

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

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

Minutes



Wednesday 19 November 2025

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Rory Vaughan (Chair), Ashok Patel and Amanda Lloyd-Harris

Other Councillors:

Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier (Cabinet Member for Public Realm)

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
Ian Hawthorn, Assistant Director Highways and Parks
Jessica Bastock, Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Hugo Ross-Tatam, Parks Projects Officer
Richard Shwe, Director of Housing
Mark Fretwell, Head of Estates.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adam Peter Lang, Trey Campbell-Simon, Andrew Jones (Cabinet Member for the Economy), Zarar Qayyum (Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Skills) and Frances Umeh (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness).

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 21st July 2025 were agreed subject to a question arising on page 8 of the minutes from Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris about whether the closure of Hammersmith Bridge had caused congestion on major surrounding roads. In response, officers stated that:

“there is no specific evidence that the closure has added to congestion only displacement and analysis done by TfL indicated that the numbers were spread across a number of bridges in the area, although this information would be held by TfL rather than ourselves”.

4. **ACTIVE WELLBEING STRATEGY**

Nigel Court, Interim Lead for Sport and Active Wellbeing introduced the item which provided the background on, and initial Action Plan for the Active Wellbeing Strategy.

He provided a presentation which covered the following points:

- Information on the national context for an Active Wellbeing Strategy and the shift from sport participation to whole-system wellbeing.
- Details on the strategic context, and how the new strategy replaced the former Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. Noting that Hammersmith and Fulham was one of the first London Boroughs to deliver a systems-based approach linked to public health outcomes.
- The vision and objectives of the strategy, including details of the co-production and consultation work undertaken.
- The three strategic themes:
 1. Active People – To build confidence and motivation to move more.
 2. Active Communities – To develop local networks and accessible opportunities.
 3. Active Environment – To create spaces and neighbourhoods that enable activity.
- Barriers to activity and ways to overcome these, including the priority areas within the Borough.
- Details of the Year 1 Action Plan and Active Wellbeing Partnership.
- The expected outcomes and benefits of the strategy and details of the Council's leisure assets.

Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris noted there had been a lot of discussion in social media about organised sports groups (LTA, FA) coming into boroughs and offering to run their sports in the respective boroughs with the intention of purchasing the grounds they were going to use. She asked officers if they were aware of this and if there was any likelihood of it happening in Hammersmith and Fulham.

In response, Nigel Court, Interim Lead for Sport and Active Wellbeing confirmed he was not aware of these intentions. However, he explained the Council was in

consultation with all the governing bodies as part of the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy at looking at ways improvements could be made, and there had been no indication from the Governing Bodies that they would like to deliver sessions or take control of the asset/s. He confirmed the Governing Bodies were working with clubs and hirers to ensure that additional participation was ongoing. He cited the work that was currently being done by the LTA to target hard to reach groups to increase participation and not to take control of the Council's assets.

Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris commented that historically there had been issues with some borough facilities that had not been maintained and had been closed down due to insufficient attendance such as the Janet Adagoki Leisure Centre. She confirmed the Leisure Centre was a Council facility, was especially well used, but was not maintained properly. Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris sought assurances that where the Council was aiming to improve facilities there would be an undertaking to maintain them, as this was far more cost effective than letting facilities fall into disrepair and to then rejuvenate them at a later date (such as Linford Christie Stadium.)

In response, Mark Raisbeck, Director of Public Realm agreed it was considerably cheaper to maintain facilities. He confirmed the Council was undertaking asset surveys to identify what levels of investment were needed and so conditions and cost considerations could be presented to decision takers at an earlier stage.

Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris noted the priority areas, such as White City and College Park. She asked if officers were keeping records for all wards because, in order to select the priority areas, there needed to be information on all wards. And would the Committee be made aware of this information as part of the ongoing process. In response, Nigel Court confirmed an aspect of the Action Plan was to ensure officers conducted more accurate reporting on residents' inequality, overall health and levels of participation so future reporting would be improved.

Councillor Ashok Patel agreed it was a good idea to improve health and wellbeing through physical activity. He noted that the borough's average participation levels in physical activity were good with 73% achieving 150 minutes per week, however he thought this was a low threshold. He asked how this target could be improved and what more could be done to encourage children to participate more in physical activity. In addition, he noted Appendix 1 included participation to be encouraged for the disabled and women and girls. He asked about how this would affect BAME participation. He voiced concern that when he had attended playgrounds, he had noted a type of ethnic segregation and very few people mixed and asked what was being done to improve social mixing. And finally, in relation to funding, he noted that many gyms were open 24/7 for a nominal fee. He asked if there was any way in which the Council could participate with them to encourage greater levels of physical activity.

