

**London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
The Economy, Housing and the Arts Policy
and Accountability Committee
Minutes**



Wednesday 9 September 2020

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Rory Vaughan (Chair), Rowan Ree, Ann Rosenberg, Helen Rowbottom and Adronie Alford

Officers: Prema Gurunathan – (Managing Director – Partnership for Growth and Innovation - LBHF & Imperial College), Yvonne Thomson – (Interim Strategic Manager, Economic Development, The Economy), Thomas Dodd – (Arts Development Officer, Economic Development, The Economy), Peter Hannon (Head of Neighbourhood Services) and Charles Francis (Committee Services)

Representatives from different Arts Groups

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lisa Homan and Andrew Jones.

2. ROLL - CALL AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

In relation to the action of the previous meeting, Councillor Rowan Ree highlighted he had not received information on the following: Action: *That Gerry Crowley provide the Committee with a copy of the Council's proposed response to the new Government Guidance on Housing Allocation for the Armed Forces.*

The Clerk confirmed this information would be circulated outside the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July were agreed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair confirmed that some general questions on the minutes of the previous meeting had been received from Marie Thomas, Resident Lancaster Court and a written response would be sent to her in due course.

No public questions were received on the Progress Report on Upstream. Five questions were submitted in advance by various representatives of Arts Groups on the Arts Commission Update and these were addressed during the meeting.

5. PROGRESS REPORT ON UPSTREAM

Prema Gurunathan, (Managing Director – Partnership for Growth and Innovation - LBHF & Imperial College) introduced the report which set out the progress on Upstream's work since it last reported to the Policy Accountability Committee (PAC) in September 2018.

The Chair thanked Prema Gurunathan for the overview and invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Rowan Ree referenced the September 2018 meeting, when the committee discussed working with large firms that were headquartered in the borough, and how transport links and the supply of affordable housing were proven ways of encouraging companies to locate within the borough. In turn, this influx of people created spending which supported local businesses. Councillor Rowan Ree asked if the Authority had considered how this might be affected with the current prevalence of working from home. In response, Prema Gurunathan explained Upstream had been in contact with some of the larger firms informally about their return to work plans (which varied). Laboratory based businesses had seen some staff return to work, but most other business were still working from home. Prema explained that Upstream were going to issue a survey to businesses shortly, to ascertain what their return to work plans were and what the implications of phased returns might be.

In the longer term, Councillor Ree asked whether the Authority had thought about how this behavioural change (of working from home) had affected the offer to larger firms. In response Prema Gurunathan explained that more residents commuted out of the Borough than came in, which was the net flow. Some larger firms based in Zone 1 in central London were looking at reducing their footfall and costs and so were actively looking at the opportunities provided by the borough (including its connectivity, availability of some affordable housing and reduced costs).

Highlighting some of the work which was being undertaken by the Industrial Strategy Board, Prema explained that a working group was currently investigating the opportunities to develop more neighbourhoods where residents worked, lived and played, which were also referred to as '15-minute neighbourhoods'.

The Chair thanked Prema for the report and commented that it was clear there were a great number of initiatives that Upstream had developed. Touching on the 2018 PAC meeting, the Chair commented that interesting and creative speakers had been encouraged to get in contact with science and tech-based businesses and he asked how this had developed. In response, Prema commented that Upstream ran two networking events per month (apart from August and only one in December) and highlighted the activities of the Deep Tech Network (research-based technology businesses) which Upstream had created in partnership with Imperial's Chemistry Department and Enterprise Division. Examples were also provided of the networking and funding opportunities which arose from the Deep Tech network.

The Chair asked if examples could be provided of those businesses which had engaged with the Deep Tech Network and subsequently decided to relocate to the borough or whether this was still in its infancy. Prema confirmed that developments were still in their early stages, but Developers had provided feedback which been particularly positive about the draw of White City.

