

Draft Leisure and Culture Strategy 2016-2020

Libraries, Parks and Open Spaces, Sport and Physical Activity, Heritage and Arts

London Borough of Hounslow

Foreword

Dear resident,

Welcome to Hounslow's Leisure and Culture Strategy which has been developed with input from service users, members of the public and partners.

Our leisure services and facilities provide an important contribution to making Hounslow a great place to live, work and visit. These services can play a significant role in improving health and quality of life, providing a cleaner and greener borough and in meeting other corporate priorities including employment, education and community cohesion.

This strategy sets out our high level ambition for provision and delivery of a leisure and culture offer over the next four years and also helps us in determining options for where and how we can make significant savings in the leisure budget.

We are extremely fortunate that Hounslow has such great services and facilities and potential to provide high quality leisure and cultural services for you, your family and your community in the future. I am delighted to present our ambition and plan for how we can make this happen.

Councillor Ed Mayne

Portfolio holder for Public Health and Leisure

Vision

Hounslow will be a borough known for its richness of high quality leisure and cultural services where every resident will have the opportunity to take part in leisure and cultural activities.

We pledge to:

- modernise our library service
- enhance our network of parks and green spaces for diverse needs
- support residents to be more active
- celebrate Hounslow's people, places, local history, heritage and culture.

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1. Executive Summary

The provision of leisure and culture services in Hounslow, in this time of austerity, presents both opportunities and challenges. These services are extremely popular and we value the substantial benefits of parks, leisure centres, libraries, heritage and arts to wider agendas such as; employment, learning, education, health and wellbeing, economic development, regeneration and community cohesion.

As part of the overall council savings programme, the budget for leisure and culture services needs to be reduced by at least £2.3million (13.4% of the overall budget), and potentially considerably more, over the next four years. This strategy lays out our high-level thinking on how best to re-shape leisure and culture services, taking into account the future needs of local residents and the need to deliver services with reducing budgets. We will formally consult with the public to further develop and strengthen this strategy so that it can subsequently be used to underpin the development of future savings plans.

The following priorities underpin our proposals for future services:

- **Rethinking what our services offer** - we will review, redesign and prioritise services to ensure they respond to the current and future needs of local residents and can be delivered with less budget. This may include changing what services are offered, addressing gaps and shortfalls in services and responding better to what we know about our population, their needs and lifestyle in the context of on-going changes in the 21st century such as advancement in technology.
- **Ensuring the right services in the right places** - we will review and rationalise our facilities and assets so they are community focused, fit for purpose and in the right place to best meet current need. This includes sharing or co-locating services and where possible improving or building new facilities and assets to the benefit of the community.
- **Better management** - we will reconsider and negotiate management arrangements for services and facilities in order to reduce the amount we pay for services, whilst minimising any negative impact for residents. This can also result in investment in facilities and improve service quality through identifying expert and specialist management. Hounslow Council will review its present and future role as a provider, partner or enabler of leisure and cultural services.

Modernise our library service

- **The physical and virtual library** - a modern service should provide a balance of both a physical and virtual place - that can be visited, but also be virtually accessible wherever people are.
- **Community hubs with services for local residents** - the service will better respond to the changing landscape and become services and places that more residents will use and visit. Hounslow libraries will retain current users and will improve engaging non-users. Residents will be actively involved and supported to have a role in shaping the future library service, ensuring libraries reflect the needs and aspirations of the local community.
- **Well-designed spaces** - a better library standard will endeavour to provide buildings which are fit-for-purpose with well-designed spaces that are: accessible and

attractive to all residents and organisations; located in areas which are easy to find and everyone can get to affordably; and reflective the needs and aspirations of the local community.

Enhance our network of parks and green spaces for diverse needs

- **Review and redesign parks and open spaces** to provide a range of high quality spaces which are safe and welcoming, making improvements where they are most needed
- **Review new service management models and maintenance regimes** so that Hounslow's parks are effectively and efficiently managed
- **Get communities more involved** - promote usage, community involvement and participation of parks and, where appropriate, explore and formalise how residents and stakeholders can actively participate in the maintenance and development of these spaces
- **Target funding strategically** - plan and prioritise spend and promote income generation from external funds and concessions, rents and fees and charges to support a sustainable management model.

Support residents to be more active

- **Create a movement** - engage all sectors to make every contact count and make physical activity popular through campaigns, education and events which support behaviour change
- **Think strategically and prioritise** - provide strategic leadership facilitating partnerships with public, private and voluntary sectors to maximise the sport and physical activity offer in Hounslow. We will also target resources and funding for sport and physical activity more strategically
- **Create active environments and provide the right facilities in the right locations** - guide future programmes of work, capital investment for new sports facilities and improve accessibility of others. Shape spaces to support physical activity making use of our parks and open spaces and provide targeted services and events for the least active people.

Celebrate Hounslow's people, places, local history, heritage and culture

- **Make Hounslow a destination** for heritage and the arts through delivery of an attractive, accessible and engaging programme of arts and events, increasing participation in Hounslow's rich and diverse cultural offer and attracting new and underrepresented audiences
- **Protect and conserve heritage** including our historic parks and buildings, streets, squares and public realm, improving the sustainability of our arts and heritage offer through innovative programming, new models of delivery, securing external funding and working in partnership
- **Maximise involvement from residents** for heritage and the arts by better understanding our audiences, creating better events, working with partner

organisations, prioritising activities for young people and families and ensuring services are provided across the borough

- **Maximise the potential** to contribute to wider corporate objectives including economic development and regeneration, connecting communities, cohesion, learning and skills development, and health and wellbeing.

In delivering the above, we will improve the promotion of services and enhance communication with residents.

By making these changes, Hounslow will provide high quality leisure and culture services that are diverse and accessible to all Hounslow residents. This strategy will also help to identify where, given the severity of the savings required, we prioritise reducing resource, provide a framework which minimises the impact of budget reductions and also identifies where we have opportunities to improve services within existing budgets.

DRAFT

2. Introduction

Hounslow Council facilitates the provision of leisure and cultural services through direct commissioning and by supporting partner organisations to deliver services. The provision of these facilities and activities are not a statutory duty for local authorities, however Hounslow have opted to provide these services because of the beneficial outcomes to residents and communities. Leisure and culture services can impact upon a range of outcomes including contributing to health and wellbeing, regeneration, learning, employment, reducing inequalities, environment improvements and biodiversity, emergency planning and sustainable communities. This is reflected in Hounslow's Corporate Plan 2014-2020, where leisure and culture services play a key role across all priority areas particularly in developing active and healthy communities.

The need for a leisure and culture strategy

Given the impact that leisure services could have on improving health and quality of life, employment and reducing population churn, it is an ideal time to develop a vision and direction of travel to better define Hounslow and encourage people to live and invest in the borough. This is made more important in the context of severe budgetary cuts and the vulnerability of non-statutory services. As part of the overall council savings programme, the budget for leisure and culture services needs to be reduced by at least £2.3million over the next four years.

This strategy outlines how Hounslow Council will improve the leisure and cultural offer to better support local communities to be independent, residents to be self-reliant and connect people with place. It proposes how this is to be achieved whilst simultaneously strengthening leisure and culture services to become economically viable.

This document should be seen as an iterative document from which further research and actions will develop as the strategy is implemented, monitored and reviewed.

Scope

The strategy will include: heritage and arts to include museums; physical activity and sport to include leisure centres, sports facilities and public halls; parks and open spaces to include parks, leisure land, cemeteries and allotments; and libraries.

Chapters 3 and 4 set the scene for the strategy providing an overview of current services and a description of key strategic drivers for change respectively. Chapter 5 outlines the overall vision of this strategy to meet the enormous economic challenges while subsequent chapters describe the high-level approach to the future development of libraries; parks and open spaces; sport and physical activity; and heritage and arts.

Next steps

Using the strategy as a framework, a draft leisure development and savings options plan will be developed. Approval will be sought at Cabinet early 2016 to consult, where applicable, with residents on the draft plan so we can make sure all decisions are properly informed by the views of local people.

3. Hounslow Today

Defining Hounslow

One of London's largest boroughs, located in West London, linking town and countryside via the Great West Road, Hounslow is a portal to London, to the UK and, through Heathrow, the world. It is a river borough with a route to the West of England and to the Channel. It has a rich environment of waterways – canals, tributary rivers, lakes, reservoirs, docks and Metropolitan Open Land (parks and open spaces) with five Great Estates all with historic references (Chiswick, Gunnersbury, Boston Manor, Osterley and Syon). It has tangible links to Britain's past with both an implicit and explicit (built) heritage from the Romans through King Canute, Henry VIII and Brunel and through its peoples to world cultures.

Above all it has potential: continuing economic and social development and opportunity; promising new looks to the town centres, new market spaces; new retail and office space for businesses (and potentially creative and cultural businesses); new homes, new schools, improved leisure and entertainment infrastructure with increased diversity of cultural offer; and enhanced public realm and facilities demonstrated by investment in libraries, leisure and some arts facilities.

Population and Demographic

The population of Hounslow is 271,800 (GLA projections, 2014) and it is anticipated this will rise to 323,000 by 2030. The age profile of the population has particular implications for leisure facilities and services due to the different use of facilities by people of varying ages. Hounslow's age profile is markedly different from that of the country as a whole. By 2030, it is projected that a quarter of the population will be under the age of 18 and nearly 15% will be over the age of 65, with 4% over the age of 80.

Hounslow has average levels of deprivation compared with London boroughs, and is ranked as the 14th least deprived borough in London and the 92nd most deprived district of 326 in the country. One of Hounslow's 'Lower Super Output Areas' is in the 10% most deprived in England and diversity is increasing in the borough. The 2011 Census showed that half of Hounslow's population was from an ethnic minority group, the largest of which was Indian accounting for 19% of residents, followed by Asian-other at 8%, and Pakistani at 5%.