In response, Val Birchall, Assistant Director, Culture Tourism & Sport, referred to the Active Lives data target of 150 minutes per week and confirmed officers were working to improve data collection with a view to combine this with data from leisure centres and the voluntary sector to provide the Council with a more comprehensive picture of how people were participating. In relation to young people, Val Birchall

confirmed a number of grants had recently been awarded from the H&F King's Coronation Youth Fund for voluntary sector activity with young people to encourage them to become more active outside of school and to take part in more physical activity in their communities or through voluntary organisations. She confirmed that the Council was about to launch a second wave of these grants to try and target those groups which were missed in the initial tranche of awardees or where they could be more closely tailored to the objectives of the strategy.

In response to the point made about the participants highlighted in Appendix 1, Nigel Court confirmed the Council were aware there were sections of the community it had never spoken to, and so an aspect of the Action Plan was to identify these sectors and for the Council to actively engage with them and deliver sessions for these groups. With regards to working with gyms, Nigel Court confirmed that Council worked with Greenwich Leisure as one of the stakeholders and the Council was looking at ways to improve its overall management contract with them to improve participation and encourage users back into the Leisure centres. He explained that part of the Action Plan was an education piece to gauge a better understanding of what facilities / programmes communities would like to have and then the Council would investigate how this could be delivered. Nigel Court also confirmed that a number of open sessions in both the north and south of the borough would also be held in the near future to encourage communities to mix and interact. In relation to working with the Leisure providers, Val Birchall added that as the Council received better data about what was happening (where there were gaps in existing provision), it would enable officers to set out a clearer sense of direction to improve the offers which were provided.

Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris asked, when officers referred to women and girls in sport, if there were going to be any female ambassadors going out, talking to and engaging with females, as this group would not respond well to being questioned by males.

In response, Nigel Court confirmed this would be taking place. Val Birchall added the Council had started to do this with King's Coronation Youth Fund where there were a considerable number of girl specific activities coming forward which was very positive.

Councillor Ashok Patel referred to a recent precedent where an East London Local Authority prohibited girls over the age of 13 from participating in a marathon and he felt this should be discouraged under all circumstances. In response, Nigel Court confirmed he was unaware of this. He explained the Council would encourage all members of the community to be physically active as part of their lifestyle, no matter what age they were. In terms of marathon running, Nigel Court highlighted the Thames Valley Harriers Club and the outreach work they did, as well the mixed gender and demographics of those residents which attended sessions at the Linford Christie Stadium.

At the invitation of the Chair, Peggy Coles, the founder and co-ordinator of Hammersmith and Fulham Dementia Action Alliance addressed the Committee. She highlighted Hammersmith and Fulham had been recognised as a dementia friendly borough. She explained the project that the organisation had been working on (made

possible by physical activity / active wellbeing strategy) was a dementia prevention programme, and a sickness prevention agenda was news for the NHS, the Local Authority and Northwest London. She provided details on the Healthy Minds Programme which launched was on 4th November 2025, including the workshops on how physical activity, making healthy choices and cognitive stimulation could reduce the risk of cognitive decline. The Committee noted that as part of Healthy Minds Together, residents were referred to the Council's well-established Active Minds community activity programme.

The Chair asked officers about the signposting work that was being done on physical activity. In response, Nigel Court confirmed that as the Active Wellbeing Action Plan was being produced, officers were ensuring the fantastic work going on under the Active Minds umbrella was incorporated into the Active Wellbeing Strategy. He confirmed that the Dementia Action Group was one of the key stakeholders and officers were keen to incorporate new concepts to bring about improvements in physical activity.

Richard Shwe, Director of Housing confirmed the Council was not working in silos, and the Housing Department had been involved in the development of the strategy. He felt it was important that sport and leisure could make a positive difference in everyone's lives, so Housing would be working with Parks and Leisure and Culture to implement the Active Wellbeing Strategy across all of the Council's 99 housing estates. The Chair reflected on the discussions and felt that the strategy was being judged on Public Health related outcomes which was quite different from monitoring how many people participated in sport or did physical exercise. He asked officers to comment further on health outcomes, increased participation in physical activity and how these interacted.

