

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Economy, Arts, Sports & Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 27/07/2022

Subject: Challenges and Priorities for the Public Realm

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SUMMARY

This briefing presents key challenges and priorities for Public Realm in H&F. It summarises the 2022-2026 business plan commitments and challenges for the Street Environmental Services, Transport, Highways and Parking services.

This paper also references the cross-cutting Climate and Ecology programme which is covered by other reports submitted to a new policy and accountability committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Committee to note and comment on the priorities and challenges.

Wards Affected: All

| Our Values | Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Building shared prosperity | The report updates on priorities for improving public space and street scene, which will improve the experience and appeal of our high streets and support business success. |
| Creating a compassionate council | Priorities include tackling poor air quality and limiting the impacts of climate change. These disproportionately affect certain individuals and groups such as those on lower incomes and with pre-existing health conditions. |
| Doing things with local residents, not to them | Working with residents is integrated throughout schemes mentioned in this report, particularly including the development of neighbourhood initiatives in transport and highways. |

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| Being ruthlessly financially efficient | The council continues to leverage external grant funding to meet its ambitions, including for transport, carbon reduction and greening initiatives. |
| Taking pride in H&F | Initiatives to improve pride in our public space include tackling fly-tipping, greening our highways, improving our parks, and improving access to sports opportunities. |
| Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency | Various schemes covered below help to tackle the climate and ecological emergency, including transport schemes to reduce polluting vehicles and increase active travel, planting in parks and highways to support biodiversity, and sustainable drainage to reduce flood risk. A full report on progress will be made to the new Climate and Ecology PAC in July 2022. |

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

1. The H&F 2022-2026 Business Plan reflects the administrations' priorities and improvements to the public realm and environment are key to these. The following points detail general environmental priorities and those that cross multiple services. Following that is commentary on specific service areas' priorities and challenges.
2. Hammersmith & Fulham's liveability and environmental factors are key to attracting investment by anchor institutions. Improving air quality, reducing the impact of, and on, climate change, and greening the borough are important to maintain its status as one of the best places to live and work in a major city.
3. We will improve the public realm and make it a better place for people to shop, eat, drink, relax and enjoy local arts and facilities. Public realm improvements will support a new vision for high streets and town centres in the borough.
4. By doing things with residents we will shape this vision and work on their ideas and priorities to coordinate a vision for high streets as experience destinations and community hubs. We will help activate meanwhile spaces and revive H&F's nightlife through public realm improvements. This will make the borough more attractive to live and work, and keep money in the local economy.

5. Cleaning H&F's filthy air is a high priority this term. This means taking bold measures to improve air quality, building on the work of the [air quality commission](#) and [climate commission](#), and implementing the recommendations of our air quality strategy. Award-winning, innovative schemes like at South Fulham which has reduced traffic, congestion and pollution by reducing rat-running, are examples of what we can do to meet World Health Organisation air quality guidelines.
6. The Covid pandemic has underscored the importance of open spaces to people's wellbeing, particularly for those without a garden. Maintaining World Class parks, green spaces and cemeteries is also central to our ecology and climate change work. More native trees, more native flora, better drainage, and more green space will encourage natural habitats and support the mental and physical health of residents.
7. Managing the risk of flooding is a significant challenge to the borough's homes, businesses and infrastructure. We will continue to challenge Thames Water and their approach to protecting homes and buildings from flooding, and take every possible action to introduce measures and assist residents and businesses in taking out insurance. This includes enhanced monitoring and information sharing of issues, regular meetings with Thames Water to discuss and challenge on action being taken, representations to government for more support for affected residents on insurance, and a pilot programme of flood risk interventions within a neighbourhood.

Street Environmental Services

Priorities:

8. We will continue to invest in our streets to ensure they are some of the cleanest in the country. We will reduce fly-tipping by promoting schemes like our bulky waste collection service, signposting to furniture re-use projects, and clearing fly-tipping more quickly when it does happen.
9. We will bring forward proposals to roll out the containerisation of waste for eligible properties to reduce the amount of waste generated and the number of single-use plastic waste sacks in the borough. We will also roll out the collection of food waste to improve our recycling rate.
10. We will increase recycling opportunities for residents, whilst also encouraging residents to share, repair, and re-use more to reduce waste. Our first Library of Things that recently opened will help to enable this and we'll roll out more if successful.

