



**HILLINGDON**  
LONDON

**RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**2008/2009**

***REVIEW OF HERITAGE IN HILLINGDON***

**Members of the Committee**

**Cllr Kay Willmott-Denbeigh (Chairman)**  
**Cllr Janet Duncan**  
**Cllr John Hensley**  
**Cllr Graham Horn**  
**Cllr Michael Markham**  
**Cllr Avtar Sandhu**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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## Chairman's Foreword

When thinking of the term '*heritage*' words such as legacy, tradition and inheritance spring to mind. Heritage covers a variety of phenomena and plays an important part in all our lives, ranging from children learning about important events in history to older people reliving past memories.



The Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee decided to investigate certain aspects of heritage in Hillingdon, as it is a subject that is very close to the hearts of borough residents.

The Committee undertook a public consultation and found that many residents feel very strongly about promoting and protecting their heritage. Therefore, this review concentrates on how those living in the borough can enjoy heritage and how the history of Hillingdon can be promoted.

The Committee were deeply disappointed to find that many of our current artefacts are deteriorating due to inadequate storage conditions. We believe that consideration must be given to improved temporary storage until a permanent home can be found for these treasures of the borough.

The heritage of the borough is something to be very proud of; residents and visitors must be able to appreciate the achievements of the borough and learn about the vast history of Hillingdon.

We therefore request that Cabinet give our recommendations careful consideration to grant the great heritage of Hillingdon the importance it deserves.

Finally, I would like to thank all external witnesses and officers whose hard work has made this review possible. This review has been particularly enjoyable and I have enjoyed working with all of you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kay Willmott-Denbeigh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Kay Willmott-Denbeigh

## **i. Background, Importance and Methodology**

### **Background to the review**

This review is one of two chosen in June 2008/9 by the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee for 2008/9. The choice was made according to set criteria aimed at ensuring Policy Overview reviews focus on matters that are important locally and cover topics that the Committee can add value to and make an impact on.

### ***Aim of the review***

*To recognise, review and improve how the Council promotes heritage in the London Borough of Hillingdon. To make recommendations to Cabinet which will improve the service and improve residents' satisfaction.*

### ***Terms of Reference***

1. To recognise the current areas of heritage in the Borough
2. To examine heritage as it is understood in Hillingdon
3. To investigate how other Councils have used heritage as a theme for regeneration and development of communities.

### **Importance**

1. Historical environment does not just include individual monuments, gardens and buildings, but consists of high streets and urban parks, cinemas and churches, villages and hedgerows.
2. Hillingdon has a wealth of heritage sources, including 408 statutory listed buildings, 30 conservation areas and 14 Areas of Special Local Character. Manor Farm, Ruislip, is one of the Borough's gems; a Council owned site, which includes several recently restored listed buildings.
3. The role of heritage in the economy is increasingly important as both a visitor attraction for local residents and for the wider tourism agenda that the Council will need to develop up to and beyond the 2012 Olympics.

4. A recent addition to the heritage agenda has been the installation of a range of Blue Plaques to mark famous individuals who have lived or worked in the Borough.
5. The Council has recently agreed an outline policy on Art in the Public Realm and the role of developers in producing works of art that will add to the heritage environment in Hillingdon will be important.
6. The Committee needs to ensure the review will define heritage as it applies to Hillingdon and as a result to inform and develop policy initiatives.
7. The Committee will need to examine the physical access and improvement to access of information regarding the heritage of Hillingdon.
8. The Committee will need to take initiative to ensure as many people as possible can appreciate Hillingdon's cultural richness and diversity.
9. The Committee needs to ensure the distinct identity of Hillingdon is celebrated.

### ***Reasons for the review***

1. Heritage can be used as a vehicle for developing a range of initiatives that require a thorough review of all policies connected to this agenda.
2. To ensure we promote a range of appropriate facilities for children and young people to appreciate the heritage of their borough.
3. To preserve, protect and enhance our natural and built heritage and seek to maximise community access to and appreciation of our heritage whilst preserving it for future generations.
4. Recent heritage studies have suggested that people have begun to feel less connected to the history of their community. They therefore have less appreciation for their historic environment and are less inclined to care for it.

