

# Policy and Oversight Board Agenda

Wednesday 18 September 2024 at 7.00 pm

145 King Street (Ground Floor), Hammersmith, W6 9XY

Watch live on YouTube: [youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham](https://www.youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham)

## MEMBERSHIP

Administration	Opposition
Councillor Lisa Homan (Chair) Councillor Jacolyn Daly Councillor Natalia Perez Councillor Helen Rowbottom Councillor Nikos Souslous Councillor Nicole Trehy Councillor Rory Vaughan	Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler

**CONTACT OFFICER:** David Abbott  
Governance and Scrutiny  
Tel: 07776 672877  
Email: [David.Abbott@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:David.Abbott@lbhf.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.lbhf.gov.uk/committees](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/committees)

Members of the public are welcome to attend but spaces are limited. To register for a place please contact [David.Abbott@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:David.Abbott@lbhf.gov.uk). The building has disabled access.

Date Issued: 10 September 2024

# Policy and Oversight Board Agenda

<u>Item</u>		<u>Pages</u>
<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</b>	
	<p>If a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest in a particular item, whether or not it is entered in the Authority's register of interests, or any other significant interest which they consider should be declared in the public interest, they should declare the existence and, unless it is a sensitive interest as defined in the Member Code of Conduct, the nature of the interest at the commencement of the consideration of that item or as soon as it becomes apparent.</p> <p>At meetings where members of the public are allowed to be in attendance and speak, any Councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest or other significant interest may also make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter. The Councillor must then withdraw immediately from the meeting before the matter is discussed and any vote taken.</p> <p>Where Members of the public are not allowed to be in attendance and speak, then the Councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest should withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is under consideration. Councillors who have declared other significant interests should also withdraw from the meeting if they consider their continued participation in the matter would not be reasonable in the circumstances and may give rise to a perception of a conflict of interest.</p> <p>Councillors are not obliged to withdraw from the meeting where a dispensation to that effect has been obtained from the Standards Committee.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b>	4 - 21
	<p>To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record and note any outstanding actions.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>RESIDENT EXPERIENCE BRIEFING</b>	22 - 44
	<p>This briefing paper provides a summary of the resident experience when accessing services at H&amp;F. It provides an overview of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customer access journey</li><li>• Resident Experience Access Programme original aims and objectives</li><li>• REAP Refresh</li><li>• Digital Inclusion Strategy current position</li><li>• Resident experience culture change work</li><li>• Co-production work</li></ul>	

**5. CHANGES TO VOTING ENTITLEMENTS AND UPDATES TO ELECTIONS ACT 2022 IMPLEMENTATION** 45 - 57

This report updates the Board on the implementation of Elections Act 2022, including the imminent review of voting and candidacy entitlements for European Union citizens resident in the borough, and the results of changes to absent voting and voter ID rules at the recent elections.

**6. WORK PROGRAMME** 58

For the Board to discuss future items for inclusion in the work programme.

**7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

To note the following dates of future meetings:

- 25 November 2024
- 5 February 2025
- 6 May 2025

# Agenda Item 3

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

## Policy and Oversight Board Minutes



Monday 29 April 2024

### **PRESENT**

**Committee members:** Councillors Lisa Homan (Chair), Jacolyn Daly, Natalia Perez, Helen Rowbottom, Nikos Souslous, Nicole Trehy, Rory Vaughan and Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler

### **Other Councillors**

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform)

Councillor Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety)

Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier (Lead Member for European Co-operation and Digital Innovation)

### **Officers**

Nicola Ellis (Strategic Director, Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services)

Matthew Sales (Assistant Director, Programmes, Assurance and Analytics)

Bathsheba Mall (Programme Lead)

Jo McCormick (Assistant Director, Procurement and Commercial)

Tina Akpogheneta (Chief Digital Officer)

Anthony King (Enterprise Architect)

David Abbott (Head of Governance)

### **Guests**

Jeremy Tolmie (Microsoft)

Stelios Zarras (Microsoft)

Darius Toomer (Agilisys)

Eugene O'Driscoll (Agilisys)

Professor Aldo Faisal (Professor of AI & Neuroscience at Imperial)

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler noted that some of the actions from the previous meeting were still pending and asked officers to follow-up.

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **4. GENERATIVE AI: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND RISKS**

The Chair outlined the theme of the discussion and noted that the item was intended to support the early exploration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its uses.

The Chair welcomed the following guests to the meeting:

- Jeremy Tolmie (Microsoft)
- Stelios Zarras (Microsoft)
- Darius Toomer (Agilisys)
- Eugene O'Driscoll (Agilisys)
- Professor Aldo Faisal (Professor of AI & Neuroscience at Imperial)

Tina Akpogheneta (Chief Digital Officer) addressed the meeting and noted that the Council had been working on the issue of generative AI since last summer. Digital Services had set up a working group to look at the implications and how to safely leverage the technology. The Council wanted to explore carefully and had taken a measured approach. For 'tech week' (10-14 June 2024) speakers from Microsoft and Gartner had been invited to discuss potential use cases. Digital Services had recently unlocked starter licences to Microsoft Copilot (a generative AI chatbot) for staff and was gathering feedback from technology champions across departments. Microsoft had also established a forum for local authorities to help them learn together and share knowledge and best practices.

Jeremy Tolmie and Stelios Zarras from Microsoft gave a presentation covering the following:

- An overview of the history of machine learning, deep learning, and generative AI.
- The key uses of generative AI – content generation, summarisation, code generation, and semantic search.
- Applying generative AI to business problems to increase productivity, automate processes, improve the customer experience, and build creative content.
- Responsible AI principles – privacy and security, inclusiveness, accountability, transparency, fairness, and reliability.

Darius Toomer and Eugene O'Driscoll from Agilisys addressed the meeting and covered the following points:

- Agilisys had been working with the Council to identify use cases such as personal productivity and handling complex processes and applications.

- The importance of a learning and development culture that requires new teaching and learning.
- A culture of innovation and continuous improvement, which Agilisys provides to local councils.
- The need for strong data governance and infrastructure as an enabler for AI services.
- AI being used to search and make use of unstructured data – which offered the public sector an array of new opportunities, for example using predictive analytics in social care services.

Professor Aldo Faisal (Professor of AI & Neuroscience at Imperial) said AI technologies represented a revolution that would transform white collar work. In local government he saw a number of opportunities given the large datasets available and various types of decisions that lent themselves to AI. Regarding risks and opportunities he noted the risk of manipulation, but also the benefits of better, more granular decision-making and messaging.

Councillor Rowbottom noted she was supportive of the agenda but had the following questions:

- What was the timeline for implementation of the Council's AI working group?
- Regarding use cases, what was the approach to complex cases in Adult Social Care and Children's Services where the majority of spend goes?
- What were the Council's thoughts on improving the interoperability of data through genuine co-commissioning with the NHS other local services?

Tina Akpogheneta said the Digital Services working group had been trialling Microsoft Copilot and other generative AI technologies and were in the process of familiarising staff with these tools, through a package of support. Opportunities were being explored in the Housing department, in contact centres, and in the Resident Experience and Access Programme (REAP). Requests for these tools used the standard H&F business case process.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom said she was interested in the use of these tools in complex cases but warned that any use of these tools for resident facing work had to be carefully evaluated and monitored.

Councillor Rowbottom asked how areas of priority were fed through to the programme. Tina Akpogheneta said the process was to put forward a business case then come to the working group for approval or amendments.

Darius Toomer said there were use cases for social care, though they required more governance – e.g. safeguarding meeting minutes. He said there was a lot of business administration work that could be automated, including lower risk social care documentation. He added that one of the main opportunities was a new era of generative AI chatbots that could be used to triage resident queries to the relevant teams.

Stelios Zarras said people should think of AI as a technology layer with a wide range of uses. He felt just looking at return on investment was too limited a view – asking

how could a value be put on saving lives or helping children. He encouraged councils to be ambitious and noted some were already moving at pace.

Professor Aldo Faisal noted that if citizens were interacting with these systems, they needed to understand how their data was being used. There had been problems reported in other countries around prejudice based on the underlying data so organisations should be mindful. They may want to know what data had been used to train the models, how systems were used by people who speak English differently, and what values the models were being aligned to.

The Chair asked how quickly businesses cases were being evaluated by the working group and what framework was being used to assess against. Tina Akpogheneta said they looked at the expected return on investment and the financials of the service, as well as wider considerations.

Councillor Nikos Souslous asked how AI fit with the Council's commitment to digital accessibility. He also asked if there was a national AI framework to help (or hinder) Councils in this work. Tina Akpogheneta said there was legislation proposed around automated decision making, but the Council was trying to think through potential risks, ahead of any future legislation. The Council was looking at developing a set of standards.

Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier (Lead Member for European Co-operation and Digital Innovation) added that the Council co-produced digital services with residents to ensure digital exclusion was minimised.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked how big the AI working group was. Tina Akpogheneta said it was comprised of eight standing members who met every fortnight.

Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler asked if the working group had the necessary expertise to innovate and take action in response to requests from across Council departments.

Tina Akpogheneta said officers had proactively set up the working group in response to this emerging technology. Officers started researching and testing products on the market. They put together a database of use cases and how to assess them. The team had guidance on how to deploy and scale up these technologies in services.

Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler asked Agilysys about their work with other councils. Darius Toomer said they worked with a range of councils. For example, in the Manchester region some council development partners were trialling generative AI in areas like social care, freedom of information requests, and complaints.

The Chair asked how many councils they worked with in total. Darius Toomer said they worked with 60 councils total, with 15 engaged generative AI councils, and four development partners.

Councillor Rory Vaughan asked about the volume of data needed for accurate and meaningful predictions. He also raised the question of biased outcomes if the underlying data contained biases.

Darius Toomer said for predictive analytics there wasn't a specific volume of data required, but to see if projects were viable they carried out a discovery project using anonymised data to see if there were the necessary markers that could be used for predictions.

Stelios Zarras noted that the use of AI in relation to social care was not restricted to predictions. He gave the example of a field worker who could use AI to make them more efficient by typing up their notes automatically or taking dictation. He added that when considering the data required for these systems to work well, it was less about volume and more about quality.

Councillor Vaughan asked if officers had used generative AI to write council reports or minutes. Tina Akpogheneta said no, not yet.

Councillor Vaughan asked about the timelines for using this technology across the Council. Tina Akpogheneta said officers were rolling out Microsoft Copilot for Edge and conversations about other programmes were starting.