Both of these factors are of particular importance in considering future provision and planning to ensure leisure and culture services are accessible and, where applicable, targeted in order to have greater outcomes and impact.

Leisure Services

Hounslow has a strong leisure and culture offer in the borough with over 200 parks, 6 leisure centres, 11 libraries, over 160 sports clubs and high profile heritage sites including Boston Manor and Hogarth's House. Leisure and culture services are delivered in partnership with delivery partners such as Fusion and Carillion which, alongside other key local and regional partners, will play an important part in delivering this strategy. The box below highlights some of the key achievements and improvements that have been made to the leisure and culture offer in recent years.

Recent key achievements:

- major regeneration project at the Gunnersbury Estate securing £8.8m from the Heritage Lottery Fund
- investment committed from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop plans for a learning space and remodelled gardens at Hogarth's House
- residents taking part in 3x30minutes of physical activity per week has increased from 4% to 23.4% over the last 7 years
- the Sport Development service in Hounslow rated excellent by Sport England's national quality scheme QUEST
- over £700k of external funding secured in two years to support the delivery of sports and physical activity projects in the borough with a further £1.25m dedicated to develop a flagship West London Sports hub at Gunnersbury Park
- refurbishment of five leisure centres and a further £13.5 million investment in a new state of the art leisure centre at Heston. Heston Park redevelopment of £1,140,000 to be completed by the end of 2015
- 14 parks and allotments awarded the Green Flag Award which recognises and rewards the best green spaces in the country
- £700k invested into shared use pathways in and around parks and open spaces: River Crane Lands, Hanworth Airpark, Duke of Northumberlands River, Pevensey Road Open Space and Bedfont Links
- 26 play areas refurbished or built since 2010 costing £3.7 million
- £450k secured in 2014 to improve paths and access in all cemeteries
- Hounslow's libraries service has a popular and varied programme of activities with over 30,000 people attended more than 8,500 events such as reading groups, film screenings and talks each year
- improved engagement in activities, learning and knowledge sharing through innovative technology. Hounslow is the first public library to set-up LEGO Education which delivers interactive and innovative learning for children and new coding clubs for 9 + years and programming skills for adults is planned
- development of a successful School Library Service which serves 74% of the borough's schools
- free wifi now available at all libraries encouraging remote working.

Libraries

Hounslow has 11 libraries distributed across the borough. The main borough library is Hounslow Library in the Treaty Centre Shopping Centre in Hounslow. There are six town libraries located in Brentford, Chiswick, Feltham, Hanworth, Heston and Isleworth and four community libraries in Beavers, Bedfont, Cranford and Osterley. Libraries currently cater for a number of core functions in Hounslow. These include access to:

- **physical stock** - includes paperback and hardback books, audio books, CDs, DVDs and cassettes
- **virtual stock** - includes e-books and a range of online resources such as the Driving Theory Test, Encyclopaedia Britannica and UK Citizenship Test. Online resources can be accessed from home computers and computers in the libraries. E-books can be accessed via compatible e-readers
- **computers** - this is the People's Network and provides library users with access to a computer in their local library. It is primarily for those who do not have access to a computer and internet at home
- **events and activities** - the libraries service now offers a range of events and activities some of which are based around reading including the Summer Reading Challenge for children and reading groups. Other activities include arts and crafts, film screenings, health promotion, English conversation classes and careers advice.

The libraries service also has a number of specialist operational areas such as the local studies collections and archives that are housed in Chiswick, Feltham and Hounslow libraries. The mobile libraries service delivers books to those who cannot access their local library due to illness or mobility issues, the Prison Library Service serves Feltham Young Offenders Institute and the Schools Library Service provides books and activities to primary schools and advice on developing library provision to secondary schools.

Some of Hounslow's library buildings have undergone refurbishment. This involved co-locating libraries with other services such as the re-built library in Hanworth and refurbished library at Isleworth that are co-located with leisure facilities, the re-built Beavers Library that is co-located with Children's Services and the library at Feltham that is situated in the same building as a GP surgery. Heston and Osterley are stand-alone libraries that have been refurbished and Hounslow Library in the Treaty Centre has undergone improvements including new air conditioning, lighting and lifts to make the facility more comfortable for users. Libraries are also increasingly sharing their space with other services that are operationally compatible, for example there are now five adult education class rooms in Hounslow Library.

Parks and open spaces

There are 208 parks and open spaces, 9 cemeteries, 34 allotment sites, 95 play areas and 137 outdoor sports facilities and pitches covering 7.2 million square metres of land across the borough. These open spaces are owned or co-owned and managed by the council, the National Trust or private land owners. They are diverse, ranging from sites of national significance to small open spaces which all provide different functions. Hounslow has more open spaces than the London average and around 85% of people visit them daily or weekly (Resident Survey, 2015). Hounslow spend £7,150 per hectare which is in the lower quartile of spend across London which is reflected in the varying quality of the parks and open spaces in Hounslow. National Green Flag Award status has also been attained by 14 parks.

Greenspaces provide free, unhindered access to healthy opportunities, promoting healthy lifestyle and supporting individual's health and wellbeing.

Parks and open spaces also play an important role in regeneration, place shaping and promoting community cohesion, hosting many of the boroughs art and cultural events such as London Mela, guided walks and are a place for outdoor learning that enrich local communities.

The contribution of our parks to nature conservation and biodiversity should also be noted with seven sites designated to be of Metropolitan importance and other benefits that include improving air quality, addressing climate change impact and providing flood mitigation.

Physical Activity and Sport

Physical activity encompasses everything from cycling and walking to fitness classes and organised sport.

The council operates six leisure facilities across the Borough in Brentford, Chiswick, Hanworth, Heston, Isleworth and Osterley. Hanworth and Isleworth are co-located with libraries. Heston Pool which closed in 2014 has been replaced by a £13.5 million leisure centre which opened in January 2016. Each of the leisure centres boast a full range of facilities including fitness studios, health suites, swimming pools, cafes, crèche facilities and outdoor pitches. In addition to five leisure centres there is also a six lane athletics track and sports centre in Osterley. All of these facilities provide local residents with a wide variety of sports and physical activity opportunities that sees an average of 120,000 visits per month. Further facility improvements include the re-development of Gunnersbury Park. Plans are afoot to re-instate the park as a destination facility for sport and physical activity with a programme of works planned that will exceed £10 million pounds of investment and is scheduled for completion in 2017.

The council has a large portfolio of facility assets including boathouses, golf courses and tennis courts. Hounslow is host to over 160 sports clubs including minority sports like badminton, martial arts and squash. The borough is proud to be the official home for Brentford Football Club since 1889 and other national standard clubs such as the volleyball club CBL Polonia, AFL premiership side West London Wildcats and rugby team Harlequin Ladies. Home to a plethora of elite clubs, the national stadiums for football and rugby on its doorstep, Wembley and Twickenham respectively, and the finish point of the annual Oxford Cambridge boat race, the borough has a vast wealth of major sporting events and teams on which to capitalise on.

Hounslow boasts a successful Community Sports and Physical Activity Network (CSPAN) that facilitate relationships between key partners and stakeholders to secure significant funding for the investment in capital and revenue projects. The boroughs school sport partnership (Sport Impact) has worked with over 55 schools, 400 teachers and over 3,000 children in the borough ensuring every child gets access to high quality physical education, competitive school sport and opportunities to lead and volunteer. The Sport and Community development team, QUEST rated excellent, provides a series of opportunities for young people in the borough to participate in a variety of sports and physical activities from cycling to running to participation in pan London and international events such as the London Youth Games and the London Marathon 'Mini-Marathon'. Opportunities like these motivate and inspire the next generation of talent in the same way it did for Mo Farah who took part in the same grassroot events several years before his world-class sporting success.

The joint Strategic Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWBS) for Hounslow identifies physical activity as key to addressing childhood obesity and enabling people to make healthier lifestyle choices. This is reflected in the joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) which identifies physical inactivity in Hounslow as a key determinant of premature death and ill health. In response to this the commissioning of physical activity programmes are targeted and provide opportunities for the least active to participate in activities such as health walks. This approach has enabled us, since 2012, to provide over 79 different, targeted activities that have reached over 5000 residents.

Public Halls

Hounslow currently has seven public halls offering varying services to local residents but all are used for community based activities in full or in part to include recreational, cultural, educational and leisure based services. In 2014-2015 there were 261,000 visits to these sites. The sites are Chiswick Town Hall, Feltham Assembly Hall, Heston Village Hall, Isleworth Public Hall, Montague Public Hall, Southville Community and Children's Centre and Wellington Day Centre.

Heritage and Arts

We are lucky enough to have a rich and diverse heritage with some of West London's remaining Great Estates of significant national importance such as Gunnersbury Park, Chiswick House and Gardens, Boston Manor House and Park and Hogarth's House. These sites are valued by local visitors, including schools, families and adults, as well as those new to the borough with more than 16,000 people visiting Boston Manor and Hogarth's House last year. The borough also hosts 27 conservation areas mostly concentrated in the east; Brentford, Chiswick and Isleworth, and some 885 statutorily listed – both commercial and domestic to include individual or groups of buildings that are locally listed for their contribution to an area's character.

Hounslow is currently identified as a Priority Development Area for investment by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and has benefited from c £21.8m of HLF funding, with notable grants to support the restoration of Chiswick House and Gardens, Hogarth's House, the Museum of Water and Steam and Gunnersbury Park and Museum.