In response, Val Birchall confirmed it was a complex area. She explained the work the Council had done with Public Health colleagues included investigating the data that they were using, and what the Council wanted to do was align with the measures that Public Health were using to determine whether people's health was improving. Health outcomes and participation datasets needed to be read together as they were hand in glove. She commented that it had been positive linking the active well-being and sports provision to a discussion with Public Health colleagues and colleagues across the Council so a systemwide approach was taken.

The Chair commented that it was a difficult way of measuring things as the data was looking to show increased life expectancy, less instances of strokes or heart attacks and the link between active wellbeing and those changes. In response, Mark Raisbeck explained that ultimately, the Council was focused on participation and the more people that participated in activity, the better this was for their health and the long-term benefits that would arise from this. He confirmed the strategy would be looking specifically at those groups with low levels of activity (identify these barriers) and increase their activity levels, as well as ensure active residents remained active. The ultimate aim was to increase participation in physical activity.

The Chair agreed that measuring increased participation levels was a key aspect of the strategy. The Chair was pleased that officers had identified key geographical areas within the borough and would be targeting them to increase participation in

physical activity. He asked how officers planned to identify and then engage with these groups. In response, Nigel Court provided details of how the key stakeholder sessions were used to inform action plans to bring about future improvements. Val Brichall added that you could not lecture people into becoming minimally active as this approach was not effective. However, the types of things the Council could do included ascertaining feedback about how people lived their lives and encouraging small steps that could be taken to make people more active like getting off the bus the stop before or also exercising when children were taken to a park.

Adding further comments Mark Raisbeck explained the reasons why some people might be inactive included their economic circumstances. To address this, the Council had added a number of multi-use gyms to its parks which would provide free access to equipment and the opportunity to do physical activity. The Sports Development Team also ran a number of programs for young and older persons to promote mental health and physical activity levels. Leisure Centres also had a number of concessions which were targeted in order to help certain groups promote their activity and an aim of the strategy was determining how the Council could target particular groups to encourage them to become more active.

The Chair highlighted the importance of targeting specific sub-groups as different demographics would respond in distinct ways to the strategy. For example bowls clubs could be used to increase activity in older people as well as be a form of social inclusion and community activity. He commented the Committee were interested to hear about which sub-groups would be targeted and what the results of this would be, as well as what was being to help people with specific health conditions to become more active. In response, Nigel Court confirmed the aforementioned areas were works in progress. However, he reiterated the good work which had been done under the Active Minds umbrella in the last few years and how this was a good example of working with key stakeholders which would be used to inform the Active Wellbeing Strategy.

Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris asked if Officers in the Place Department were engaging with the Education Department as there was an issue about communication between sports and education especially about bowls. She provided details of how play worthy these pitches were and felt there was scope to improve how these were maintained and also the communication between Council departments. She highlighted the importance of having the facilities and making sport attractive, as well getting the messaging right from the Education Department so active wellbeing was written into the curriculum.

The Chair commented it was important to get people who were minimally active to become more active. And the strategy which had been outlined was a good one. He was interested to see how officers approached those harder to reach sub-groups, as well as the cross council working which would be necessary. He explained the committee were interested in the indoor facilities and new strategies that were being put forward and the importance of the facilities being maintained. The Committee had heard about the work that was being done with women and girls and the committee would welcome an update on how this was developing within the strategy. It was also important that participation levels and uptake numbers were monitored.

Closing the item, Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier, Cabinet Member for Public Realm, thanked the Committee for its valuable feedback and for identifying some of the communities which were traditionally underrepresented and unserved by sports strategies. He provided an overview of the sporting heritage of the borough and explained the strategy could have been presented at a number of different Council Departments as it was so cross-sectional. He confirmed the strategy was geared to tackling a number of health issues, including dementia and was about getting residents to become more active. It was right that the Council was taking a non-stigma approach to exercise as it was about getting residents to overcome barriers to physical exercise. He commented that he was approaching the sports strategy as a key breaker of inequality, gender inequality and overcoming the very uneven provision of private sports provision across the borough. Finally, he mentioned the strategy also encompassed social mixity and cohesion as there was no nationality, creed or gender when people fought together as part of a team when playing competitive sports. He thanked officers for their work on the strategy.

