

**Project code:** 8367

**Project name:** Local Authority of the Year, London Borough of (ONE) Hounslow

**Contact:** Amy Burns, Hounslow Council

**Category:** Council of the Year

**Category type:** LGC Awards Categories

**Project title:** Local Authority of the Year, London Borough of (ONE) Hounslow

**Supporting material:**

[council\\_of\\_the\\_year\\_supporting\\_evidence.pptx](#)

**Job Title:** Senior Communications Officer

Please use the questions in the bullet points below as a guide and break up your submission accordingly. Some may be more applicable than others for your entry.

**Total word count: 1,000**

**Submissions should focus on:**

- Summarising your council's vision, its current objectives, the steps it is currently taking to achieving those objectives and your success in doing so, within the relevant timescale
- Specific evidence of the quality of the council's performance in relation to:
  - The performance of and outcomes achieved by the major services;
  - The council's response to continued reductions in public expenditure;
  - Community leadership;
  - Collaboration with other councils and partners, including where appropriate involvement in devolution agreements with the government;
- What makes your council distinctive;
- What you think makes your council excel and what you feel other councils could learn from what you have done.
- The council's contribution to sector-led improvement.

**Award entries will be judged on:**

- The scale and sustainability of the council's achievements and the quality of the evidence to substantiate them;
- The success of the council in combining significant public service improvement and reform with budget cuts and efficiency savings;
- The contribution of the political and managerial leadership, partnership working and community engagement;
- The council's success in addressing key challenges such as: economic growth, housing, the ageing society, health inequalities and children's services;
- The council's contribution to the wider local government sector;
- This award will be judged through both a site visit by judges and by a presentation to judges. Entrants are urged to use the visit to give judges access to the people – officers, members, staff, the public and representatives of local public sector partners, the business community and third sector organisations – who can prove the council's success in the above criteria.

**Your answer here:**

One Hounslow – value driven change

As 2020 began, Hounslow had one of the UK's fastest growing economies. The Council had huge ambitions for itself and the borough. We started 2021 heading into a third national lockdown, facing some of the harshest social and economic impacts.

Underpinned by the new core values of our 'One Hounslow' transformation programme - Lead with heart, Do new, Harness the mix, Be a rock, Pass on the power - we built a movement across the Council and borough, embedding a new culture, approach and relationships at a pace that seemed impossible in January 2020.

## COVID crisis and recovery

### Response

Within two weeks of the first lockdown we established our Community Hub to support 22,500 'shielding' residents. In the following months, the Hub - a borough-wide partnership staffed and supported by Council colleagues, community groups, local businesses and volunteers - had:

Handled 42,000 calls from people in need

Connected 450 volunteers with opportunities

Provided housing support to 6,000 residents

Made over 30,000 additional home visits

Maintaining core services and other support we:

Collected 6% more waste and recycling

Provided over 1,000 extra parking permits for health and care workers

Created a virtual library with access to 60,000 e-books and 9,000 e-audio items

Distributed £30 million of grants to 2,000+ businesses

Housed over 150 street homeless people

Distributed more than £630,000 hardship funding to 4,200 residents

### Recovery

We commissioned Oxford Economics to forecast the impact on Hounslow. This told us we faced:

£2.7 billion (15%) reduction to the borough's GVA

43,000 jobs at risk - a third of our workforce

Surveying residents and businesses, we knew mental and physical health had declined, people were feeling isolated and struggling financially, and of 13,300 SMEs, 8,000 had ceased trading and 3,000 were unsure about their future. At one point, 40% of the borough's working population - 72,000 residents - were unemployed or furloughed.

By July, we had established a Recovery Programme Board, chaired by Leader Cllr Steve Curran, and supported by senior figures from Heathrow, health and community partners, education, Brentford FC, the Metropolitan Police and major businesses.

Its four underpinning taskforces - Communities, Economic Recovery, Green Recovery, and Social and Wellbeing - have driven forward a borough-wide response and strong foundations for recovery.

In September we held a Borough Recovery Conference. Over 200 attendees - comprising community groups, businesses, NHS staff, faith leaders, academics and residents - helped shape a shared vision. The resulting Borough Plan for Recovery - 'One Hounslow, Forward Together' - was published in October.

