
London Borough of Hackney
Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission
Municipal Year 2020/21
Date of meeting Monday, 18 January 2021

Minutes of the proceedings of
the Living in Hackney Scrutiny
Commission held at
Hackney Town Hall, Mare
Street, London, E8 1EA

Chair	Cllr Sharon Patrick
Councillors in Attendance:	Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Anthony McMahon, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ian Rathbone Cllr Penny Wrout, Cllr Anna Lynch
Apologies:	
Officers in Attendance	Aled Richards (Director of Public Realm), Ian Holland (Head of Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces), Sam Parry (Parks Development Manager), Karol Jakubczyk (Strategic Planning Manager), Matthew Carrington, (Strategic Delivery Manager) and David Padfield (Interim Director of Housing)
Other People in Attendance	Sam Griffiths (AECOM Senior Landscape Architect), Phil Glanville (Mayor of Hackney)
Members of the Public	None
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Councillor Sharon Patrick in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 No Apologies for absence.
- 1.2 Apologies for lateness from Cllr Anthony McMahon.

2 Urgent Items/ Order of Business

- 2.1 There was no urgent items, and the order of business was as per the agenda.

3 Declaration of Interest

- 3.1 Cllr Rathbone declared he is the Chair of Hackney Parks Forum.

4 Green infrastructure in Hackney and Parks and Green Spaces Strategy

- 4.1 In attendance at the meeting for this item from AECOM, Senior Landscape Architect, Sam Griffiths. From London Borough of Hackney in attendance at the meeting for this item was the Mayor of Hackney, Phil Glanville; Director of Public Realm, Aled Richards; Head of Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces, Ian Holland; Parks Development Manager, Sam Parry; Strategic Planning Manager, Karol Jakubczyk; Matthew Carrington, Strategic Delivery Manager and Interim Director of Housing, David Padfield.
- 4.2 This discussion item would be looking at the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.
- 4.3 The Chair opened this item and explained the green infrastructure strategy is much more than a strategy for the provision of the traditional 'green space' of parks and gardens. Green infrastructure (GI) is integral and essential to the borough's resilience, meeting its future challenges and the delivery of its wider strategies, both at a community and individual level. To maximise the benefits of Green Infrastructure the Council is proposing to interlink 3 strategies / plans.
- 4.3.1 The presentation covered the draft Hackney Green Infrastructure Strategy providing a short overview of the vision, baseline and needs, objectives, opportunities, projects and initiatives.
- 4.3.2 In addition to the GI strategy a new strategy was being developed for parks and greens spaces. The draft Parks and Green Spaces Strategy was out to consultation and due to close on 18th Jan 2021.
- 4.3.3 Although there is no statutory requirement to produce a parks strategy the Council is committed to continuing to deliver improvements to its parks and green spaces. The last strategy covering the management of Hackney parks was the Hackney Parks Strategy 2008-2013.
- 4.3.4 As part of the consultation process the views of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission are being sought as the Council develops its Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.
- 4.4 The Director of Public Realm from LBH commenced the presentation with the following opening remarks.
- 4.4.1 The council has recognised the significant impact the green infrastructure can have on achieving its vision. This work is a high priority and incorporated within the Council's environmental services work to improve the green infrastructure across the borough, improving the linkages between the various green infrastructures.
- 4.4.2 Currently there are huge challenges such as climate change. The green infrastructure has an important role in, for example, cooling the urban environment, reducing temperatures by planting large canopy trees to help to improve air quality.
- 4.4.3 The pandemic has highlighted the importance of green infrastructure and spaces for residents both for their physical and mental health wellbeing. The work now is to link all the strategies together and put in place a robust strategy

to get community food growing and enable access to nature. This has shown to have a beneficial impact on mental wellbeing.

- 4.4.4 During the pandemic, the council has seen more use of its parks and open spaces than ever before. Last year this high usage raised issues. But it also highlighted they are a vital resource for residents in the borough, many of whom do not have access to outside space.
- 4.4.5 The officer explained by linking the parks together it will help to improve the current infrastructure for cycling, walking to improve health of population.
- 4.4.6 The officer pointed out to maximise the benefits of the green infrastructure the council is preparing 3 documents that will interlink.
1. Green Infrastructure strategy
 2. Parks and Greens Spaces Strategy
 3. Nature recovery plan – key mechanism to help monitor and prioritise nature recovery in the borough.
- 4.5 In relation to Hackney's Green Infrastructure Strategy the Strategic Delivery Manager from LBH opened with the following main points.
- 4.5.1 The council commissioned the work to deliver on the manifesto commitment which was the green infrastructure plan, and this was also referenced in the open spaces assessment that informed the Local Plan (LP33).
- 4.5.2 AECOM were commissioned in Feb 2021 to work with the council to develop the green infrastructure strategy. The council also commissioned London Wildlife Trust to deliver a nature recovery plan and review sites for nature conservations.
- 4.5.3 The GI strategy will align with the template for London and follow the new guidance being issued by the GLA. The officer pointed out Hackney is one of the first London boroughs to align with the template. It also identifies the structure for other operational plans like the nature recovery plan. The Council is also one of the first local authorities to undertake a nature recovery plan.
- 4.5.4 Developing the GI strategy has involved key stakeholder from the GLA and staff members from planning and parks and green spaces as part of a working group. This work has also featured in wider working advisory groups that have involved housing regeneration, housing development etc.
- 4.5.5 The council has undertaken some initial public engagement with stakeholder groups like Hackney Biodiversity Partnership and stakeholders involved in nature recovery. The council is planning to do more engagement over the coming month and is currently in dialogue with external organisations.
- 4.5.6 The Senior Landscape Architect from AECOM advised they have been working with Hackney Council staff for the last 12 months to develop the Green Infrastructure strategy. The officer outlined the proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 4.5.7 The strategy will cover all the boroughs green assets such as:
- Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and parks

- Amenity grassland around housing estates
- Woodlands
- Street trees
- Gardens
- Public realm
- Built green features
- Wetlands and waterways.

4.5.8 Although these are all individual assets when joined together, they become the green infrastructure network. This network can be planned, designed and managed to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits.

4.5.9 The strategy will incorporate the following:

- **Context:** establishes the case for green infrastructure in Hackney
- **Baseline and needs analysis:** provide an understanding of existing assets that comprise Hackney's current green infrastructure network. Identify deficiencies to focus resources.
- **Vision:** states how the borough should change over the period up to 2040.
- **Objectives:** providing specific details of the vision.
- **Opportunities:** for the realisation of the objectives, identifying the parties and mechanisms best placed to bring about change.
- **Proposals:** lists specific interventions that should be implemented to realise the vision (streets and parks etc).
- **Forward Plan:** identifies the priority tasks.

