

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Policy and Oversight Board

Date: 18/09/2023

Subject: Policy and Accountability Committees' Update Report

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Responsible Director: David Tatlow, Director of Corporate Services

SUMMARY

This report outlines the areas of work and reports considered by each of the Council's six Policy and Accountability Committees, from April 2023 to September 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the updates of the Policy and Accountability Committees and discuss any areas for future review or collaboration.
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Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Doing things with local residents, not to them	The Policy and Accountability Committees aim to amplify the voices and concerns of residents and to give them a mechanism to comment on, participate in, and determine Council policy.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The Policy and Accountability Committees were set up to hold the administration to account and scrutinise decisions in the interest of residents.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE UPDATES

Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee

The Committee considered the following items at its meeting on 3 July 2023:

- A Year of Youth Voice
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report
- Summer in the City 2023

For the first item the Committee were joined by the Youth Council who gave a presentation covering some of their highlights of 2022/23 including the launch of the Youth Voice Strategy, developing an inclusive Youth Voice Network, and the Youth Achievement Awards. The Committee offered their support for their future plans – including SEND strategy co-production, holding a youth-led hackathon in November, developing champions to support their priorities, and improving communication with schools and school councils.

For the second item the Committee invited Mike Howard (Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership) to present the partnership's first annual report, covering 1 April 2021 to 31 October 2022. He spoke about the benefits of having a sovereign partnership including better collaborative working and more of a focus on local issues, which enabled the best outcomes for children and young people in the borough.

Members discussed ways to use the Council's Business Intelligence data to lobby Government for changes to the way the most serious cases were handled. In relation to one of the cases in the report, the Committee asked about how mould and damp housing issues could be escalated and resolved if children were involved. Officers also offered to attend an upcoming Parentsactive meeting to discuss how the referral process worked.

For the third and final item, the Committee considered the Summer in the City programme 2023. The programme, which supported up to 1,200 children per week, had been designed to ensure a diverse range of high-quality sessions including enriching activity, physical activity, nutritional education, and food.

Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs

- Data sharing and collaboration between the Council, partners, and the NHS
- The Council providing co-production support to partners

Work programme

13 November 2023:

- TBC

Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee

The Committee considered the following items at its meeting on 18 July 2023

- Climate change supplementary planning document
- Solar energy and net zero in H&F

This Committee discussed the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which helped ensure new homes and developments were more friendly to the environment. The new SPD offered guidance to developers, landowners, homeowners, planning officers and other interested parties when preparing and assessing planning applications.

The Committee stressed the urgency of introducing the necessary changes to the local plan. Members noted that this was vital to ensure that fundamental climate change issues particularly within new developments were being addressed and made mandatory in line with the Council's climate and ecological emergency target. Members were provided with an update on the timescales for the completion of the local plan. Officers would work in collaboration with the Climate Change team to review the local plan. Whilst officers had not yet committed to a timeframe for this, it was anticipated that an exercise to collect and build some evidence would take place this year with the view to begin consultation next year.

Commenting on the overall report, the Committee also recommended the importance of frequent pre-application planning discussions, to encourage the use of natural materials for the development of properties within the borough.

In relation to the Solar energy and net zero item, the Committee discussed the Council's work on solar power and community energy, and the role it played delivering the Council's target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the borough by 2030.

The Committee welcomed Etta Dale (Solar Development Manager, Repowering London) who gave a presentation on the Council's partnership with Repowering London to establish the borough's first community energy group, Hammersmith & Fulham Community Energy, which enabled residents to become involved in solar schemes across the borough. The Committee were excited by the development of this initiative and requested that this be amplified as much as possible within the local community and requested that members be kept updated of any community engagement events.

Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs

- Climate change supplementary planning document - Housing and Homelessness PAC
- Solar energy and net zero in H&F - Housing and Homelessness PAC

Work programme

21 November 2023:

- The rollout of food recycling in H&F and waste recycling in general in relation to the drive to reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Other items TBC.

Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee

The Committee considered the following items at its extraordinary meeting on 26 April 2023 and ordinary meeting on 19 July 2023:

- West London Trust Update – Ealing Adult Acute Mental Health Beds
- Impact of the delayed rebuilding of St Mary's, Hammersmith, and Charing Cross Hospitals
- North West London Adult Community-Based Specialist Palliative and End-of-Life Care Review Programme
- Post Covid Syndrome Services Update

In April the Committee held a special meeting to discuss West London NHS Trust's enhanced engagement process around Ealing adult acute mental health beds, the feedback received, and the Trust's response. The Committee agreed with the recommendation to continue with the temporary suspension until further information was gathered. They also made a number of requests to the Trust, including being more mindful of the use of inclusive language and to co-produce future consultations with disabled people.

In July, the Committee welcomed Dr Bob Klaber from Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust to discuss the delayed rebuilding of Charing Cross, Hammersmith, and St Mary's Hospitals and the healthcare impacts on residents. Members highlighted the concerns that residents had over the delays, the importance of hospitals that were fit for purpose and met the needs of patients and the community, and the importance of partnership working.

The Committee also received an update on the new model of palliative and end-of-life care ahead of the launch of the official engagement process. Members were generally pleased with the progress made since the previous update, however there remained questions about the length of the engagement exercise and the Committee asked for an extension to ensure residents could have their say on the proposals.

For the final item, Melissa Mellett (NW London ICB) gave an update on the post-Covid service offer in North West London. She discussed a new service due to open at Charing Cross Hospital in September. Members discussed digital inclusion, GP referrals, the funding for the service, reaching under-represented groups, and support for children and young people.

Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs

- The cost-of-living crisis – The impacts on the borough and actions the Council and partners could take to mitigate them
- Homelessness – health inequalities linked to poor or inaccessible housing
- Health and wellbeing support in the context of domestic violence and abuse, and violence against women and girls
- Digital inclusion in primary health care services

Work programme

15 November 2023 (TBC):

- Annual complaints and complements report

- GP Services
- Vaccination update

Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee

The Committee considered the following topics at its meetings on 25 July 2023:

- Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Prevention
- Southern Housing Partnership
- Private and Social Housing Standards
- Repairs Improvement Plan

Representatives of Southern Housing Association outlined its partnership with the Council in managing 1,147 social homes in H&F, its recent merger and operating structure. Representatives addressed member questions about their approach to damp and mould cases, independent living for older residents, and subletting.

The Committee was briefed on private housing standards, landlord licensing and enforcement work taken by the Council, including acting as mediator between landlords and tenants to provide an opportunity for resolution before taking enforcement action. Members noted the challenges for residents and officers with regards to some landlord business models, and additional information on rogue landlords was provided to the Committee after the meeting.

On Repairs Improvement Plan, members noted the introduction of a “Home MOT” service, seen as a way to significantly improve resident satisfaction with the housing repairs service; and an initiative that seeks to bring contractors into resident group meetings, to enable repairs work to be done better and quicker.

Members received an update on rough sleepers and homelessness and noted that the Housing First model proved to be the most sustainable method of ensuring former rough sleepers did not return to the street. They noted that the number of rough sleepers in the Borough was low for an inner-London Borough, probably due to a range of support options and work undertaken by the enforcement team in a multi-disciplinary way. As the number of households living in temporary accommodation in England had recently hit a 25-year high, the Chair requested the team report on local impact and any stress to the budgets by increasing placements into temporary accommodation.

Work programme

14 September 2023:

The agenda for the next meeting is to be confirmed but the following items were proposed by members:

- Greening the Housing Stock
- Voids Management
- Homelessness Prevention
- Housing Ombudsman

Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee

The Committee considered the following items at its meetings on 26 July 2023:

- Policing in Hammersmith & Fulham following The Casey Review

At the July meeting, the Chair led a discussion with the Metropolitan Police, Councillors, Community Groups, and Residents about the future of policing in Hammersmith & Fulham following the Baroness Casey Review.

Superintendent Craig Knight, joined by Detective Chief Inspector Scott Ware and Detective Chief Inspector Anne Linton, presented the 'New Met for London Plan'. The plan was designed to deal with the impact of austerity, recruitment and standards, changing demographics and demands, returning to policing by consent, cultural change, and fixing the fundamentals around pay and conditions, training, and internal processes. The police also discussed recent changes to policing in the borough aimed at tackling sexual assault, taking a more robust approach to violence against women and girls, and improving response times.

