

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

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

Minutes



Monday 3 February 2025

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Rory Vaughan (Chair), Liz Collins, Adam Peter Lang and Ashok Patel (online)

Other Councillors:

Councillor Sharon Holder (Cabinet Member for Public Realm)
Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform)
Councillor Stephen Cowan (Leader of the Council)

Officers:

Andrew Munk (Assistant Director Economic Development)
Bram Kainth (Executive Director - Place)
Kellie Gooch - Head of Finance (Place)
James Newman (Assistant Director Finance – Corporate Finance)
Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm)
Annie Baker (Assistant Director – Street Environmental Services)
Charles Francis (Committee Coordinator)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jackie Borland, Andrew Jones (Cabinet Member for the Economy) and Zarar Qayyum (Cabinet member for Enterprise and Skills). Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Adam Peter Lang.

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 18 November 2024 were agreed.

4. **UPDATE ON 'UPSTREAM LONDON': THE VISION FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF THE COUNCIL'S INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**

Councillor Stephen Cowan (Leader of the Council) introduced the item and provided a comprehensive update on the development of the next phase of the Council's pioneering Industrial Strategy: *Upstream London*. This was launched in late November 2024, at an event at the new WEST Youth Zone in White City. Building on the first phase of the Strategy, the Committee noted the aim was to make the borough a global hub of innovation and inclusive growth.

Councillor Stephen Cowan provided details on how the strategy had initially developed, following the establishment of a partnership with world-leading Imperial College London in 2017 to establish a cluster of science, technology, engineering, maths, medicines and media (STEM) businesses around Imperial's existing research and development, to create a world-leading economic ecosystem in future industries.

Councillor Stephen Cowan explained the Council had developed a clear strategy to grow a localised economic ecosystem, with a focus on the sectors that were set to grow and that were deemed right for the local area. He highlighted the importance of creating the conditions for serendipity to occur and the innovation which stemmed from this. It was noted that since the inception of the Industrial Strategy, the Council had helped to generate £6billion of high-growth business investment, creating over 13,000 jobs. This had led to increased opportunities in the community through working closely with partners including anchor institutions, businesses and investors.

At the same event and as a central part of Upstream London, the Council also launched the Upstream Pathway Bond. Councillor Stephen Cowan explained this was a groundbreaking initiative giving people a clearer pathway into new careers and more opportunities to develop new skills. The Committee were informed that utilising relationships with businesses and with the international partnerships the Council had developed, young people would have significantly more opportunities.

Councillor Ashok Patel congratulated Councillor Stephen Cowan on Upstream London / the Industrial Strategy. He noted the innovation districts which had been set up in Europe and Australia and asked if there were any plans for these to be developed in the Far East, particularly Singapore and India. Councillor Ashok Patel also commented on the work of the Sands End, Arts and Community Centre and the events which had been taking place there. In response, Councillor Stephen Cowan explained that next year, the Council would be launching the Innovation District Convention, and the council was currently in the process of speaking to all its partners and stakeholders in Hammersmith and Fulham about this, which would be open to people from around the world.

He explained that the Council was keen to extend the number of innovation districts in the democratic world as this was the best way to share learning and ensure the Council made the right decisions. He explained that the Council had met with the Leaders of Kanataka about linking with them in India and the Council was particularly keen to develop its Life Science connections. It was noted the Council had signed a letter of intent and memorandum of understanding with them in 2024.

Councillor Stephen Cowan explained the Council had been in contact with the Korean Embassy about establishing innovation districts in the Republic of Korea and Singapore was another area of interest. Given that Hammersmith and Fulham was an economic hotspot and was world renowned for having produced fast economic growth, the opportunities to share and learn were increasing.

In relation to the Governance structures – the Upstream London Delivery Board and the Upstream London Political Oversight Group, Councillor Ashok Patel asked for more details to be provided on these, including their composition. In response, Councillor Stephen Cowan confirmed that he Chaired the Delivery Board which also included several Cabinet Members and prominent members of the community. This was the formal body that steered decisions and ensured that land development connected with skills, which then connected with entrepreneurial support.