4.5.10 In relation to the context. The reasons for developing a green infrastructure were outlined to be:

- Health and Wellbeing - Outdoor air pollution, urban heat, Covid-19, cardiovascular disease are areas where the green infrastructure can help.
- To tackle climate change - Climate Change is the key factor underpinning this work. An emergency declaration was made in July 2019, committing to do everything in Hackney's power to deliver net zero emissions.
- Nature Recovery – is a key element aligning with the Environment Bill. Space for nature to thrive.
- Sustainable Growth – Hackney is expected to experience a high percentage population change. It is estimated 279,700 people in 2019 will increase to 320,000 by 2033, and 335,000 by 2041.
- Benefits of Green Infrastructure – more liveable infrastructure.

4.5.11 They commenced this work looking beyond the borough boundary. The key assets on borough boundaries are Lee Valley Regional Park, Victoria Park (in Tower Hamlets), Finsbury Park and the Waterways – River Lea, Regents Canal and the New River. These are all primary corridors through urban landscape.

4.5.12 The presentation showed a graph showing green cover comparing boroughs using GLA data from heat mapping. This shows how much of the borough is green. Hackney is about 38% green.

- 4.5.13 The officer pointed out Hackney has approximately 739 hectares of green cover comprising of:
- Parks and green spaces.
 - Sites of importance for nature conservation
 - Trees and woodlands
 - Rivers and wetlands
 - Green roofs
 - Domestic gardens.
- 4.5.14 In reference to parks and green spaces. 3/4s of Hackney residents rely on these as their primary open spaces. However, in the borough 7 wards in the west of Hackney are deficient in access to open space. Highlighting that the distribution of parks is not even across the borough.
- 4.5.15 The officer explained there can be a compromise of ecological function following the need to provide a wide range of functions and leisure use. Pointing out sometime the ecological function can be lost or compromised by other demands.
- 4.5.16 In relation to trees and woodlands Hackney's coverage is 23% with over 350 species of trees in the borough. Parks and domestic gardens are key assets. Street trees are a valuable tool in forming the linkages they would like to see.
- 4.5.17 In relation to rivers and wetlands there are 9 critical drainage areas prone to flooding during severe weather. This is a type of green infrastructure that could be used to minimize the risk of flooding.
- 4.5.18 Although no detailed information was provided about green roofs and domestic gardens (because they are harder to map) they are still very important to the GI.
- 4.5.19 After mapping Hackney's GI it was assessed as:
- The borough enjoys a good level of green cover overall
 - The waterways comprise the key green corridors
 - The network is largely fragmented. There are areas of low quality greening that could be enhanced to provide wider benefits
 - The south western part of the borough is typically the most in need of enhancement
 - There are gaps in the network, particularly the strategic road network and commercial areas
 - There is some compromise in quality where sites serve both ecological and recreational purposes.
- 4.5.20 The draft vision for the strategy is '*By 2040 Hackney will be a series of liveable neighbourhoods that are resilient to the effects of climate change, provide a network for wildlife to thrive and promote the physical and mental health of its residents.*'
- 4.5.21 The draft objectives of the GI strategy were noted to be:
- Objective 1** – Improve residents' health and wellbeing.

- Promote active travel and more parks. If more parks and green spaces is not possible can they promote green links to existing networks
- If there are constraints on space can they provide new cul-de-sac pocket parks in some areas with least provision
- Minimising air and noise pollution through integrating new strategic planting.

Objective 2 - To become more resilient to the effects of climate change. The climate is changing and bringing new challenges in terms of weather and adaptation. Expanding the sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) network to cope in flooding events, particularly having multi-functional green SuDS. Protecting existing tree canopy will provide shading to help mitigate the urban heat island effect and attenuate surface water. Although the officer pointed out they need to diversify the plant stock to have an elevated level of bio security. In addition to a promotion of urban greening. Particularly promoting green roofs and green walls for future new developments to help regulate the temperature.

Objective 3 - To increase green infrastructure provision in areas of deficiency in green open space. In areas like Shoreditch, Dalston, De Beavoir and Haggerston.

Objective 4 - To increase ecological connectivity between the existing network of nature conservation sites for people and wildlife.

- Protecting the best ecological assets;
- Securing net gains for biodiversity;
- Prioritising locally native plants;
- Reducing the application of pesticides;
- Implementing biosecurity measures;
- Improving the quality and extent of the most valuable habitats;
- Establishing a local nature recovery network.

Objective 5 - To maximise delivery of green infrastructure through increased collaboration between internal departments, and between the Council and key external partners. Interdepartmental coordination

- Collaboration with key land owners
- Working with neighbouring boroughs
- Working with the community groups.

4.5.22 The council recognise the green infrastructure will span a number of administrations and boundaries but is in the interest of everybody.

4.5.23 If the council is to deliver this coherent network, then there needs to be communication between all the different groups and stakeholder who might put forward schemes.

4.5.24 In terms of opportunities the GI strategy also provides some strategic opportunities these are:

- 1) Enhancement of existing networks particularly parks and green spaces
 - Hackney's Parks
 - Hackney's Estates and green spaces around housing estates
 - Expansion of Tree Network

2) Transforming streets and the public realm

- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
- Cul-de-sac Pocket Parks
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)
- Expansion of Street Tree Network

- 3) Urban Greening – embedded within the LP33 particularly around polices and initiatives like the urban greening factor and urban space requirements. Urban greening of existing and new buildings and developments is a key way to realise some of these objectives.
- 4) The enhancement and creation of green links. This is primarily the rivers and waterways. They can look to introduce a number of green links through exploiting opportunities that can be joined up.
 - River Lea
 - Regent's Canal
 - New River
 - New green links.
- 5) Mobilisation of citizens and community groups. This is bringing groups together to feed into a coherent set of goals and objectives.
 - Community groups
 - One off volunteers.

4.5.25 In relation to the proposals the emerging proposals with different departments to achieve the vision were outlined to be:

- SPATIAL FRAMEWORK - A mapping that identifies the priority locations for interventions needed to establish an integrated network.
- There will need to be a shift in organisational structures and how they use policy linked to a number of INITIATIVES.
- Lastly a series of PROJECTS which are practical things that need to happen on the ground to enable the network to be realised over the coming years.

4.5.26 The forward plan will highlight the key projects that are a priority for the next 5-10 years.

4.6 The Parks Development Manager presented the information about the draft Parks and Green Spaces Strategy that was out for public consultation. The main points noted from the presentation were:

4.6.1 The strategy will be implemented this year.

4.6.2 The Parks and Green Space services is responsible for 58 parks in the borough and from next year the service will soon incorporate approximately 200 council housing green spaces too.

4.6.3 The Parks and Green Spaces Strategy will guide their work over the next 10 years and will cover both parks and housing green spaces. The document is high level with guiding principles instead of documenting a series of specific improvement projects.

