

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

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



Monday 22 April 2024

PRESENT

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

Officers:

Bram Kainth, Strategic Director of Environment
Mark Raisbeck, Director of Public Realm
Ian Hawthorn, Assistant Director, Highways
Nicki Burgess, Head of Business & Enterprise
Sam Ridley, Place Shaping Officer
Matt Rumble, Strategic Head of Regeneration and Development
Matt Paterson, Assistant Director for Spatial Planning
Charles Francis, Committee Coordinator

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Jones (Cabinet Member for the Economy), Councillor Sharon Holder (Cabinet member for Public Realm) and Councillor Liz Collins.

Apologies for lateness were provided by Councillor Ashok Patel.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

The Open and Exempt minutes of the Economy, Arts, Sports and Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee meeting held on 5th February 2024 were agreed.

4. **HIGHWAYS CONTRACT REVIEW**

Ian Hawthorn, Assistant Director Highways gave a presentation on a review of the current Highways service delivery contract. This focused on contractor performance as well as highlighting future procurement requirements. The presentation drew attention to the following:

- Hammersmith and Fulham Highway Assets
- RBKC Framework and x6 contract areas
- The key principle of the contract
- Contract Performance Management and Service Manager Dashboards
- Risks
- Future Contract 2026
- Key findings on the current highway contract market in London

With reference to the contract performance indicators, Councillor Adam Peter Lang noted that *site health and safety inspection* was rated as only satisfactory, and he hoped that in the new contact this could be improved upon as a priority. He also noted that *respect for the environment* only had a satisfactory rating and hoped this could be improved. On a positive note, he highlighted that asphalt resurfacing, pot-hole repairs and winter gritting were rated as *good* and he commended the respective teams for their work.

In terms of the future, Councillor Adam Peter Lang noted that the Authority had ruled out partnerships with other neighbouring boroughs, such as Westminster and would be bringing grounds maintenance and horticulture back in house. He also commented that the Council needed to be mindful of the length of the contracts it entered into.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang commented that whichever partner the Council entered into a contract with, it was important to enquire about their staffing, as employment rates were critical in all industries at the moment. He noted that ten years was a long time and asked whether the company had sufficient staff to meet the demands of the contract. He explained that he had posed the question of staffing and recruitment to Viola recently and had been assured that they could meet these targets.

In response, Ian Hawthorn confirmed that it was some of the smaller sites and the minor works which was where the issues were. Whereas the planned works where there were schemed works were excellent. Members were reassured to learn that Conway was held to account by the Council when it missed its targets on the smaller sites. In terms of recruitment within the industry, Ian Hawthorn provided details of his specific interest in the area and the importance of encouraging women to join the

Highways Industry. In terms of pot-holes, Ian Hawthorn confirmed that Hammersmith and Fulham was second in London with the fewest number of pot-holes and he provided details of the monitoring work that was done to identify defects in road surfaces before they developed into pot-holes. He underlined the importance of the weather, its effect on roads and how a wet July 2023 had meant that pot-holes had begun to develop well before the usual 'pot hole season' of December and January. It was noted that the Council provided a 24/7 service from 1 October to the end of April, monitored the weather and despatched gritters as soon as low temperature thresholds were met.

With regards to long term contracts, Ian Hawthorn explained that the Council had surveyed all London Boroughs as well as some of adjacent counties, such as Essex, and long-term contracts were becoming the norm. He explained that inner London Boroughs suffered in terms of space for depots for contractors compared to outer London where there was more space and this also tended to shape the contract.

Councillor Jackie Borland asked for further details to be provided on why the Council had ruled out partnerships with another borough where there was an opportunity to save costs. In response, Ian Hawthorn confirmed that in the case of Westminster, it wanted to move faster than the Council did, as Hammersmith and Fulham wished to review how the works contract operated. He confirmed that as with all contracts, the devil was in the detail, and any decisions taken in haste could create a considerable amount of future work to recoup costs from contract specifications which were not robust enough. Ian Hawthorn confirmed that there were twenty thousand items in the new contract and this included a considerable amount of work in sustainability. Members noted that Council still worked closely with Westminster, but that in this instance, the Council had deliberately chosen to move more slowly so it could take more time to assess its options.