In relation to Upstream's forthcoming business survey, Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked if this would also collect soft intelligence, such as partnerships which had formed, networks, the connectivity the Upstream brand had in the borough, and finally, the digital connectivity around place rather than a geographical one. In response, Prema confirmed that Upstream had captured some of the connectivity data and surveys did contain a tracker element to evidence those businesses which had been brought together.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg asked about broadband connectivity within the borough and especially the patchy performance in Sands End. She highlighted there were some businesses which were having significant problems and wondered whether these types of issues had been reported to Upstream. In response, Prema explained she was aware there had been problems.

Action: Prema Gurunathan to contact Councillor Ann Rosenberg outside the meeting to discuss broadband performance in the borough.

The Chair highlighted that he had listened to a recent Upstream Podcast on prosthetics for children which he had found interesting and informative and asked how other Podcasts had been received. Prema provided details on the Podcast work which had been conducted so far and some of the firms which had benefited.

Referencing the Oxford Economics report and the future proofing of businesses, Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked how the current climate had impacted upon SMEs. Prema confirmed the impacts had been varied and cited several examples of how firms were reacting and adapting. Asking a supplementary question, Councillor Helen Rowbottom suggested it would be interesting to see at a future meeting what impact the £2.4 million central government grant funding stream had had on the businesses which received it. Further questions included: whether this funding was sufficient, did the Authority need to ask for more and had the grant been instrumental in saving businesses during the freeze period.

The Chair asked Prema if she could provide some feedback on the some of the recent events which Upstream had hosted and also some thoughts on what Upstream might do in the future (in light of London Tech Week). Prema provided details of London Tech week and it was noted that this involved seven boroughs (one of which was H&F) for an eleven day period. Information and examples were provided on recent collaborative work, including work with Scale Space and a showcase events entitled Tech for Impact which involved four different companies. Further work streams included a fireside chat with a Tech Influencer, various networking opportunities and how social supporting work (with companies agreeing to display their logo on London Tech Week events) operated. Prema explained that Upstream had received a significant amount of positive feedback within the borough for the work it had done.

In terms of the future, (Prema explained that Upstream was jointly funded by the Council and Imperial College 50 / 50) the intention was to develop the business model (looking at a number of possible models, including that of the Knowledge Quarter). In doing so, additional funders would be brought to the table and the funding burden could be spread wider than the two current parties, as Upstream brought benefits and value to companies which did not currently fund Upstream.

Summarising the item, the Chair explained the Committee were impressed by the way

Upstream had developed over the last few years and there were lots of examples where Upstream had provided input and support to numerous start-up businesses. The Chair confirmed the Committee would like a further update to be provided in 12 months' time.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note and comment on the report.

6. ARTS COMMISSION UPDATE

Thomas Dodd (Arts Development Officer, Economic Development, The Economy) introduced the report. He explained that since the Committee's last update, the Council's Arts Commission had transitioned online with a revised programme to address the sector wide impacts of Covid-19. It was noted that two sessions had been held online, with the Commission's remaining five sessions projected across the next quarter and its findings due for publication by the end of 2020.

On the 26th May 2020, the Commission met to explore the theme of 'Arts & Culture in Extraordinary Times'. Commissioners were asked to report on their observations of the impact of the crisis on Hammersmith and Fulham, and the wider arts and cultural sector.

The Chair thanked Thomas Dodd for the overview and invited questions from the Committee.

Referencing the 2018 EHA PAC meeting on the Arts Commission, Councillor Rowan Ree explained that the Committee had highlighted the need to involve young people in the arts / cultural offerings (in terms of access or providing them). He commented that the report before the Committee suggested that none of the Arts Commission evidence gathering sessions had focused on young people and none of the Commissioners appeared to be representing young people or youth groups / schools. Specifically, he asked what was being done by the Commission to harness the enthusiasm of young people. In response, Yvonne Thomson (Interim Strategic Manager, Economic Development, The Economy), explained that several people on the Arts Commission worked with young people and in terms of the expert witnesses, the Bush and Lyric theatres had been involved, which did lots of work with young people. The Commission had also spoken to the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA). Yvonne highlighted that Hammersmith and Fulham had been successful in gaining a London Borough of Culture Impact Award which was based around young people, using music as a medium. One of the Commissioners is involved in music production, taking music from the bedroom scene into studios, and overall, the Culture Impact Award meant that the borough was working with hundreds of young people, so the Arts Commission had been mindful to involve young people. Councillor Rowan Ree thanked Yvonne for the update and asked that future reports include these types of updates.