Councillor Nicole Trehy asked about the implications for staff and companies. She also raised concerns about the dangers of people trusting these systems over other humans. Stelios Zarras acknowledged the concerns about the impact on jobs but stressed that Microsoft saw the technology as a force multiplier for human workers, not a replacement. Professor Aldo Faisal felt the answer to Councillor Trehy's second point was education. People needed to understand if these systems were producing accurate information, if they could be trusted correct, and when to challenge their outputs.

Councillor Jacolyn Daly asked about how to move forward ethically and safely. She asked if other organisations were looking at this and if there was any learning to take that the Council could put in place. Professor Aldo Faisal offered his advice and support to the Council in this area.

The Chair then invited reflections from Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform. Councillor Rowan Ree addressed the meeting and thanked the guests and committee members for attending. He said this technology was developing rapidly and all areas of society were rushing to harness the benefits of AI. He wanted to ensure H&F was embracing opportunities if they led to better, more efficient services for residents. He felt there were huge opportunities with AI and other technologies and noted the investments the Council had already made to improve efficiency including robotic process automation and business intelligence. He also highlighted the co-production work on digital accessibility.

Councillor Ree noted that the Council had a huge amount of data across different services and said he was keen to ensure that it was used in the most effective way to design services to address people's lives as they are. He welcomed Professor Aldo Faisal offer for further discussion and support.



The Chair summarised the discussion and noted the following points:

- This was the beginning of a discussion about how the Council could harness AI technologies for the benefit of the organisation and residents.
- There were a wide range of opportunities – from simpler data processing to more complex areas like predictive modelling.
- The Council needed a structure in place to assess bids and opportunities for AI in its services.
- She was interested in looking at examples from other organisations for learning that could be applied in H&F.
- The Council needed to be mindful of the issue of bias and the quality of the underlying data powering the models.
- Any AI technologies used by the Council had to work for residents. Some education and communication may be needed to allay fears about how data was being used.

The Chair thanked Councillors, officers and guests for their contributions.

## **RESOLVED**

1. The Policy and Oversight Board noted and commented on the report.
2. The Board requested more information on the AI working group and asked officers to think about a more formal structure going forward.
3. The Board asked officers to look at examples of use cases in other local authorities and organisations that could be applied locally.

**ACTIONS: Tina Akpogheneta**

## **5. COST OF LIVING UPDATE**

Matthew Sales (Assistant Director, Programmes, Assurance and Analytics) and Bathsheba Mall (Programme Lead) introduced the report which provided an update on the Council's Cost of Living response programme and work underway to develop a strategy for 2024/25, given the government's late decision to extend the Household Support Fund.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked what the most impactful intervention had been. Matthew Sales said it was hard to pick one scheme but highlighted the Crisis Prevention Fund, a cash first approach and one of the first times the Council had done that. He noted that officers were tracking a range of different indicators and had responded to that data – for example increasing housing support in response to rent rises. He also highlighted the Winter Support Fund, £340,000 of grants to third sector organisations that helped over 4,200 households.

Councillor Rowbottom noted there were now three Family Hubs in the borough but they couldn't keep pace with the number of referrals. She asked how the Council was monitoring that and how they could be supported to meet the demand. Matthew

Sales said they needed to make connections with the hubs to see how to work better on referrals as a council and with partners.

The Chair noted that one of the positive aspects of this had been the Cost of Living Alliance and the relationships built with third sector partners.

Councillor Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety) addressed the meeting and discussed the new winter booklet targeted at schools, GPs, and libraries with information about income maximisation, housing, debt, and more. She noted the Council was investing a lot into the advice service and the third sector. She also echoed the Chair's comments about stronger partnerships and the importance of the Alliance steering group who had worked together on delivering the signposting tool.

Councillor Natalia Perez asked who was coordinating the signposting tool and referrals. Bathsheba Mall said she was leading the work on the signposting tool internally, supported by a project team from different service areas.

Councillor Perez asked about the likelihood of the Household Support Fund being extended further and the impact of its withdrawal. Matthew Sales said it had been extended until 30 September but there was no clarity beyond that. It was an important source of funding which the Council added to from its own funds. Without it there would be significant pressure on the Council to either end the support or find money from elsewhere to continue it. He said it was difficult to plan without permanent funding in place.

Councillor Vaughan asked for more information on building economic resilience and supporting the local economy. Matthew Sales said he would come back on those questions.

**ACTION: Matthew Sales**

Councillor Daly thanked officers for their work in this area. She asked if officers had found a way of capturing what had been achieved so the lessons could be applied in other areas. Matthew Sales said the team was keen to evaluate what had been done and how to develop it further. They were doing an analysis and evaluation of past data and performance and they would be looking at where to apply that more widely in the Council.

Councillor Harvey said she was keen to take the learning and build it into the Financial Inclusion Strategy. She added that there was a lot of work still to be done, but they could build on real successes – like the work done with the H&F Foodbank to save 40% of the cost by going straight to delivery.

The Chair thanked officers and members for their contributions. She said there was a lot of learning to build into how the Council operates.

**RESOLVED**

1. The Policy and Oversight Board noted the report and provided comments and feedback on H&F's response to the Cost of Living crisis.

**6. WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler proposed an item on the level of traffic and parking fines in the borough. Members suggested that should be considered as a potential item for the work programme of the relevant Policy and Accountability Committee, rather than the Board.

**RESOLVED**

1. The Board noted the draft work programme for 2024.

**7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The following dates of future meetings were noted:

- 1 July 2024
- 9 September 2024
- 25 November 2024
- 5 February 2025
- 6 May 2025

Meeting started: 7.00 pm

Meeting ended: 9.22 pm

Chair .....

Contact officer: David Abbott  
Governance and Scrutiny  
Tel: 07776 672877  
E-mail: David.Abbott@lbhf.gov.uk

## Policy and Oversight Board Action Sheet 2023/24

20 June 2023

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
1.	Item 4 – Update on Co-production	Jane Wilmot said the Council wrote a statement for every (Civic Campus) contractor that set out its expectations around inclusivity. The Chair suggested these elements could be written into a range of contracts and activities undertaken by the Council. She asked officers to investigate potential areas where this could be done.	<p>Response from the procurement team:</p> <p>When we seek to buy goods, works and services, the specification identifies the context and requirements. Co-production allows for joint development of the specification. Engagement supports understanding of requirements and formal consultation may also be involved for some regulated areas.</p> <p>Any contractual requirements will be derived from the specification and align with H&amp;F contractual clauses regarding equalities.</p> <p>Based on the specification, our procurements can then include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specific questions relating to inclusion in the evaluation of tenders for goods, works or services we are buying.</li> <li>• social/added value for contracts over £100k, where some measures are aimed</li> </ul>	Julian Eccles	Done

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
			at enhancing inclusion e.g. care experienced residents, lone parents, those with poor mental health etc.		
2.	Item 4 – Update on Co-production	Cllr Nikos Souslous asked if there were lessons from working with organisations like the police. The Chair suggested inviting the police and the co-production team to a future meeting.	Item added to the Social Inclusion and Community Safety PAC long list for consideration.	David Abbott	Done
3.	Item 4 – Update on Co-production	Cllr Nicole Trehy noted that the Met Police wouldn't be responding to mental health calls beyond September 2023 and raised concerns about the impact on neurodiverse people. The Chair suggested this could be considered at a future meeting.	Item added to the Social Inclusion and Community Safety long list for consideration.	David Abbott	Done
4.	Item 4 – Update on Co-production	It was agreed that each PAC receive a quarterly update on previous and planned co-production activity. And the Board would consider a summary of such reports biannually.	The first updates have been scheduled for the November PAC meetings.	Julian Eccles	Done
5.	Item 5 – Introduction of Voter ID Requirements	Re producing elections materials in different languages - Kayode Adewumi said if members were aware of community organisations the team	Cllr Perez emailed the Elections team with community group contacts.	Committee Members / Kayode Adewumi	Done

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
		could work with, they could send him the details.			
6.	Item 5 – Introduction of Voter ID Requirements	Cllr Jacolyn Daly thought Voter ID awareness needed a Council-wide approach and asked PAC Chairs to think about how different departments could respond.	PAC Chairs have been contacted to think about how different areas of the Council could respond.	PAC Chairs	Done
7.	Item 5 – Introduction of Voter ID Requirements	Elections officers to work with the co-production team to ensure all materials being sent out were accessible.	Actioned. Elections send all public materials to the co-production team for comment prior to circulation.	Zoe Wilkins	Done
8.	Item 5 – Introduction of Voter ID Requirements	Officers to circulate the Electoral Commission's report to members.	The EC's interim analysis report was circulated by email on 26/03/2023. The full report was circulated on 23/11/2023.	Zoe Wilkins	Done

**18 September 2023**

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
9.	Item 4 – Intergenerational Practice	Officers to investigate London-based charity that matched young people looking for somewhere to stay with older people who had a spare room. Suggested the Council could promote.	In Adult Social Care a scheme that is similar to this is Shared Lives Plus ( <a href="http://sharedlivesplus.org.uk">sharedlivesplus.org.uk</a> ) and officers are in the process of developing a business case for starting this in H&F. Shared Lives is a care and support service which is for people aged 16+ (in England and Scotland) and 18+ (in Wales and Northern Ireland) who want to live independently in their community, with the support of a family and community network. It's an alternative to supported living or residential care. Shared Lives carers use their own home and family life to share it with someone who needs support around the UK.	Julius Olu	Done
	Item 4 – Intergenerational Practice	Officers to explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the Council could highlight services available to charities and other groups.</li> <li>• programmes where students helped out in care homes (see Hammersmith Academy and the Elgin Centre).</li> </ul>	Officers are working on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infusing intergenerational practice into relevant developing strategies or strategies under review – e.g. the draft 3SIF strategy.</li> <li>• Turn the policy team's research briefing into a</li> </ul>	Julius Olu	Done

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
			<p>guidance document for third sector organisations to consider as part of the future 3SIF investment programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with Sobus about actions following their meeting with the Youth Council.</li> </ul>		
11.	Item 4 – Intergenerational Practice	Chair to develop idea around engaging young people in voluntary work.	Made links between the Youth Council and Nubian Life. Third sector programme lead tasked with exploring how to better promote young people volunteering through discussion with The Volunteer Centre and linking them to the Youth Council.	Cllr Homan	Done
12.	Item 5 – Digital Inclusion Strategy for H&F	Officers to circulate list of sheltered housing schemes with free Wi-Fi.	List circulated on 25 Oct 2023.	Tina Akpogheneta / Darren Persaud	Done
13.	Item 5 – Digital Inclusion Strategy for H&F	Officers to provide clear measures to track progress and include member involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers contacted key internal stakeholders to pull together their specific key metrics.</li> <li>Digital Accessibility Group workshop 18/10/23 to get views on key measurements.</li> </ul>	Tina Akpogheneta / Darren Persaud	In progress