- 4.6.4 The draft strategy was developed following extensive engagement with local people.
- 4.6.5 There were a number of drivers as to why a new parks and green strategy was being introduced. Firstly, the council has not had a strategy since 2013. Secondly the other drivers were noted to be:
- New technology – drones and electric scooters
 - Austerity – cuts to public services
 - Increased interest in the environment and concern about the use of chemicals
 - Plastic use
 - Air pollution
 - Climate change
 - More people cycling through parks
 - Expecting new facilities and services in parks such as outdoor gyms
 - More professional dog walkers using the parks
 - Increased interest in biodiversity - people expecting a quicker response
 - Taking on housing green spaces this year.
- 4.6.6 The Parks and Green Spaces Strategy will sit under the Green Infrastructure Strategy and alongside the Nature Recovery Plan.
- 4.6.7 Discussion started in early 2020 meeting with stakeholders to get their views on what they wanted to see in the strategy. Following these meetings, they identified categories which were transformed into chapters in the strategy.
- 4.6.8 The officer highlighted the main themes and structure of the strategy and explained it outlined the process for development - comprising of focus groups, research and engagement. It was noted the document was produced in a easy to read format because they wanted the general public to read and understand it.
- 4.6.9 After dialogue with stakeholders 3 main themes were created in the strategy.
- 1) Work with communities
 - 2) Activation of parks and green spaces
 - 3) Environmental sustainability – the green spaces and the service.
- 4.6.10 Under work with communities – this theme emerged because local people wanted to engage with them more. Feedback identified people wanted to be more involved. Although they have a few volunteers in their parks they want to expand this. One of their commitments is to appoint a dedicated volunteering officer to oversee a comprehensive and intergenerational volunteering programme for Hackney’s parks. The aim being to see young people volunteer in their parks and progress to employment in their parks.
- 4.6.11 The officer highlighted they do a lot of engagement on parks and green spaces currently and would like to expand this area of work. The service would also like to see the park user groups actively involved in looking after green spaces. The service would also like to involve young people in the design of their response to climate emergency and the improvement in the facilities in their parks.

- 4.6.12 There are a total of 10 commitments under this theme and those noted at the meeting were:
- 1/ Involve young people in designing our response to the climate emergency, children's play spaces, sports provision and informal socialising spaces.
 - 4/ Engage local communities, residents and tenants in improvements that affect their local parks and housing green spaces, with continued engagement from outset to delivery, with a special effort made to reach and hear from underrepresented groups.
 - 6/ Develop a skills/employment pathway, creating opportunities for structured career progression, and an extensive training programme for our staff.
 - 7/ Appoint a dedicated Volunteering Officer to oversee a comprehensive and intergenerational volunteering programme in Hackney's parks and green spaces.
 - 10/ Develop a work experience and apprenticeship programme and explore supported opportunities for people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- 4.6.13 Activation of parks and green spaces - under this theme they want to make it easier for residents to plan and host appropriate community and cultural events. In their engagement with stakeholders several groups feedback that it was difficult for them to host events currently. The process was bureaucratic and difficult to navigate and largely unknown.
- 4.6.14 The service area wants to create a design guide to inform the development of parks and green spaces including play areas. The creation of a criteria is to help bring transparency to the investment in parks and green spaces, so residents understand how the money is spent. Although there are some cafes and food outlets in parks people want to see more. In addition, the council is receiving a number of requests from artist to put on exhibitions and permanent sculptures in parks.
- 4.6.15 There are a total of 10 commitments under this theme and those noted at the meeting were:
- 13/ Make it easier for residents to plan and host appropriate community and cultural events in parks and green spaces.
 - 16/ Create a design guide to inform the development of parks and green spaces, including play areas.
 - 17/ Create criteria for investing in parks, sports facilities and play improvements.
 - 18/ Expand the provision of cafes and food outlets in parks and green spaces.
 - 19/ Develop a Hackney Parks and Green Spaces Public Art and Culture Strategy and Policy to secure investment to deliver more public art and culture.
- 4.6.16 Environmental sustainability - this theme came through strongly in the engagement sessions. This covers 2 main areas firstly responding to the biodiversity crisis and secondly responding to the climate emergency. Currently a lot of the green waste collected is taken out of the borough and composted. They want to re-use more of the green waste locally. There are local initiatives like Haggerston Park reusing more green waste on the site and they would like to expand this initiative.

4.6.17 The service area has received interest from groups wanting to support the delivery of creating more wild areas across all parks and green spaces.

4.6.18 The use of glyphosate is a concern to residents, and they want them to go further by reviewing all the chemicals they use. Currently the council is using 50% less glyphosate than it did a few years ago and there is a no spray zone being trailed in the E5 postcode.

4.6.19 There are a total of 10 commitments under this theme and those noted at the meeting were:

21/ Work towards becoming a Zero Carbon service by 2031.

22/ Aim to re-use more green waste within parks and green spaces.

26/ Increase biodiversity across Hackney in line with the emerging Local Nature Recovery Plan, creating more wild areas across all parks and green spaces.

27/ Eliminate all annual planting and replace it with more sustainable and drought tolerant planting schemes.

28/ Significantly reduce the use of Glyphosate and continue to explore alternatives.

29/ Follow the recommendations of the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy where they relate to parks and green spaces, including identifying opportunities to connect parks and green spaces together.

4.6.20 The document will cover a 10-year period. Each year they will produce an action plan which will provide more details about what they will be delivering each year. Progress will be reported annually through annual reports.

4.6.21 Timeline for next steps is:

- Consultation Nov- Jan 2021
- Finalising Strategy Feb 2021
- Finalising action plan for year Feb 2021
- Strategy approved by Cabinet April 2021
- Implementation April 2021
- Annual report published Jan 2022.

4.7 Questions, Answers and Discussions

(i) In reference to the consultation Members asked how members of the public were informed about the consultation for the strategy being online. Members wanted to understand who has been told the consultation is live. Members pointed out responses rates might be impacted by the pandemic, schools being closed, limited access to youth clubs etc. Members asked if young people, TRAs and TMOs knew about the consultation and if they were consulted. Members referred to the digital divide and raised concerns about a consultation of this significance only being online. Highlighting during Covid people may not be aware of the consultation.

The Parks Development Manager from LBH confirmed they have not been able to do as many face to face meetings during the consultation period as they had hoped. However, they did manage to have a number of physical meetings before the latest restrictions were implemented. So they did have some meetings with groups and individuals face to face.

The consultation was published in Hackney Today and they have put up hundreds of posters and banners in the parks and on housing estates.

The council met with the Resident Liaison Group (RLG) to speak to housing tenant representatives. They have received approximately 600 responses. The officer pointed out this is a high response rate for a consultation of this type.

The officer added If people were not online, they could contact the service area and they would send out a hard copy to people who do not have the ability to respond online.