Councillor Jackie Borland highlighted the frustration felt by residents when highways and footways were repeatedly dug up on a regular basis. She enquired about what was being done to link utilities together so that multiple services could be repaired or laid at the same time to help minimise disruption. In response, Ian Hawthorn confirmed that one of his roles included leading the team for Network Management, so he co-ordinated those works. He explained that a considerable amount of collaboration was done (including monthly meetings), so that when the Council did its planned maintenance programme, utilities were encouraged to contact the Council so that any works could be dovetailed where possible. It was noted that current legislation did allow utilities to go into works which had been completed by the Council, if for example, there was a need for emergency access (a burst pipe) or a new connection was required.

Councillor Ashok Patel noted that under asset type (on page 14) there was a reference to Hammersmith Bridge and he asked why this was. In response, Ian Hawthorn confirmed that the bridge was one of the few large structures in the borough and that was why it was highlighted. Councillor Ashok Patel asked why all the contracts had been awarded to FM Conway with the exception of drainage repairs which was won by Kappa. He asked if it would be simpler if one contractor addressed all works. In response, Ian Hawthorn confirmed that FM Conways did not bid for the drainage repairs.

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan, asked in terms of looking forwards and the new contract (implemented in 2026), what the next steps and timings were. And what consultation activity and the budget implications were likely to be. In response, Ian Hawthorn confirmed that the contract process had started and an external consultant would be leading the procurement process, which would involve a considerable amount of engagement and consultation, as the contract needed to be examined piece by piece. It was noted that the Council would be testing the market (for costs) as it was a named body within the TfL framework. Ian Hawthorn confirmed that in the current marketplace, there would be higher prices, but these had been taken into account as the Council tailored its work. New materials and technologies were also examined as possible ways of reducing costs. It was noted that a survey of the whole borough had recently been completed which highlighted there were many challenges. These included winding roads, Victorian infrastructure, the historical planting of footways and contacting neighbouring boroughs (to the contract) which would begin in the next few months. Ian Hawthorn confirmed he was Chair of the London Technical Advisory Group, so he represented all the other Highways Officers in London and co-Chaired this with TfL so he had a strong overview of where other boroughs were with their procurement. So, in summary, the Council was currently doing the preparatory work for the procurement and there were many challenges given the impacts arising from climate change.

Action: That Ian Hawthorn come back to Committee and provide a schedule of the procurement works in the near future.

The Chair commented that there were a considerable number of strategies within the Council that would be interwoven into this work such as the tree and SUDS strategies. The Chair asked how individual streets within highways were prioritised for maintenance, what reviews had been done on high carriage ways and gullies and how these plans were put together.

In response, Ian Hawthorn confirmed that a condition survey was done on every road which took on board comments from members of the public and Councillors. It was a case of finding the sweet spot of doing maintenance just before a road deteriorated and costs exponentially escalated. It was noted that all planned maintenance was done on a risk-based approach (risk, who used the asset, whether there were vulnerable users, resident feedback and complaints data). Ian Hawthorn confirmed that a considerable amount of a roads' deterioration came from underneath the road. Details were provided on how roads were then assessed and graded for repair, as well as how the 'reserve list' of those roads awaiting repair also operated. Members noted that Highways were a dynamic asset as its condition was constantly changing and evolving over time.

The Chair highlighted that the condition of footway paving was an area of concern and asked what the timescale was to increase the percentage of these to a good standard (an 80% target). Adding a supplementary question, he asked what was being done to ensure temporary traffic lights (needed during the repair) were moved quickly on to the next job after the repair had been completed.