No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third Sector workshop on 22/11/23 at Shortlands with 15 orgs attending to review work to date, and firm up key measurements. Stakeholder workshop with internal colleagues on 30/11/23.</li> <li>• The final strategy with key measurements will then go through internal governance before Cabinet approval in October 2024. One of the recommendations is a delivery group to be chaired by Cllr Chevoppe-Verdier.</li> </ul>		
14.	Item 5 – Digital Inclusion Strategy for H&F	Item for Health PAC – Connectivity and assistive technologies in day centres.	Item sent to Health PAC Chair / added to work programme long list for consideration.	David Abbott	Done

**11 December 2023**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Item / Action</b>	<b>Response / Update</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>
15.	Item 4 – Update on Youth Voice	Item for Health PAC - Healthy relationships and health and wellbeing to be given more consideration when procuring health services	Item was added to the Health and Adult Social Care PAC long list for consideration.	David Abbott	Done
16.	Item 4 – Update on Youth Voice	Housing and homelessness suggested as priority for the Youth Council.	Item added to list for consideration as part of the 2024 priorities.	Brenda Whinnett	Done
17.	Item 4 – Update on Youth Voice	Members requested input from the Youth Council on PAC work programmes.	Strategic leads have been tasked with taking the areas discussed forward and will refer items to the relevant PACs / PAC Chairs.	Strategic leads	Done
18.	Item 4 – Update on Youth Voice	The Chair asked that PAC reports include a section to record whether the Youth Council have been involved.	The PAC report template has been updated.	David Abbott	Done
19.	Item 5 - Continuing Response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis	Cllr Brocklebank-Fowler asked if the ethical debt policy had affected the Council Tax collection rate.	In common with other local authorities, a number of factors have affected council tax collection since early 2020 with the chief contributing factors being the cost of living crisis and the operational difficulties during covid. It is not possible to fully isolate these impacts but we do not believe there has been a significant impact on council tax collection rates from the council's Ethical Debt Collection policy as the proportion of debt referred to enforcement agents is	Sukvinder Kalsi	Done

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
			<p>less than 1% of the amounts due.</p> <p>The Council Tax Team has been working strongly on this matter including supporting residents with benefit entitlement claims and early conversations with residents with arrears. As a consequence, collection rates have improved during 2023/24 (and arrears have reduced by £6m in total for LBHF/GLA). This trend is expected to continue in the future.</p>		
20.	Item 5 - Continuing Response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis	The Chair asked for further update once Government funding decision had been made.	The update was added to the Board's forward.	Matthew Sales	Done

**23 January 2024**

Page 20

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Item / Action</b>	<b>Response / Update</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>
21.	Item 4 – 2024 MTFS	Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler asked that, in future, financial risks included a range from best to worst case scenarios.	The MTFS is under continuous review to take into account emerging national policy and fiscal matters. The MTFS that will be reported in February 2025 will include a sensitivity risk analysis.	Sukvinder Kalsi	Done
22.	Item 4 – 2024 MTFS	Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler asked for a breakdown of internal and external legal costs.	The budget in 2023/24 for internal legal costs was £2.6m (70% of total) and £1.1m (30% of total) for external costs. This expenditure is entirely justifiable given the complex legal operating environment of the Council. The budgets for 2024/25 were only increased for pay awards.	Alex Pygram	Done
23.	Item 5 – Update on Voter ID Requirements	Zoe Wilkins to provide guidance for members about how to support people to vote.	Did not meet this ahead of the 2024 general election but will be developed for future ones.	Zoe Wilkins	Done
24.	Item 5 – Update on Voter ID Requirements	Zoe Wilkins to provide an update on how the Council is reaching out to community groups.	Elections report to POB in September 2024 provides updates for this.	Zoe Wilkins	Done
25.	Item 5 – Update on Voter ID Requirements	The Chair noted the ‘register to vote’ cards with QR codes that led to the Government’s voter registration website. She suggested something similar could be produced for Voter Authority Certificates (VAC).	The QR code on register to vote cards points voters to the voter registration site portal which has links and explanations about Voter ID requirements. Rather than have two cards, once old stock is used, registration will be on one side and the VAC page link on the other.	Zoe Wilkins	Done

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
			Voters can readily pass between the two webpages concerned as they link to one another.		

### 29 April 2024

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
26.	Item 4 – Generative AI	The Board requested more information on the AI working group and asked officers to think about a more formal structure going forward.	To be addressed in report scheduled for November 2024.	Tina Akpogheneta	In progress
27.	Item 4 – Generative AI	The Board asked officers to look at examples of use cases in other local authorities and organisations that could be applied locally.	To be addressed in report scheduled for November 2024.	Tina Akpogheneta	In progress
28.	Item 5 – cost of Living Update	Councillor Vaughan asked for more information on building economic resilience and supporting the local economy. Matthew Sales said he would come back on those questions.	Briefing note circulated on 10/09/2024	Matthew Sales	Done

### Summary

25 of 28 actions complete. 3 actions in progress:

- Digital Inclusion Strategy for H&F (action 13) – Members requested clear measures to track progress and include member involvement. Progress measures will be in the Cabinet report coming October 2024.
- Generative AI (actions 26 and 27) – Members requested more information on the AI working group and examples of use cases in other authorities. These will be covered in an update report coming in November 2024.

*Last updated: 10/09/2024*

# Agenda Item 4

## LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

**Report to:** Policy and Oversight Board

**Date:** 18 September 2024

**Subject:** Resident Experience Briefing

**Report author:** Ashley Bryant, Interim Director of Resident Services

**Responsible Director:** Nicola Ellis, Director, Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services

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### SUMMARY

This briefing paper provides a summary of the resident experience when accessing services at H&F. It provides an overview of:

- Customer access journey
- Resident Experience Access Programme original aims and objectives
- REAP Refresh
- Digital Inclusion Strategy current position
- Resident experience culture change work
- Co-production work

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Board to note and comment on the report.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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<b>Our Values</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the <a href="#">H&amp;F Corporate Plan</a> and the H&amp;F Values</b>
Building shared prosperity	Having effective systems in place to monitor feedback from residents enables opportunities to improve services for our residents' benefit.
Creating a compassionate and inclusive council	Understanding difficulties our residents face in dealing with our services where residents are experiencing their most difficult circumstances or have complex needs
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Learning from our residents' feedback enables us to ensure that we are delivering services that meet their needs. Utilising co-production groups to

	redesign services that are part of the programme.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Providing a service that meets residents needs provides value for money, utilising new technology to provide opportunities to reduce costs and improve outcomes.
Taking pride in H&F	Providing accessible and effective services to our residents and businesses makes Hammersmith and Fulham an attractive place to live work and do business in.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	A more efficient service increases the opportunity for digital delivery and better facilitates sustainable service delivery.

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## BACKGROUND

1. This briefing paper provides a summary of the resident experience when accessing services at H&F. It provides an overview of:
  - Customer access journey
  - Resident Experience Access Programme (REAP) original aims and objectives
  - REAP Refresh
  - Digital Inclusion Strategy current position
  - Resident experience culture change work
  - Co-production work
  
2. As part of the REAP refresh detailed further in this briefing paper, we will focus on the wider customer experience across the council to ensure consistency of service and the service provision across all channels. Enhancing the use of the current technology we have in place and exploring new opportunities where the landscape has changed. Managing expectations clearly and improving customer updates and notifications will be key to delivering an improved customer journey.

### Current Customer Access Journey

3. Too often, our view of our residents is fragmented; we often fail to appreciate that one resident can use multiple services because we view the resident experience through a service lens.
  
4. Our services do not share a consolidated customer fulfilment centre. Technical or specialist skilled staff who cost the council more are delivering simple transactions within services, rather than concentrating on specialist and qualified advice. We have 162 published telephone numbers on our website where residents can contact us.

5. Standards are inconsistent as we don't have a corporate wide view of what good service looks like or what our residents can expect from us. This can create confusion for residents who will have a different experience depending on what part of the council they are contacting.
6. We are working hard to improve the resident experience, irrespective of the channel they choose. Our revised resident access model means that we can use automation with our systems in the background, to handle high volume repetitive tasks, so that backlogs will be eliminated, residents are able to increasingly self-serve online at their convenience if they are able and we can speed up access to services for those that need support most.

### **Resident Experience Access Programme Aims**

7. The aims of the Resident Experience and Access programme are to significantly change the way that residents interact with the council by:
  - providing a consistent approach and standard for resident access across all council services
  - bringing more council services online so that residents can self-serve from initial contact to fulfilment and move towards digital solutions
  - providing an assisted digital offer so that vulnerable residents and those who are digitally excluded can still access the services they need
  - delivering the forecasted benefits for the programme

### **REAP Refresh**

8. We are currently working on a plan to move into the next phase of the programme.
9. Since the programme commenced in 2019 demand for services has grown. The Covid-19 pandemic, and subsequent increased demand for council services, disrupted the service landscape in a way which wasn't envisaged when we modelled demand in our 2018 business case.
10. Subsequently, we have continued to face increased demand on day-to-day services due to the cost-of-living crisis which has meant that a new group of residents, typically in employment, have engaged with us for the first time to access support. The REAP programme has continued to progress moving services online but in a more piecemeal transactional way than was originally envisaged by the business case.
11. The proposed refresh will focus on the delivery of a bolder and more ambitious reset of our end-to-end resident experience through a slightly revised access model that considers new technology advancements since the programme was initiated in 2019.
12. Our proposal will be that we further change the way our staff work, giving them the digital frameworks, systems, processes, and automation they need to be able to support residents and other stakeholders across all customer-facing



channels whilst reducing our cost base and driving efficiencies in line with the original REAP business case.

13. The clear vision for resident access transformation shall result in the realisation of:
  - A culture that puts resident's needs first, with processes and service delivery designed around what users need to get done, not around the ways we currently do it, or around specific technology products
  - Enhanced digital services that are straightforward and convenient, providing 24/7 access, that maximise the opportunity for all sections of society making simple transactions simple to access, and with high quality support/advice for the more complex
  - High quality assistance for those who find digital less easy to access than traditional forms of contact e.g. telephone / in person, to support the council's commitment to digital inclusion
  - Consistency in the quality of the customer service experience, across channels and across services
  - Consistency in customer feedback/tracking ability of service resolution progress, across channels and across services
  - Reduced cost of service delivery
14. The vision recognises that initial contact is the first impression that a customer will get of our service offering and our aim is a redesigned front door for excellent and efficient customer service through all channels of contact. The aim of the reset is to agree to proceed to a single digital pathway for all resident contact to ensure that there is a consistent and high-quality customer experience for resident access across all channels and services. This means that no matter what channel a resident chooses to use, the process would be the same at the first point of contact with either residents accessing this directly or through assisted self-serve and our staff using the same pathway.