5. It is timely to review the most appropriate sources of funding for the heritage service and the best way to fund future development opportunities.
6. It is timely to review the impact of legislation and national guidelines – examining the legislation through which the most important archaeological and historic assets are protected (which is primarily by designation as Listed Buildings and scheduled ancient monuments, conservation areas, historic battlefields, historic parks and gardens).
7. A review of current arrangements for policy development and overall direction for this service.
8. The continuing need to ensure value for money.

### **Equalities**

Access to heritage is important for all communities and the review provides an opportunity to reflect on the Hillingdon perspective.

### ***Key issues for the review***

The following issues were taken up in the Committee's enquiries:

1. What definition does Hillingdon want to apply to heritage?
2. What opportunities are there to develop heritage in Hillingdon?
3. Can we learn from how other Councils have utilised the heritage agenda successfully?
4. Are residents' expectations and concerns about heritage in Hillingdon reflected in the Council's service standard?
5. What are the potential threats to heritage that need to be dealt with?
6. Is there support available for local arts and heritage groups?
7. Are there funds available for heritage development?

### **Methodology**

#### **1. Witnesses**

The following people attended the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee meetings when heritage in Hillingdon was being discussed:

- Carolynne Cotton, Local Studies and Archives Manager, Central Library and author of *“Uxbridge Past”*.
- Harry Wale, Trustee of Maidenhead Heritage Centre.
- Cllr George Cooper, Heritage Builds Bridges.
- Cllr David Routledge, Heritage Champion for LBH
- Jean Palmer, Director of Planning and Community Services, LBH
- Stephen Timms, RAF Uxbridge Supplementary Planning Document Lead Officer

## **2. Visit**

On 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009, the Committee visited the Central Library's Archives Store in the basement of the Civic Centre. The Archive Store was set up in 1983. Old library books, Council meeting minutes, paintings, engraved signs from around the borough and historical artefacts are housed here. The store is not accessible



*Carolynne Cotton (far left) and Members in the archive store.*

to members of the public, however items are requested from the store by members of the public on a frequent basis – these items are usually Council meeting minutes or library books. Due to extreme temperature fluctuations and flooding the condition of the items in the archive store is deteriorating.

The tour was arranged by Carolynne Cotton (Archives Manager) and allowed the Committee an opportunity to see artefacts being preserved and ask questions regarding the future preservation of items of historical importance. The following observations were made:

- Artefacts relating to the borough and final copies of books that are not in satisfactory condition to be kept in the public library are kept in this store. A majority of the things in the store are books or papers such as Council meeting minutes. Members found the minutes from an Uxbridge Board of Health meeting held in 1886! (Photograph B)



B.

- The temperature fluctuations in the store are ruining the artefacts. The heating is turned off, yet the pipes running through the store are still very hot and therefore the store is constantly facing extreme temperature conditions. Carolynne Cotton informed Members that the extreme temperature fluctuations lead to the paper in the store turning brittle.
- The store is subject to flooding due to a leaking ceiling and water coming in under the door. The damp has ruined many paintings and newspapers in the store already.

- The “Three Tuns”, “Fairy Bell” and “King’s Arms” pubs signs (photograph C) are kept in this store room. Members said that any water damage would lead to the paint peeling off the signs and would ruin these pieces of Hillingdon heritage.



C.

- Members found a sign with the twinning of Hillingdon twinned with Schleswing and Emden in Germany and Mantes-la-Jolie in France engraved on it lying by a damp wall in the store. Members agreed that it would be a huge loss if such a historically significant sign was ruined due to bad storage conditions.

- A sign with names of past Uxbridge mayors is also being kept in storage. Members agreed that such a significant part of the history of Uxbridge should be displayed for residents to enjoy.

- One Member found himself a bicycle to add to his collection...from the late 1930s! (Photograph D)



- Members were impressed with the numerous beautiful paintings and historical artefacts in the store, and agreed that the public should be able to enjoy these (photograph E). However, the conditions that these items were being kept in were less impressive.



- Members found a painting donated by Mr Philip Kidby on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1975. Mr Kidby was a stamp den owner.

- The store is not compatible with Health and Safety procedures, with uneven roof levels and flooring. Filing cabinets can be moved at the rotation of a wheel – extremely dangerous if a person is standing behind the moving cabinet (photograph F). This 'wheeling' system has been in place for 25 years and would benefit from being modernised.



