

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission Community Halls Review Update

Monday 9th February 2026 - 7pm



Purpose of today

Why we are here

- To update the Commission on progress since July 2024
- To follow up on the Commission's recommendations
- To share learning from pilots and engagement
- To set out the choices ahead for the Community Halls portfolio



What has changed since July 2024

We now have better grip

1. Clearer understanding of income and usage by hall
2. Condition surveys and capital needs across the portfolio
3. New management and compliance framework in place
4. Active pilots testing new models, not just plans



What residents are telling us

Demand exists, trust is fragile

1. Strong memories of halls as social spaces
2. Confusion about access and who controls halls
3. Appetite for safe, everyday, welcoming use
4. Door-knocking and community meetings at Napier Grove illustrate this clearly



The real tensions

Trade-offs we are managing

1. Access and affordability versus running costs
2. Openness versus safety, compliance and complaints
3. Local control versus fairness and inclusion
4. Social value versus financial sustainability



What we are testing

Napier Grove Community Hub pilot

1. Co-production with estate residents
2. VCSE leadership within clear Council rules
3. Focus on everyday use, not one-off hires
4. Testing funding, safety, governance and social value together



Other approaches we are testing

Learning across the portfolio

New Kingshold Community Centre:

Resident-led VCSE projects (Co-CREATE and Community Closet) using office and hall space, delivering social value during the day and testing longer-term tenancy models.

Walrond Community Hall (planned pilot)

Affordable childcare and workspace model led by local residents, testing viability of mixed community and enterprise use.

Locally managed halls reset

Introduction of standard management agreements, audits, DBS and training to address exclusion, safety and informal control while keeping resident leadership.

Pricing and access testing

Exploring alternatives to large deposits and different pricing tiers through pilots, rather than a single borough-wide change.

Responding to Scrutiny

Six themes shaping our approach

1. Strategic plan for the Community Halls portfolio
2. Targeted consultation where change is viable
3. Co-production, with Napier Grove as a blueprint
4. Pricing and affordability, including alternatives to large deposits
5. Robust agreements for locally managed halls
6. Social value, measured realistically and meaningfully



Management and governance

Improving effectiveness

1. Standardised management and keyholder agreements
2. Clear roles and accountability for TRAs and partners
3. Compliance, DBS, fire safety and training embedded
4. Reducing informal or “closed shop” arrangements



Asset management and alternative uses

Not all halls are the same

1. Some halls can operate as vibrant community hubs
2. Some need partners or alternative operating models
3. Some may not be viable long-term in current form
4. Evidence now allows a more honest portfolio conversation



What sits where

Within service control

- Management agreements and compliance
- Engagement, pilots and evidence gathering
- Day-to-day operation and oversight

Needs Member / corporate steer

- Long-term subsidy and funding models
- Decisions on under-used halls and alternative uses
- Scale and prioritisation of capital investment



What success would look like

Outcomes we are working towards

- Halls residents feel welcome using
- Fair, transparent access
- Reduced exclusion and informal control
- Sustainable running costs
- Clear choices about the future of the portfolio



Appendix – Evidence available on request

Supporting information held

- Hall-by-hall income and usage data
- Full condition surveys and capital estimates
- Draft and implemented management agreements
- Pricing framework and concessionary rates
- Pilot learning from Napier Grove and other sites