### **Digital Inclusion Strategy**

15. The Digital Inclusion (DI) Strategy was coproduced with the Digital Accessibility Group (DAG), VCS and internal departments. The DI Strategy was originally presented to SLT on 23 August 2023 and then taken to POB on 18 September 2023. POB approved the strategy. Thereafter an action plan was further developed with service areas from across the council on 30 November 2023. The strategy is now in its final stages of approval and will be taken to Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

### **Resident Experience Culture Change**

16. REAP is all about improving the resident and customer experience whichever way or contact channel the customer chooses to engage with us through. Many residents will need to engage with their local council for support or to raise service requests and they do not have a choice of which council they use; this is why it is fundamental that all services, team and staff at LBHF ensure an excellent experience every time. REAP has a workstream to focus on culture

and customer service to improve customer satisfaction. This can ensure we build on a good reputation, deliver service effectively minimising unnecessary contact and ensuring a good customer experience.

17. The REAP programme developed five values and behaviours which are linked by a golden thread to the council six key priorities. These five values and behaviours are in place to guide the council's staff in their interactions with customers and residents. They are:

- Customer and resident focus
- Collaborative
- Courteous
- Committed
- Challenging

18. To deliver change and drive improvement, back in 2021 we created bespoke workshop sessions: these are interactive sessions that focus on the customer and resident service, journey and experience. Delving into the values and behaviours in different service areas. The interactive sessions are 2.5 hours and look at the way our resident and customers want to interact with us, their expectations and how we can deliver a good service. We have delivered the workshop session to over 300 staff (including the two largest main contact centres). We also delivered two bespoke internal customer workshops to Digital Services and People and Talent.

19. The sessions continue to be available to book in groups of 12 or more through the Learning Zone and are part of our Corporate Induction programme for all staff.

### **Customer Satisfaction and Feedback**

20. The aim of this REAP workstream is to improve and build on the customer satisfaction surveys and insight council wide. In 2021 the main survey in use was for the LBHF website feedback with a few other service areas gathering customer satisfaction and insight in various ways. We have now implemented customer satisfaction surveys across all main Netcall (our telephony solution) Contact Centres, with callers having the option to complete a customer satisfaction survey at the end of the call. We have implemented a QR customer satisfaction survey at 145 King Street for face-to-face services and implemented surveys for feedback on complaint handling which are available on every stage 1 and stage 2 complaint response. We have comprehensive surveys within Housing Repairs which are in place and being reviewed.

21. There are multiple feedback systems in use that have the right functionality for a service or the communication channel needs. Within this REAP workstream we will be developing a Business Intelligence Feedback dashboard to incorporate all customer satisfaction feedback for an overall view for analysis and monitoring. We are currently in the process of developing the libraries feedback survey and aiming to start work with the Libraries Service to introduce this in Q3.

## **Co-production Work**

22. Co-production work was an active response to the Disabled People's Commission (DPC) findings and recommendations in 2016 and the subsequent report in 2018.
23. Based on the recommendation of the Disabled Peoples Commission Report, the Disability Access Group (DAG) group was set up in June 2022, comprising 12 residents and 9 Council officers across 4 departments.
24. DAG now has 14 residents (both disabled and non-disabled) and 16 officers across 9 departments, (REAP, Comms, Digital Services, Co-Production, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Housing, AALS and Independent Living).
25. It is the first co-production group of its kind, comprising of all residents, both disabled and non-disabled, and the issues it discusses span more than one council department. Members have a high level of digital aptitude for a resident group.
26. There have been 19 DAGs held so far, the last in August 2024. They are well attended by an engaged and enthusiastic membership. The August DAG contained an interactive session which will help us understand residents' expectations of customer service from the council and feedback from this is included in our presentation pack.
27. Refreshing the REAP programme will enable us to further engage with the homelessness, older people's and poverty commissions so that we have a detailed view of customer need.

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – The resident and customer experience at LBHF

## The resident and customer experience at LBHF

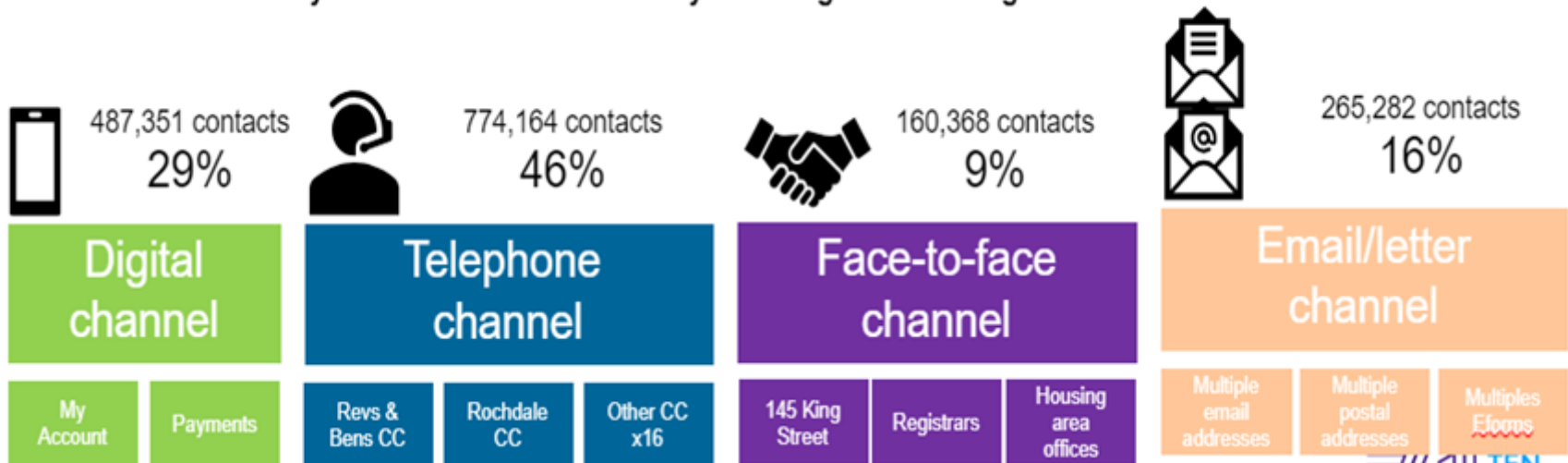
- Volumes of contact via different channels
- Love Clean Street App overview
- Service channels overview
- Feedback for Digital Accessibility Group about customer expectations
- Customer expectations changing
- Customer service
- Six key priorities/Values and Behaviours
- Customer satisfaction overview
- Customer satisfaction in the Housing Repairs Contact Centre



# LBHF's multi-contact channels and delivery of services

The Council is currently contacted over 1.7m times a year through the following channels.

Page 29



\* Libraries and Housing area office footfall data needs more investigation



The Love Clean Street App can be used on any smart phone and also via a website. Residents or anyone can report issues around, fly-tipping, missed bins, highways issues etc. You can upload photos and see if it's already been reported. You can receive an update on the resolution to the report.

Download the app now

- [Google / Android](#)
- [Apple / iOS](#)

[Guide to using H&F Love Clean Streets | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham \(lbhf.gov.uk\)](#)

Registered users – you do not have to register to use LCS, you can live in or out of the borough to report issues and make service requests.

Active users reports

Unique reports using LCS from Jan 2019 – Dec 2023 – 9205

Jan 23- Dec 23 - 2365

Jan 24 to July 24 1309 so far

In April 2023-March 2024 there were 37,271 reports made through LCS.

Alternatively, you can add a report through the [H&F Love Clean Streets \(H&FLCS\) website](#).

# Love Clean Street – analysis of reports and data

Month 2024	Report volumes
April	2842
May	2010
June	3421
July	3548

Page 31

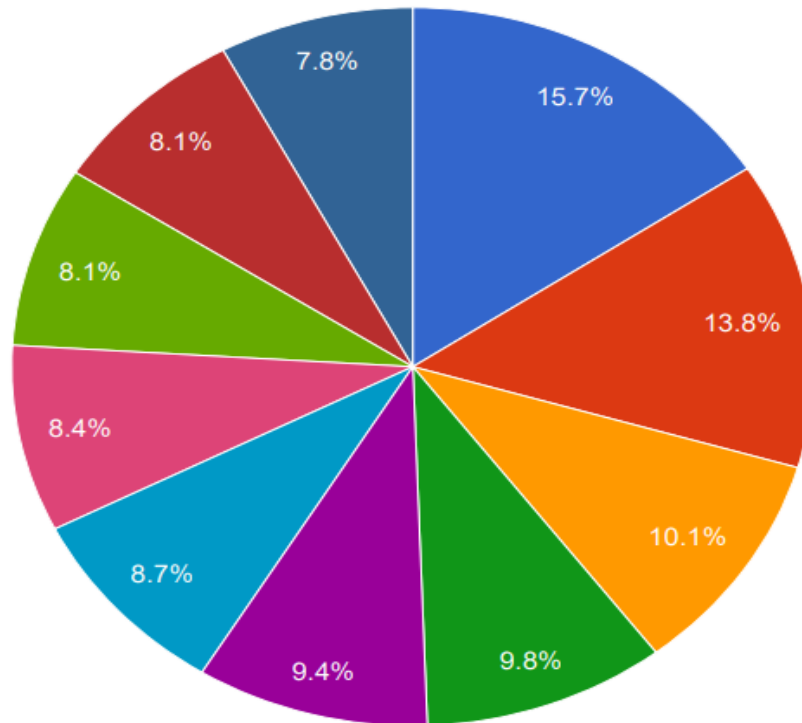


The data shows an increase month on month this year with reports made via the app.