Councillor Stephen Cowan also explained there was an Oversight Board, Stakeholder Board and day to day delivery was monitored by an Advisory Board which aimed to meet about three times per year. He confirmed that Elanor Gunn had met with the Council last week to discuss the Pathway Bond, which Councillor Cowan felt needed to act like a steering group. The composition of the Boards was still to be confirmed, but Councillor Cowan confirmed he was pleased with the number of people who had agreed to sit on these at this stage. He also provided comprehensive details on the Pathway Bonds and what these sought to achieve.

Councillor Rory Vaughan asked about the delivery of Scale Space and how this worked in practice, as well as sharing innovations more widely within the borough. He also mentioned the CO2 absorbing paint amongst other exciting innovations and how these were being shared. Councillor Rory Vaughan commented that Upstream was not purely focused on White City and there were also a number of places around the borough such as Fulham Riverside which had focused particularly on health and well-being.

Councillor Rory Vaughan also highlighted it was important to consider how the industrial and cultural strategy interacted with each other and helped to increase visitor numbers to the borough. In response, Councillor Stephen Cowan commented that next week there would be visitors from Poland who would be shown around the innovation district as well as share learnings. He commented that it was positive that the new Government had talked about economic growth and growth plans were now increasingly commonplace. It was noted the Council introduced its growth plan in 2017, and by working in partnership with Imperial College, this had given the council a significant advantage over late adopters.

The Chair thanked Councillors Stephen Cowan, Andrew Jones and the officers supporting Upstream and the Industrial Strategy work. He confirmed the Committee looked forward to a further update in due course.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee note and comment on the recently launched Upstream London 'white paper' vision document
2. That the Committee note the intention to develop and cost a delivery plan

5. 2025/26 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS)

Corporate Budget

Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, introduced the item that provided details on the proposals for the 2025/26 revenue budget – including the risks, financial resilience, and impact of those proposals.

He explained this had been achieved through ruthless financial efficiency and reforming how services were delivered. The following points were noted:

- The Net General Fund Revenue Budget was £221m.
- The financial environment, including reduced revenue funding, changing demographics and a sluggish national economy.
- The key objectives of the financial plan: Ensuring the safety of residents, businesses and visitors, protecting the statutory services and other Council services valued by residents. Promoting prosperity, running an efficient council, and preserving low council tax rates.
- The budget headlines for 2025/26 included: Investing £3.5m in community safety and crime prevention, relieving pressure on statutory services, investing in the Upstream Industrial Strategy, tackling climate change and investing in sports facilities.

Councillor Rowan Ree noted that the Revenue Budget would be presented to the Cabinet and Budget Council in February 2025 and thanked cabinet members and officers for their work in realising a balanced budget over the past year.

Departmental Budget

Kellie Gooch - Head of Finance (Place) gave a presentation of the budget for the Place Directorate. The following key achievements were noted:

- Keeping the borough clean through waste / recycling collections and street sweeping.
- Minimising waste and increasing recycling.
- Maintaining 53 excellent parks and open spaces.
- Delivering 4 leisure centres and 1 swimming pool, at a net annual income to the Council (no cost to the Council).
- Providing a warm and safe space for 625,000 Library visitors every year.

- Keeping roads and pavements in good order and clear of obstacles.
- Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency.
- Pushing ahead with the Council's pioneering Industrial Strategy - "Upstream London".
- Consistently meeting learner targets, attracting full grant funding for Adult Learning & Skills (at no cost to H&F).
- Implementing the Council's cultural strategy.

Kellie Gooch, (Head of Finance, Place) also updated members on the budget changes and future strategic budget risks. These included Hammersmith Bridge works, waste collection and meeting service costs, national inflationary pressures and challenges to secure funding for the Corporate Business Plan objectives.

In relation to waste disposal, general waste to recycling, Councillor Adam Peter Lang highlighted that he had received a considerable amount of case work on topic which had now largely gone. He took the opportunity to thank the officer teams for both improving the environment and saving costs in this area. He asked if there was a grant available to the Council in relation to household cardboard.