The Chair mentioned the timetable of the Arts Commission, its reporting schedule and requested that the Committee have sight of the Arts Commission's final report

Action: That officers ensure the Committee considers the final report of the Arts Commission at an appropriate EHA PAC meeting, early in 2021.

With regards to the timeframe for the Arts Commission, Yvonne confirmed there were five further Arts Commission meetings planned. Pre-Covid, the Commission had hoped to hold a large public consultation meeting where the draft recommendations could be considered, but given current circumstances, these plans had needed to be altered. As a result, the next meeting would involve about fourteen community representatives which had been nominated by members of the Commission and this group would provide their feedback on the draft recommendations. This would be followed by a further meeting of Arts professionals who would also review the draft recommendations, before these were then refined or amended. Yvonne confirmed that the final meeting of the Arts Commission would be used to sign off its report.

Councillor Adronie Alford commented she was disappointed the report highlighted there had been several Arts Commission meetings, but it did not provide details of any of the outcomes. Councillor Adronie Alford also questioned the timescale to produce the final Arts Commission report by the end of the year (2020) and whether this was realistic.

Yvonne explained that all the reports were produced by People Make It Work (an organisation commissioned to manage all the work of the Arts Commission), so when officers and Councillor Andrew Jones attended Arts Commission meetings, they attended as observers and all the reports were produced by a Doctor and his

colleague, David Micklem, who also produced the research papers. Yvonne stated that the research papers would be published on the Council's Arts Commission website link. Yvonne confirmed that all the papers for the Arts Commission had been produced in a timely fashion and she had no concerns about the timescale for the production of the final Arts Commission report.

Action: That officers ensure the research papers to the Arts Commission sessions are published on the Council's Arts Commission website link.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg asked where the venues would be located for small events (theatre and music) for young people to attend and use in the future. Yvonne confirmed that venues had been discussed by the Commission and some new venues were in the pipeline through existing Section 106 agreements. Yvonne highlighted that there were numerous small venues in White City as well as adaptive space at the Riverside Studios where filming was currently taking place, but which could perhaps be used differently in the future. She explained that a mapping exercise (of venues) had been undertaken by the Commission and, as a number of smaller organisations were represented on the Commission, they had an expertise which could be tapped into.

Asking a supplementary question, Councillor Ann Rosenberg enquired whether these new venues would be affordable to small organisations to use. In response, Yvonne confirmed that the Arts Commission had taken a holistic approach to the resources / venues in the borough and taken the needs of different sized organisations into account. Yvonne explained that she was not able to share the draft recommendations of the Arts Commission at this stage, but she hoped the Committee would be pleasantly surprised by these when they came into the public domain.

Through the Chair, Ros Scanlon, Cultural Director Irish Cultural Centre provided an overview of the activities which had taken place at the Irish Centre since March 2020 (including concerts, films, music and story-telling) and how ICC Digital had been used to produce and air new content to over 50,000 viewers. Ros highlighted the devastating impact of Covid on performance venues and the efforts which were being made to support those which had lost their incomes. Ros explained it was important to recognise that the internet meant global audiences could be reached and it was vital that some good emerged from the pandemic.

The Chair asked Yvonne if she could comment on how the Arts Commission were considering the issues posed by Covid. In response, Yvonne confirmed that there was a national programme called Culture Reset and Hammersmith and Fulham was integrated into this programme. The Committee noted that some smaller venues had started to reopen, such as the Bridge and prominent residents such as Vanessa Redgrave had been petitioning outside the National Theatre (and as a Borough, Hammersmith and Fulham were supporting them) in their campaign to ask the private sector to bailout the arts in some shape or form. The Council were also working with the GLA to address the ramifications of Covid.