Hounslow also provides a number of grants to arts-based organisations including Watermans Art Centre and Feltham Arts and has facilities such as Redlees Artist Studio and the Paul Robeson Theatre, all of which often work alongside community groups to engage people and their cultural heritage across the borough.

4.A Changing Landscape

In order to deliver on the vision for Hounslow's leisure and culture services, it is necessary to consider what these services are for the current and future needs of Hounslow residents. Economic austerity, the impact of new technology and changing social trends are important drivers which necessitate a re-evaluation of how we provide services. Leisure and culture services of the future have to respond to these changes, and remain relevant to the modern and changing needs of Hounslow residents.

Economic climate and national context

Leisure and culture services are facing unique circumstances including severe budgetary cuts and service restructuring over a short time-scale. Whilst the importance of leisure and culture services is recognised at a national level, additional funding from Central Government is unlikely. Councils in many areas may not have enough funding to meet all statutory responsibilities and money available for leisure and culture services will reduce further. In Hounslow, leisure services have been tasked with reducing the leisure budget by at least £2.3 million. Difficult decisions will need to be made about which services to prioritise and in considering increased efficiency, re-modelling service delivery and where applicable, the degree of service reduction.

Legislation

Generally speaking, the majority of leisure and cultural services are discretionary and therefore councils have a choice over the level and type of service provided. The main exception is the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act which requires local authorities to deliver a "comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof". There are however, no national standards, or a precise definition of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient service in the 21st century and it is the duty of each local authority to determine the level of service provision based on local need.

There are also a number of legislations that inform parks and open spaces including: the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), which places a duty on the council to have regard for and the conservation of biodiversity; and the Disused Burial Ground Act, which places a duty to manage sites previously maintained as burial grounds often closed church burial grounds. Many of our parks and open spaces have additional protection due to specific legislation such as the Countryside and Rights of way Act, Allotment Act and/or specific planning designation such as Green Belt which has influenced the character and nature of these spaces. The historical ownership of many of our parks and open spaces have further prescriptions if designated as Common Land, have restrictive Covenants or specific status in law in their creation such as King George V/ Queen Elizabeth II playing fields. As a borough situated next to the Thames there is also further legislation that affects how we manage our waterways and maintain the quality of water, such as the Reservoir Act. The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 also enables local authorities to establish and manage nature reserves, of which the borough has ten.

Local authorities also have a primary role in protecting the historic environment. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to properly judge applications for listed building consent. Local authorities also have a range of enforcement powers to tackle listed buildings at risk. Support is available from English Heritage when it becomes evident that a designated asset is being allowed to deteriorate.

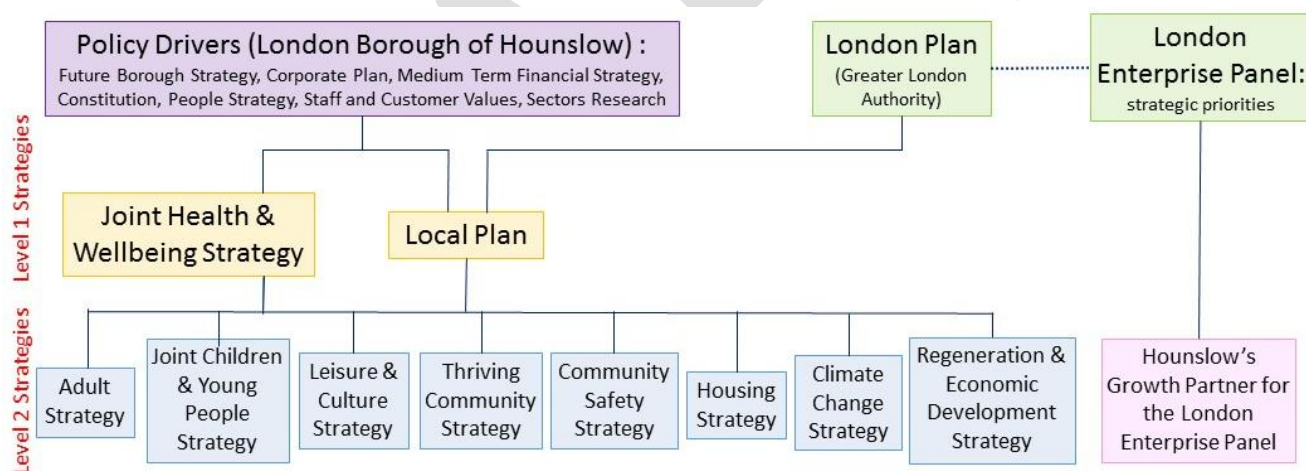
The Health and Social Care Act 2012 conferred new duties on local authorities to improve public health, transferring the responsibility of primary care trusts to local authorities. Whilst it is not a statutory function of local authorities, physical activity features within the Public Health Outcomes Framework as a key indicator that the Department of Health expects local authorities to work towards.

Corporate Plan and Strategic Framework

Hounslow Council is committed to providing a high quality leisure and culture offer to Hounslow residents which is highlighted in the themes within the Corporate Plan 2014 – 2019:

- keeping you safe
- brighter futures for our children
- good quality homes and jobs
- a cleaner, greener borough
- active, healthy communities
- help and support when you need it
- an ambitious council delivering quality services and value for money.

The council has also recently developed a new strategic framework which helps to identify how this strategy fits and interacts with other council strategies.



Health and Wellbeing

Amid the changes and challenges the council faces, from 1 April 2013, the council received new responsibility for public health. Our statutory JSNA and Health and Wellbeing Strategy is overseen by the Hounslow Health and Wellbeing Board, and will drive much of the integration between council and partner services.

The integration between leisure, culture and health has also been made explicit in the nature of its structure through the placement of leisure within the Public Health Team at Hounslow Council and through joint-commissioning and funding arrangements. Leisure and cultural services in Hounslow is seen as an important resource for improving public health and wellbeing and in addressing priority public health concerns. For example, service provision encourages more active and healthy lifestyles by increasing participation in physical activity and sport and people's access and use of green space which can have a lasting positive effect on resident's mental wellbeing and quality of life. This is also recognised within

Hounslow's Director of Public Health's Annual Report for 2015/16 which focusses on Active Living and the role leisure services play in contributing to this.

Leisure and Culture plays an essential role in the prevention of ill-health and reducing health inequalities which too has an impact on reducing costs to the wider economy, the council (namely adult social care services) and the NHS in the long-term. This is even more pressing due to the ageing population in Hounslow, presenting additional and new pressures on council services and the health system.

Regeneration and Economic Development

The leisure and culture offer of the borough has significant value to the local economy as *place-making* – a means of making a better place, attractive to would be residents, businesses and investors, helping to give the borough definition through the associations, the facilities and the activities. Examples include the role of green space in improving connectivity of an area, the use of arts, leisure and cultural facilities located within town centres to make them become vibrant destinations and also in helping to diversify town centre uses to attract both a day and night time economy.

The facilities and profile of Hounslow's broader public realm offer (inclusive of leisure centres, libraries, parks, theatres, town squares – even allotments) matter as part of the overall quality of life offer to residents and visitors alike. This logically develops into a 'narrative' about how *this* place called Hounslow may be defined and shaped and links explicitly with heritage.

This is also reflected in the Local Plan objectives and Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy, where there is a commitment to:

- develop new leisure and cultural facilities in town centres through managing uses
- promote and protect character and identity to include heritage assets
- protect, maintain and improve the openness, access, amenity, biodiversity and recreational value of the borough's green spaces to include local open space, allotments, agriculture, play space, education space, food growing, outdoor sport facilities and burial space
- enhance existing green infrastructure links and create new ones to connect green and blue spaces and facilitate better access for local residents and contribute to biodiversity and wider environmental resilience
- deliver appropriate infrastructure providing a range of community, education, health, cultural, sport and entertainment facilities and places that will support the borough's growing community and which are seen as a positive reason for visiting, living and working in the borough
- ensure environmental quality to include reduction of carbon emissions and the management of flood risk
- enhance connectivity and promote the ease of movement for all through improving public transport, cycling and walking measures.

Further to this, ten local strategies for the local districts provide a location-focused approach, all of which have some reference to leisure and cultural facilities and service provision. The future West of the Borough Plan will also be a key planning tool to help deliver the Leisure and Culture Strategy.

Lifestyle

As consumers we are demanding access to services quickly and conveniently, at times and ways that suit us e.g. more responsive, personalised and 24 hours a day. This is happening hand in hand with the digital and mobile revolution e.g. smartphone sales outpace sales of desktops and laptops.

Technology

Behaviours have dramatically changed through advances in technology and this has changed our lifestyles. For example the rise of ICT, social media and digital content has changed how people access reading and find information and people now seek knowledge and entertainment through a wide range of products and services. Digitisation is also occurring in the arts and culture sector with assets being developed such as new or enhanced digital databases, archives, galleries and creative outputs. There are also opportunities to use technology to find new ways to engage communities or improve monitoring of service usage. With behaviours and expectations changing, leisure and culture services of the future have to respond to these changes and opportunities whilst also considering residents needs and digital exclusion.

5. Our Vision

This strategy responds to the severe challenges facing Hounslow borough and suggests how in the context of shrinking budgets we can maintain a quality library, park, leisure centre, public hall, heritage and arts offer for both local communities and visitors.

Our vision:

Hounslow will be a borough known for its richness of high quality leisure and cultural services where every resident will have the opportunity to take part in leisure and cultural activities.

To realise this vision we will:

1. **modernise our library services**
2. **enhance our network of diverse parks and open spaces**
3. **support residents to be more active**
4. **celebrate Hounslow's people, place, local history, heritage and culture.**

We recognise and celebrate Hounslow's diverse population and value the need for spaces and services that reflect this and the needs of the community. We will facilitate the development of a network of culture and leisure services in Hounslow that meet the need of its increasing and diverse population. New or improved, affordable and accessible facilities will encourage healthy and inclusive communities within Hounslow, improving quality of life.