RESOLVED

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

5. PLAY TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME 2025-28

Jessica Bastock, interim Head of Parks and Cemeteries, introduced the item which provided an overview of the current condition of Hammersmith and Fulham's playgrounds and outlined the development of the 2025-2028 Play Transformation programme which would see a £8.3m investment across the borough. She was supported by Hugo Ross-Tatam, Parks Projects Officer

The presentation covered the following points:

- An overview of the Playground Transformation Programme, including the timescale, budget and aims of the project.
- Details on the Programme Development work, including the independent review of the borough's parks playgrounds and using inspection reports to highlight where improvements could be made.
- Information on the existing programme for 2026-26 and the specific improvements being made to several parks.
- Details on the Housing Services Programme 2025-26, its 62 play sites and the actions being taken to improve play provision on the estates.
- An overview of the Delivery Programme, including the duration of the works, consultation on playgrounds and the procurement of planned works.
- Details on the consultation and engagement work undertaken.
- The role and aims of The Play Forum as part of the Play Transformation Programme.

Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier, Cabinet Member for Public Realm thanked officers for their work on the project. He noted the Council was fortunate to have nearly £10 million of investment to put into the borough's parks and open spaces. He explained he had asked officers to focus on three key areas. These were the improvements made to play spaces within housing estates, the intergenerationality

and accessibility of the design/s and finally to look at the two-phase consultation effort to maximise resident feedback.

In relation to the £8.3 million of investment, Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris asked how much of this was part of the Section 106 money from Fulham Football Club. In response, Mark Raisbeck confirmed the investment was not connected with the money from Fulham Football Club and the funding was completely separate.

With regards to the new space for girls, Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris asked what this was. In response, Hugo Ross-Tatam, Parks Projects Officer confirmed this was a space for teenage girls (using the findings in parks, including from the Make Space for Girls national study) for them to hang out in parks. There was a feeling that despite the provision for all genders with multi-use games areas, the needs of teenage girls had been overlooked. Hugo confirmed that the first space for girls would be created in Bishops Park.

Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris referred previous initiatives for teenagers, including the creation of a skate park which had been very successful and brought in teenagers from across London which was used by some girls. However, she was still unclear what girls wanted, as, having spoken to a number of them, there had been mixed feedback. So, she asked what the space for girls would look like.

And in relation to the 'beach area' at Bishops Park, there were ongoing concerns as there was no security in the park. She explained it was welcome to have facilities in parks for all ages, but when these were broken or tampered with due to anti-social behaviour it became an issue. Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris asked what was being done to repair the water feature at the beach in Bishops Park.

In response, Jessica Bastock, interim Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that at the moment, as part of the Playground Transformation Programme, the only area officers had identified as an exemplar play area(s), was Ravenscourt Park. However, officers could investigate the beach area at Bishops Park to identify what work was required.

Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris referred to the report and explained facilities for the under 8's and over 8's age groups had already been identified. In response, Jessica Bastock confirmed that the paddling pool area at Ravenscourt Park was mentioned. In Bishops Park, Hugo Ross-Tatam confirmed that the two current projects were the under 8's and over 8's and in terms of the Space for Girls, this would be an area for exercise and yoga which also included hammocks and additional seating space.

In response, Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris confirmed that the additional benches by the skateboarding area were removed after a period of time as they were not used and they were damaged, as were the table tennis tables. Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris asked if different contractors would be used for different requirements and whether robust gym equipment would be installed. In response, Jessica Bastock explained that a long-term approach was being taken so that high quality equipment would be installed which would also be well maintained. Hugo Ross-Tatam confirmed the Council would either be inviting quotes or going to open tender to complete the works.

In relation to the £8.3 million funding over 3 years for the programme, Councillor Ashok Patel asked for more information on this. He noted that paragraph 17 of the report highlighted that £7.25 million of the funding was still to be allocated, so asked what had happened to the £5.4 million. Secondly, he noted there were 33 playgrounds across the 55 parks and open spaces and would like further information on this and what the criteria was for specific parks to receive funding. And finally, with regards to the consultation and engagement, apart from consulting the Play Forum and the Parks Forum, he highlighted the importance engaging with local schools to ensure they got maximum usage from the parks.

In response, Jessica Bastock confirmed that of the £8.3 million, £5.4 million was available to spend. The other element of this was future funding, which would come from future development in the borough over the next three years. In terms of the different parks, Jessica Bastock confirmed that some parks were more sport focused. It was not possible for all parks to offer uniform facilities, so a tailored approach would be necessary. With regards to consultation with schools, she confirmed that schools close to parks would be a part of the consultation process and the intention was to use the school's weekly newsletters to parents and guardians and to insert internet links about the consultation and the park into these.