Yvonne explained that in her view, it was the financial impact which would be felt most keenly and how business models allowed venues to survive with such reduced

footfall. Yvonne confirmed that the Arts Commission was aware of these issues and were actively investigating these. The Chair welcomed this response and reiterated it was important the Arts Commission recognised a national and local cultural reset was required.

Echoing the sentiments of Ros Scanlon, Councillor Helen Rowbottom underlined it was important to know what was happening to the Arts now, given the degree of uncertainty created by Covid. Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked if a comedy festival was still going ahead and secondly, in relation to the Arts Commission report, whether once the recommendations were formed, what the different nodes would be for its dissemination, including where the report would be sent after it had been approved.

Yvonne confirmed that the Leader of the Council was steering the comedy festival, supported by his Team, which might be virtual, given the current social distancing constraints. In terms of how quickly the Arts Commission recommendations could be translated into an action plan, Yvonne explained that draft action plans based on the draft recommendations had already been prepared so the 'agreement to action' phase should be quite swift.

The Chair explained that he had received several written questions in advance and these were read out as follows:

How can residents share the insights the Commission are gaining and either contribute their own experience to the process or learn from it?

In response, Yvonne explained that the extensive research papers which accompanied each Arts Commission session could be published on the website and as previously mentioned, as large public consultation meetings are currently prohibited, then the commission would actively seek feedback from resident representatives and (arts) professionals. The Chair confirmed that if residents which wanted to feed into the Arts Commission contacted the Council, then officers would pass the resident's details to the Arts Commission.

What are the priorities the Commission is going to pursue, for example does it see itself focusing on participation or on audience experience or on gap filling or things that are working well – community or professional artists or the needs of specific sectors of the population?

Yvonne explained that one of the largest work areas had been ensuring equality and diversity ran across all themes and was effectively a golden thread through all recommendations. Yvonne confirmed that the Commission had been looking at building on the strengths of the borough, as well as the shift towards citizen led decision making around the Arts and looking at the Local Authority as an enabler.

In terms of finance, whether its conclusions focused on reshaping of existing investment or a different approach?

Yvonne confirmed there would be a recommendation which focused on finance.

How is it anticipated that that the strategy which comes out of the Commission will be implemented and managed?

As previously mentioned, Yvonne confirmed an action plan would be implemented on the recommendations which would include SMART objectives to ensure these were strategic and could be measured. Yvonne confirmed that the action plan would be the document within the borough which illustrated the Council's commitment to the strategy and provided details of how this would be delivered.

Could the Commission share a few key insights which have been gained through evidence sessions to date, and does the Commission see these insights as leading towards radical change in the council's approach to the arts or gradual change or something else.

Yvonne commented that for any change to be successful, it needed to be incremental, but she also explained that she was unable to comment on the Arts Commission recommendations at this time.

In relation to funding, Ros Scanlon, Cultural Director Irish Cultural Centre asked whether the fast track funding which had been used to great effect in Hammersmith and Fulham in the past, could be adopted, given the current situation. And whether an emergency fund could be created to support all the artists / projects in the borough.

In response, Yvonne confirmed that the Arts Commission had already looked at the Covid period and the implications of the cultural reset. However, she explained she would take a note of the points Ros had mentioned and raise these with the consultants at the next Arts Commission meeting.

Lucy Pittaway, Director Scariofunk Dance asked about the music workshops and whether anyone had been appointed to lead these and push them forwards or whether these were just a concept at this stage. Lucy explained that music, comedy and an arts gallery had been mentioned, but asked what support was available to the other arts sectors. Asking a final question, she noted she had attended the PAC meeting in 2018 when engagement with young people had been discussed, but she had heard nothing further on this and wished to know what steps the Commission were taking to publicise its work and engage with young people directly.