Challenges:

11. Keeping streets free of weeds continues to remain a challenge because weeds need to appear before they can be removed (and will grow across the borough at times at speed depending on the weather). In addition, we no longer use glyphosate spray to kill weeds and the manual removal of weeds is a

significantly more labour intensive operation.

12. Significantly improving recycling rates to over 40% in an inner London borough is challenging because high overall recycling rates at this level usually include a significant proportion of garden waste which is not generated in as high a quantity in inner city areas where there are fewer (and typically smaller) gardens. In addition high recycling rates are harder to achieve from communal bin collections as contamination is more of an issue and participation is harder to identify and target. We can encourage and enable the reduction of waste in the first place which also contributes to our climate and ecology ambitions. Our performance in this area is strong, with LBHF having the 5th lowest waste arisings per head in the country.

Transport

Priorities:

13. Develop and implement a cleaner air programme, building on the work of the air quality commission. This includes expanding the air quality monitoring network, and consulting widely to introduce cleaner air neighbourhoods across the borough. These will build on the successful South Fulham cleaner air scheme.
14. Develop a healthy school streets programme. Work with residents to implement a School Streets Plus programme and challenge schools that fail to encourage parents not to use motor vehicles on the school run, whilst also reviewing safe walking routes and crossings that serve schools.
15. We will prioritise the extension of 20mph speed limits across all borough roads to improve road safety. We will also improve cycling standards in the borough through safer cycling infrastructure, continuing free cycle training, and by working with (food) delivery companies that use cycle couriers.

Challenges:

16. Managing increasing levels of freight in the borough and across London will continue to be a challenge with increasing deliveries to homes and offices. Working with a myriad of distribution and delivery companies and consolidating across a disparate sector will be difficult but enabling more zero-emission last-mile deliveries and consolidating goods will help mitigate the impact of freight.
17. We will do all we can to regulate the use of the river paths by mopeds, e-bikes, cycles and e-scooters so that pedestrians are safe and have priority.
18. Electrifying the council's own fleet, and that of our contractor's, will be a challenge, particularly for large vehicles that collect waste due to it being early-stage technology, high cost and the lack of electricity capacity to charge them.

Highways

Priorities:

19. Greening the grey, reducing tarmac and de-paving where possible, and rewilding, planting native vegetation, installing community planters, and designing sustainable urban drainage schemes to reduce the risk of flooding.
20. Introduce a sustainable transport strategy to increase active travel, improve air quality and make more space for nature. This will lead to more pocket parks, rewilding, traffic calming measures, enhanced crossings, safer cycle paths, cycle parking, and a walking and cycling campaign.
21. Ensure every street has at least one electric vehicle charging point whilst matching supply to demand through our web-based interactive tool. We will also do everything we can to bring down the costs of charging vehicles.

Challenges:

22. Installing more cycle storage is a challenge due to increasing cost, high levels of maintenance required and limited supply. However, orders have been placed for new cycle hangars to meet demand and maintenance will be managed to ensure they are cost-effective.
23. Increasing community parklets (on-street areas with plants and seating), trees, SuDS, and active travel infrastructure is a challenge due to the limited highway space and competing uses for this space both above and below ground. This will be mitigated by prioritising locations for sustainable urban drainage schemes and tiny forests.
24. Maintenance of additional green space is a challenge with a limited budget. Capital expenditure on green spaces and trees need to factor in maintenance costs to ensure newly created and newly planted spaces, plants and trees are properly maintained.
25. Major cycling schemes will have funding challenges due to TfL's financial situation and is dependent on its funding settlement with central government. We will continue to prioritise walking and cycling improvements in all schemes.