However, delivering our vision and keeping pace with changes facing this borough (including significant reductions in public sector funding) will challenge provision of existing leisure and cultural services. It will require their transformation and the adoption of new, radical and sustainable approaches capable of meeting community need now and in the future. Large scale changes are required to ensure that facilities will be fit for purpose in the medium to long term and that there is further consideration to how these community services are provided and managed.

Realising our vision

We will seek to realise our vision using the following approach:

- **Rethinking what our services offer** - we will review, redesign and prioritise services to ensure they respond to the current and future needs of local residents and can be delivered with less budget. This may include changing what services are offered, addressing gaps and shortfalls in services and responding better to what we know about our population, their needs and lifestyle in the context of on-going changes in the 21st century such as advancement in technology.
- **Ensuring the right services in the right places** - we will review and rationalise our facilities and assets so they are community focused, fit for purpose and in the right

place that best meets current need. This includes sharing or co-locating services and, where possible, improving or building new facilities and assets to the benefit of the community.

- **Better management** - we will reconsider and negotiate management arrangements for services and facilities in order to reduce the amount we pay for services, whilst minimising impact on service provision.

Principles

Underpinning the approach is our commitment to a number of principles that will guide our decisions and developments. These include:

- provide **high service quality** and excellence with customer focused access
- facilitate the use of leisure and culture services in its **wider corporate role** to include education and learning, regeneration and growth, employment and civic participation
- recognise and **celebrate diversity** and provide a diversity of spaces and places for all residents
- provide **value for money** for residents and communities with services that are sustainable
- work in **partnership** with other agencies and support our partners to provide a diverse leisure and culture offer for diverse needs
- provide services which have a **positive impact on health** and wellbeing and quality of life, preventing future need of other services
- move towards **greater community ownership** and empowerment
- be **innovative and radical** and introduce fresh approaches
- better **connect people to place**
- act as an enabler, **supporting communities to be independent** and facilitate self-reliance
- be a **better communicator**, promoting the leisure and culture services available to residents.

What will we provide?

It is important to first consider our leisure and culture offer in the broadest sense. These can be categorised as follows:

- **Learning spaces** - *providing education, reading and learning opportunities.* Revision space, book lending service, learning suite, adult education services (to include support to people to improve the prospects of employment through the development of new skills), local archives (to include digitisation) education technology, signposting and advice services, access to information and material (for education or leisure), wifi access, access to computers and IT (digital participation) and support in how to access and use these services.
- **Active and healthy spaces** - *for activities that improve health and increase physical activity levels.* Fitness suites (gyms), fitness classrooms, adaptable spaces (to change with trends), swimming pools, play spaces, sports halls, pitches, sport specific facilities or spaces within the public realm e.g. town centres.
- **Community spaces** - *to develop and bring our communities together and promote community cohesion and social inclusion.* Social activities and services for different

life stages e.g. meeting space and community information. The space allows communities to create and provide their own services and organise community activity.

- **Creative spaces** - *for activities which aim to build a thriving economy and support cultural industry and engagement.* Performance or exhibition space, arts centres, support for creative industries, business space and 'incubator' to promote economic wellbeing and support the creation of enterprise e.g. video-conferencing, providing net-based work spaces or e-learning facilities.
- **Commercial spaces** - help in making sustainable model of delivery, demand and needs led, market driven and complimentary to above functions e.g. café, crèche, wedding function etc.

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6.A Modern Library Service

Introduction

The Society of Chief Librarians has listed five core services that people expect from libraries. These are:

- reading
- information
- digital services
- health and wellbeing
- learning.

Hounslow has a good library service which provides these five core services. It provides books, both fiction and reference, computers, online information, e-books and free wi-fi. These services enable people to read for enjoyment and to study, learn and develop their knowledge. Each library also offers activities that improve people's health and quality of life as well as giving them the chance to learn and develop new skills. Examples include arts and crafts, languages, children's activities, health promotion advice and careers and business start-up support.

Library services have to adapt to the challenges and opportunities described in chapter 4. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport has set up a Library Task Force to look at the challenges modern libraries face. It recognises the value of a good library service. It, therefore, makes three recommendations for delivering library services:

1. develop a digital resource that all libraries can use
2. improve and revitalising library services
3. increase community involvement.

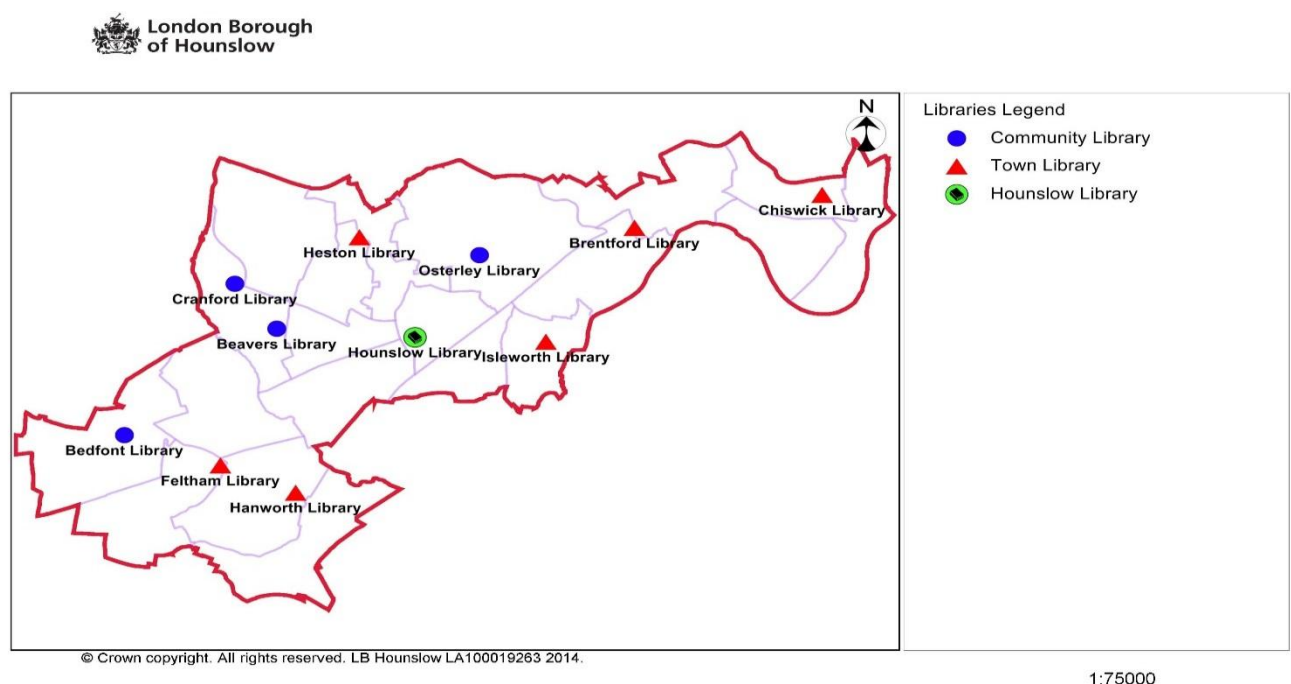
Councils have to find ways of spending less on all of their services. This includes re-thinking how they deliver services, making the most efficient use of space and, in some cases, reducing or stopping services. Hounslow needs to consider these options and will need to take some difficult decisions to meet the challenges of reducing budgets. This section describes the framework, or 'lens', the Council will use when looking at saving money on its libraries services and consulting with residents and stakeholders on savings and development ideas.

For Hounslow this process gives the council the opportunity to improve and revitalise its library services by building on successes. This includes making the best use of the resources available to the deliver the service, developing buildings and library spaces that are welcoming and accessible and partnering with other council departments and organisations to provide a good range of services in libraries.

Case Study

Through its **Idea Stores** the London Borough of Tower Hamlets have improved the basics of the libraries service with more books and better IT. By combining with Adult Education, as opposed to just sharing buildings, the council created a service that was greater the sum of its parts. As well as saving money on buildings and resources, the Idea Stores have become very popular and successful.

Hounslow's 11 libraries



Key facts and figures for Hounslow's library service

Hounslow has 11 libraries, a library at home service, a school's library service and a prison library service. Hounslow's 11 libraries equate to one library per 24,709 residents, which is an average level of provision across the 20 comparator outer London boroughs.

2014/15 data shows:

- total library visits were just under 1.4 million, which is similar to the London average but this has declined by 20% in the last 5 years. This decline is comparable to the national trend
- just over 1.2 million books were borrowed. Whilst less people are visiting libraries, a recent trend has shown those who do visit a library for the purpose of borrowing books are borrowing more books overall per person
- 46% of books borrowed are children's books
- online information was accessed almost 700,000 times

- 15% of visits were for the purpose of using a computer
- 28,800 people attended events such as author talks in libraries
- almost a quarter of library members are children under 10
- just over a third of library users are 25-44 years old
- 60% of library users are female
- overall, teenagers and young people in their early twenties are marginally under-represented (libraries are a key study space for teenagers) and the 45+ age group is under-represented.

