure funding was invested in local infrastructure / green spaces.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang highlighted the value of case studies and asked if several examples of best practice could be incorporated into the strategy. He highlighted the importance of engaging with particular groups, such as schools, on health and well-being and the benefits of exercise.

In response, Val Birchall confirmed that the Council had tried to expand the group of providers it was speaking to, and recently had held a day-long event which included the Sands End Arts and Community Centre (SEACC), Dance West and a wide range of providers. One of the key messages was that these groups wished to see improved co-ordination between them so that they could share practices that worked, as well as enhancing the referral process for users to different activities. Nigel Court highlighted the three football clubs in the borough and cited these as a good example of partners working together, rather than competing against each other.

In response, Councillor Adam Peter Lang commented that the strategy needed to include some more evidence about what approaches worked and those that did not. In response, Nigel Court confirmed that there was scope to improve communications from the Council so that groups knew what activities were taking place in communities throughout the borough. He confirmed this had been integrated into the Action Plan.

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan, commented he was encouraged by the progress which had been made. He noted there were some actions that were ready to be implemented to improve physical activity levels amongst the 18 to 20% inactive category. The Chair asked what the communications were in the next 6 months for inactive groups, who were they and what actions could be taken to encourage them to become more active. He noted there were national strategies to address inactivity and also the benefits of introducing (popular) more women-only sessions to improve activity levels.

In response, Nigel Court explained the Council would be contacting community leaders to help identify those sectors with the greatest inactivity levels, so that tailored plans could be created to address the issue. In relation to women-only sessions, Nigel Court confirmed the Council would be looking at Leisure Centre opening hours and identifying those times where more sessions could be delivered at off peak times in conjunction with the Council's partners.

Val Birchall added the Council was part of a National Wellbeing Network which was working with health professionals at a national level. She highlighted there were ongoing concerns about the state of national health and a number of campaigns were ongoing to address inactivity, such as 'the more ball games' campaign (replacing 'no ball games') to encourage children to participate in active play. Val Birchall also explained the Council was working in partnership with Public Health as another way of reaching people, and taking a systems-based approach, the Council could identify where people were and how to reach them.

Concluding the item, the Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan commented he would be interested to learn more about the wider communications strategy but also how the

tailored plans for certain groups were working (in future reports). The Chair noted that the outdoor gyms across the borough were well used and where facilities had been upgraded, such as at Hammersmith Park, the facilities were excellent. It was also encouraging to hear there was a wider roll-out of improvements to park facilities across the borough. The Chair was pleased that work was ongoing, and action was being taken ahead of the formal approval of the strategy. In terms of future reports, the Chair asked for these to incorporate details on how pitches were being maintained and upgraded and encouraging children, and especially young girls going into secondary school to remain physically active. He also requested future reports to include details on the identification and implementation of good practices and how the strategy was working for inactive groups.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the Committee review the report and provide comments.

## **6. PLACE-SHAPING THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE**

Labab Lubab, Head of Partnerships, Investment and Assurance provided a presentation on place shaping through affordable housing development and community infrastructure. The Committee noted that effective place-shaping was a foundational pillar of the Council's approach to inclusive economic growth. *Upstream London*, the second phase of the council's Industrial Strategy, articulates this vision; it focuses on the conditions for innovation-led growth and shared prosperity.

Labab Lubab explained that Prosperous places are built on diverse communities and comprehensive social infrastructure. And it was for this reason that the provision of a range of affordable housing options and modern community facilities was crucial to successful place-shaping and the continued growth of the local economy in line with the principles of *Upstream London*.

It was noted that affordable housing and community infrastructure was currently in its construction phase. It was hoped that when a further update was provided in a year's time, this would include details on a number of completed schemes.

The presentation covered the following points:

- The Building Homes and Community Strategy was the genesis of the Development Programme.
- The Development Programme aimed to deliver:
  1. 1,800 new homes within the next 5 years.
  2. Modern fit for purpose infra-structure
  3. A commitment to co-design and co-production.
- The 7 elements of good place shaping:
  1. Affordable homes.
  2. Engaged Communities
  3. Social Infra structure - Community.
  4. Social Infrastructure – Education



5. Economic Inclusion.
  6. Public Realm, open space and connectivity
  7. Sustainable Liveable Places
- The Development Programme had delivered the following so far: 78 homes, 315 homes on site under construction and 344 homes approved by the Planning Committee.
  - Improved public realm, open space and connectivity arising from the Development Programme.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Chair welcomed Councillor Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness to the meeting.

Councillor Ashok Patel noted the housing development to date as part of the overall Development Programme and asked if these were all affordable homes. In response, Labab Lubab confirmed they were all affordable.

Councillor Ashok Patel commented if the construction was for affordable homes, he anticipated there would be less interaction with the constructor than with market homes. Referring to paragraph 5 of the report: *“To this end, the programme has been recently supplemented by a number of opportunities to purchase, rather than build, new affordable homes”*, Councillor Ashok Patel asked for further details to be provided.