In response, Kellie Gooch, Head of Finance Place explained the aim of the £1.8 million funding from the government (extended producer responsibility) was to charge the producers of the waste and in doing so, incentivise them to reduce the amount of packaging. Councillor Adam Peter Lang highlighted the issue of the loss of public toilets across London, and suggested this could be looked at in relation to parks at some point in the future.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang asked for an update in relation to Linford Christie Stadium. In response Mark Raisbeck, Director of Public Realm explained that the changing rooms had just been demolished and replacement facilities were being installed. He also highlighted that the running track would also be upgraded later in the year which would boost user numbers and increase revenue.

Councillor Ashok Patel asked three questions. Firstly, he noted that £3.4 million was earmarked for the Law Enforcement Team which he commended. He asked what was being done to increase participation from the Police, or Police numbers so the Council could reduce its expenditure on the LET in future. Secondly, with regards to the receipts for domestic rates, he noted that four in ten households were exempt and asked for further details on this. And finally, he asked about the proposal to balance the 2025/26 budget and the savings and efficiencies of £5.1 million and asked for a further explanation to be provided.

In response, Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform acknowledged that crime and anti-social behaviour was probably the most prevalent issue raised by residents. He provided an overview of the fall in Police numbers and activity and highlighted how important the LET had become in terms of preventing crime in the borough. And while there was a need for the LET it would continue to be funded through the base budget. He also provided details of the council's Gangs Unit as well as work being done to reduce violence against women and girls.

With regards to four in ten receiving discounts, he explained this was part of the Council tax support scheme. He provided details of how the scheme worked, which residents were assisted and highlighted that Hammersmith and Fulham was one of only three London Boroughs that offered 100% discount to the most vulnerable. Finally, in relation to the £5.1 million, Councillor Rowan Ree explained this was the total figure for efficiencies across the whole of the Council for the year.

Adding further details, Kellie Gooch explained that in the last year alone, LET had carried out over 100,000 investigations and patrols. Over 4,000 weapons sweeps were conducted and over 2,000 fines were issued. And since the LET was formed in 2021, there had been a 22% reduction in reports of anti-social behaviour reported to the Police.

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan welcomed the LET had been moved into the base budget to secure its future funding. Clearly the LET was highly regarded and much needed. He highlighted its work in Coningham ward and how instances of anti-social behaviour had been reduced. The Committee noted the impact of extractions (where Hammersmith and Fulham officers were often redeployed to hotspots such as Westminster) and acknowledged the role LET played.

Councillor Rory Vaughan welcomed the funding available to upgrade sports facilities, such as the recent improvements to Hammersmith Park, which he hoped could be rolled out across the borough. He asked for further details to be provided on general sports improvements and what scope there was to enhance sporting opportunities across the borough (such as padel tennis courts). The Chair welcomed the work on enforcement around advertising boards and time banded commercial waste collections. Not only the revenue this generated, but also in terms of ensuring clear footways, which were of particular concern to disabled residents as set out in the equalities impact assessment.

In response, Mark Raisbeck commented that what was reflected was a general improvement in ongoing maintenance to increase standards across the borough. He also explained that officers were currently working on a Sports Facilities Improvement Programme which could be brought to a future committee meeting. He confirmed there was no further progress on padel tennis, but officers were in contact with a number of potential organisations and were looking at potential sites for courts.

In relation to time banded collections, he explained this work was ongoing and was particularly targeted at those locations with the highest footfall in the borough such as King Street and Uxbridge Road. With the express intention of limiting the time waste was spending on the footway both causing an eyesore as well as potential trip hazards to pedestrians. In relation to advertising Boards, Mark Raisbeck confirmed this was a licensing issue, as well as ensuring that their placement did not cause an obstruction on the highways for pedestrians. It was noted that officers were working on a programme to deliver improvements in this specific area.

Summing up, the Chair thanked Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet colleagues and the Finance officer team for their work to deliver the budget. He confirmed the committee

would look forward to a series of further updates on the topics identified in the discussions.