Canvassing residents about our response to the pandemic we found:

60% felt our response was Good or Excellent (only 15% felt negatively)

89% felt informed by us, with 66% having heard of our Community Hub

64% of those receiving support thought it Good or Excellent

We ensured a clear focus on sustainable recovery. Innovation Labs brought together academics, business leaders, public sector partners and residents to develop our Green Recovery Strategy, agreed in January. Plans include:

A Green Skills Academy

A Green Enterprise Zone

A £250,000 Green Innovation Fund

Decarbonising a 300-home estate

Decarbonising Council buildings and schools

£5 million to extend our green vehicles fleet

Community at heart

We needed to capitalise on new borough unity to transform our long-term role and relationships with residents, and community and voluntary organisations.

We knew we didn't reach our diverse communities equally, with the voices of Black, Asian and other ethnic minority residents, and younger people too often missing from conversations. COVID-19 emphasised these disparities.

We reviewed how we engage, bringing in expert challenge and advice. In December we approved plans to transform engagement, launching our One Hounslow, Many Voices programme.

Following a review of how we worked with our CVS sector, we developed a 'Community Solutions' model that connects people to support through signposting, referrals to voluntary and community partner services, and access to assessments for statutory services. A new digital platform - One Hounslow Connect - will improve online support and complement a new physical presence at points across the borough.

Through our 'Thriving Communities: Hounslow Response Fund' we've allocated £1 million in

community grants, with 37,000 people expected to benefit across 56 projects.

March 2021 saw the launch of a three-year Safer Communities Strategy - a preventative approach focussed on early intervention and tackling the causes of issues, working with communities to keep Hounslow safe.

## Transformation at pace

### Workforce

Emboldened by our 'One Hounslow' values, colleagues demonstrated exceptional behaviours with many redeployed to support the borough effort. Over 450 managers were trained in coaching skills, helping them empower their people to solve problems and make decisions.

We recognised the need to support mental health and wellbeing through a new system of ongoing holistic 'check-in' conversations. A wellbeing survey found over 80% of staff felt well connected and supported.

### Digital inclusion

We accelerated our Digital Strategy in response to the societal shift to online, delivered parts faster in addition to managing the challenges of transitioning the Council to remote working and enabling online public meetings.

Establishing a cross-council Digital Inclusion Group, we delivered 750 devices to schools, helping children without computer access. Working with Hounslow CVS we created, trained and supported 100 digital champions to help in their communities.

We ran a month-long digital festival in November to increase skills with colleagues and the community. Focused on mental health and wellness, we worked with partners and businesses, delivering 62 sessions with 2,700 people taking part.

### Health and care

The past 12 months saw us further strengthen the borough's Integrated Care Partnership. Comprising the Council, CCG and local health providers, co-chaired by Council Chief Executive Niall Bolger, its governance arrangements have been refreshed and cross-organisational working is becoming embedded.

### Leisure fit for future

In the autumn, we decided to move Hounslow's six leisure centres - previously run by Fusion Lifestyle - to the newly formed Lampton Leisure, part of Lampton 360, our wholly owned trading company. The transfer included five public halls moving in-house, managed by the Council. Delivering within the two-month timeframe, we reopened safely and successfully in line with the Government's roadmap.

### A new constitution

Our constitution hadn't been significantly changed since 2015 and it was holding us back. Through officer and Member engagements overseen by a cross-party Member working group, we've reviewed and updated our processes and governance arrangements to make them more transparent,

streamlined and effective.

Clear vision and strategy

Hounslow's transformative year culminated in the publication of our new Corporate Plan – 'A fairer, greener, stronger borough' - embedding our One Hounslow approach. We're well on our way to realising our overarching ambition of being an outstanding council serving an outstanding borough.

100 word summary\*

**100 word summary:**

Through one of history's toughest years, Hounslow Council has led an exemplary crisis response, galvanising communities and partners to work as one.

But our story is not only one of COVID-19 response. We seized the opportunities of this pandemic to redefine who we are and what we do, accelerating towards our vision of being an outstanding council serving an outstanding borough. Through our transformation programme 'One Hounslow' we became more connected to communities, partners and businesses. Reshaping our workforce and embedding a new culture, we've minimised digital exclusion; in-housed leisure provision; embedded joined-up health and care; and refreshed our governance.

**What private sector partners do you work with (if any):**

If you are a private sector organisation Please provide contact details of the local authority that you are in partnership with. You will need to obtain prior consent from the local authority contact to pass on their details for GDPR compliance.