Use of each library in 2014/15

Library	Visits	Number of books borrowed	Computer use a percentage of total visits	Average physical visit per hour of opening
Main Borough Library				
Hounslow	422,956	323,282	22%	141
Town Libraries				
Brentford	50,277	45,821	11%	26
Chiswick	338,676	163,661	7%	123
Feltham	179,354	105,749	22%	61
Hanworth	57,373	38,259	11%	30
Heston	87,008	76,224	18%	32
Isleworth	57,307	59,981	13%	30
Community Libraries				
Beavers	13,691	8,213	15%	9
Bedfont	69,620	27,749	7%	39
Cranford	39,488	19,390	15%	21
Osterley	36,049	42,329	12%	19

The visits include borrowing books, using computers, attending events and activities and making use of the library as a safe friendly community space to spend time reading or meeting others.

While overall library usage has fallen nationally, libraries continue to play an important role in Hounslow and for different ages.

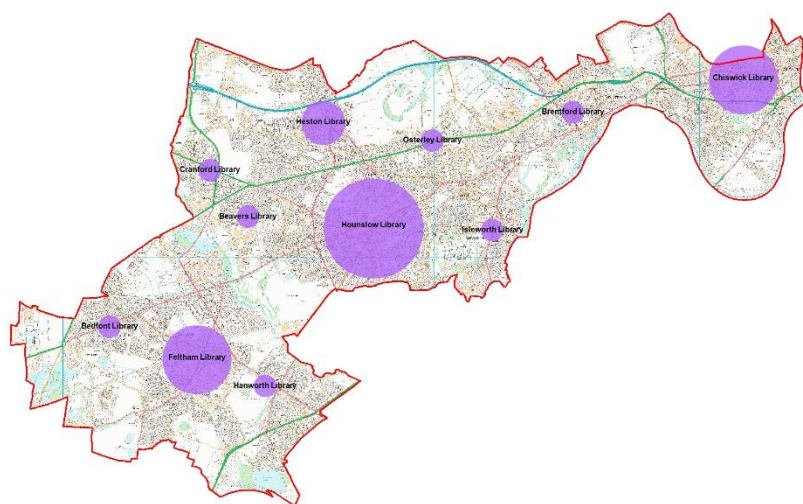
From our consultation we know that our library users value the following:

- books
- digital services
- computers
- social interaction
- health benefits
- history
- children's activities
- study spaces.

For children libraries provide books and activities and are a key part of their development and education. For teens libraries provide study spaces and reference materials. Libraries are a place where parents can take their children; they are a place where adults of all ages

can borrow books, use computers, go online, access information and learn and develop new skills. For older people, libraries are a place for reading, social interaction and improved wellbeing. Libraries therefore are important to communities; the challenge for councils is to find ways to deliver the benefits of libraries while making savings.

Map 1 – Relative visits to individual libraries in 2014/15



What does a modern service look like?

Traditionally libraries have had a clear role as spaces providing free access to information and books in a quiet environment for reading for leisure and learning for educational and development purposes. Library services have been responding to the changing landscape and their identity has evolved and diversified on an organic basis to meet local needs and deliver against local strategies and policies. The library service must continue adapting to changing circumstances if it is to stay relevant, affordable and accessible and to bring it into the 21st century.

The physical and virtual library

A modern service should provide a balance of both a physical and virtual place – that can be visited but can also be somewhere to be part of wherever they are.

Libraries should provide spaces for those who love to read and learn from physical books and also be virtual places providing a world of digital information that users can access anywhere and anytime through their home computers, smartphones, tablets and e-readers. They must also provide places where people can go to access digital information through computers and free wifi internet access.

Whilst the core purpose of a library has remained there is a shift in how people read, share information and learn. Technology is changing how information and knowledge is accessed with a significant increase in the use of home internet, smartphones and electronic readers, which is set to continue. We are a nation that is constantly connected and instant and personalised information is becoming the norm. Libraries must respond to these changes whilst also maintaining a balance of physical books and their key role in digital inclusion e.g. for those that do not have internet access or the relevant digital skills. By enhancing the digital and online offer more residents will be able to access more information at a time that suits them, whether they are at home, travelling on public transport, at work or visiting the library.

In addition to accessing information, an enhanced digital offer can help with learning. Examples include online courses that can be accessed from home or the library, scope to read and write blogs, opportunities for local residents to publish their work online and scope for verbal accounts of life in the borough.

Community hubs with services for local residents

The service will better respond to the changing landscape and become services and places that more residents will visit. Hounslow libraries will retain current users and be better at engaging non-users. Residents will be actively involved and supported to have a role in the shaping of the future library service, making sure it reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community.

A modern library service should provide the five core services of reading, information, digital services, health and wellbeing and learning, and will consider how they are developed to provide relevant and tailored services for the local community it is based within. This may include making the library a space that residents can work in, more interactive, supportive of business and economic growth or specialist for key user groups e.g. children's or students. Non-users could be engaged through the provision of a number of services in the same building. Examples include development of an incubator space for new businesses, inclusion of other Council services or a café and LEGO Education, which has been introduced in the borough.

The future modernised library service should be a focal point for the community and attract new users by offering services that benefit and are of interest to the local community. They will not exist in isolation but collaborate and connect with other council and public services to give people a wider choice of services in more accessible and shared locations. We will think innovatively about partnerships with other services that support local residents to learn, be independent, be creative and healthy and identify how these services can complement the library offer and retain the library as the heart of the community. This will also give libraries a key role in helping more vulnerable groups adjust to key new national and corporate agendas e.g. The Care Act and health and wellbeing.

Well-designed spaces

A better library standard will endeavour to provide buildings which are fit-for-purpose and well-designed spaces which are: accessible and attractive to all residents and organisations; located in areas which are easy to find and everyone can get to affordably; and reflective of the needs and aspirations of the local community.

The library space also needs to be flexible to allow for the fact that the needs of the community will change over time. Flexible spaces also enable the library to be used in

different ways, for example evening classes, exhibitions, social events, public meetings or health advice days. The way the inside of the library is designed will also allow it to be used for services and activities that benefit and are of interest to the local community. For example, classrooms for adult education and other classes, areas for other council services, toilets, a coffee shop or kitchen, computer rooms and meeting rooms.

This approach has the advantage of reducing cost (economies of scale from sharing costs) and increasing the use of a building, making it more efficient in the long-term. Hounslow has already done this with libraries and leisure centres at Hanworth Airparks and Isleworth Leisure Centre and Library and at the Treaty Centre with Hounslow Library and Adult Learning services. Future new buildings could also incorporate commercial assets and housing units which provide the potential for income generation.

Objectives

Taking all of the above into account, there is now an opportunity to explore the development of library buildings into better, fit-for-purpose facilities which will deliver a range of services and provide specifically designed spaces, in easily accessible venues, that support the long-term delivery of our services and priorities. There may be some opportunities to increase income which could be used to reduce the overall cost of the library service. Designed through consultation, these sites will be bespoke, providing what the community wants in terms of layout and the services provided. This will be supplemented by an online offer which will increase the range of services available to residents and improve accessibility.

In order to modernise the service with reducing budgets we will:

- provide both a physical library and a virtual library service across the borough, improving the online offer whilst retaining a balance with physical books
- develop libraries into community hubs with a range of services and facilities
- ensure buildings or spaces for library services are fit for purpose, well designed and financially sustainable.

How will we achieve these objectives?

Provide both a physical library and a virtual library service across the borough, improving the online offer whilst retaining a balance with physical books:

- focus on both the physical book stock and digital services, involving residents of all ages in shaping the physical and virtual stock in Hounslow's libraries
- provide a good IT infrastructure and keep up to date with trends in technology
- be involved in national initiatives to increase the range of e-books and online materials available to libraries.

Develop libraries into community hubs with a range of services and facilities including opportunities to learn, develop new skills and improve health:

- increase two way communication with residents of different ages and from different communities to let people know what is happening in their library and hear their views on and ideas for their local service
- work in partnership with agencies such as schools, Hounslow Council's Children's Service, Adult Education, health advice providers, information providers, local organisations and local businesses to offer a range of services suited to the needs of the community using each library

- increase the range and number of volunteering, learning and skills development opportunities and materials for young people and adults
- provide opportunities to meet and interact socially with staff, volunteers and other library users and to enhance the libraries' role in benefiting people's mental and physical wellbeing
- to promote the library as a flexible space that is open in the evenings and at weekends and that provides core library services and a range of activities that benefit residents at stages in their life, including toddlers, children, young people, adults and older people.

Ensure buildings or spaces for library services are fit for purpose, well-designed and financially sustainable:

- to ensure the location of the library and design of the space is as attractive and accessible as possible
- to find ways of funding, investing in and generating an income from libraries to support the service in the long-term
- encourage users to get involved in the library service for example using libraries as a place to share, promote or sell their work in all forms such as blogs, photos, artwork, training materials and written work.