The table for reports by day show in July that Monday was the busiest day for reporting. This is similar for all months since April except May when Friday was the busiest reporting day

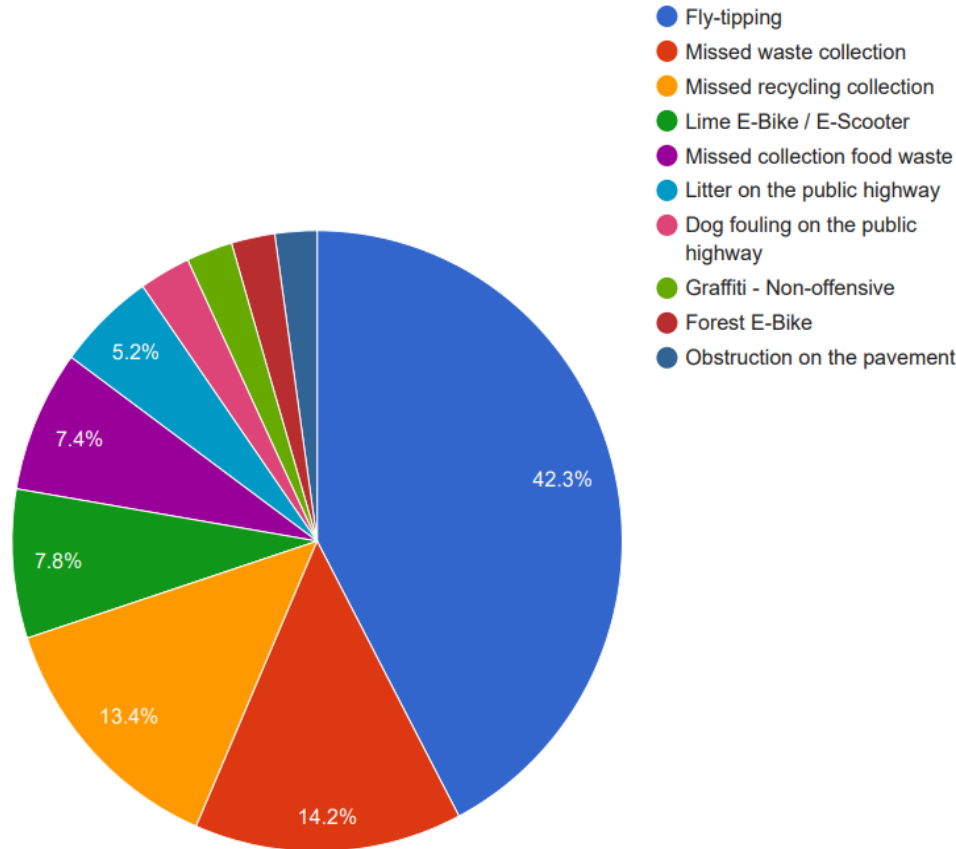
Reports by Ward between 01/04/2024 - 31/07/2024

- Coningham Ward
- Palace & Hurlingham Ward
- College Park & Old Oak W.
- Wormholt Ward
- Ravenscourt Ward
- Hammersmith Broadway W
- Munster Ward
- Brook Green Ward
- West Kensington Ward
- Parsons Green & Sandford





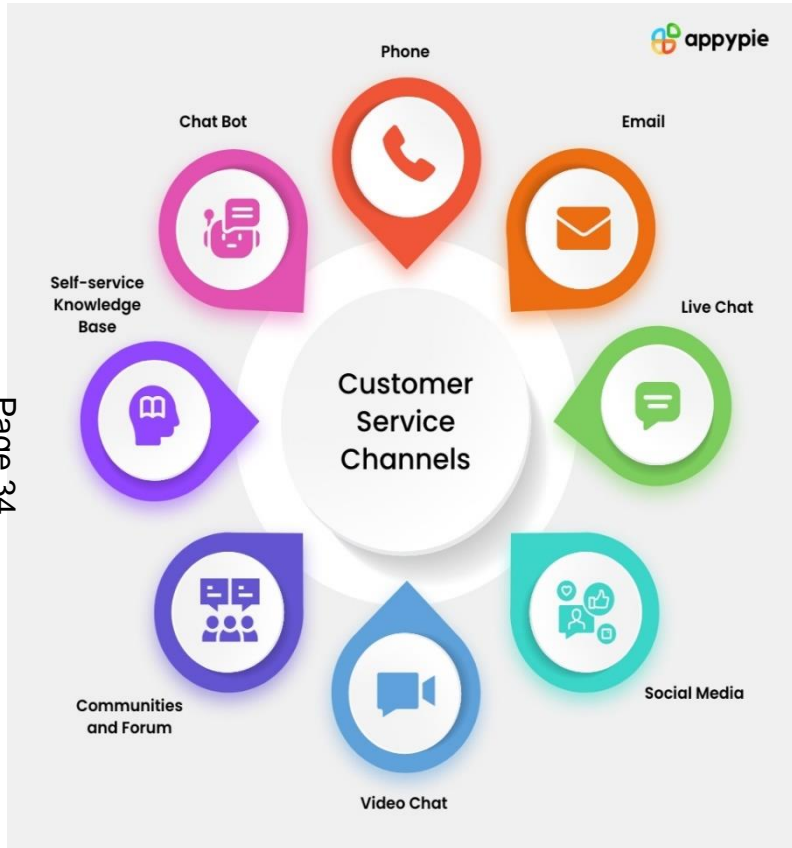
Top 10 Categories Pie Chart between 01/04/2024 - 31/07/2024



Over 42.3% of reports are for fly-tipping. Followed by 14.2% for missed waste collections and 13.4% for missed recycling collections. With 7.8% for E-bike/scooters abandoned.

Reporting times show the most common reporting times daily are 8am-9am and 9am-10am, followed by 10am-11am. There is also a peak again between 2pm-3pm and 3pm – 4pm.

# Service channels and access choices at LBHF



Page 34

**Face 2 Face services** – services delivered mainly at 145 King Street, providing a walk in service for all council enquiries and other support needs. Working collaboratively with the Housing Needs Team and providing access to free online services. Borough wide there are also Family Hubs, Libraries and Housing Offices.

**Contact Centres – phone** – offering a wide range of services for all including environment, housing, council tax, benefits, welfare, social care, planning and building control, housing repairs and all housing services. These are either in multi service contact centres or individual contact centres. They also incorporate some email and webchat (chatbots and live chat).

**Contact Centres** – Call back functionality, proactive texting and a comprehensive Out of Hours emergency Service offer covering Housing, Repairs, Social Care, Anti-Social Behaviour and many more.

**Online LBHF website** - with recent news and updates, providing service contact details, access to multiple forms and self-service options council wide. An accessible website with an aim to provide accessible services for all through multiple languages and screen read options for example. Ensuring access to self-service options are available 24/7.

**Social Media** – with seven social media channels managed by the Communications Team. Including Nextdoor, X, Instagram and more.

**Communication forums** – through Resident Voice you can join different forums and get involved and ensure your voice is heard.

# What do you think are your priorities when accessing LBHF services?

We spoke to members of the Digital Accessibility Group on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024. They spoke about the kind of behaviours that defined a positive resident experience when using the services of other organisations

Polite  
Attentive  
Helpful  
Pro-active  
Responsive  
Accountable  
Good  
communication  
Understanding  
Empathy  
Flexibility



## Design Museum

"She was just kind of like, she was quite friendly but not too overbearing, ...she was sort of like welcome, you know, what are you looking to see today? ...she just sort of listened to us and we could sort of, you know, chat with her sort of like as little or as long as we wanted.

## Octopus Energy

"I really struggle with online forms and I said look I'm really having problems you know, I'm disabled. She asked how can I help you? Do you want me to help you populate it shall we share the screen? She shared the screen with me and actually helped me to complete the form."

## What do you think are your priorities when accessing LBHF services?

We spoke to members of the Digital Accessibility Group on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024. They spoke about the kind of behaviours that defined a negative resident experience when using the services of the Council other organisations

Rudeness  
Indifference  
Disrespect  
Complexity  
Inaccessibility  
Lack of  
accountability  
Confusing  
processes  
Not valued



### LBHF Housing

"you speak to somebody on the phone or you send them an email, which some departments prefer, it should be about what I prefer. Maybe one person needs taking accountability for that. Maybe this is the problem. You know, too many cooks."

### Thurrock Council Waste

"...they didn't empty the bin because it was too heavy, they said, even though he's physically disabled he would have to take all the bags out and drive half an hour to the nearest dump and dispose of bin himself or pay the council extra to remove the waste."

## What do you think are your priorities when accessing LBHF services?

What do residents want from the Council when they get in touch?

I want them to make me feel valued, be attentive and good listeners

I need digital information and forms that are always available and easy to use, with the option to speak to someone if I want to

Council should take ownership, be professional empathetic and understanding,

Staff and online information that helps us understand the process, manage our expectations, tells us how long something will take and when the council will be in touch again

I want them to know what I last got in touch about

Staff should be lively and interested in my query

I should be able to find out information on the website easily, without clicking on too many pages

**How has the customer expectation changed in recent years and what type of service do our resident and customer expect?**