- (ii) Members asked if the council will provide more information about the links between the GI and P&G strategy. Highlighting there is some overlap between the two strategies. Members want to know how they planned to create a unified strategy to make sure everyone works together for the borough, how it will be managed and how the different sections of the council will work together – streetscene, parks, planning etc. Members asked for more information about the progress and was seeking assurance that everyone was on board with the work objectives and vision.**

In response the Parks Development Manager informed it was beneficial that they would be delivering the two strategies at the same time along with the replacement biodiversity strategy. The development of the strategies simultaneously has required liaising with each other throughout the process. The GI strategy mentions the parks and green spaces strategy and vice versa. The officer highlighted the park and green spaces strategy only covers parks and housing estate green spaces. It does not include streets or any of the other elements mentioned in the presentation for the GI strategy.

The Strategic Delivery Manager added when they set up the project advisory groups, they put together a breath of people from across the council. Doing the nature recovery plan has helped them to understand that area better. The officer often highlighted the timelines for the different documents do not align. The officer pointed out when people see the 2 documents, they will see the relationships between the parks and green spaces strategy and the GI strategy. When all 3 documents are viewed you can see how they link. This is the advantage of doing them all at the same time and in a sequential way.

The council is aware there is strong community interest around parks and green spaces, and they want to harness this interest to the maximum benefit for the communities. Doing all the documents together has been a positive experience and they have learnt from it. The other critical element is the engagement with members of the public and finding out their interests. Producing the documents in a similar time frame has maximised the benefits.

The AECOM officer reiterated a key objective of the GI strategy is to set up mechanism for departments and stakeholders to work together. This collaboration and work will need to continue once the documents are finalised.

- (iii) The Chair commented there was an example of this joint working in her ward for the new playground in Millfields Park which is on the edge of**

Millfields estate. This is a demonstration of the joint working. This is welcomed because the playground has been redundant for many years.

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces from LBH agreed this was a good example. The officer pointed out there was a demand from park users for a new play area in the south of Millfields in addition to tenants on the Millfield estate wanted the play area replaced. This was taken out of use following health and safety concerns.

After considering all the options they concluded it would not be best use of resources to put 2 play areas within 10-15 meters of each other. Therefore, they decided to work together to deliver a play area that was accessible by both residents and park users. This should be complete in the next couple of months.

The Director of Public Realm added all of the work streams – streetscene, pocket parks and the work in Dalston Colvestone Crescent are all integrated into the public realm climate change agenda. They are all working and co-There is partnership working with housing, residents and tenants to develop these schemes rather than taking a top-down approach. The Director hoped this would give Members reassurance that all the pocket parks and greening of cul-de-sacs linked into the green infrastructure. Resulting in all the various public realm environmental services linking into the work stream.

- (iv) In relation to the parks and green spaces strategy Members asked the following questions and made the following comments**
- a) Referred to 2040 and the expected growth in terms of the volume of park users. Members asked if the strategy would be able to address the long-term volume of users in the future.**
 - b) Members asked if it was possible to have a complete park that catered for a range of users e.g., in Clissold Park there is an area for the children with animals etc and the cafe. Members wanted to know if there could also be an area that is designated for young people. The Member pointed out not all young people want to play football or rugby. The Member encouraged the council to think more broadly about other activities that can be included. Although the questions were directed at young people's provision. The Member encouraged the council to look at a range of activities across all age groups. A park that will enable a parent to look after younger children, older children, grandchildren but will also be of interest to the adults too.**
- (v) Members asked for more information about the volunteers' programme referenced in the strategy and asked if the service area would be working in partnership with Hackney Works. Enquiring if this programme would be independent or in conjunction with Hackney Works.**
- (vi) In reference to sustainability and the environment Members asked about having honeybees – not necessarily in parks but in green spaces and woodland. If possible, could this be considered as a future investment - Hackney honey.**

- (vii) Members referred to page 8 point 3.13 in the report and asked about the council's commitment to this and the approximate timescale that would be needed to start the process if an organisation wanted to run an event next year. Members suggested a timeline was added to this commitment so that people would be aware how long the process should take.**
- (viii) In reference to use of space and expanding the provision of food and drink. Members agreed it would be good to have more tea/coffee places in the parks. Members acknowledged there have been challenges with letting spaces. But Members wanted to know how much local people could be involved in that process. The Member has had enquires from local residents about operating a tea bar in a park.**
- (ix) Linked to the above question Members also asked how the council would keep residents involved in the parks in different ways. In essence how they can activate more people in the parks and involve more diverse communities through all these activities.**
- (x) Members referred to food growing on estates as referenced in the strategy and asked if they could use part of a park or green spaces to grow food. Thinking about the pandemic and the impact Brexit is having on vegetable and fruits coming into the UK. Members suggested it might be beneficial to encourage more vegetable growing etc.**
- (xi) The Chair reiterated the Members points about diverse communities and pointed out from her regular use of local parks she had noticed very little diversity in park users. Members commented they want to make sure everyone feels welcome to use the parks.**

The Chair also referred to the Members previous points about young people and added although there is great provision for under 5 years and primary school, in their view there is a deficit of provision for young people above primary school age and teenagers. Members suggested widening the offer.

The Chair also highlighted the areas with green gyms and various equipment did not have labelling to explain how to use them or give instructions.

The Chair also asked for the Green Infrastructure to think about where communities can meet. Noting street pocket parks were used by the local community in that street to socialise because they did not have a community hall. The Chair suggested consideration was given to something similar for young people to enable them to meet so they do not cause any disturbance to other residents. Pointing out if they congregated on the estate around stairs they get moved on and if they on the streets there is a risk they can get stopped by the police. The Chair urged for more thinking about facilities for young people and where they can meet safely together. The Member pointed out the council has excellent youth clubs, but they cannot cater for all the youth in the borough.

In response the Head of Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces advised in reference to food growing the reason the strategy is focused on food growing in estates is they are of the view it would be more successful and there is already great work and an existing network of work by the housing team in developing this area. They already have a shortage of green spaces. If they were to put food growing in parks and green spaces, they can end up becoming restricted spaces for the people involved in the food growing and not necessarily accessible spaces for the wider community. Therefore they conclude this initiative is more successful directed at housing estates. The officer pointed out the council does have 3 food growing sites in their parks and green spaces with growing communities. They are:

- Clissold Park
- Alan Gardens
- Springfield Parks.

In reference to many of the questions above about (making the space inclusive, how to design them to appeal to a wider range of users) the officer referred to an example as his response.

The officer cited the refurbishment of Shoreditch Park. This process is an example of how they intend to approach future parks projects. They started with a blank sheet of paper and went out to the local community. They held a few consultation and engagement session – online, face to face and focus groups. The council received 1600 responses for that first stage of the consultation. A large percentage of the response were from children and young people because they targeted them (they are often not heard in community engagement and consultation exercises). After taking the responses into consideration they developed outline designs. The second phase of the consultation process involved going back out to consultation to make sure they had the design right. This received a further 400 responses. The process was slightly constrained by Covid so the level of engagement was not as extensive as the first phase. The community confirmed they had it right and the community feedback was they had listened. The design now includes spaces that are accessible and appeal to a wider range of user. There are sports facilities, areas to sit, newly designed play areas and play trails, new walking and running routes around the park, quiet space for contemplation and new wildlife area etc. The objective was to design a park that was suitable for as many groups as possible within a constrained space.