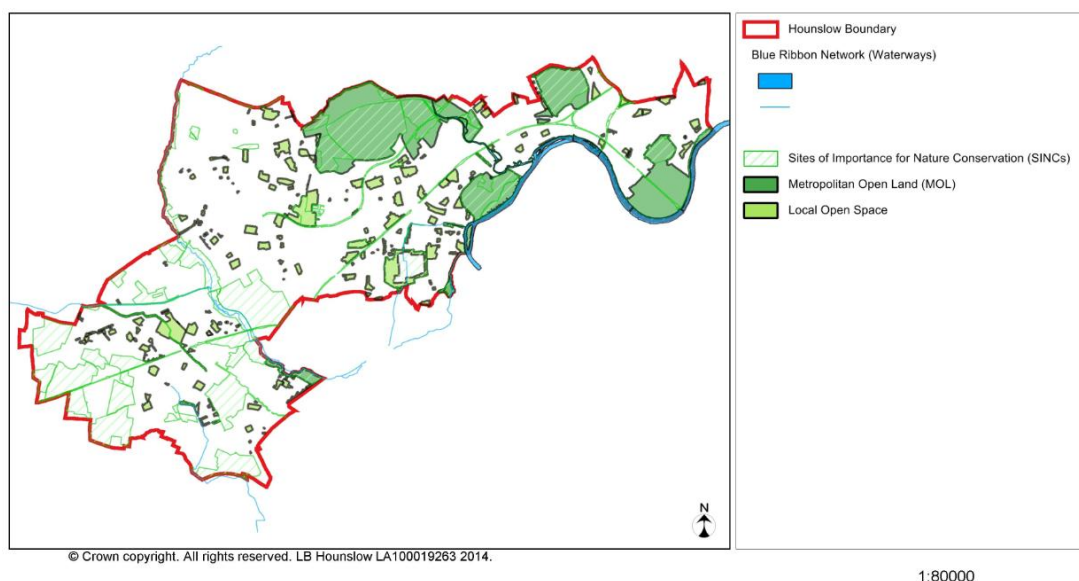
7. Diverse Parks and Open Spaces

Parks and open spaces make a unique contribution to improving health and wellbeing, the local economy, community safety, quality of life and a general sense of satisfaction for local people. They also provide a valuable natural habitat for wildlife and enhance biodiversity, help to improve air quality and reduce traffic noise and provide essential natural flood risk management. They help to improve the appearance and attractiveness of the public realm and provide space for events and settings for sports facilities and physical activity.

A localised approach is needed to understand access to open space. An open spaces background document was produced in 2013 and amended in 2014. A review in 2016 is needed to produce an up to date and evidence based provision of open spaces to be used in the Local Plan reviews. This will provide details of open space provision, deficiencies and surplus and will give insight into how our resident population currently uses our sites which give valuable indications of future demand. Previous surveys identified the following:

- The total quantity of Public Open Space in the borough is 1365ha (which equates to 5.3 ha per 1,000 population, due to reduce to 4.88 by 2030). This exceeds the average level of provision for similar and neighbouring boroughs, which stands at 3.6 ha per 1,000 population.
- Provision of public open space varies widely between different parts of the borough, with the highest level in Isleworth and the West and the lowest in Chiswick, closely followed by Central Hounslow, Heston and Cranford.
- The West area has above average provision of all three types of open space in comparison to the borough average (nature conservation, parks and gardens and amenity green space). However, large parts of West Area do not have easy access to parks and gardens, a form of open space that often has a higher recreational value.
- West Area contains the greatest number of low quality open spaces, followed by Heston & Cranford and Chiswick. This is particularly an issue in Heston and Cranford and Chiswick, where the low provision of Public Open Space means there is likely to be a high intensity of use by local residents.

Map 2 below provides an illustration of the distribution of parks and open spaces across the borough and their designations.



Public parks are an essential part of social life and fabric of communities. They are heavily used and much loved public assets. Many of our parks are now facing new challenges such as reduction in public subsidy and uncertainties in resourcing their long term care. According to the publication “Rethinking Parks” funded by Heritage and Lottery Fund and Nesta, there is an urgent need to establish new business models and promote radical innovation in how parks are supported and sustained in the future.

The “State of UK Public Park” review in 2014 highlighted the value of parks and open spaces supporting health and happiness, improving social cohesion and providing natural habitats that can help improving the environment and mitigating air pollution.

The 2015 consultation identified local residents value our parks as community spaces that bring people together and there is a strong desire for wider usage across all age groups, particularly young people and older people.

This highlights the need for us to make better use of our parks and open spaces, adapting them to offer all people of all ages more opportunities to be physically active, increase social interaction and encourage contact with the outdoors and nature. Spaces need to be made more accessible to local people, developing diverse spaces to provide choice. This includes cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds which remain central to local communities and are included within our definition of parks and open spaces.

Most parks and open spaces in Hounslow provide a fantastic range of landscapes from heathland to riversides, from playing fields and playgrounds to sports pitches. We want to offer diverse and stimulating green spaces for communities to enjoy and use, facilitating activities that reach all parts of the community. We must think imaginatively about how we use these green spaces to engage individual people and communities. Spaces should be multifunctional and reflect communities’ needs and desires to respect local character, social purpose and the history of the space.

This aspiration however cannot be met within the current resources available and with reduced budgets. Further to this, historical under-investment has caused deterioration in standards and our liability to repair assets significantly exceeds our available resources. This means we will have to strategically prioritise the budget that we do have and be realistic about timescales. We must also consider what we do with spaces that are not providing a function, seek external funding, consider who is best placed to manage these spaces and

find ways we can generate income. We aim to optimise such opportunities and improve the quality of our overall service.

Objectives

From our recent public consultation and feedback we know that our residents want our parks and open spaces to be:

- well maintained and well managed
- a community resource
- a place for nature
- a place for health and wellbeing
- a safe environment to enjoy
- a green infrastructure that connects spaces through river corridors, wildlife corridors and other links, including cycling.

Key messages advocated for a strong commitment from the council to maintain our parks and open spaces, improved partnership working with community groups and other organisations and improved communication to celebrate and engage communities and local groups.

To respond to these views above we will:

1. provide the right spaces by responding to local needs and making improvements where they are most needed
2. rethink delivery and review new service management models, so Hounslow's parks are effectively managed
3. promote community involvement and participation, celebrating cultural heritage and contributing to health and wellbeing
4. target funding strategically and promote income generation from external funds and concessions, rents and fees and charges to support a sustainable management model.

How will we achieve these objectives?

To deliver the aspirations we will:

Review and redesign parks and open spaces

- support the council's planning development in producing an updated Green Infrastructure/ Open Space Strategy which considers all green space in the borough to better inform future decisions
- adopt a green infrastructure model that takes a more regional approach working with neighboring authorities, third sector delivery agencies and other land owners, including looking at the importance of river corridors and the River Thames
- protect and manage green space where it is considered essential in terms of access, function and statutory designation
- review, re-design and manage parks and open spaces to make them more accessible, safe and relevant to their place and social purpose through consultation with residents
- improve usage of parks to increase health and wellbeing, looking at sporting and recreational activities for all ages including walking and cycling

- prioritise spend to improve low quality open spaces and review furniture and structure, considering change of use in consultation with residents
- identify parks development opportunities and ring-fence monies for reinvestment in maintenance of parks and open spaces to support the long term delivery of services, raise the quality of other spaces and manage the nature conservation value of parks and open spaces ensuring that existing habitats and species are maintained, enhanced, restored or where possible created.

Review new service management models and maintenance regimes

- review management arrangements for parks and open spaces, including investigating shared services and options for future management arrangements
- investigate changes to maintenance regimes which will reduce costs and improve diversity but have no or minimal negative impact e.g. introduction of wildlife areas which are not intensively managed or plant species which require less management
- review leased and tenanted buildings and land to ensure the most appropriate management model is being used. Where it will achieve community benefits, support sustainability and not significantly limit accessibility we will facilitate the transfer of management, maintenance or ownership, to viable organisations e.g. third sector, social enterprise models, private sector or a mixture of all three
- work with partners and the community to regenerate or find alternative uses for under-utilised assets.

Get communities more involved

- explore opportunities to improve our service delivery through sharing resources with other partners, stakeholders and local community groups and increase opportunities for them to contribute through devolved management
- promote volunteering and introduce a more formalised process for residents and stakeholders to actively participate in the maintenance and development of parks and open space
- develop engagement programmes that attract more users through events, health, environmental, and educational activities e.g. the GP referral healthy walks programme
- engage with residents to get their suggestions as to how money could be better spent or savings made.

Target funding more strategically

- develop a framework for investing in better quality green spaces that responds to community needs
- channel and prioritise already secured funding to deliver wider community benefits whilst leveraging additional funding
- promote income generation from concessions, rents and fees and charges where appropriate, in line with other council services
- develop the skill base of residents, Friends of Parks Groups and other key partners to access funding not available to Local Authorities
- identify and secure grant and external funding opportunities
- include leisure and cultural need in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to secure funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 monies.

8. Support residents to be more active

Why is physical activity important?

The range of ways to be physically active is broad. It can include activity that fits into everyday lives such, as using the stairs rather than the lift, or gardening, active travel (cycling or walking to commute or travel), informal play and sport e.g. in parks and open spaces or on streets to more formal fitness classes or structured sports sessions such as hockey, cricket or football.

The benefits that can be gained from regular participation in sports and physical activity are far reaching at any age. Not only does participation improve mental and physical health but provides social and economic benefits to the borough making it a great place to work, visit and live. Despite this, in Hounslow just 56% of the adult population (16 and over), 12% of primary school children and 3.5% of secondary school children meet the recommended guidelines for physical activity (Active People Survey and Hounslow's Children and Young People Survey, 2014). Table 1 shows Hounslow's inactive residents are comparable to the rest of London whilst a lower than average number meet the recommended guidelines of 150mins per week. (Public Health Outcomes Framework).

Table 1. Physical inactivity and activity levels

	>30mins (inactive) %	150+ (active) %
Hounslow	26.7	56.2
London	27.	57.8
England	27.7	57

The 2015 Physical Activity and Sport Needs assessment for Hounslow identified the lowest levels of participation to be amongst: children and young people; women and girls, particularly those with disabilities or from ethnic minority groups; and older people. The

needs assessment also undertook thorough analysis of participation by ward, identifying six priority areas (largely in the central and west of the borough) in which to focus activity. Despite below average participation rates, the Active People Survey demonstrates that, 67% of Hounslow residents want to do more sport, of these 25% are inactive.

In Hounslow, between 2009-2011, there were 1500 deaths owing to premature mortality of which physical inactivity is one of the top four contributors. It is estimated that health related costs that can be attributed to physical inactivity, is in the region of £5 million per year in Hounslow. This not only puts pressure on budgets at a time when financial pressures are growing, but it also creates inequalities. For example the gap in life expectancy between the highest and lowest wards in the borough is 11.7 years for males and 13.1 for females.