**Seamless and Quick Transactions**

**Connected Experiences Across Digital Channels**

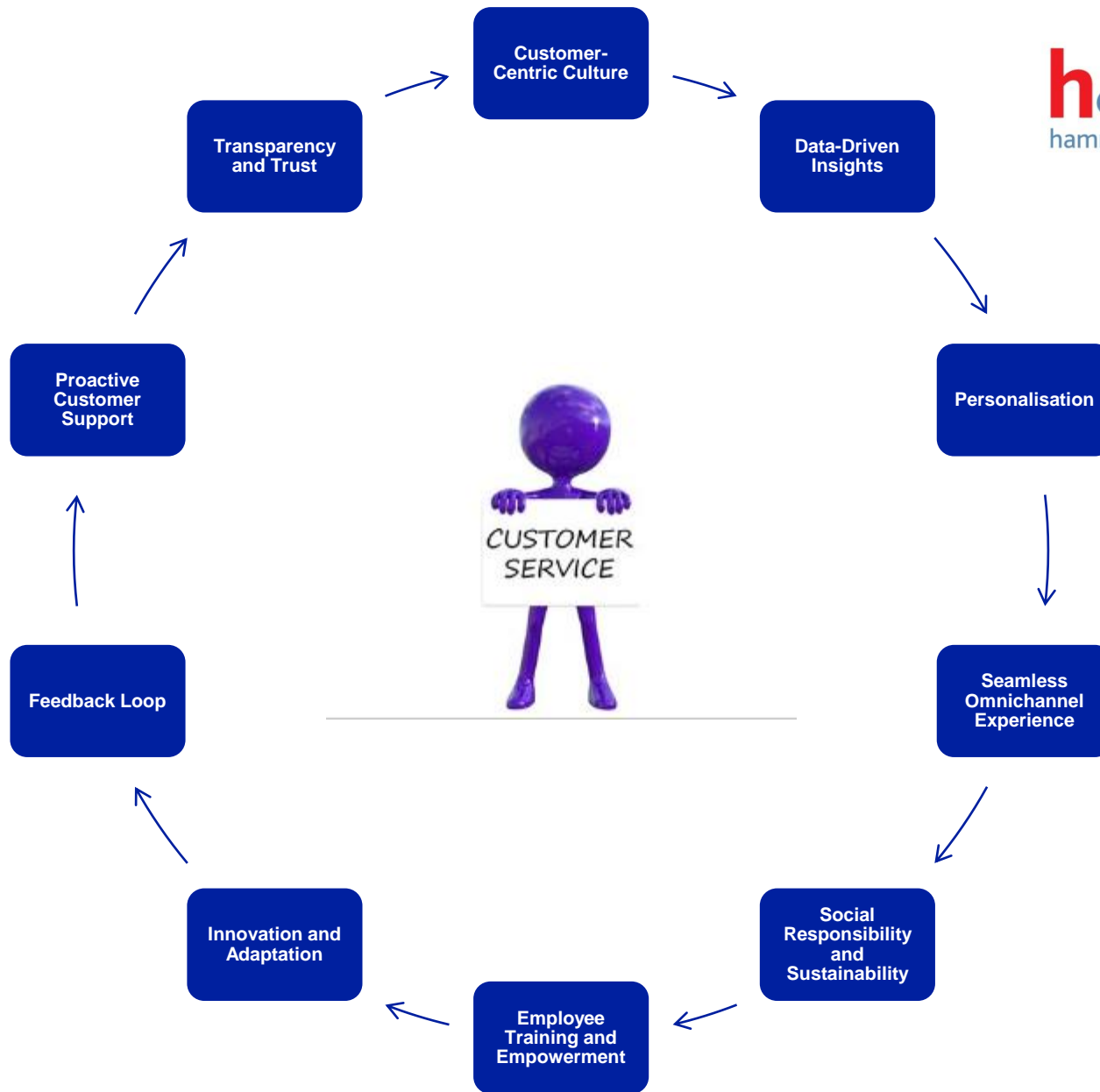
**Alignment of Values**

**Personalisation**

**Data Protection and Privacy**

**Higher Expectations Driven by Innovation**

**Adaptation During the Pandemic**





Remember the six key priorities for H&F



The Resident Experience and Access Programme (REAP) is transforming service delivery and improving the resident and customer experience.



At H&F we want to ensure accessibility, equality and fairness for all. Offering services to meet all needs and having flexibility in service delivery.



Ensuring complaints are resolved fully at the first opportunity and aim to stop further escalation. At H&F we want you to take ownership of a complaint or request for information, ensure you provide a quality response and in time.



Resident and customer focused behaviours. (more to follow)



Doing things with residents, not to them. Co production with our residents is underway and a focus for H&F.

Driving change from the start at induction and delivering training and support to LBHF staff to be empowered to deliver an excellent service every time.

Driving a customer centric culture - no matter which way a resident or customer contacts us.



- Provide a consistent, professional, fair and honest approach when dealing with our residents and customers
- Consider the impacts of all our actions on residents and customers
- Deliver an accessible, reliable, efficient and flexible service
- Aim to accurately resolve enquiries at the first point of contact
- Take ownership of any enquiry, aiming to fully resolve the enquiry to the residents' satisfaction
- Take the time to understand our residents' and customer needs
- Learn from our residents and customers and utilise feedback to inform our service delivery
- Ensure all our residents and customers are treated fairly, recognising diversity and promoting inclusivity and equality

## LBHF's resident and customer focused behaviours



# Customer Satisfaction Surveys

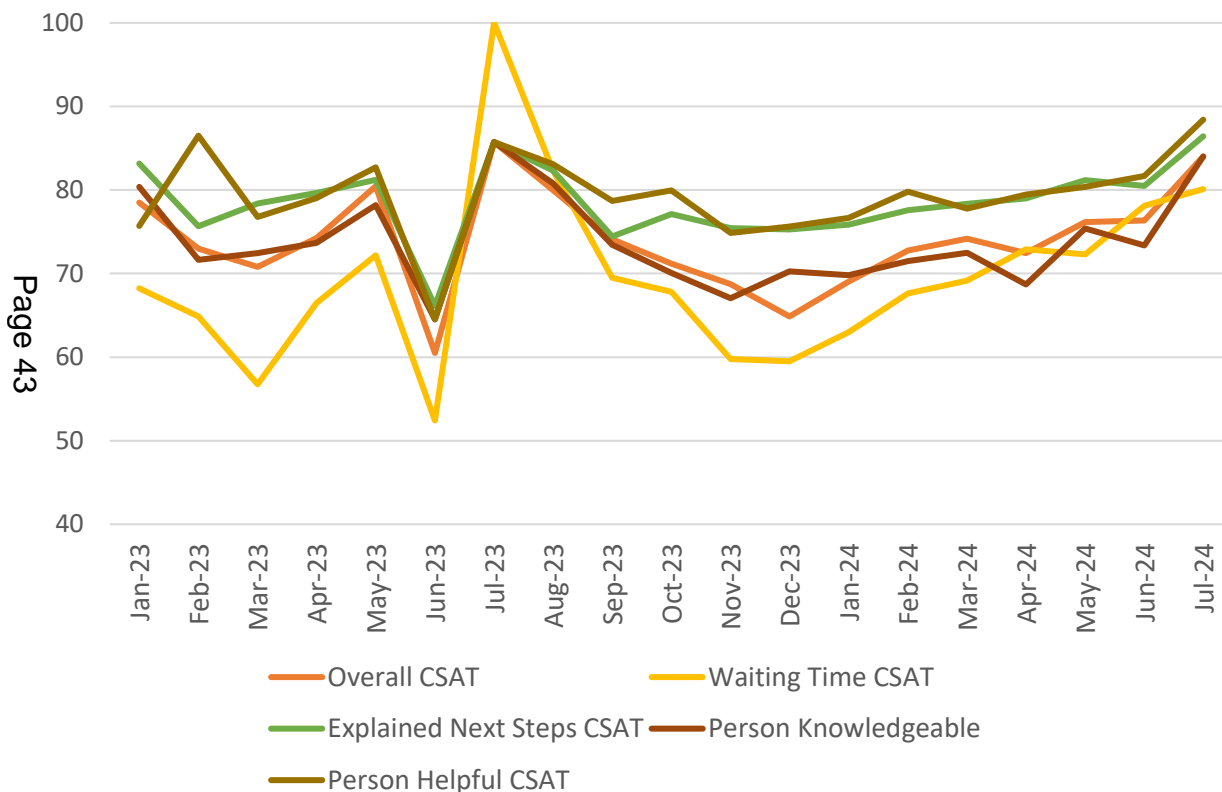
The REAP workstream aims to enhance customer satisfaction and provide better insights across the council.

- In 2021 LBHF had a primary survey on the website, capturing feedback about the online experience.
- We are currently developing the customer satisfaction tools as there are various system in place and not all functionality is being used.
- We have introduced a customer satisfaction survey across the Netcall groups over the last 6 months. This is currently being embedded and we are working on the implementation of a customer satisfaction dashboard to have oversight of all the Contact Centre's feedback. We are also embedding a QR code satisfaction survey for face-to-face services.
- The Housing Repairs contact centre surveys are also in place and have been for some time. The summary of the feedback we capture is shared over the next 2 slides.
- We are using multiple customer satisfaction tools council wide and the focus of the REAP workstream is to create the Customer Satisfaction Dashboard.

# Customer Satisfaction Scores – Housing Repairs Contact Centre



## Customer Satisfaction Scores



The graph shows increases in customer satisfaction since January 2024.

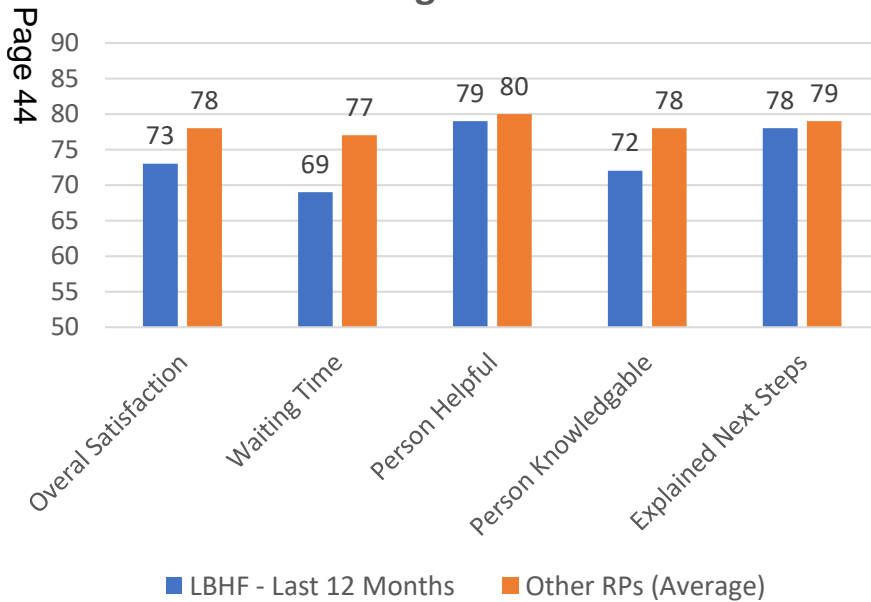
Slight dips in satisfaction sometimes coincide with new starters.

\* Please note, the dip in performance figures in June 2023 was due to the surveys and NEC Northgate system having a disrupted link causing issues in connectivity.

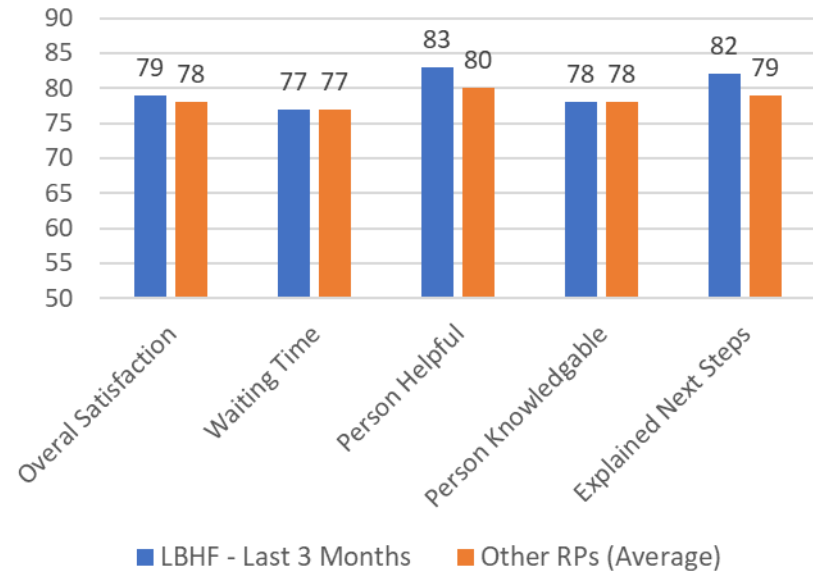
# Housing Repairs Contact Centre – customer satisfaction with benchmarking comparisons

- The response rate for surveys completed related to the customer service centre is at 16%
- Benchmarking on CX Feed allows us to compare to similar organisation asking similar questions. This is slightly above average for this survey type in CX-Feedback where the average response rate is 14%. The graph shows LBHF customer satisfaction and improvements over the last 3 months.