This example is a demonstration how they will approach and deliver future projects for parks and green spaces and the level of engagement with the community.

In reference to the question about bees. The officer confirmed they do have some bees in parks and green spaces – Hackney Marshes tree nursery, Millfields waste depot and some in St John's Church Yard. The officer pointed out there is a balance to be struck in terms of bees, biodiversity and the prevalence of honeybees.

In reference to their commitment for events they recognise that user groups have found it challenging and they needed to find a better balance. However, they also need to ensure the events are safe because if they grant permission

to run an event on council owned land (parks and green spaces), the liability rests with the council for approving the event. The Parks service is working with the Events Team to aid. Where a community group or user group is struggling, they appreciate they need to put more time and effort into helping them. The key point officers wanted Members to note is that events need to be appropriate for the green space.

The parks and green spaces volunteering programme is not with Hackney Works. However, they will co-ordinate through their dedicated volunteering officer with Hackney Works. Although they are working with Hackney Works on apprenticeship roles. When they integrate with the housing grounds maintenance service the objective is to create a number of apprenticeship roles. Recruitment for these roles will be through Hackney Works. The officer explained the horticulture sector has an aging workforce and they need to attract young people into the workforce. The apprenticeship programme will be a way to help address this challenge over recent years.

In response to the question about cafes they do want more cafes and kiosks in the parks and green spaces. Over the last year the pandemic has made this challenging and it has not been the right time to put out opportunities. A few sites have been identified but they will have to go out through a competitive tender process for the concessions. The opportunities will be widely advertised. For example, there is a small old park keepers hut in Haggerston Park and the council intend to put this out as a concession opportunity. This would be suited to a sole trader or a start-up business. There will also be bigger opportunities like Clissold Park in the house that would suit a more established business. The parks and green spaces service are of the view there will be a range of opportunities that will be attractive to both small and medium size businesses. There are plans to put these opportunities out to the market next year, but this will be Covid dependent. The success of the tender will be market led. This will also be the same for the potential opportunity for the kiosk at Millfields depot. Again, this will be led by the market to identify if there is a viable business there or not.

- (xii) Members asked how the council will integrate the work between housing, parks and the new green infrastructure to make sure tenant voices are heard. Recognising tenants were consulted and the RLG has responded to the consultation Members still wanted assurance individual voices would feed in too, not just capturing their views about their estate but wider issues too.**

In response the Interim Director of Housing from LBH pointed out he was pleased with work on estates recently. This has aligned with the agenda in relation to tree canopy work and not using Glucophage's around saffron hedgerows and Victoria meadows. They are working quite closely with parks but are looking forward to joining up the grounds maintenance teams to pool resources and expertise. This should enable the council to do a lot more with spaces on housing estates.

In terms of the engagement with resident the officer advised the parks and green spaces officers went to the RLG meeting last week and had a robust discussion. Some resident representatives expressed concerns about if this would encourage people who did not live on the estate to come onto the

estate. LBH officers did offer some reassurance that the work would go via TRAs and existing resident engagement networks. Their commitment going forward is to work with residents about any proposed changes they are planning to make on the estates.

Mayor Glanville added linked to the officer's response, Shoreditch Park is important because it links into the Britannia project around toilet facilities. This had been referenced by residents for years at that site. In recognition of the things needed to make a park successful (toilets, cafes, water fountains etc.) the best example is the co-production and the live work about Shoreditch Park. At this meeting he hoped what was coming out strongly was the coherence sitting under the GI strategy. But also, the work of the aging well strategy, Hackney Young Futures and the synergies.

The Mayor held up a jar of Millfield honey as an example of local produce.

In terms of estates and green spaces the sense of ownership is critical. We know estates can sit differently in the public realm and there has been that long aspiration from Members about having a seamless public realm with the same quality of planting and cleansing. The council is also aware that places that feel comfortable for people to walk though feel safer. Therefore, having really attractive and more attractive estates – Kings Crescent, Pembury and Wenlock Barn - will encourage people to want to go there as they are walking their children home from school. The Mayor acknowledged there is a fine line in relation to creating a destination on Hackney estates. He highlighted leaseholders have expressed concerns about the implications for their charges and cleansing. On the housing and green spaces side people are cognizant of that dilemma and making sure the council gets it right.

In relation to the food growing movement referenced by officers. The Mayor pointed out this came from their housing estates and from some of the very best work of this scrutiny commission, championing and coming up with new opportunities for food growing. Although this is a manifesto commitment, it has not been driven by the council but dictated from the bottom up. Residents have come to the council requesting for the patch of green space to be used differently and housing services have responded to the request by enabling it to happen.

In closing the Mayor commented there has been a huge number of aspirations set out in the political manifesto along with the aspiration of residents. There has been investment in play, facilities, greening and biodiversity. Critically also investment in volunteering and job opportunities. The volunteering and apprenticeships are an example of the green dividend that goes beyond what they are delivering - parks and green spaces. This is an opportunity for Hackney to take the lead and demonstrate where jobs for the future can come from.

- (xiii) Members commented they welcomed the inclusion of health both physical and mental. This is important and the last 12 months have shown how important parks are to people.**
- (xiv) Members commented there are some risks associated with parks and commercial opportunities. It was noted residents have been concerned**

about gentrification and isolation for parts of the community. Members asked how the strategy would try to mitigate these risks. Members referenced Victoria Park as an example of maximising commercial benefit which caused misery to residents.

- (xv) In reference to previous points about diversity Members suggested this work should link in with the work of the Cabinet Member for Early Years Cllr Woodley and Mayoral Advisor for Older People Cllr Maxwell. In relation to the work they are doing with young and older people in making sure parks fit with their needs. The Member commented from the information tonight it would appear this work is being joined up at an officer level and Members assume this is also the same at Cabinet level too, to ensure no duplication and one voice.**
- (xvi) Members asked if it would be possible to look at having green gardens with greenhouses in the parks to grow plants and flowers for residents to have via a donation or for free. In addition, in these locations can there be volunteering opportunities and environmental educational small courses?**

In response to the questions about commercialisation the Head of Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces from LBH agreed there needs to be a very careful balance. The officer was hoping Members had seen this in the last few years in Hackney's parks and green spaces. Referencing events like the half marathon and 10K that have been compatible with the parks and green spaces. Pointing out they are mass participation but low impact on the parks and green spaces and residents. Albeit there are road closures associated with them. Where they have had events in parks and green spaces, they have had a dialogue with the user groups to try and find compatible events. They recognise events are an important part of parks and green spaces to bring communities together. Although it has to be the right event in the right space.