In response, Ian Hawthorn provided details of how complex footway repairs were, and how historically, the approach had changed over time. However, he confirmed that changes were underway to improve how these repairs were implemented. In terms of temporary traffic lights, he confirmed that these were monitored on a regular basis. If Councillors were aware these should have been moved, they were urged to contact Ian to expedite matters, as temporary lights needed to be moved as soon as possible. In terms of overall monitoring, it was noted that Council conducted 20,000 inspections a year on utilities work.

In relation to street lighting and electrical contracts, Councillor Ashok Patel asked why street lighting was described as only satisfactory – planned works not completed until March 2024. In response, Ian Hawthorn confirmed that this area was underperforming, the reasons why and the actions being taken to improve performance.

Concluding the item, the Chair confirmed that the Committee would like to revisit the topic in six months' time in terms of looking at the new contract and in particular, the strategy in the next 10 years. It was noted that there was going to be a considerable amount of evolution in terms of climate change and those overlapping strategies.

Action – That the Committee revisit the Highways Contract in six months' time to examine the new contract (as detailed above).

RESOLVED

1. For the Committee to note and comment on the paper and presentation.

5. PLACE SHAPING APPROACH AND PRIORITIES

Nicki Burgess, Head of Business & Enterprise gave a presentation which provided details of the Council's place shaping approach to transform key town centres and priority areas. It also outlined ongoing work to support vibrant secondary high streets

The presentation covered the following points:

- The Council's place shaping vision to transform three key regeneration priority areas:
 1. King Street and the opportunities the Civic Campus presents.
 2. Shepherds Bush and its connectivity with the White City Innovation District.
 3. North End Road and the section 106 opportunities Earls Court Development present.
- Place Shaping ambitions align with the Local Plan, Arts & Cultural Strategy, Hammersmith SPD, Civic Campus Board, White City Public Realm Study, and the overarching aims of the Industrial Strategy.
- The work also includes supporting secondary highstreets with the formation of the seven High Street Business Associations.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang commended the progress which had been made on the Civic Campus and highlighted that Olympia would be coming on track in the near future. In relation to subways and public safety, he confirmed that he agreed with the points that were raised in the officer presentation. He stated it was important the Council thought creatively and engaged with residents about how it could encourage them and visitors to the borough, to use the range of facilities in Hammersmith and Fulham (the Civic Campus, Olympia, King Street, the Thames Path and surrounding places of interest.). Further points of discussion included the importance of accessibility and provision for young people.

In response, Nicki Burgess, Head of Business & Enterprise confirmed that the Council was looking at joining up with the river as part of its wider vision for the borough. And it was also looking at other stakeholders and assets within the borough such as Olympia and Lyric Theatre to drive more footfall towards Hammersmith as a whole.

Councillor Jackie Borland commented on the decline of Fulham Broadway over the last 5 years in comparison to Hammersmith and the north of the borough and asked what support could be offered to help improve and rejuvenate the area. In response, Nicki Burgess confirmed that there had been a high turnover of businesses in the area. However, there were new businesses coming in, and highlighted that North End Road and Fulham Broadway to Lillie Road were the key town centres. It was noted that officers were working closely with Fulham Bid to encourage further investment into the area. Councillor Jackie Borland commented that it was important for high streets to work independently as well as collectively to provide the best services for the community.

Councillor Ashok Patel asked what the investments sums were for the regeneration projects in Shepherd's Bush and North End. While he agreed that more should be done to encourage the growth of new businesses, he highlighted the impact of business rates and also the enforcement of business rates. In response, Nicki Burgess confirmed that later items in the agenda would address investment for regeneration and she confirmed that in terms of North End Road, the Council was working with ECDC (Earls Court Development Company) who would be submitting their planning application in the near future, so the Council would be negotiating Section 106 monies to fund those improvements.

The Chair commented that the strategy was a good example of co-ordination and cross working across the Council. Councillor Rory Vaughan asked what resident involvement there was going to be in some of the strategies that had been outlined. And in terms of the strategies, he asked if there were some quick wins anticipated (such as on King Street) as well as what the longer-term ambitions were.