In response, Labab Lubab confirmed the expectations for interaction were quite similar. With social housing there might be a percentage of people who did not necessarily have the same expectations as private owners acquiring a property, but the expectation to live with dignity, have respect and be treated fairly were universal. Labab Lubab explained that there were a number of intermediate housing owners, so these people were also high earners, as a household could be earning up to £90,000 and accessing these products, so their expectations were broadly aligned with market owners.

In relation to the acquisition of affordable homes, Labab Lubab explained that if this was looked at from a mixed economic outlook, then there were opportunities to acquire affordable homes delivered under Section 106 planning agreements where a developer is required to provide the affordable housing. There were also opportunities to acquire affordable homes from some Housing Associations which had chosen to divest from some of their housing stock.

Councillor Ashok Patel noted that housing would be provided to the Passivhaus classic standard and asked how much this increased the cost of an average build. In response, Labab Lubab commented that in terms of construction this could be 10% and for design it could be 20%. Costs would vary according to when the standard was implemented. It was noted that the earlier the standard was implemented, the more money was saved in the longer term, compared to midcycle design alterations and retrofitting.

Councillor Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness commented that the Passivhaus classic standard meant properties were delivered to the highest possible energy efficiency standard. So, while there might be the upfront costs and investment, the longer-term savings for individuals living in these

properties would mount up as there would be lower energy costs and maintenance overall, so this would counterbalance the investment costs.

Councillor Jackie Borland commented that housing provision was under huge pressure across the country, so anything that could be done to alleviate this was positive. She noted that all of the projects had at least 50% affordable and asked what affordable meant. In response, Labab Lubab explained that affordable related to intermediate and genuinely affordable housing. Genuinely affordable meant social rent, as well as London affordable rent which was the lowest rent that could be charged at the moment. So, in real terms, this equated to c. £200 per week potentially for a 2-bedroom property. In terms of intermediate housing these were governed by guidelines and meant that a household wanting to rent a home, it would qualify if its total income was less than £67,000 and if it was to acquire a property through shared ownership for example, the household income could not exceed £90,000. However, £90,000 was deemed quite high and so the Council could stipulate to Developers, that a proportion of properties had to be made available to households earning £60k, £70k and £80K. The Committee noted that a high proportion of the people on the Home Buy register (c. 9,000) could access a home.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang drew a number of statistics from the report: 52% of families were still working from home post-Covid, and also most people searching for homes were looking for family homes. Given the place shaping that was occurring, he asked if there were any opportunities for office space to be converted into housing in Hammersmith and Fulham or in London in general.

In response, Labab Lubab commented that Planning colleagues were receptive to changes of use and were actively looking at opportunities across the Borough. Councillor Frances Umeh added that serious consideration also needed to be given to the infrastructure and the buildings that were in place to make them viable conversions, as there had been examples across London where this approach had failed.

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan, commented that officers had stated residents were involved from conception to completion. He knew there had been a considerable amount of consultation with residents (and changes made as a result of this), as there were two affordable housing developments in his ward. He commented that he was interested to learn what family homes and units would be produced (such as at the Old Laundry Site Development) as this was raised on a regular basis at ward surgeries. The Chair asked that as developments came on stream, whether officers were looking at the lessons learnt, such as the passive house standards and whether savings on maintenance had materialised.

In response, Labab Lubab confirmed that Development and Housing officers were looking at housing needs and a Family Housing Strategy was being used to try and deliver as much affordable family housing as possible across all tenures. He explained the Council did not want a transient population and hoped people would put down roots and thrive in the borough. In terms of the lessons learnt, Labab Lubab commented that it was possibly a little early. There were some lessons from the Springville development, but this was a small scheme. The real learning would arise from the second phase of Ed City which comprised of 108 homes plus other

facilities, and also from the Lannoy site which was the Council's first passivehaus largescale development. Officers would be able to provide a comprehensive update on these schemes in a year's time.

Commenting on the conversion of office space, the Chair noted the way in which offices were constructed differed significantly from how houses were built. And changing lifts and core facilities within a building meant that it was difficult to covert offices to housing. Councillor Frances Umeh added that a core part of the Upstream London Industrial Strategy was focusing on ways to create hubs and flexible office working spaces. So, officers were thinking about existing units and those modifications that might take place to adapt buildings given the post-Covid changes to the working world.

Drawing the item to a close, the Chair commented the Committee would like to see the lessons learnt (including passive house), the impact on communities and whether the upfront investment costs and benefits (such as lower energy bills and less maintenance) that were anticipated had borne fruit. The Committee looked forward to a further update in due course.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the committee note the report and the contents of the accompanying presentation.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm  
Meeting ended: 9.07 pm

Chair .....

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