The officer added commercial opportunities can also bring other opportunities e.g., café concessions. Whilst they cannot afford to put toilets in all their parks and green spaces - they only have 8 toilets blocks in the 58 parks. The council can request for the café operator to provide a public toilet for the park and green space. A good example of this is the project they are looking to deliver at Fairchild Gardens. This is a concession with a toilet designed. The toilet will be looked after by the café operator in that premises. The officer pointed out commercial opportunities can be used to deliver some of the wider objectives and then the council does not pick up the costs and have ongoing revenue costs.

The officer explained in relation to green gardens unfortunately the council does not run a nursery and growing opportunities have diminished. Some councils still provide this, but it needs to be done at scale and potentially at the loss of green space for other opportunities. However, they do have excellent groups in the borough that provide tech training opportunities for people on growing. Mainly around fruit and vegetables. But there are opportunities in parks and green spaces working with other stakeholders. Currently the council has no plans to go into the nursery provision given the space it would require.

- (xvii) Members asked if the parks and green spaces strategy aligned or incorporated the work of the Kings Park Moving Together project. Members asked the Council what they have learnt from the research and work of this project and how the council is taking this into consideration. Members pointed out this work highlighted many residents in Kings Park Ward did not use the Hackney Marshes or were aware of the park and green space.**

In response the Head of Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces from LBH explained they are working with the Kings Park Moving Together project team to look at opportunities. The officer pointed out the community engagement carried out identified the local community valued Daubeney Fields over the Hackney Marshes and their focus and desire was for this area to be improved. The Council started the process with a new play area which has been well received and increased usage of the space. They are looking at potential improvements to the skate park. In addition to looking at new pathways to help the community get from one side of the space to the other through active transport routes as opposed to walking around the space on a wet day.

The Council has also been speaking to the project team about potential use of the canal for the local community to utilize cheap water sport opportunities. There are a number of conversations taking place about how they can improve Daubeney for the local community and for them to use it more for their health and wellbeing.

- (xviii) In reference to the officer's points about accessing water sports. Members pointed out Hackney has the Lea Rowing Club in Springfields and the Laburnum Boat Club that do excellent work. Members referred to the waterways and asked how they could use them more and how the council could support the use of the waterways safely.**

In response the Head of Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces from LBH informed the waterways are the responsibility of the Canal and Riverside Trust not the council. However, they can work with them to open up access to opportunities. This was also one of the conversations they have been having with the Kings Park Moving Together project to introduce water sports to the local community around Kings Park utilising the council's riverbank access.

- (xix) Members commended the work of all departments over the last year managing all the covid challenges. One of the highlights from this has been that people are more affectionate about their green spaces.**
- (xx) Members pointed out Victoria Park has been at the extreme end of events in parks and at the opposite end of the scale was Well Street Common that has had a few community events including the Well Street Common Festival. Members highlighted this is a community event that has been organised by the same group for over 10 years. The Member pointed out they would have quite a lot of expertise in running events. Members were aware the council run a couple of workshops every year for organisations interested in applying for community grants to explain the application process to smaller organisations. Members asked if the parks and green spaces service would consider doing something similar**

for the community groups who might be interested in holding events on the Council's green spaces. Walking them through best practice and the considerations. Members asked for the council to give some consideration to doing this.

- (xxi) **Members referred to the discussion about older people's activities and diverse communities. Highlighting the busier the parks get perhaps older people get fearful about using parks. Adding areas like the bowls green in Springfield Park were no longer available. Members asked if the service was thinking about any particular activities in the parks for older people that could be of interest e.g. gardening clubs.**
- (xxii) **Members referred to the discussion about food growing on estates and pointed out although some people may want more food growing space others want a green space to be retained for leisure purposes. Members expressed concern about going too much towards food growing on estates and losing recreational green space. In relation to this Members asked how the council would get people involved in the steering group and how they recruited to the steering group. Enquiring if it was through the TRAs or some other form of outreach.**
- (xxiii) **In reference to cafes and commercial opportunities and the strategy citing this would seek to use non-recyclable plastics. But with the plans to have more cafes Members were concerned about the rubbish and packaging. Members asked if the council would be proactive to minimise rubbish and encourage recycling by using the cafes as a tool to educate people about recycling.**
- (xxiv) **Members also asked how the strategy would manage the issues related to London Fields overuse in the summer months.**

In response the Head of Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces from LBH explained in terms of cafes they check all their specifications through the Environmental Sustainability Team for input. This is the same for the Public Health Team. This needs to be balanced with the viability of the concessionary offer. Therefore, they are guided by the teams about what they should put in the specification about recycling.

In terms of events and best practice the officer advised they have previously helped and assisted with documentation. This support is usually on a one-to-one basis. The Parks and Greens Spaces Team have been in dialogue with the Events Team to talk about doing what Members have just suggested. Offering workshops to a wider range of organisations. This will give peer advice in conjunction with support and information from the Council.

In reference to London Fields, they do have plans in place for this summer to manage many of the issues they experienced last year.

In relation to activities for older people there used to be a number of bowls greens in the borough but they have generally been under used for over a decade. Therefore they were unsustainable based on the level of usage. The council is looking at alternative provisions for them. The officer informed currently they put on activities for older people but mainly around walking and

safe access routes. The new age games programme for ages 50+ utilizes the parks and green spaces particularly through Covid as there has been no access to leisure centres or community halls. Through the parks and green spaces strategy they can look at if there is demand for anything further.

The Director of Public Realm from LBH added the Council recognises the situation with London Fields last year was abysmal. They did put more enforcement resources in place but this year they are trying to pre-empt the issues and challenges they might face. The Director pointed out that as people have had restricted movement for the last few months, they suspect that when the warm weather comes out in April people will want to get out. As part of their planning the council carried out a London Field conversation with residents capturing their views about London Fields and their main priorities. These responses have been taken into consideration and they are now preparing a briefing note that will outline how they will manage some of the issues faced in London Fields last year and how they will resource it. This is so that they can mitigate a lot of the issues experienced.

The Director advised they have very good liaison with the residents on London Fields and they expect a very busy summer in London Fields their plans and preparations now should help to resource and resolve the issues.

- (xxv) Notwithstanding London Field was the worst hit by overuse, in response to officers' replies Members asked if other parks around the borough will be considered in the strategy and the pre-planning work too. As some of the other parks experienced inappropriate use too.**

In response the Director of Public Realm from LBH confirmed all parks will be considered. They are looking at increasing enforcement and working with the police for those parks over the spring and summer. The director highlighted that the situation with London Fields was exacerbated by the close proximity of Broadway Market and some premises selling take away alcohol. This was the fuel for the antisocial behaviour. The other parks have not been excluded but the decision was taken to have a London Fields conversation to find a way forward for London Fields.