In terms of resident engagement, Nicki Burgess confirmed that projects like the Civic Campus had already heavily involved residents. The Council had its internal governance framework, and now it needed to construct its external governance framework and how the Council was going to engage and work with residents. Nicki Burgess explained that the Council ran a Business Network with brought business together on a bi-monthly basis and officers were planning on undertaking a business engagement event for King Street businesses in June 2024. This would underline

what the Civic Campus was, including what the benefits were. In terms of quick wins, Nicki Burgess highlighted the shop front programme, subway quality and improving the quality of streets projects. In North End Road, the Council was concentrating on the branding of the stalls, and in Shepherd's Bush there was the Comedy Festival in the near future. Shepherd's Bush Business Forum were also working hard to join up the attractions and create a visitor map to encourage new visitors and develop the night-time economy.

The Chair was encouraged by the large number of projects that were underway and commended the good cross-working across the council. The Committee supported the way in which Business Associations had been used to develop specific regions in the borough and increase footfall in these areas.

RESOLVED

For the Committee to note and comment on the report.

6. PLACE SHAPING THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Matt Rumble, Strategic Head of Area Regeneration gave a presentation which provided an update on the council's work to shape better places through the development of new, affordable housing and community infrastructure such as schools, community spaces, and commercial space. The presentation drew attention to the following:

- Background to the Development Programme.
- Placemaking in the Development Programme.
- Example Schemes (White City Central, Ed City, Old Laundry Yard, Avonmore School and Lillie Road).
- Other housing growth initiatives (Quayside Lodge Acquisition, Refugee Housing Programme and Housing and Corporate Asset Review).

The Chair thanked Matt Rumble for a clear and comprehensive update and for providing many examples of development projects.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang echoed the Chair's comments on the report. However, he thought there was scope to improve how this progress was communicated to residents. He explained that his case work illustrated that some residents only saw the negatives associated with development rather than the positive outcomes. Making a general point on development, it was his view that Housing Associations had become too large and it was good that the Council was working directly with developers to address housing need. It was also essential that with any form of development, that the Council explained what section 106 monies stemmed from the development and how this would be used to benefit the local community.

Matt Rumble explained in terms of lessons learnt, that having engaged with residents, the more that could be done to demystify the process, the better the engagement process was, and residents were more likely to feel they owned a project. He explained every scheme was different, and the Council had to think creatively about how it could engage the local community. With regards to communicating with residents, Matt Rumble underlined the Council needed to sell what it was doing and ensure it talked to its Tenant Residents Associations (TRAs) forums to illustrate where it had been successful and provide confidence that other projects in the future would be delivered in the same way. He explained it was necessary the Council demonstrated proof of concept first with a few smaller schemes before the Council increased this messaging with larger schemes.

Councillor Jackie Borland commended the level of ambition set out in the report and presentation. She noted that Housing Associations were focusing on maintaining the stocks they already had, but highlighted she regularly received reports from residents that were suffering from leaks, mould and other issues. Very large leaseholder bills was another issue that was highlighted. She commented that it was important when future homes were designed, leaseholders were not saddled with huge bills they would struggle to pay.

In response, Matt Rumble confirmed that in the very early stages of any development, officers did examine the lifecycle costs of Council assets to ensure they were building premises that were built to last and would not need substantial investment in the future. And in terms of the Council's housing stock, Matt Rumble confirmed officers were conducting a comprehensive stock condition survey (which had been ongoing for several years). This would inform the Council what the quality of all its homes were in the borough, and help the Council set the blue-print for where and how it invested in housing stock in the future in a data driven way.

Councillor Ashok Patel commented that the projects were meant to be self-financing and asked how long it would take for the Council to be reimbursed. In response, Matt Rumble provided details of how schemes worked. It was noted that if the Council were to solely rely on financing its schemes through sales receipts, the Council would build fewer affordable homes. By using the rental income to pay down the residual debt it meant that Council could build more affordable homes.