Parking

Priorities:

26. Managing kerbside space and priority.
27. Delivering parking changes to deliver climate change priorities.
28. Improve residents' and their visitors' experience of parking in the borough. This includes addressing:
 - Clarity over parking fees and rules around parking control.
 - Visitors and tradespeople parking using pre-paid vouchers.
 - Providing more information on how RingGo operates.
 - Better information on pay and display machine locations.

- Improve communication and engagement with residents on how parking controls operate in the borough and contribute to improving air quality and addressing the climate and ecological emergency.

Challenges:

29. Managing the competing demand on space, deprioritising the space for car use.
30. Introducing emissions-based residents' parking to help reduce parking fees.
31. Modal shift and correct parking infrastructure to support future road use.
32. Introducing free parking for cleaner vehicles outside of high-volume neighbourhoods, rush hour and school-run traffic periods.

Climate and Ecology

33. H&F Council published a comprehensive strategy and action plan in September 2021, titled H&F 2030: Climate and Ecology Strategy. Council services are now working towards the goal of a net-zero by 2030 borough.
34. A new Climate and Ecology PAC has been formed to steer and scrutinise strategic decisions, priorities and challenges related to the climate and ecological emergency.
35. Separate reports on the broad progress against the action plan will be published and are available [here](#) beginning with the first meeting in July 2022.
36. Other PACs, including Public Realm, will consider the climate and ecological impact of decisions, policies, and projects.

Parks and Leisure

Priorities:

37. We will implement our 'parks for the future' strategy, putting us in harmony with the needs of nature in our open spaces. We will invest in improving the appearance, maintenance and facilities of our parks and open spaces. We will use green vehicles and introduce sustainable drainage system (SuDS) solutions to protect trees and grassed areas.
38. We will further increase the number of Green Flag parks and green spaces.
39. We will ensure accessible toilet facilities are provided in or nearby to all our parks, open spaces and cemeteries.
40. We will ensure all our parks and open spaces are patrolled, checked and locked at night by the borough's Law Enforcement Team (LET) Officers.

41. We will increase the number of native trees grown in the borough and we will save or replace all trees lost through decay or damage which are a danger to residents' safety.
42. We will develop a Sports Strategy designed to allow every LBHF resident who wants to become active a chance to do so. We will ensure that there are state-of-the-art sports facilities and clubs in every corner of the borough – ideally no more than a 20-minute walk away – to include a Hurlingham Park refurbishment and enhancement of Wormwood Scrubs. We will create a digital hub for sports bookings. This will also provide accessible information about H&F parks and park events.

Challenges

43. Balancing the demands placed on our parks and green spaces which has intensified since the pandemic, from formal sports activities, dog walking, informal recreation use, events and increasing areas of rewilding and natural habitat and planting more trees.
44. Maintaining all the assets in parks, cemeteries and green spaces, pathways, boundaries, playgrounds, buildings and other infrastructure so it is safe and fit for purpose.
45. Raising external funding to help improve state of the art sports facilities across the borough.

Arts and Culture

Priorities

46. Delivering on the [Arts Commission's](#) recommendations , including the development of a Cultural Strategy .This will build on the commission's work to develop a shared vision and strategy for the borough, that contributes the council's aspirations for the economy, inclusion ,access, health and wellbeing and responding to the climate and ecological emergency.
47. Develop an ongoing programme of public visual art, making use of our parks, public spaces and public buildings to promote the borough as a major artistic and cultural environment.
48. With residents' support, organise community street theatre in local neighbourhoods to strengthen community relationships, improve community resilience and make neighbourhoods happier places to live. Will include a play in Brackenbury village.
49. Work with residents to put on events such as community concerts, parties, food markets, street theatre, tea dances.
50. Launch a Black History Trail to bring into focus the famous Black, Asian and minority ethnic people who have lived or worked in our borough.

Challenges

51. To create a robust strategic framework that will help access resources for delivery.
52. To bring the sector together to create one voice for benefits of arts and culture.
53. Identifying accessible space in the borough for a museum, archives, and exhibitions.

LIST OF APPENDICES

None.