

Policy and Oversight Board Agenda

Wednesday 5 February 2025 at 7.00 pm

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

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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

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Date Issued: 28 January 2025
Date Updated: 29 January 2025

Policy and Oversight Board Agenda

If you would like to ask a question about any of the items on the agenda please email David.Abbott@lbhf.gov.uk by: 4 February 2025

<u>Item</u>	<u>Pages</u>
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS <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>	
3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	4 - 18
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record and note any outstanding actions.	
4. 2025/26 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS)	19 - 58
This report provides an update on the overall preparation and proposals for the 2025/26 revenue budget, risks, financial resilience, and the impact of those proposals. The report also sets out the budget proposals for the services covered by the Policy and Oversight Board, and the Board is invited to comment on the budget proposals set out in detail in the appendices.	

5. WORK PROGRAMME

59

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

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To note the following dates of future meetings:

- 6 May 2025
- 17 September 2025
- 24 November 2025
- 4 February 2026
- 29 April 2026

Agenda Item 3

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Policy and Oversight Board Minutes



Monday 25 November 2024

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Lisa Homan (Chair), Jacolyn Daly, Natalia Perez, Helen Rowbottom, Nicole Trehy and Rory Vaughan

Cabinet and Lead Members

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform)

Councillor Sharon Holder (Cabinet Member for Public Realm)

Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology)

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

Officers

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

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

Tina Akpogheneta (Chief Digital Officer)

Joanna McCormick (Director – Procurement, Commercial, Digital)

John Galsworthy (Director of Climate Change and Transport)

David Abbott (Head of Governance)

Tiffany Yip (Assistant Committee Coordinator)

Guests

Sam Nutt (Researcher & Data Ethicist at the London Office of Technology and Innovation)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nikos Souslous and Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Nicole Trehy.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. UPDATE ON AI ADOPTION AND GOVERNANCE

Tina Akpogheneta (Chief Digital Officer) provided an update on artificial intelligence (AI) adoption at Hammersmith & Fulham covering the following points:

- Since the last update to the Board in April, the working group had been extended to include different services.
- Microsoft Copilot for Edge had been enabled so staff could get familiarised with using AI at work.
- A comprehensive AI Governance Framework had been developed.
- The view of the team was that Hammersmith & Fulham would likely benefit from more purpose-built tools and from tools that were integrated into the systems.
- Resident Services was using Copilot for Word to assist with complaints procedures, while Social Care was exploring using AI solutions to generate Education, Health, and Care Plans. Housing was implementing Voicescape for tenancy analytics.
- The recommendation of the team was that Hammersmith & Fulham needed to ensure its data was AI-ready and that the costs of adopting AI should be managed. There would be continued work on data literacy and data stewardship among staff, and options on managing costs would be taken to the Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) shortly.

Sam Nutt (Researcher & Data Ethicist at the London Office of Technology and Innovation) gave a presentation covering how other London councils were using AI and the public attitude towards AI. A few key points for adopting AI responsibly were highlighted:

- Start with common ethical principles
- Ensure compliance with common legislation (GDPR, Equalities Duty, Human Rights)
- Embed your standards and policies into procurement processes
- Invest in proper evaluation of AI uses
- Engage with residents and staff to understand concerns better

Councillor Natalia Perez enquired about what Hammersmith & Fulham was doing to nurture public trust in the Council's use of AI and the role of co-production in the process. Tina Akpogheneta said the use cases were currently small scale, but the team would look at options to build public trust when they started to scale up to larger use cases. It was noted that co-production and training on ethics for decision-makers were important going forward. In the meantime, AI projects would go through the Digital Board, which was comprised of SLT members and others.

Councillor Jacolyn Daly was interested in how AI was being used in the Housing department. She applauded the slower move around using AI for any process that could penalise residents. She was interested in how AI could be used in budgeting,

predicting demand, and making information more accessible to residents as well as the use of data for predictive analytics. Tina Akpogheneta said that at the moment, the use of AI in Housing was limited to Voicescape, a software which analysed tenancy behaviour, such as the likelihood of residents falling behind on rent. A human decision-maker was in place to make the final decision. She said that she would come back to Councillor Daly on this point.