The Chair remarked that the Table in Annex 1 was particularly helpful as it gave a clear picture of the number of homes in each scheme, their tenure (affordable as opposed to market rent) and the completion dates. He noted that several schemes would be completed in the next two to three years. In terms of creating happy and diverse communities, the Chair explained that he went to the grand opening of the White City Youth Zone which was very well attended. In relation to sustainability and passive house / environmental benefits of the building, the Chair asked if these benefits could be articulated in terms of the carbon reduction and the reduction in energy bill costs. With regards to the Ed City Development, the Chair asked how much family accommodation had been built there, as three-bedroom properties were rarer than was ideal across the borough.

In response to housing sustainability, Matt Rumble explained that a presentation on this had recently been provided to the Housing and Homelessness PAC and he

offered to return to the Committee and provide a similar presentation. He provided details of how carbon reduction was calculated, and it was noted that Council was now reducing its carbon emissions substantially with the Hartopp and Lannoy scheme reducing emissions by 84% compared to the building standard in 2013 which meant that tenants saw a reduction of between 50 to 65% in their energy bills.

Matt Rumble confirmed that in relation to the Family Housing Strategy, this was being addressed through the development programme. Based on the Council's Housing Needs Data, the housing need in Hammersmith and Fulham was predominantly for one and two-bedroom properties, so schemes were developed with this in mind. However, the Council recognised there was also a need for some larger properties and so was trying to factor in more larger family sized homes into its new developments.

The Chair was pleased that new housing developments were coming into fruition over the next few years and commented that the committee would monitor developments closely.

RESOLVED

That the committee note and comment on the report and the presentation.

7. HAMMERSMITH TOWN CENTRE SPD and ITEM 8 - WHITE CITY PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

Matt Paterson, Assistant Director for Spatial Planning provided a joint presentation on the Hammersmith Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and White City Public Realm Strategy. The presentations drew attention to the following:

- The Hammersmith SPD
- An Overview of the Vision, Opportunities, Developer Guidance and Delivery of the Town Centre SPD
- An overview of the White City Public Realm Strategy
- White City – Shortlisted Projects
- Details on the Shepherd's Bush Green project

Councillor Adam Peter Lang commended the plans for development on Shepherd's Bush Green. Making a general point, he stressed the importance of engaging with the community - businesses and residents - on any new developments.

Councillor Jackie Borland commented that public realm had so many knock-on effects, not just visually and aesthetically, but could also reduce crime, anti-social behaviour, and so, overall, its implementation was a positive influence for the borough. She explained it was positive to hear about the links which were being forged between established estates and newer areas and how spatial planning and public realm could help residents feel more grounded in their communities.

In response, Mike Patterson confirmed that the Council did not have a blank sheet for redevelopment, and what it was trying to do was enhance existing neighbourhoods and communities and ensure there was a cohesiveness to place.

Councillor Ashok Patel asked what the Council's vision was for the iconic BBC Television Centre, and if there had been any public consultation about the site. In response, Mike Patterson confirmed that the redevelopment of the BBC Centre had won several awards already and the feedback which had been received was broadly positive. In terms of the public realm for the site, it was extremely popular and was well used. The remaining question was whether it felt as public as it might do, as it still felt a bit private at times. However, the consensus was that residents would like this feel replicated up Wood Lane.

Concluding the item, the Chair confirmed that the Committee would be interested to examine how the King Street SPD developed (having taken on board the comments received during the consultation period). As well as how the six design concepts areas developed over time. The Chair asked what the timescales were for these projects. In response, Mike Patterson confirmed that the consultants had identified 28 interventions (physical improvements) within the White City area. It would be a long-term delivery project, as there was still all of Imperial College's Southern Campus, other sites still to come forward, as well as some other sites within the White City Innovation District.

The Chair underlined that the Committee were excited about the developments within the public realm and would like to revisit the six concept areas as they developed in due course.

RESOLVED

1. For the Committee to note and comment on the report.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 9.47 pm

Chair

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