- Due to the unsafe conditions of the store members of public are not permitted to visit it.
- On average, a member of public will ask to see something kept in storage once a week. The items can range from library books to Council minutes.
- An assessment of the conditions of the archive store took place before the Heritage Lottery Fund and Heritage Builds Bridges were introduced. The independent assessment recommended that the store should be upgraded, but no action was taken. Since then the conditions have worsened, with the store becoming very crowded.
- Members agreed that a Records Management Policy must be put into place to ensure that everything in the store is kept record of. Currently, the library does not have a full record of what is kept in the store. Members said that knowing what documents are kept in the store would be very useful. The Committee learned that some archives are held by local residents, for example from World War II. A Record Management Policy would enable the borough to have a catalogue of all artefacts in the borough, which could potentially be displayed in a museum or heritage centre.

### **3. Related Documents**

- Review of List of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historical Importance
- Review of Cultural Strategy
- RAF Uxbridge redevelopment plans (the draft Supplementary Planning Document includes aspirations for a museum/cultural centre).

## **ii. Summary of Findings**

This chapter explains the rationale behind the Committee's recommendations. It draws on the evidence presented to the review, which can be found in appendices:

### **1. Residents Views**

As part of the Committee's review of Heritage in Hillingdon, a survey was placed on the Council website to allow residents to express how they would like to see the history of the borough preserved and promoted. The survey was advertised on the front page of the Council website and was placed on there for two months. The following themes emerged from the results of the survey:

#### ***i. What are your priorities when considering Hillingdon's heritage?***

- To preserve, celebrate and publicize heritage in the local area
- Education provided through historical sites of architectural importance
- Heritage should be celebrated in a manner similar to sites run by the National Trust or English Heritage
- Saving listed buildings
- Leaving a legacy behind for the borough's children
- Promoting modern cultural trends

#### ***ii. How would you propose that the distinct identity of Hillingdon is celebrated?***

- Publicize local events via a website
- A celebration to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the borough in 2015
- Create a cultural museum with great family facilities
- Use open areas to encourage community events

#### ***iii. If there were a Civic Pride area where you live, how would you like to see it preserved?***

- Civic Pride needs to be promoted for people to be proud of their borough

- ❑ Promotion of local communities

**iv. From what period in history do you think the exhibits in such a museum should start?**

- ❑ The museum collection which is in store should be kept to reflect history and development of the area

**v. What would you like to see included in such a collection?**

- ❑ Every day objects: Photos, maps, artefacts, recordings of oral history
- ❑ Diversity of community highlighted
- ❑ Timeline of the development of the borough
- ❑ Museum learning should be creative, interactive and experiential
- ❑ Artefacts with meaningful social relevance should be included
- ❑ RAF WWII bunker in Uxbridge could be centre of museum.
- ❑ Olympics held in Hillingdon in 1948
- ❑ Hillingdon Domesday Book
- ❑ Farming Heritage of Hillingdon
- ❑ Fun information about the borough that kids can relate to
- ❑ Personal accounts from residents who have experienced important events
- ❑ A distinct heritage profile of individual areas should be promoted.
- ❑ **75%** of respondents would like a military collection to be included in a Hillingdon Museum.

**2. Comparisons with another Local Authority**

The Committee heard from a Trustee of the Maidenhead Heritage Centre, Harry Wale. This gave the Committee the opportunity to make useful comparisons with a borough that has set up a centre to preserve and promote its heritage. The Committee took the evidence:

**i. What do you define heritage as at the Maidenhead Heritage Centre?**

A Heritage Centre was set up 15 years ago as residents felt there was a need to set up a 'Heritage Operation'. Four major Heritage exhibitions are

presented each year. Ideas are taken from Maidenhead's past to stimulate those who have come to the museum to learn about Heritage in Maidenhead. They aim to 'educate, excite and stimulate'.

He explained that there will be two permanent exhibitions running in Maidenhead – a time-line history of the area of Maidenhead and air transport auxiliary.

***ii. How long did it take to set up the Heritage Centre? How were the artefacts gathered? How was the funding obtained?***

Local residents set up the initial centre in 6 months. They work with Historical Society and are able to quickly to put exhibitions together. They have used 8 or 9 locations rent-free; these are usually shop spaces, which are in-between renting. They put an advert/article in the local paper before the exhibition. A major funding programme was run, however more is needed. The cost of running the centre amounts to £60,000 per annum, which is raised through funding. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead provides the centre with a £6,000 grant.

There is one full time paid staff, and between 30 to 40 volunteers. The management group is made up of a group of trustees who have a mixture of skills between them.