ACTION: Tina Akpogheneta

Nicola Ellis (Director, Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services) added that they were looking at using AI to make services more accessible as part of the Resident Experience and Access Programme and would continue to examine this in the second phase of the programme.

Noting that she felt AI could be radically transformational if done right, Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked the following questions:

- Was there any insight about the procurement of AI technology across the sector?
- How could councils capture the value of their data?
- What was the discussion like from a commercial angle?

Sam Nutt replied that the information governance hurdles were significant, and no councils were at the stage of using sensitive data yet. The London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) was working with the Local Government Association, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, the Information Commissioner's Office and the Crown Commercial Service on producing guidance on procuring AI in an ethical way. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission's recent report on the use of AI by local authorities reflected poorly on the meeting of duties, and the barriers in information governance were high.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom followed up by asking how the value of data could be captured both ways, highlighting that councils had a responsibility to capture the full value of technology if it was available. Sam Nutt said that the sector was not quite thinking about that yet, but LOTI was developing data standards and a platform which used AI to find insights from data collected from damp and mould sensors, allowing for more proactive intervention. With regards to Children's Services, the tools around predictive analytics did not always perform to a satisfactory level, but he agreed that things generally should be moving in the direction proposed.

The Chair asked if the long lead-in time for procurement in the public sector had been considered and if there was any risk of having limited choice if a few big companies were to monopolise the technology. Tina Akpogheneta responded that the use of AI had been embedded in the procurement process and the use of AI by existing providers were being tracked already to balance potential risks and benefits. Sam Nutt added that this was the sensible approach considering the difficulty in making procurement more agile. The Council could still focus on governance and upskilling staff who worked on procurement. Joanna McCormick (Director of Procurement, Commercial and Digital) agreed that the procurement process could be long but pointed out that they had scope to buy digital tools via the existing framework, adding that it was exciting to hear about the guidance LOTI was working

on. It was also noted that currently all contract reports went through a lead in Digital to ensure that proper checks had been done before they reached Council members.

Councillor Rory Vaughan wondered if the focus on governance would slow the Council down in the adoption of AI. Referencing a Gartner article, Tina Akpogheneta said that organisations that wanted to be successful with AI needed to get their governance right first to avoid major issues in the future. Generative AI was quite new, so its functions had to be well understood first. Individual licenses that were being tested showed little benefit to the organisation as a whole. The goal was to scale up to tools that could benefit the whole organisation rather than spending money on licenses that could only benefit a few. It was noted that generative AI was not the only solution and there was value in integrating different systems and tools.

Councillor Rory Vaughan followed up by asking if there was an issue with risk appetite with using different types of AI and when the committee could expect to know about the limits of using AI in different services. Tina Akpogheneta replied that the current focus was shaping the approach with SLT, so the team and the leadership could work together to shape the strategy. As an organisation, Hammersmith & Fulham had not always been a first adopter, but the desire was to be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by AI while managing the risks.

The Chair was keen to know more about the use of AI to assist efforts to tackle fly tipping at Westminster City Council and if there were any lessons that could be applied to the H&F Love Clean Streets app. Sam Nutt replied that the Westminster City Council tool emerged out of a political commitment to reform waste reporting services, and a lot of resources were invested to develop the app in-house. The lesson that other councils could take from this was to have a very clear outcome in mind during the design process.

Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier (Lead Member for European Co-operation and Digital Innovation) addressed the Board and thanked officers and members for their valuable contributions. He noted that the upcoming Data Bill was well-positioned to make the most of AI and he was confident that the Council would be able to balance making savings and improving the delivery of public services while also ensuring residents' safety. The Digital Accessibility Group (DAG) tested all digital tools being rolled out to ensure accessibility and there were checks and balance to make the most out of technological development. He was confident about the ability of the Council to continue on the AI journey.