- (xxvi) Members referred to the 7 wards on the west side of the borough with deficient green spaces and asked about the council's work to try to address this. In addition, Members asked how the leafy east side of the borough might be linked to the west. For example, could there be green trails to help navigate people to the other green spaces around the borough that may be in close proximity.**

- (xxvii) Members asked if there will be more notices in parks and more leaflets distributed to give information and a description of what each space offers in terms of foliage and fauna. Members suggested this will help people to value the space more and understand there is a whole living environment in that space.**

In response the Parks Development Manager from LBH explained a lot of their parks and green spaces have park management plans with a lot of information about the parks. The team have been working to translate this information into accessible and readable posters. They are in the process of putting them

up on park notice boards. This will give members of the public information about what is in the park and the improvements they will be making to the park soon. For park specific improvement projects (Springfield Park and Abney Park) they are looking at better interpretation. They are discussing what the interpretation boards will look like to give people a bit of a richer history about their green spaces. They are also creating activity packs for local schools to run self-led trails around the parks to teach children what is in the parks and green spaces.

(xxviii) Members referred to MUGAs that are not up to standard and asked if there was a timeline for improvements with those areas e.g. St Johns Court.

In response to previous questions the Strategic Delivery Manager from LBH explained there is recognition of density and housing density in the west of the borough and the challenges. There is a distinction between accessible green space and just green space. The options for accessible green space are potentially how they negotiate on new developments as part of the planned growth in some of those locations e.g., the south of the borough and in Dalston. Also, the council will need to be innovative in terms of how it looks at highways - in relation to repurposing highways. The officer pointed out low traffic neighbourhood schemes (LTNs) are currently in the experimental phase, but they are the beginning of journey of how they might make use of different spaces. If it does become installed in the future, it is about changing the dialogue to look at the wider benefits that may come out of a low traffic neighbourhood – how they soften the entrances around parks and repurpose existing highways space. The officer highlighted they will need to be mindful if they are creating new space about how they will be managed, maintained and financed. There is a recognition in areas of key deficiency they will have to look at things in terms of the future and the long-term requirements for those locations. Particularly as there will be an increase in density as a result of developments.

In terms of green links the officer for AECOM referred to the presentation and the outline of the objectives addressing that deficiency in the south and in the west. One of the key means is where they cannot have new green spaces is to create green links. Previously mentioned in the presentation were opportunities and these may be across the borough, however, they are focusing on those in the areas of need. For example, for low traffic neighbourhoods and green links they would need to look at links overlay, matching need, different assets and where they can join up with either a low traffic neighbourhood, certain streets that meet the right proportions, or looking at how they use car parking spaces. It means utilising all those opportunities to create green links to tie into the wider network e.g., if they can get people to the tow path of the Regents Canal then they can get across to Victoria Park. Creating small steps to link into the wider network if they cannot deliver new green spaces on the doorstep.

(xxix) Members congratulated the Director, Service Head and Manger for their work in helping to maintain a wonderful green borough, the green spaces and increasing the green flags. Members expressed their appreciation for them on behalf of the residents. They encouraged officers to build on the improvements they have achieve thus far.

In addition to officers' comments Mayor Glanville from LBH added the deficit in the west of the borough in those 7 wards will be met in a variety of different ways. Crucial to this will be the repurposing of street space and this will be incremental. They have an idea of what some of that can look like and there has been a huge, impressive roll out of SuDS and urban planting in and around some of their key street scape schemes. Pointing out this is about creating those biodiversity intervention, sustainable urban drainage but also some beauty. Mayor Glanville highlighted they may need to change what they consider as beauty as this will not always be ornamental planting like they have historically. The diversity of their street trees combined with those spaces will, for generation to come, have a fundamentally different layout to what people expect. This can be seen on Queensbridge and Mare Street and in Colvestone Crescent when they do the 21st century street. There is the potential to take some of those lessons onto the estates and improve greening there.

Mayor Glanville referred to the biggest regeneration project in the borough Woodberry Downs and highlighted this is a tripling of the density of residents but also having a large increase in useable public green space that ultimately comes back to the council. So, it will not become privatised green space but useable urban parks that link the reservoirs and communities together. Mayor Glanville pointed out this was possible because of the master plan work as a partnership and the challenge from the council's planning department about the types of spaces they want to see. There is also recognition of MUGAs and the value of the cage and the MUGA in the urban realm. Making sure that those green spaces become not just ornamental but useable and work for residents and different groups of residents in an intergenerational way. This intervention is visible across the western boarder and Dalston is a demonstration of how emerging planning policy treats the deficit of green space. They are placing value on places like the Eastern Curve but going further and thinking about the connectivity and those opportunities to introduce further planting. This will be seen at Ridley Road and Arcola Street as part of the greening for public squares and spaces in the future.

Mayor Glanville informed there has been a lot of learning and best practice which has been incorporated in Planning's LP33 document and the thinking about how development can create inclusive spaces. Seeing a development that will improve the green infrastructure and play in the public realm and less behind a gate. This can be seen in the new regeneration area of Kings Crescent. The second phase of this will not just have a new green in the heart of the estate but an inclusive MUGA space as well. This will be comparatively close to Clissold Park. Resident feedback indicated they wanted to see this near their homes with a useable green space on their doorstep.

In reference to London Fields and enforcement whilst they want to do more as custodians of the public realm but there is a cost for education and enforcement. If they want to manage a space like London Fields, it is not easy and sustainable to just have an enforcement response. They will need residential support as they maintain the inclusive spaces for everyone coming out of the lockdown period. They do not have the option to employ private security to support the work of their parks and enforcement teams indefinitely.

The Strategic Planning Manager added in relation to the deficiency in open space, the planning system in its role of guiding and managing new developments, is well placed to address this. Hackney is in a good place by having the LP33 already adopted in addition to a whole suite of new area-based plans coming forward that will support this. The growth the council is planning for across the borough does provide planning with the opportunity through the growth strategy, planning policies and site allocations to deliver on some of the identified deficiencies and make right the level of provision.

Despite a tension around the scale of growth and how they accommodated and embedded new open space and green infrastructure within that scale of growth. Woodberry Downs is a good example of how the council is applying its planning policies particularly around the design of new developments to optimize opportunities and ensure that all new infrastructure networks are fit for purpose for the growth taking place in the borough.

Mayor Glanville commended the work of the various teams across the council to assist the good discussion at the meeting. Highlighting Hackney has the best team in London and the UK doing this work.

The Chair closed the discussion by making the following closing remarks:

Hackney has a great parks team and brilliant parks. This pandemic has made more people realise how good Hackney's parks are. With unlimited funds the parks could be even better, and the council could do all the improvements they would like to see.

In relation to the consultation the Commission welcomed the consultation and were of the view it was a good consultation with good ideas and they look forward to it being implemented.

