

Minutes

ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND REGENERATION SELECT COMMITTEE

16 March 2022

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman) Alan Chapman (Vice-Chairman) Nicola Brightman Alan Deville Scott Farley (Opposition Lead) Janet Gardner Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana (In place of Allan Kauffman)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Neil Fraser, Democratic Services Officer Nigel Cramb, Partnerships and Business Engagement Manager Stephanie Waterford, Head of Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Licensing & ASBET Helena Webster, Community Engagement & Town Improvements Manager</p>
69.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Kauffman, with Councillor Ahmad-Wallana present as substitute.</p>
70.	<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
71.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT ANY ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be considered in public.</p>
72.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2022 be approved as a correct record.</p>
73.	<p>REDEVELOPMENT OF HIGH STREETS FOLLOWING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Helena Webster - Community Engagement & Town Improvements Manager, Stephanie Waterford - Head of Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Licensing & ASBET,</p>

and Nigel Cramb - Partnerships and Business Engagement Manager, introduced a report detailing the work undertaken by the Council to help regenerate the Borough's High Streets following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report was summarised, with Town Centre Improvements, including the use of grant funding to provide the 'Welcome Back' branding, temporary street furniture hire, and support for local businesses, all highlighted. The events and promotions carried out to incentivise increased footfall and promotion for local business were set out as per the report, and included events such as the Christmas Lighting Programme, arts and crafts festivals, and family food days.

The 'Welcome Back' initiative also allowed for the trial of temporary public realm changes and the installation of 'parklets' to help restaurants/cafes maximise available outdoor seating and patron safety.

Businesses were further being supported through the offer of a free training programme covering digital marketing. On this, officers advised that difficulty in identifying relevant businesses who could take advantage of the training was the main barrier to the uptake of the programme. Further information gathering and evaluation would allow for improvements to be made in this area moving forward.

The economic development of Uxbridge was expanded upon, with the Committee advised that, like a number of larger town centres, Uxbridge High Street had suffered from the closure of high profile, anchor stores and footfall had subsequently reduced. To address this, the Business Improvement District (BID) had carried out a number of actions including support for visitor health and safety, advice and support for businesses, promotional campaigns as the High Street re-opened, and events such as the Christmas Lights.

Additionally, the GLA provided the 'High Streets For All Fund', which was used in Hillingdon to commission research on residents and their use of the High Street. The research was currently being compiled for evaluation and would then be used to inform further actions to promote the High Street moving forward. The financial support provided by central government was also highlighted.

The activities of the Regulatory Services throughout the pandemic were outlined, and included visits and inspections, enforcement actions for those in breach of pandemic restrictions, risk assessments, support and guidance for activities, and the processing of licences and permissions for street markets and events. As restrictions had eased, the service had moved to carrying out a programme of catch-up inspections, as well fact-finding and advice for the promotion of local businesses.

Regarding inspections and subsequent enforcement action, officers confirmed that these had been carried out through proactive work undertaken by the service in conjunction with intelligence and reporting from residents and Ward Councillors.

Some Members provided feedback from themselves and their constituents regarding the events that had been held. While some feedback was positive, other feedback suggested that there was room for improvement.

Feedback included the importance of scheduling outdoor events when weather was good, provision for indoor activities if weather was bad, better promotion of events, better aligning of events to area diversity and heritage, promotion of the night-time economy, and further consultation with residents, resident associations, Ward

Councillors, and the Hayes Town Partnership. Some business had also reported that the events had not resulted in increased footfall/business.

Officers advised that the events were trials to be evaluated and iterated upon, with feedback received being important in identifying improvements for future events. Regarding promotion and consultation, this would be reviewed, though where available, resident associations and groups such as the Hayes Town Partnership were being consulted.

Members confirmed that some residents had complained that the siting of parklets had resulted in obstruction for residents with mobility issues when accessing important sites such as pharmacies. Officers advised that parklets were designed to fit into a parking spot and did not take up more space than an ordinary vehicle. However, while no direct complaints had been received, a further review of siting and potential implications on accessibility could be carried out.

Regarding the use of parklets, the Committee was advised that all were currently in use, barring one parklet where the business had advised they no longer wished to use it. In this instance, an alternate site for the parklet was being sought, though this was a lengthy process as parklets required traffic orders before installation.

Members suggested that events be expanded to include stage plays. It was agreed that this would be reviewed with the Council's Arts Services. Additionally, it was requested that alternative avenues for funding, such as through HS2 and S106 contributions, or from TfL, be reviewed. The Committee also requested that additional information on the continuation of Rateable discounts be provided following the meeting.

The Committee thanked the officers for their presentation and their work to support the Borough's High Streets, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

74. **CABINET FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Consideration was given to the Cabinet Forward Plan and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

75. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 7.55 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Neil Fraser on 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.