Members and guests discussed their experiences of racism and sexism in relation to policing in the borough – and suggested a number of improvements. The Committee asked to see more from the police about local training, plans to improve response times, and how to ensure residents were fully aware of the policing structures and processes in place to support them.

Areas of potential collaboration / cross-over with other PACs

- Cost of living, in the context of community safety – The trend of increased crime during periods of economic uncertainty.
- Development of a borough Food Strategy.
- Digital inclusion - what the Council is doing internally and with partners.
- Mental health and wellbeing in the context of community safety.

Work programme

22 November 2023:

- TBC

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

The Committee considered the following items at its meeting on 24^h July 2023:

- Update on the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Hammersmith & Fulham
- The Draft Tree Strategy

The Committee considered an update on The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Hammersmith & Fulham. Following the recommendations of the borough's Community Sport & Physical Activity Network (CSPAN) presented in the last report to the Committee in January, there had been further extensive engagement and consultation with CSPAN members, sports organisations, and local stakeholders including education and disability forum representatives. The draft strategy and action plan were close to completion and the Committee's view were sought on these developments.

Themes to emerge from the meeting included: the need to ensure fringe sports (skateboarding and walking football) were not omitted from the list of activities residents were encouraged to participate in, as well concerns about how realistic the consultation timetable was. The Committee stressed the importance of involving young people and schools in the consultation process and were pleased to learn that the inter school's games organiser was the CSPAN representative. Members recommended ensuring there was sufficient accessible green space within the borough that was not being used for organised sport, as well as the opportunities for repurposing brown field and industrial sites for sports and physical activity.

The Chair recommended steps were taken to ensure there was co-production with disabled residents in the development of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and sought assurances on this. He also asked what the measures of success of the strategy would be.

The Committee recommended the way in which the opportunities for sport and physical activity were currently being communicated to residents could be improved in the future, such as by celebrating achievements. In addition, questions were asked about how the Authority was working to deliver sports and physical activity on the fringes of the borough, given its geography and very porous boundaries in some places. For example, Shepherd's Bush Cricket Club in Acton but a 2-minute walk from the borough boundary, as well as Wormwood Scrubs bordering Brent and Acton.

Commenting on the overall report, the Committee supported the priorities which had been set out and the Committee looked forward to an update in about six months' time.

In relation to the draft tree strategy, the Committee noted this was the first tree strategy for Hammersmith & Fulham. The report provided details on the vision of the strategy, how it would be achieved, as well as why the borough needed a tree strategy. The Committee noted that the strategy included three main aims: increasing the canopy cover, preserving and improving existing trees and working

closely with residents and stakeholders. Details were provided of how these three core areas broke down into a further twelve sub-sections.

Members highlighted how a significant proportion of their casework related to trees. Recent topics included: that trees were pruned at the wrong time of the year, for dead trees to be removed and replaced and finally, a group of residents had asked how they could go about getting trees planted in their road. While the Committee commended the planting of more trees, it noted that there was a paucity of dates within the draft strategy and recommended the draft could be strengthened by the inclusion of some key milestone dates.

In relation to improving communication, the Committee recommended that the Council's website was revamped to include FAQ's on trees, to assist residents and Councillors and also for key information such a ward tree inspections to be sent to respective ward councillors.

The Committee recommended officers investigate the merits of events possibly being held in the north, middle and south of the borough, and for these to be held in conjunction with the Tree Council to inform future strategy development.

The Committee agreed with the points raised by the Hammersmith Society (in writing), namely the type of materials used at the base of trees (the need for a permeable surface), the promotion of watering some street trees by local residents and in town centre areas, cages were required around some saplings. The Committee were pleased that officers would act on these suggestions.

Finally, the Committee noted that the draft tree strategy consultation document was due to go out at the end of September / early October, but the duration of the consultation had not been finalised. The Committee recommended that the consultation was circulated for as long as possible to ensure residents had a good opportunity to provide their views.

Work programme

20 November 2023 (TBC):

- Review of performance of the new household waste collection contract
- Implementation of wheeled bin and food waste collection
- Arts within the Civic Campus
- Industrial and cultural strategy - tourism and marketing strands
- Cultural strategy update

LIST OF APPENDICES

None.