**Benchmarking - Last 12 Months**



**Benchmarking - Last 3 Months**



**Report to:** Policy and Oversight Board

**Date:** 18 September 2024

**Subject:** Changes to Voting Entitlements and Updates to Elections Act 2022 Implementation

**Report author:** Zoe Wilkins, Electoral Services Manager

**Responsible Director:** Sharon Lea, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer and Nicola Ellis, Director, Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services

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### SUMMARY

This report updates the Board on the implementation of Elections Act 2022, including the imminent review of voting and candidacy entitlements for European Union citizens resident in the borough, and the results of changes to absent voting and voter ID rules at the recent elections.

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Board to note and comment on the report.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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<b>Our Values</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the H&amp;F Values</b>
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Our publicity, staff briefings will be by electronic methods where possible, and our review of facilities in polling stations to incorporate the legislation will ensure that additional spend is incurred only where necessary for the efficient implementation of the requirements.

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## **BACKGROUND**

1. The Elections Act 2022 brought several changes into force for all elections including parliamentary by-elections, mayoral and local referendums in England.
2. The Act was implemented in two tranches – the first introduced the requirement for voters to show photo ID in polling stations, changed the voting system requirements for mayoral and PCC elections and extended accessibility for disabled voters by requiring Returning Officers to take all reasonable steps to provide support for those with a disability in polling stations.
3. The second tranche of the Elections Act also came into force for polls from May 2024. This included changes to overseas elector registration requirements, postal vote applications, handling and secrecy rules, and changes to EU Citizens voting and candidacy rights
4. The London Mayor and Assembly elections held on 2 May 2024, and the UK Parliamentary elections held on 4 July 2024 were the first elections held in the borough where these requirements were in force.

## **CHANGES TO VOTING AND CANDIDACY RIGHTS FOR EU NATIONALS**

5. The Elections Act made changes to the rights of EU citizens to vote and to stand for elections in the UK. The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) must review all citizens of EU countries who are currently registered to vote by January 2025.
6. Citizens from Commonwealth countries or Ireland are unaffected by this change, are not included in the review, and will not receive any correspondence about it.
7. EU citizens who have leave to remain in the UK, or who have been living in the UK since before the UK left the European Union on 31/12/2020 still have the right to register to vote and stand as candidates in local elections.
8. Additionally, citizens of countries that have a bilateral voting and candidacy rights treaty with the UK also retain the right to stand and vote in elections. Currently treaties have been made with Spain, Portugal, Luxembourg, Poland and Denmark.
9. The review will start by the end of September and falls into two parts. These are:
  - a. A “data-based” review, that will result in 11,300 electors being told that we believe they are still eligible to vote and that they need do nothing further.
  - b. A “correspondence-based” review of the remaining 6,600 electors who will need to tell the ERO that they have retained their right to vote, or they will be removed from the electoral register. We do not know how

many of the electors in the correspondence review fall into this category.

10. The data-based review will primarily use voter registration records to identify electors who have been registered since before 31/12/2020 or who are from a country with a reciprocal voting and candidacy treaty.
11. Where residents are confirmed as eligible following the data-based review, they will be sent a letter by the ERO explaining that their registration has been reviewed and that they have kept their voting rights as the ERO believes they meet eligibility criteria, and that they need not do anything further.
12. Electors that cannot be dealt with by the data-based review then move into the correspondence-based review. They will be written to asking for confirmation as to whether they meet the eligibility criteria under the new rules or not. They will also be informed that if they do not respond they will ultimately be removed from the electoral register in January 2025.
13. They can respond online via a national portal or by post or email.
14. The correspondence review includes two reminder stages including a personal visit which we hope to conduct at the same time as visits for the annual voter registration canvass.
15. EU nationals who either inform us they do not meet the criteria or who do not respond to the correspondence review will be removed from the electoral register in January 2025. They will need to re-apply to register if they want to vote or stand as a candidate.
16. Costs for the EUVCR are being funded by a grant from MHCLG who have provided £7,817 for communications.
17. In addition to statutory letters, visits and reminders, we will be sending additional emails and reminders to encourage residents to respond to the letter when it arrives. The council's website is being updated to include more general information for EU citizens about their eligibility to vote as well as specific information about the review.

## **CHANGES TO POSTAL AND PROXY VOTING**

18. The Elections Act made changes to postal and proxy voting in the UK. These changes came into effect early in 2024 and were in place at both sets of elections this year.
19. The main changes, set out below, are around applying for a postal or proxy vote, and to the rules around who can handle or deliver postal votes to the Returning Officer.

### **Changes to postal and proxy vote applications**

20. From 31 October 2023, all absent vote applications, except for emergency proxy applications must contain a National Insurance Number (NINo) or provide a reason why one cannot be provided.
21. The personal identifiers on the application (date of birth, name, and NINo) are initially verified against Department of Works and Pensions data, and where identity cannot be verified then electors are asked to submit documentary evidence of their ID.
22. Also from 31 October 2023, electors (except anonymous electors) have been able to apply for a postal or proxy votes online, through the Online Absent Voting Application (OAVA) portal.
23. There are some kinds of absent votes that must still be made through a paper application, such as postal vote waivers, proxy applications for indefinite periods due to disability and proxy applications due to employment and emergency proxies, mainly due to the requirement for these types of applications to be “attested” (countersigned) by a qualified person as well as the elector themselves.
24. The maximum length of time that a postal vote arrangement can be held by an elector is now three years, after which the arrangement must be reviewed by the Electoral Registration Officer.
25. Electors who had a long-term postal vote in place before 31 October were automatically allowed to vote by post in polls for the whole of 2024, and there are transitional arrangements in place for the ERO to request new applications from them.

### **Online Absent Voting Application (OAVA) portal**

26. From 31 October 2023 electors have been able to apply for most types of absent votes online via a national government portal. **Appendix A** gives the figures for all the applications using the government portal over the General Election period, including ordinary registration, overseas registration, Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) applications etc.
27. The portal itself has been updated considerably since “go live” and while there are still some enhancements still to be made for both the public and “back office” functionality to improve both the speed of processing and the clarity of communication, particularly in cases where extra information is needed from the elector if ID has not been verified.
28. The shift to online applications is more secure than emailed copies of forms, and has slightly reduced postage and printing costs, and it helps to meet modern expectations about online service availability.
29. However, there are some back-office refinements still to be made to make the process more efficient. For example, the process for paper applications is rather convoluted – fortunately the numbers that are now received are small but nevertheless they take a disproportionate amount of effort from the electoral services team to process. However, amendments and updates to the service



are still actively being made and this should be less onerous by the time then next scheduled elections take place in 2026.

### **Changes to postal vote handling rules**

30. Postal vote handling rules were also brought into force for elections in 2024. This meant that any person handing a postal vote pack in to council offices or into a polling station had to complete a “return of postal voting documents” form giving the name and address of the person handing in the postal voting packs, and confirming they had conformed to the rules concerning the number of packs they were handing in and whether they were a political campaigner or not.
31. The maximum number of postal votes that can be handed in by any individual is now five postal voting packs, plus their own pack (making a limit of six in total)
32. For political campaigners, a further limit was placed on whose postal vote could be handed in by the campaigner. They could still hand in five packs plus their own pack, the packs had to be from people the campaigner was closely related to or someone they provided regular care for.
33. Packs that were handed in at council offices or at stations without the person handing them in completing a “return of documents” form had to be rejected. Voters where ballots were rejected for this reason are written to after the election to explain that their vote could not be allowed.
34. Fortunately, there were no cases where postal votes were rejected for this reason at the GLA elections and only one case in the General Election, where a postal ballot was inserted into a polling station box (Hammersmith and Chiswick constituency)
35. This new procedure was the cause of some concern for polling and front-line staff who had previously simply had to accept postal voting packs and place them into a receptacle provided by Electoral Services, and there was additional time spent training all polling station staff on the new rules, in addition to explaining new rules around voter ID.
36. However, concerns about poor behaviour or confusion did not materialise on either polling day, although the extra administration did require additional staff time and resource. Most polling stations had additional staff to accommodate both the new postal vote handling rules and the voter ID requirements, and that is likely to be an ongoing need at future elections.
37. To ensure that voters who wanted to hand in votes at council offices were able to do so conveniently, reception staff at 145 King Street were provided with training and the necessary forms and a ballot box to keep postal votes secure and they were collected regularly by electoral services staff. This worked smoothly and will be repeated at future polls.

### **VOTER ID – EFFECT OF IMPLEMENTATION AT 2024 POLLS**

38. The tables at **Appendix B** show numbers of electors in each ward reported as turned away from polling stations because they were unable to show accepted forms of ID, those returned with acceptable ID and were able to vote, and the number of electors using Voter Authority Certificates as a means of proving their identity for voting purposes.
39. It is impossible to quantify how many people without valid photo-ID might have voted if they had it, and there is no way to know how many potential voters simply stayed away from polling stations, although as discussed in the last report to the Board, the Electoral Commission did carry out some research that suggested that up to 4% of all non-voters did not vote because of the ID requirements.
40. Presiding Officers (the officers in charge of polling stations), were asked to give feedback about the GLA elections.

### **Voter Authority Certificates**

41. There were 79 applications made for VACS between the date the election was called on 22 May and the deadline for applications. This compares to 28 applications made from Notice of Election for the GLA Elections on 19 March until the deadline for applications of 24 April.
42. It is likely that the rise in the number of applications reflects the higher level of interest in the General Election compared to the GLA elections, more than a result of a difference in advertising or promotion of the availability of free ID, given the campaigns for both elections were essentially the same.
43. VACS that were issued were not necessarily used in polling stations. The number of VACS presented in polling stations was recorded as 58 for stations in the borough for the UKPGE, and 50 for the GLA elections for the borough as a whole, while just over 200 VACS were issued this year.
44. While some under-reporting by busy polling staff is probably inevitable, it is still interesting that so many VACs that were issued do not appear to have been used in polling stations. Without further research it is not possible to know whether this is due to electors applying needlessly for their VAC or if they were choosing not to vote for some reason.