ACTION:	Chair to draft formal response to Parks and Green Spaces Strategy and submit.
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5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 5.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th January 2021 were approved subject to the following amendments.
- 5.2 Amendment request to the minutes from the Chair on page 5 for paragraph 6 and 7 wording is not correct. The incorrect wording was noted to be:

page 5 for paragraph 6 (current wording)

It is not the preferred option to open a self-contained shelter due to the risks of infection. The council would be required to implement a number of things such as staffing, signage for one way systems, additional cleaning and deep cleaning after residents have left etc. In addition to testing and screening for

Covid before letting people into the premises and having security to keep people safe. In essence there are multiple things the council would need to consider delivering this type of provision.

Amended wording

It is not the preferred option to open their own self-contained shelter due to the risks of infection and additional costs that would be associated with operating a provision during Covid. The Council would be required to implement several things such as staffing, signage for a one-way system, additional cleaning and deep clean after residents have vacated the premises. Also, they would need to implement testing and screening for Covid before letting people into the premises and have security to help keep the people safe. In essence there are multiple specification that would need to be met to deliver this type of provision.

page 5 paragraph 7 (current wording)

The Rough Sleeping Manager from LBH added in terms of people the winter night shelter cannot accommodate, if they eligible access public funds the Council will assess under the usual homeless HRA criteria and process under interim duty of care.

Amended wording

The Rough Sleeping Manager from LBH added in reference to the people the winter night shelter could not accommodate. If the individual is eligible to access public funds, the Council would assess them under the usual homeless HRA criteria and assist them under the interim duty of care.

- 5.3 Amendment to minutes by Cllr Lynch to point 5.7 (ii). The Councillor advised it should read “CCG Managing Director” not “CCG Chair”.
- 5.4 Chair informed the Commission she would daft some points as the formal response from LiH to respond to Council’s the Lettings Policy consultation. This will be circulated to Members of the commission.

RESOLVED:	Minutes were approved subject to the amendments noted above.
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6 Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission- 2020/2021 Work Programme

- 6.1 The Chair referred to the work programme and updated the commission on the discussion items for the remaining 2 meetings in the municipal year.
- 6.2 The February meeting was scheduled to include a discussion about digital divide. But attendees were not confirmed. The Chair explained the digital divide had been exacerbated by the pandemic in all areas. The Chair was in discussion with officers about attendance. The Chair was of the view this was an important area for scrutiny to review to consider the council’s work and response during the pandemic. The Chair pointed out currently officer resources are stretched due to the impact of the pandemic and the recent cyber-attack on the council’s systems.

- 6.2.1 In addition to digital divide in February there would be an update on the Hackney Carnival, previously discussed in January 2020. This discussion will consider the new approach taken to the Hackney Carnival as a result of Covid. This item will also explore if the recommendations made (for better inclusion of the wider community) in the discussion at the LiH meeting in January 2020 were taken on board. In addition, there would a discussion about libraries and the strategy for reopening the service post lockdown.
- 6.2.2 The March meeting is scheduled to look at the lift maintenance and repairs contract. There have been several life breakdowns which has left residents stranded. It was noted the discussion will be restricted because housing services are currently going through the retender process for a new contractor.
- 6.2.3 In addition, there will also be an update from Thames Water on the flooding in N4. This was the agreed six-month report back requested by the commission earlier in the municipal year.
- 6.2.4 Lastly there will be information about the resident engagement work.
- 6.3 In response to the Chair's update Members made the following points.
- 6.3.1 Cllr Rathbone asked to bring the police back for an update before the end of the municipal year to discuss their reviews on handcuffing and their work on vehicle stops and ethnicity monitoring.
- 6.3.2 In response the Chair recommended this was reviewed in the first meeting of the municipal year. Explaining this would be six months since their last discussion on the topic area. This should give the police appropriate time for a progress update.
- 6.3.3 The Member referred to a recent report *called Review of Pre-arrest Handcuffing* by the MPS. The Member pointed out the report makes a few recommendations and that the scrutiny commission had not been formally informed about this report. The Member suggested the Commission schedules the item for 30 minutes to get a short update on their work in this area. Then also have an additional meeting in the new municipal year. The Member raised concern about the MPS plans to do ethnicity monitoring for vehicle stops.
- 6.3.4 The Member pointed out some of the recommendations in the report had been implemented, some already completed, and others were planned for future implementation. The Member also highlighted a second report about a pilot project checking the ethnicity for police stops.
- 6.3.5 Cllr Wrouth asked about looking at renaming spaces following the comments from the Minister Robert Jenrick. Suggesting they should be proactive in fighting back. The Members asked if they should consider having an update on this.
- 6.3.6 The Member referred to the impact of Covid-19 on the arts and culture industry. Pointing out many venues may only open in a piecemeal way and added given the significance of the arts and culture industry for Hackney they may wish to look at this.

In response the Chair advised they could add this to the Hackney Carnival update and ask the Cabinet Member to expand his presentation to include this update at the February meeting.

- 6.3.7 Cllr Lynch referred to the trails of the new waste collection in the next few weeks. The Member suggest the commission looks at how that is progressing. The Member acknowledged the Commission did look at this area previously and considered the new waste collection and implementation plans. The Members suggested this may be an item for the future meetings.
- 6.3.8 The Member agreed with the suggestion about looking at arts and culture and reviewing the carnival to consider the long-term implications.
- 6.3.9 The Member also asked about the focus of the item on digital divide highlighting it covers a large area of inequality across residents. The Member pointed out other scrutiny commissions would be looking at this issue for their remit e.g., CYPS for children. However, if the focus was about the Council's communications with residents who may not have online activity or devices in their home. This might link to the work of the Mayoral Advisor Cllr Maxwell in relation to her work on the Aging Well Strategy.
- 6.3.10 In relation to officer attendance for the digital divide item the Member expressed concern about asking ICT officers to attend the meeting when they were focused on recovery following the cyber-attack on the council's systems.

In response the Chair confirmed CYPS had looked at this area. However, the Chair pointed out to apply for anything from the Government an individual needs online access and many residents were not online, and the places previously used to access online services were currently closed due to the pandemic.

Cllr Etti added the CYPS Commission discussion on digital divide also highlighted the issue of WiFi and internet access. Pointing out a larger number of children were going into school in this third lockdown due to the lack of access to the internet.

Following Members comments the Chair suggested revising the item on digital divide to focus on housing service in relation to having an update on council housing blocks and community halls for connectivity.

Members agreed.

- 6.3.11 Cllr Ozsen asked about looking at LTNs.

In response the Chair advised this is covered by the Skills, Economy and Growth Scrutiny Commission not Living in Hackney.

- 6.3.12 Cllr Wrouth suggested an update on community halls and the plans for reopening for use.

The Chair suggested this could be added to the resident engagement item.

6.3.13 After discussions Members agreed the following amendments to the work programme.

1. Housing Services to update on Wi-Fi in council housing blocks and community halls in relation to digital divide.
2. The Cabinet Member for Planning, Culture & Inclusive Economy to talk about arts and culture in addition to the previously requested updates.
3. Review of the lift repairs contract and how residents are supported to exit or gain entry to their properties.

7 Any Other Business

7.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.30 pm