RESOLVED

1. That the Policy and Accountability Committee (PAC) considers the budget proposals and makes recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.
2. That the PAC considers the proposed changes to fees and charges and makes recommendations as appropriate

6. INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT DISABLED RESIDENTS TEAM UPDATE

Annie Baker, Assistant Director Street Environment Services provided an update on the work of the Inclusive Environment Disabled Residents Team. The report was co-authored with Jane Wilmot, Inclusive Environment Disabled Residents Team Co-Chair. This update included an overview of the Team, the work undertaken to date and planned in the future, as well as key achievements and challenges.

The following points were noted:

- The Inclusive Environment Disabled Residents Team was set up in 2024. The Team now plays in co-production work across the Place directorate.
- The Inclusive Environment Disabled Residents Team is made up of council officers and disabled residents and meets monthly with 10 meetings per year.
- The remit and membership of the group.
- Successes to date included:
 1. Access Audit of King Street and monitoring.
 2. Site visits to understand the barriers at staggered crossings and bus stop bypasses on King Street and Wood Lane/South Africa Road.
 3. The Development of Street-smart Guidance.
 4. The implementation of Disabled Shopper Bays and issues regarding E-Bikes.
- Key challenges:
 1. The provision of Inclusive technical information.
 2. Working with other organisations, and recruitment.
 3. The use of Resources and maximising impact:
 - “Doing things with residents, not to them” – further examples from the Place Directorate.
 - Information on future work streams.

The Chair, Councillor Rory Vaughan invited Kate Betteridge, local resident member of the Inclusive Environment Disabled Residents Team to provide her comments. The Committee heard that it had been an honour for the Inclusive Environment Disabled Residents Team to work with Councillors and everyone had learnt from each other. Disabled residents rightly had expectations as they wished to live independently within the Borough. The group would continue to highlight barriers to officers, so by working together these could be overcome.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang congratulated the Group on its work to date and asked if there was anything Councillors / the Committee could do to assist them further? In

response, Annie Baker confirmed that raising awareness of what the Group was doing as well as need for new members to come and work as part of the team were critical factors. Kate Betteridge commented that geographically across the borough, the Inclusive Environment Disabled Residents Team would like better representation as many of the current membership were centrally located around the Fulham / Hammersmith borders and White City. However, the Group was not represented to the East or West of the borough.

Councillor Adam Peter Lang agreed with the concerns that had been raised about E-Bikes, and in particular, where they were stored and asked if there anything else Council could do in terms of Parking bays or funding from central government to support a greater pan-London approach to E-Bikes.

In response, Mark Raisbeck, Director of Public Realm, confirmed E-bikes were a growing and important part of the transport network. However, their popularity was having consequences the Council did not want such as the parking of large numbers of bikes often in inappropriate locations. To address this, the Council was rolling out additional parking stations off the footway and Lime (one of the largest providers of E-bikes) had recently announced a £20 million package for London to address the issue. Mark Raisbeck confirmed that the Council would continue to work with E-Bike providers, alongside disabled residents to find a way of overcoming issues. Kate Betteridge confirmed that E-Bikes / scooters were recurrent theme at Disabled Residents Team meetings. She provided details of an incident in Covent Garden and reiterated, it was her view that Lime, Forest, Dot and others needed to start penalising e-transport users if they were not using the bikes/scooters in a responsible way, as the Council could not be held responsible for independent transport businesses.

Councillor Ashok Patel reiterated the issues which had been raised about E-bikes and suggested more should be done by the respective business to control; how they were used and stored. Mark Raisbeck confirmed that the issues which had been raised about E-bikes were the same faced by many Councils' across London, and officers would continue to work with E-bike providers to address these in innovative ways going forwards.

Councillor Rory Vaughan asked what the step and railings at the crossing on Wood Lane involved and how well the disabled shoppers bays just off King Street worked. In response Kate Betteridge explained how the shopping bays operated and confirmed these were working well. With regards to the crossing at Wood Lane, Annie Baker confirmed that she would need to provide details outside the meeting.

Action: That Annie Baker provide further details on step and railings at the crossing on Wood Lane.

The Chair thanked officers for the co-production report and was pleased that there was a significant amount of work being done across a range of issues throughout the Council.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee note and comment on the report

Meeting started: 7.00 pm

Meeting ended: 9.31 pm

Chair

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