In addition to the rising levels of inactivity there is the growing concern with regard to sedentary behaviour in both children and adults (sitting or lying down for long periods). High levels of sedentary behaviour come with similar health risks to physical inactivity.

Current offer

Leisure centres, sport facilities, public halls and parks, both in and out of the Council's ownership or management play a significant role in supporting residents to move more every day. They provide residents of all ages with a comprehensive menu of sport or physical activity opportunities to choose from, with a combination of need-driven (targeting the most inactive) and market-driven (based on demand and market trends) services.

Every resident in Hounslow lives within 4 kilometres of a Hounslow Council leisure centre, with 2 located within the most deprived communities/ wards. The number of usable leisure facilities per 100,000 population is 69, which ranks Hounslow 10th among the 20 outer London boroughs (UK Active, Turning the tide of inactivity, 2014). Fusion (our current leisure centre contractor) has 9,407 members (4% of Hounslow residents) and an estimate of 93% had used their membership last year (2013/14) and in 2014/15 there were 1.6m visits to the leisure centres. Usage varies depending on the leisure centre (see table below).

Table 2 - Physical visits at each leisure centre in 2014/15

Leisure Centre	Usage (physical visits)
Brentford Fountain	454,713
Hanworth Air Park	417,444
Heston Pool	NA
Isleworth	341,107
New Chiswick	244,688
Osterley Sports Hall and Track	94,929

Hounslow Council leisure centres also successfully target and engage inactive people and provide concessionary rates to those in poor health or are less able to pay. This is delivered through subsidised schemes for certain groups and the provision of an exercise referral programme.

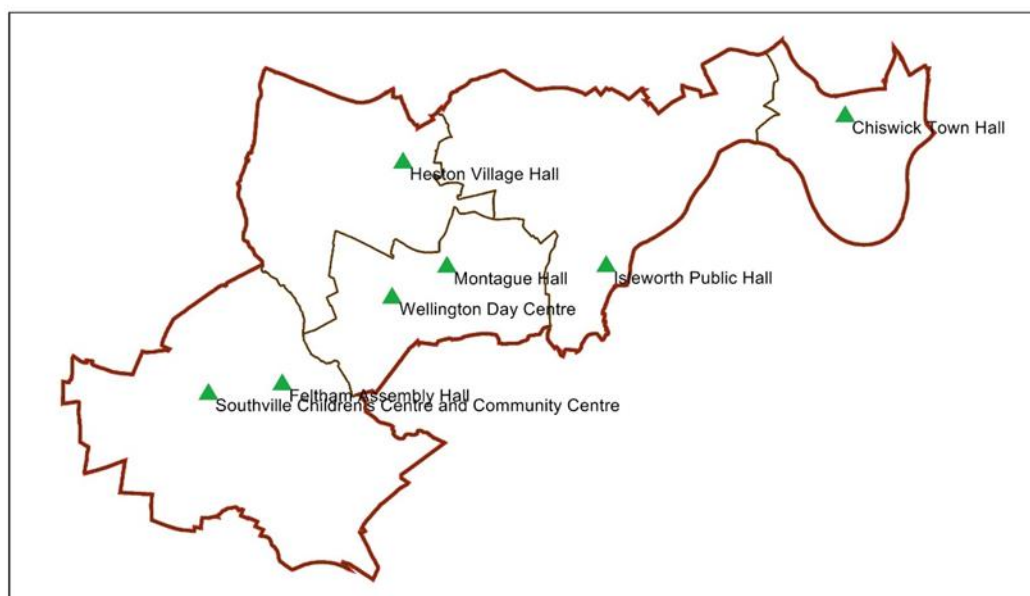
Table 3 below demonstrates how, through tailoring their services, the leisure centres are increasing usage amongst our lowest participation groups – with a drop only in older adults.

Table 2. – Leisure Centre visits by priority group 2014/15

Priority Group	Average visits per annum	Year on Year
Under 16's	330,000	56% increase

Older people	120,000	8% decrease
People with disabilities	30,000	18% increase
BME	285,000	33% increase

In addition to leisure centres, public halls also play an important role in providing space to support active communities. Hounslow currently has seven public halls across the borough offering varying services to local residents. The public halls provide residents with valuable and accessible venues for community based activities in full or in part to include recreational, cultural, educational and leisure based activities. The Council's seven public halls are managed by Fusion Lifestyle (registered charity) and include Chiswick Town Hall, Feltham Assembly Hall, Heston Village Hall, Isleworth Public Hall, Montague Public Hall, Southville Community and Children's Centre and Wellington Day Centre.



Typically public halls provide a large space, a main hall that is often accompanied by smaller rooms. As a result their use is very varied ranging from leisure and social activities, events, meetings, functions and celebrations.

Parks and open spaces also have an important part to play, providing spaces for everything from informal walking and play through to structured sporting activities where clubs hire facilities or manage the land through formal leases. Whilst parks and open spaces take up a high proportion of the borough (approximately 40%) only 5.7% of Hounslow residents use outdoor space to exercise for health reasons (Public Health Outcome Framework, 2014). Over 50 sport sites exist in the borough, including boathouses, golf courses, pitches and tennis courts, which are home to a high and growing number of sports clubs who provide a crucial role in providing sport and physical activity opportunities. At present many of the parks and open spaces only accommodate physical activity/play for children. With the introduction of more creative places we can enable the wider population to be more active in free accessible environments.

Hounslow commission a physical activity and guided walks programme that delivers across the borough and has engaged nearly 20,000 residents in the last 3 years. In addition the

Active Travel team has invested and will continue to develop Hounslow's roads and paths to make it easier for residents to move about the borough by walking or cycling. Support is also provided to residents to undertake cycle training and access social, led bike rides. Fusion, our leisure providers, deliver a sport development function on our behalf which provides multiple opportunities for children and young people in the borough to access and participate in multiple activities, coaching and regional events including the London Youth games and the Mini-Marathon. Their remit also extends to enhancing the current offer provided for adults and older people in our leisure centres and other community venues including parks.

This strategy considers how we address physical activity and sport through a number of key settings to include leisure facilities, parks, sports clubs and schools. This will be delivered through the Community Sport and Physical Activity Network. Hounslow Council will continue to act as a facilitator and enabler to this essential network, providing strong leadership at a local level.

Hounslow: London's least inactive borough

The recently produced national framework 'Everybody Active, Every Day' (Public Health England, 2014) calls for action from local leaders in physical activity to improve the nation's health through everyday activity. This is reflected in the Director of Public Health's Annual Public Health Report and Hounslow's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which identify increasing physical activity levels and reducing sedentary behaviour as a key priority for the borough.

We will:

Acknowledge that physical inactivity is not an isolated or insignificant issue in Hounslow and we play an influential role in challenging and reversing the trend of inactivity, in embedding physical activity into daily life and making it the norm in Hounslow. In order to achieve the corporate objective of an Active Healthy Borough, we must support local residents by creating the right opportunities, providing appropriate facilities, educate and support behaviour change and involve all sectors including providers and commissioners in health, social care, transportation, education, sport, planning and leisure, the voluntary community sector and private and public employers in the borough.

Understand local needs better and consider the growing evidence base of what works for our population, identify and reduce barriers and consult with and respond to the needs of our local residents. We believe that providing and supporting variety is key to giving residents the opportunity to be active in ways which suits their interests. To do this we will ensure that Hounslow has the most appropriate facilities that are in the right locations. We will review and identify sites that have potential to provide sport and physical activities within the borough and consider future development and enhancement of sporting facilities informed by consultation with the local community and stakeholders.

Explore the unique opportunity that the Local Authority has to use its leisure facilities, parks, transport, planning, health, education, social services, housing and economic regeneration services and links to businesses to support inactive people to become active. For example, changes could be made to the built environment through urban design to encourage more active behaviour. Regenerating a town centre may provide an opportunity for a leisure centre and improving the quality and safety of our parks and the facilities available in our parks may increase use for exercise purposes.

Acknowledge physical activity improves quality of life and is a key preventative tool in both the health and adult social care agendas, enabling adults to be able to live independently within their own homes and remain healthy and active as long as possible. Growing financial

pressure and ongoing management, maintenance and improvement costs mean we must now consider how we can best continue to provide high quality facilities with a reduced budget.

Therefore focus our limited resources on how we can better enable others e.g. schools, planners and sports clubs to provide or promote play, sport and physical activity and build capacity of the sector by developing strong partnerships to support sustainability.

Objectives

Our overarching vision for physical activity and sports, as mentioned in Hounslow's Annual Public Health Report 2015/16, is to improve the health and wellbeing of Hounslow residents by reducing the number of inactive residents in the next 10 years, moving 27,000 people from inactive to active.

Our objectives are to:

1. create a sport and physical activity movement in Hounslow working with key local, regional and national partners to champion physical activity and sport
2. think strategically and prioritise in terms of both people and place
3. create active environments and shape policy ensuring the right facilities in the right locations are of a high standard and fit for purpose.

How will we achieve these objectives?

To deliver these objectives we will:

Create a social movement

- develop a workforce of professionals and volunteers that champion physical activity and sport, working together to make physical activity the social norm – making people 'agents of change', moving professionals e.g. through work with the health sector and Clinical Commissioning Group.
- utilise national campaigns at a local level to inspire, educate and raise awareness of physical activity and sport for those that live, work and visit the borough.
- use behavioural science to design and implement interventions and campaigns that 'go with the grain of human behaviour'. Rigorously evaluate interventions and adapt based on learning.
- build an evidence base and establish robust systems to evaluate projects that assess pre and post project physical activity as well as participation and wider outcomes (using the Standard Evaluation Framework).
- exploit the opportunity offered by national and international sporting events to the benefit of our residents, such as the 2015 Rugby World Cup.
- create models of delivery that are both resilient and more sustainable.