Councillor Ashok Patel noted that South Park was constantly being used by St Thomas's School which was a private school, but hardly ever by the Hurlingham Academy which was a state school across the road. He asked if there was a reason for this? In response, Jessica Bastock explained she was unsure why this was the case. However, officers would investigate this and report back to the Committee.

Action: That officers investigate the use of South Park by St Thomas's School and report back to the Committee.

Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris commented that of three parks in her ward, South Park was the least impressive, the fabric was in a state of disrepair, however, it was well used. Hurlingham Park was more than just an astroturf surface or a running track. The issue at Hurlingham, was Fulham Boys School were using it consistently which meant the grass could never recover.

Richard Shwe, Director of Housing provided apologies for absence for Cllr Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness who was attending a Tenants and Residents Association meeting. He commented that work in partnership which had not been present for a long time with Play and Housing colleagues were working with Parks to develop a new play programme for parks but also for the Council's estates. He explained Housing would be working collaboratively with registered social landlords (which had not previously looked at play spaces) to improve facilities and promote more inclusive play facilities across the borough. It was noted that on the Clement Atlee Estate, the main play area was run by Notting Hill Genesis but all the tenants thought it was Council controlled.

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan commented that the Committee welcomed the investment and was glad officers had undertaken the conditions report on the different playgrounds and identified that these were at different stages of their life

cycles. Councillor Rory Vaughan asked how the improvements to play spaces would be prioritised for an upgrade. Presumably, those spaces in the poorest conditions first, unless there was a different approach. He mentioned the play space at Godolphin Gardens where the equipment seemed out of date as one which officers might wish to investigate.

In terms of the consultation, Councillor Rory Vaughan asked how residents associations and other interested parties could become involved. He noted that in Cathnor Park, the residents association were conducting their own consultation to understand what people wanted in the park and how the playground could be redeveloped. In response, Jessica Bastock confirmed that the Council would concentrate on those playgrounds in the poorest condition first. With regards to the consultation process, and in particular Cathnor Park there was the Friends of group, as well as an active residents association. And where there might be investment for a larger project, officers might attend the residents' meetings as part of the consultation.

The Chair commented it would be informative to see the timescales for the different parks when these became available. In terms of encouraging play amongst children, he asked if there was funding for this, such as financing Play Workers and how people volunteered for the Play Forum. In response, Jessica Bastock confirmed Play Workers were not under consideration at this point of the programme, as this was still a concept being built around the Play Forum. The Committee were encouraged to send details of those residents who had expressed an interest in the Play Forum to officers. She confirmed there would also be an opportunity for expressions of interest to be submitted.

Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier, Cabinet Member for Public Realm, highlighted that this year the Council had been awarded a further three green flags which meant there were now 25 across the borough. In terms of the £10 million total, this was the combined Play and Parks budget. He confirmed that existing programmes would not be drawn from the £10 million as this was separate. He highlighted that more Section 106 money than ever before was being negotiated and so there were no concerns about where the improvements funding would come from. In relation to Section 106 money being ring fenced for specific projects like improvements to Bishops Park through the lease agreement with Fulham Football Club, this was the case. However, Community Infrastructure Levy money was more fluid and could be used to mitigate that.

In terms of future Projects, Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier commented he would not pre-empt the consultation outcomes to ensure the Council provided the facilities that residents had specifically requested (where feasible). He looked forward to taking the largest ever investment into the Borough parks and open spaces forward. Play was a key part to staying well, learning social codes and collaborating with others.

Concluding the item, the Chair noted that the number of questions asked showed what important topics Play, Parks and Open Spaces were. The Committee welcomed the large engagement exercise to ascertain what residents wanted in their parks, and that a wide range of facilities would be modernised. He welcomed that

officers were looking at specific users of parks, including teenage girls and the provision which was being made for them. And in addition, that playgrounds would use different contractors, be sustainable and also the engagement with schools.

The Committee looked forward to learning what the timescales would be for these improvements and what the upgrades would be, as well as the roles of Play Workers to get the best out of the new facilities. Finally, he noted that upgrading facilities on housing estates would be critical and be beneficial to these residents and the Committee endorsed officers desire to ensure other social landlords made a positive contribution to the transformation programme. The Committee looked forward to a further update in due course.

RESOLVED

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

Meeting started: 7.00 pm

Meeting ended: 8.44 pm

Chair

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