***iii. What role did the public play in the setting up of the centre? Were the public consulted?***

The public were not consulted in the setting up of the centre. The idea arose from people working in the community and the activities of the Civic Society to protect and preserve their heritage for future generations. As Maidenhead is sometimes overshadowed by the importance placed on the Royal aspects of Windsor, there was a desire to capture the heritage of Maidenhead alone.

***iv. On average, how many people visit the centre per week? What age group do most visitors belong to? Do people visit for specific purposes i.e. school visits?***

Around 5,000 people a year visit the centre. 40 lectures a year are organised by the centre and delivered to approx. 50 people (these are often paid lectures). The Maidenhead Heritage Centre website receives around 4,000 hits per year. Most of the visitors are retired, though the school visits are usually organised for younger children, if it is relevant to their studies.

### **iii. Conclusions and Recommendations**

**The following are proposed as conclusions and recommendations to go into the Committee's final report.**

The Committee reviewed the duties, functions, performance of and potential for improvements in the preservation of the heritage of Hillingdon. A summary of the Committee's conclusions and recommendations are below.

***The Committee concludes:***

Following an in-depth review into the heritage of the borough, the Committee believe that artefacts from Hillingdon's past must be kept in satisfactory conditions. Currently the artefacts are being ruined in the Archives Store, which will lead to a loss of the heritage of Hillingdon.

The Committee believe that members of the public would benefit from and enjoy seeing such items of interest displayed in a public area, as the Archive Store is not open to members of the public. Better publicity of these items will help residents feel more connected to the borough

The Committee also believe a record should be kept of all documents and artefacts in possession of the borough, due to some artefacts being in the possession of residents and others with the libraries or Council.

The Planning and Community Services department is undertaking a review of the Cultural Strategy. The Committee believes the review of the Cultural Strategy should interlink and overlap with this review of Heritage in Hillingdon.

The Committee will note the progress of this report by revisiting the review as part of their work programme in the following years.

***The Committee therefore recommends:***

**Recommendation 1: That Cabinet considers the following recommendations to improve the promotion of heritage in Hillingdon.**

***Recommendation 1***

(i) The Committee advise that an independent assessment of the store should take place to ensure that items in storage are kept in the best possible conditions. The current condition of the store is leading to the destruction of the many extraordinary antiques. This may mean that artefacts need to be placed in short term temporary storage.

(ii) That the Council, in conjunction with Brunel University and British & Foreign School Society, consider investigating the possibility of obtaining appropriate temporary storage until a more permanent facility within the borough can be established. This will ensure that financial claw back either in part or full of the funding that has been provided will not be made in 2011. (The Heritage Lottery Fund contributed £305,000 to catalogue and digitise the collections and provide a website; a condition of this grant was that the archive storage be improved to BS5454; "**Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents**" is a British Standard for the preservation of archival material. Among other things, it specifies temperature and humidity ranges for document storage, shelving schemes, and materials for document containers.

***Recommendation 2***

The Committee notes that Cabinet have endorsed the RAF Uxbridge Supplementary Planning Document and support the decision to build a museum or heritage centre to display historically important information in the borough. This could provide long-term storage.

***Recommendation 3***

(i) The Committee advise that due consideration is given to the recruitment of an experienced photographer to produce high quality pictures to be used

as part of a coordinated centralised cataloguing system to keep record of all artefacts kept in the borough. This is to ensure the security of these items. A digital system is near completion; however an experienced photographer should be recruited to complete this task.

(ii) The cataloguing of items could act as an income generator. After items have been photographed and properly catalogued, a small fee could be charged for heritage searches performed by members of the public. Although such a charge is already in place for some library searches, it does not yet apply to heritage searches.

#### ***Recommendation 4***

(i) The Committee recommend that the placement of Blue Plaques should be extended to all places and people of interest throughout the borough. This is to ensure that future generations are able to identify the many important historical events that took place in the borough. The plaques would become part of a heritage trail throughout the borough.

(ii) The Committee recommend that as part of publicising heritage, notice boards should be erected at entrances of publicly owned buildings of local architectural or historical importance. These signs will be used to identify buildings of interest and allow members of the public to learn about the heritage surrounding them.

#### ***Recommendation 5***

The Committee recommend that consideration be given to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the borough in 2015. Celebrations should involve all communities in the borough and encourage residents to mark this special occasion.