### **Engagement and Publicity**

45. The previous report to the Board set out most of the engagement and publicity activities that Electoral Services and others were planning to promote awareness of the requirements of voter ID and are listed in **Appendix C** with updated costs and outcomes for those specific where available.
46. Work to alert voters to the voter ID requirements, and the availability of VACs was primarily by direct use of publicity materials both through social media and more traditional forms such as leaflets, posters and other handouts were made available in libraries and at public-facing offices such as 145 King Street.

47. Handouts explaining what ID was acceptable, where to find additional information and where to apply for a VAC for future elections were made available in every polling station in the borough, at both sets of elections. These were made primarily for staff to give to voters who did not bring the correct form of ID to begin with, but some Presiding Officers reported that they were also asked for them by voters to pass on to friends and family.
48. Electoral Services officers attended sessions for the Independent Living Skills group at the Care Leavers Hub, to explain voter registration, voter ID and voting to young people. The event was very well received, some of the young people attending registered to vote and applied for VACs or found out they already had appropriate ID to take to their polling station. Electoral Services are hoping to make attendance at these sessions a regular occurrence.
49. Young people were actively engaged via the council's Youth Council in promoting and publicising both voter registration, the ID requirements and voting itself. This resulted in social media messaging written by the young people, and a short video showing a young person voting for the same time which was shared via the council's website and the Youth Council membership (Cost £200).
50. Social media message, written by the young people, was re-posted by an LBC presenter, which increased its reach considerably.
51. The Faith Forum was attended by the Returning Officer, explained what the new requirements were and provided information about the ID requirements, and the forum was also provide with explanatory leaflets for use in their places of worship and elsewhere.
52. Disability groups were more difficult to engage with directly in this period, mainly due to scheduling difficulties for electoral services staff and the organisations concerned, however previously co-produced publicity materials were provided to libraries and local organisations and were used on social media.
53. The timing of the UK Parliamentary General Election meant that there was no time available for direct engagement about voter ID with external organisations after the GLA elections. However, considerable effort was put into providing information via social media and other advertising again, including repeating the provision of a leaflet explaining the new Voter ID requirements with poll cards and to libraries.

#### **FUNDING FOR ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE AWARENESS AND DELIVER THE NEW REQUIREMENTS - UPDATE**

54. Since the last report to the council, at which we noted that a further grant was due, we have received a further £37,690. The grant is not ring-fenced, but the funding was intended to cover changes to the Overseas and absent voting rules at £17,943 and £19,747 for voter id communications costs. This will allow us to conduct all the activities listed above.

55. We received a further grant in April 2024 for the remaining provisions in the Act of £70,294, to cover additional burdens costs for 2024/2025 ahead of the May polls to provide additional poll clerks and additional training for all polling staff with regards to voter ID and new postal vote handling rules.
56. A further £22,885 was also received in June to support the additional staff processing costs for overseas voter registration, OAVA processing and VAC processing, with an element for communications costs for EUVCR.

## HELPFUL INFORMATION

Further reports which may contain helpful Information for Officers and Members can be found here:

- Electoral Commission's report on the May 2024 elections in England: [Report on the May 2023 local elections in England | Electoral Commission](#)
- DHLUC's Evaluation of the Electoral Integrity Programme: [Electoral Integrity Programme evaluation: Year 1 - executive summary - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- All Party Parliamentary Group on Democracy and the Constitution: [VID+Inquiry+Report+FINAL.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)
- Local Government Information Unit, The Impact of Voter ID, the Views of Administrators: [The-impact-of-voter-ID-the-views-of-administrators.pdf \(lgiu.org\)](#)

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A – Applications received through government voter registration portals  
Appendix B – 2024 Voter ID Statistics  
Appendix C – Engagement and publicity activities carried out prior to the 2024 elections

### Applications received through the government voter registration portals

**Table 1:** Applications received since the General Election was called (22<sup>nd</sup> May) until the respective deadlines.

Service	Deadline	Total Applications	Digital Applications	Paper Applications	In-Person Applications
Register to Vote	23:59 18/06/2024	15231	15226	5	
Overseas Electors	23:59 18/06/2024	1119	1117	2	0
Voter Authority Certificates	17:00 26/06/2024	79	76	3	0
Postal Vote	17:00 19/06/2024	5783	5310	473	0
Proxy Vote	17:00 26/06/2024	1263	1234	29	0

**Table 2:** Applications received since the application deadline and the General Election (4<sup>th</sup> July).

Service	Deadline	Total Applications	Digital Applications	Paper Applications	In-Person Applications
Register to Vote	23:59 18/06/2024	885	884	1	
Overseas Electors	23:59 18/06/2024	64	64	0	0
Voter Authority Certificates	17:00 26/06/2024	6	5	0	1
Postal Vote	17:00 19/06/2024	176	49	124	3
Proxy Vote	17:00 26/06/2024	11	9	2	0

**Numbers of voters using Voter Authority Certificates (VACS), numbers turned away for inadequate photo ID, total voters in person at elections 2024**

**GLA Elections – 2 May 2024**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>VACS used</b>	<b>Turned away</b>	<b>Returned to vote</b>	<b>Did not return</b>	<b>Total voted in person</b>
Addison	2	19	11	8	1393
Avonmore	4	7	5	2	1361
Brook Green	1	14	7	7	1577
College Park & Old Oak	1	22	19	3	1699
Coningham	5	20	16	4	2219
Fulham Reach	4	31	22	9	2385
Fulham Town	0	10	5	5	1374
Grove	3	8	7	1	1622
Hammersmith Broadway	0	32	25	7	1357
Lillie	1	16	11	5	1112
Munster	7	15	11	4	2332
Palace and Hurlingham	2	8	7	1	2510
Parsons Green and Sandford	0	2	0	2	1411
Ravenscourt	3	15	12	3	1455
Sands End	1	12	9	3	1595
Shepherds Bush Green	5	23	17	6	1019
Walham Green	1	7	4	3	1204
Wendell Park	3	10	9	1	1881
West Kensington	2	16	12	4	1687
White City	1	10	9	1	1832
Wormholt	3	12	11	1	1479
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>34504</b>

**UK Parliamentary General Election – 4 July 2024****Hammersmith and Chiswick Constituency**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>VACS used</b>	<b>Turned away</b>	<b>Returned to vote</b>	<b>Did not return</b>	<b>Total voted in person</b>
Addison	10	3	3	0	2135
Avonmore	2	15	14	1	1876
Brook Green	4	12	8	4	2334
Chiswick Gunnersbury	4	8	5	3	4023
Chiswick Homefields	2	6	3	3	4700
Chiswick Riverside	2	4	4	0	3542
Coningham	4	23	19	4	3260
Grove	4	4	3	1	2444
Hammersmith Broadway	0	26	17	9	2010
Ravenscourt	7	2	0	2	2067
Shepherds Bush Green	3	22	17	5	1396
Wendell Park	1	11	10	1	2577
White City	1	8	6	2	2645
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35009</b>

**Chelsea and Fulham Constituency**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>VACS used</b>	<b>Turned away</b>	<b>Returned to vote</b>	<b>Did not return</b>	<b>Total voted in person</b>
Chelsea Riverside	1	1	0	1	2062
Fulham Reach	8	24	19	5	3531
Fulham Town	0	13	10	3	2395
Lillie	4	11	7	4	1841
Munster	2	15	15	0	4152
Palace and Hurlingham	2	1	1	0	3910
Parsons Green and Sandford	0	1	1	0	2446
Redcliffe	1	0	0	0	2027
Royal Hospital	3	18	15	3	2145
Sands End	2	9	6	3	2873
Stanley	0	2	2	0	2160
Walham Green	2	4	2	2	2057
West Kensington	2	11	10	1	2695
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34294</b>

## Engagement and publicity activities carried out prior to the 2024 elections:

### A. General audience

1. Facebook and Instagram advertising targeted borough residents, with an increase in frequency as the election approaches, costing £2000 (at £500/month)
2. Internal communications and newsletters included sections to raise awareness and encourage onward distribution of advertising materials.
3. One-page advert in the Annual Report booklet. (Cost £2000).
4. E-newsletters included information re photo ID and elections to be sent to all subscribers.

### B. Voters renting from Social Landlords / voters with lower income

5. Digital Boards - High street boards and boards in H&F social housing lifts were used to raise awareness around Photo ID and election dates.

### C. Young voters and future voters

6. Members of the Youth Council co-produced messaging for Young People in the borough, and some materials and messaging was created by young people working with professional designers to create artwork and messaging for publication on social media and distribution to schools. One of these graphics was particularly successful in that it was seen and then “re-posted” by James O’Brien, a well-known radio presenter
7. A short video was filmed at the GLA elections (showing what voting was like for a first-time voter) and made available on the council’s website and to schools.

### D. Disabled Voters

8. The existing Disabled Voters campaign, co-created with local disabled residents, was reprinted and redistributed to include messaging about Voter ID. (Cost £500)
9. The council’s website and information provided with poll cards gave more information about what facilities and assistance was available in polling stations.

In the future, we plan to expand this further to enable voters to look at their own station’s facilities in more detail and enable them to ask the Returning Officer for additional adaptations or equipment they may need more easily

10. Audio files of candidate/ballot paper details were made available on-line for the first time at the GLA elections (The GLA London Elects team provided this). This was also provided at the General Election and we aim to provide it at all elections in future.

### E. Voters with privacy requirements

11. A leaflet explaining privacy arrangements will be offered in all stations was distributed via the Faith advisory group and associated Facebook and networks, and the Returning Officer alerted members of the group to the new requirements.



**F. Poll cards**

12. Poll cards for May's elections were on A4 paper, enclosed into envelopes. A leaflet about voter ID with the poll cards was enclosed with all poll cards for both sets of elections. Cost £3800 to print and enclose for GLA elections, final invoice awaited for the UKPGE.

# Agenda Item 6

## **Policy and Oversight Board – Draft Work Programme 2024/25**

The Board is asked to note the draft work programme for 2024/25 and suggest any additions or amendments.

### **25 November 2024**

- Generative AI Update

### **5 February 2025**

- MTFS / Budget

### **6 May 2025**

- TBC
- 

### **Items to be scheduled**

- Co-production update
- Affordable and flexible childcare in H&F
- Corporate performance
- Women's safety
- Greening the Grey Workshop feedback / recommendations