Think strategically and prioritise

- work with London Sport, Sport England and Public Health England to provide strategic leadership to our CSPAN, facilitating partnerships with public, private and voluntary sectors to maximise the sport and physical activity offer in Hounslow.

- take a life course approach to our work; starting well, living well and ageing well
- commission evidence based targeted physical activity programmes for the least active people and in the area of lowest participation
- move at scale, scaling up what works and has the most impact
- provide leisure facilities that are accessible to all residents and enable them to live a healthier more active lifestyle, including exercise referral
- continue to bring communities together to enhance cohesion and social inclusion utilising our community buildings and open spaces
- support local businesses to develop workplace health initiatives which encourage physical activity, active travel and reduce sedentary behavior
- target funding for sport and physical activity more strategically. Identifying gaps in provision and barriers to participation and seek funding (S106, Community Investment Levy, Sport England funding etc) to effectively address this
- explore opportunities to improve our offer through sharing resources with other partners, stakeholders and local community groups to increase opportunities for these to take responsibility and improve own sport and physical activity provision
- make physical activity and sport a main component of policies and planning
- facilitate and explore the spectrum of options available with regard to facilities including the transfer of management, maintenance or ownership where appropriate
- promote income generation from rents and fees and charges to subsidise physical activity services. Implement a rents subsidy policy to support community sector for reduced market value rents where community benefit, council priorities and social value can be demonstrated.

Create active environments and shape policy

- Use the physical activity needs assessment 2014/15 to inform and guide future programmes of work and policies and implement the key recommendations in order to provide activities and programmes that meet local demand.
- Prioritise capital investment in the borough as identified through the Physical Activity and Sports Facilities Strategy 2014/15 and the Playing Pitch Strategy 2015/16.
- Develop new leisure facilities in town centres by reviewing use and delivery implement infrastructure providing a range of community, sport, health and entertainment facilities.
- Work with partners, including schools, to increase accessibility to sport and physical activity facilities to the wider community planning.
- Work with planners and urban designers to develop environments which support active living. Encourage active travel and continue to improve infrastructure so we can enable people to easily build physical activity into daily routines, re-shaping existing places if necessary
- Utilise and develop parks and open spaces in Hounslow to encourage a diverse range of play and physical activity, developing 'active spaces' where they are needed the most.

These are explored further in Hounslow's Physical Activity and Sport Strategy (2012-2022).

9. Celebrate Hounslow's People, Places, Local History, Heritage and Culture

When we use the word 'heritage' we refer to it in its broadest form: including museums, historic buildings, natural heritage – (landscapes and species) and also local history, the borough's archives and the cultures and memories of the people that live in the borough who want to find spaces and opportunities to share those with others.

Heritage and the arts are key contributory factors in defining Hounslow and are equally essential in shaping its future. Whilst we have no statutory duty to deliver or support arts and heritage, we recognise the value that they can bring to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of individuals and communities across the borough.

Hounslow's story is made up of the places, events, people, communities and its culture. It is one of movement and change. From quiet countryside estates, to the arrival of industry, canals, railways and aviation bringing goods, services, new communities and cultures from around the world. This has given rise to diverse communities; a rich mix of ethnicities, gender, ages, physical abilities, race, economic status and faiths and a vast heritage and arts offer. That said, this has remained largely unexploited to visitors and residents to date.

There is therefore an opportunity to develop and promote an exciting, informative and accessible heritage and arts offer for Hounslow residents that will stimulate pride, ownership and respect for places within the borough, in addition to playing a key role in growing the visitor economy.

We will cherish and celebrate Hounslow's local history and actively seek opportunities to work with diverse local groups and organisations to record, preserve, celebrate and commemorate people, places and stories which have resonance for our residents.

We need to make the most of our heritage sites in particular and better understand who visits, who does not, and the barriers that may exist to prevent those sites being culturally and physically accessible. We will increase interpretation across our sites and will work in partnership with sites across the borough to explore the potential to gather wider audience intelligence in order to inform programmes of activity that are directly targeted and to exploit opportunities which may bring in additional funding, develop audiences or enhance the learning offer across sites. We recognise audiences are not static and we will seek to develop partnerships with neighbouring boroughs and delivery agents to provide a diverse offer for local people.

With limited resources the need to conserve, protect and improve our heritage assets, historic environment and arts services in Hounslow presents a significant challenge going forward. We will look to identify different approaches to the future management of heritage assets, including how we use our local assets as resources and by exploring the role of the voluntary and private sectors.

The preservation of the heritage of the borough will require investment and sound business planning, including the development of income generating opportunities. Given current financial restraints, this will only be possible through seeking external funding and in partnership with external like-minded organisations both in and out of the borough. The council must therefore play a significant role in raising the profile of existing and new arts and heritage activities, whilst supporting established groups to put on quality, diverse and engaging programmes. We will act as facilitator and enabler, leveraging in funding and building the development of arts infrastructure and the heritage sector.

Objectives

To deliver these aspirations we will:

Make Hounslow a destination for heritage

1. increase access, participation and engagement in Hounslow's rich and diverse heritage, arts and cultural offer, attracting new audiences and underrepresented audiences
2. increase awareness and enjoyment of the arts, culture, local history and heritage of Hounslow by residents, workers and visitors
3. increase understanding of the value and significance of our heritage and arts whilst raising their profile to make Hounslow a visitor destination for arts, heritage and cultural activity.

Protect and conserve heritage

1. protect and conserve heritage, investing in our heritage assets and improving the sustainability of our arts and heritage offer through innovative programming and new models of delivery
2. maximise the potential to contribute to wider strategic objectives including economic development and regeneration, connecting communities and cohesion, learning and skills development and health and wellbeing.

How will we achieve these objectives?

Make Hounslow a destination for heritage

Maximise involvement

- better understand our audiences (and potential audiences) to inform programmes of activity
- create better and sustainable events which engage, or are led by, the community.
- work with partner organisations to deliver an attractive, accessible and engaging programme of arts and events at key sites across the borough including town centres, providing existing and new audiences with an awareness and enjoyment of the arts, culture, local history and heritage of Hounslow
- prioritise activities and offer for young people and families, while offering participation for all age groups

- support heritage and arts activities that include physical activity
- ensure services are provided across the borough.

Publicise and promote

- improved communication and collaborative working across sectors including cultural industries and voluntary sector, to deliver a supported joined up offer of arts and heritage activity across the borough
- work with neighbouring boroughs and other cultural agencies to promote Hounslow's heritage and cultural offer as part of strategic marketing and tourism promotion
- badge and brand partnerships supported by and delivered in Hounslow.

Protect and conserve heritage

Target funding strategically

- maximise investment in arts and heritage including local and cultural history and archives, natural heritage, public realm, squares and historical buildings through external funding sources in partnership with internal and external bodies
- modernise and centralise the archives service to increase access to and awareness of the borough's history, including digitisation of holdings for online access
- raise funding to develop unique assets such as Gunnersbury Park buildings, Boston Manor House and Park, Hogarth's House and increase their use by all
- retain and build on our existing arts infrastructure in the borough including encouraging new voluntary and private sector investment in Hounslow
- seek opportunities for increased income generation at managed sites.

Rethink delivery

- participate in London-wide cultural programmes to strengthen Hounslow's position and contribute to the opportunities for local communities to engage in, and benefit from, large-scale cultural programmes
- work collaboratively to identify ways in which we can develop programmes to increase cross cultural engagement across Hounslow and nationally develop sustainable service delivery and governance models which better manage, interpret and develop arts and heritage. This includes Gunnersbury Park and Museum, Boston Manor Park and House and Hogarth House
- encourage ownership of sites by developing a culture of volunteering
- work collaboratively with established community groups and the voluntary sector to make better use of the borough's cultural assets, whilst supporting the delivery of community led arts and heritage projects
- exploit the potential for delivering heritage and arts either in the public realm or in other facilities
- write and implement the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy and Conservation Strategy.

10. Conclusion

Leisure and culture services play a key role in making Hounslow a distinctive, vibrant and thriving borough with the community at its heart. We now have an opportunity to reconsider and improve our leisure and culture offer to better achieve our ambition to reduce the leisure budget by at least £2.3million, celebrate Hounslow's culture, provide diverse spaces, develop modern services and support residents to move more.

To achieve these ambitions we will explore the buildings, facilities, places and spaces (of which Hounslow has a significant number) where leisure and culture happens (or could happen) and maximise this potential. Most leisure services are dynamic in nature and this provides a certain degree of flexibility in the location they take place, and opportunities for leisure growth within easy reach of communities.

We will make sure we provide the right offer in the right spaces and in doing so will bring services closer to the community. We will engage with communities and ensure the infrastructure is necessary for developing and encouraging a diverse and widespread use of, participation in and access to, the leisure and culture offer.

This strategy sets out a vision for the future of leisure and cultural services in Hounslow and aims to provide the overall strategic direction to guide future funding and service delivery over the next 4 years. It also sets out the principles which guide how it will be developed within future resources available and in conjunction with a range of partners.

The intended outcome of this strategy is to develop Hounslow's great potential in providing high quality leisure and cultural services for residents and visitors alike, improving quality of life and making it an attractive place to live.

The strategy, will subsequently be drawn upon to develop detailed proposals for service developments and savings in specific areas which will also undergo formal consultation, as required, beginning in early 2016.

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