Yvonne explained the as part of the London Borough of Culture Impact Awards, the Borough had been working with HQI (a music organisation) and key for life (an organisation reducing knife crime) to engage with young people. In terms of dance, Yvonne confirmed there was a broad representation of all art forms. Natalie Carrington – dance, Becca Pelling-Fry – art curation and UK TV was on board. Yvonne explained she was interested in Lucy becoming more involved in the work of the Arts Commissions and so she agreed to take this forward with Richard Watts of the Arts Commission.

Melanie Nock, Project Manager Hammersmith & Fulham Arts Fest asked about the implementation process of the Arts Commissions' recommendations and how long

these would take – six months, a year / five years, and whether there was scope for the Arts Commission recommendations to evolve. Yvonne acknowledged that Melanie had been invited as a part of a professional body to review the Arts Commission draft recommendations and to provide feedback. In terms of implementation, she envisaged this would be an incremental process which might span 12 months. Yvonne acknowledged that Covid would have an impact, and some of the recommendations which had been at the forefront earlier in the year would slip down the list.

Ros Scanlon, Cultural Director Irish Cultural Centre congratulated the borough for all its community care work and assisting residents with food during the pandemic. She explained that the Irish Cultural Centre had established a culture hot line, which was a phone line for elderly residents, which provided music, stories and people's reaction to these down the phone. She hoped that the borough would be able to publicise this facility as it helped engage people with the arts and also reduced loneliness and a sense of isolation which many people had felt during the pandemic.

Helen Rowe, Interim Chair Hammersmith & Fulham Arts Fest, explained that during the festival this year, Hammersmith & Fulham Arts Fest had established a partnership with Hammersmith Bid, where street performers provided doorstep performances for people who were isolated or immobile. Helen explained this had been very successful and would continue into the autumn. She underlined the importance of H&F Arts Fest and other festivals as a means of creating employment for artists.

Lucy Pittaway, Director Scariofunk Dance highlighted that she had been offering online dance workshops and inspiring interviews to inspire the local community . She asked whether an online element could be added to the Arts Commission in view of the uncertainty created by Covid.

The Chair asked how proactive the borough had been in advertising the online arts events / offerings through the Council's website or through the weekly emails that were sent to residents, and if this had not been done, whether there was an opportunity for the Borough to help advertise future events.

Yvonne welcomed the comments that had been made and confirmed she would contact Ros outside the meeting and help promote the Irish Cultural Centre's hotline. She also confirmed that maximising the impact of local arts and culture was regularly discussed by the Arts Commission when she attended as an observer.

Helen Rowe highlighted that an online platform was being produced for the H&F Arts Fest and confirmed that she and Yvonne would need to discuss how this could be developed further with the Council outside the meeting.

Summing up the discussions, the Chair thanked everyone in attendance for their contributions and reiterated that Yvonne would be in contact with a number of the contributors to see how they could engage with the Arts Commission or to otherwise be involved in providing further information which could be fed into the Arts Commission. The Chair explained it had been a useful exercise to learn what

activities and events had been taking place and was reassured by Yvonne's comments that the Arts Commission had been undertaking a wide breadth of work.

outside the In terms of the Arts Commission's report, the Chair explained the committee hoped to see working with children and promoting young people, the issues surrounding venues / supporting music and the impact of Covid-19 and the recovery from that for our arts institutions and community arts. Further points which the Committee were keen to see incorporated into the Arts Commission's report were improving and promoting the Council's online offerings for the arts and enhancing overall access and engagement. Concluding, the Chair explained the Committee looked forward to considering the Arts Commission's report early in the new year and he asked for the supporting papers from all the Arts Commissions meetings to be published on the website .Yvonne encouraged the participants or their contacts to get in touch with her with further questions which she would be able to provide fuller answers to outside the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Committee reviewed and commented on the report.

Meeting started: 6.30 pm
Meeting ended: 8.21 pm

Chair

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