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) thanked the Board and the officers and guests for an interesting discussion and said that AI could have the same transformational power as computers had in the office environment. It was important to get the basics right at this moment so the Council would become well-placed to take advantage of it. He echoed Councillor Rowbottom that the Council had a responsibility to use technology where it benefitted residents. From a finance perspective, the Council had a responsibility to use technology to make it cheaper to provide services to residents. He agreed with Councillor Daly that the output of AI technology was only as good as the input so using the right data with safeguards was important. As Councillor Perez mentioned, maintaining residents' trust in the

Council's use of AI was important, following the approach of doing things with residents but not to them. He was grateful for the framework laid down by officers and the expertise of Councillor Chevoppe-Verdier.

The Chair wrapped up by highlighting how far the council had come. Since the last meeting, a proper governance structure, a business case process and a procurement process had been put in place. She said the Board would like the next update to take place once scaled up uses of AI were in place.

ACTION: Tina Akpogheneta

The Chair thanked Sam Nutt for attending and members and officers for their contributions.

RESOLVED

1. The Policy and Oversight Board noted and commented on the report.

5. UPDATE ON FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES CO-PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

Nicola Ellis gave an update on co-production in relation to Finance & Corporate Services. Co-production was coordinated by the Corporate Co-Production Team and co-production had helped developed the Council's services, as the following shows:

- The Digital Accessibility Group (DAG), a diverse group of residents from across the borough, had been very successful and positive. The team was also working on digital signposting with the Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance and had worked on developing and implementing the digital inclusion strategy.
- The Resident Experience and Access Programme (REAP) and the DAG had worked with the team on designing new processes, self-serve options, forms and information available on the website.
- Another area of co-production was the Cost-of-Living Programme, which involved working with residents' groups and members of the Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance. The Programme set up the H&F Community Compass, which was a product that would enable residents to identify what support was available through the voluntary and community sector, including information on the digital inclusion strategy.
- People and Talent had been delivering a programme in conjunction with Inclusion London on co-production and disability equality. The team had also been supporting various events among staff, for example Wellbeing Wednesday and the EDI Board.
- Regarding procurement, residents were involved in building designs, architect plans and evaluation. The team was also looking at co-producing service models in market engagement. Co-production was embedded in the service and benefits were being seen.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked if there had been reflection on the groups of people being reached and whether that mirrored everyone who was being provided for by the Council. The Chair added that there might be people who did not have

time to come to meetings and enquired if the Council's digital channels were used to reach a wider group of people. Nicola Ellis acknowledged that it was challenging for some residents to co-produce with the Council and so the issue would be taken to the team for them to investigate further.

ACTION: Nicola Ellis

Councillor Helen Rowbottom mentioned the difficulty of gathering information of the people they met on canvassing and wondered if a large language model would help with that and make co-production less onerous on residents.

Councillor Rowan Ree pointed out that some people might not wish to spend a lot of time interacting with the Council and REAP would be important in changing how people interacted with the Council, such as creating a one-stop shop for council services.

Councillor Rory Vaughan asked about the learnings from the pre-market engagement activities, particularly with engaging with local businesses. Joanna McCormick said that the team worked with Economic Development colleagues on engaging with small businesses and trying to understand what they knew and did not know about getting a contract with the Council, the contracts available to them, how they might get onto the supply chain, and what they would want to see in the design of specifications. The Council could not always procure at that scale but there were opportunities to look at through supply chains and direct purchasing where appropriate. Having direct conversations with small businesses was very valuable and trainings were also jointly given by the Economic Development and Procurement teams.

Councillor Rory Vaughan followed up by asking if the Council did more business with Small and Medium-sized Businesses as a result. Joanna McCormick said more small businesses were coming onto supply chains, but it was less frequent to buy from very small businesses directly. Nevertheless, the team was aware of the local businesses they could reach out to when an opportunity arose.

Councillor Rory Vaughan was also keen to know more about the feedback garnered from the young inspector programme for semi-independent living. Joanna McCormick said that she would come back with more information from Children's Services colleagues. Finance & Corporate Services was involved in contract management and the procurement cycle was something that could be replicated in other areas. Councillor Rory Vaughan suggested looking at how the evaluation took place and how the contract could be tweaked mid-stream or when re-procurement took place.

ACTION: Joanna McCormick

The Chair enquired if there were barriers to involving residents in procurement decision-making given the details and confidentiality of many procurement matters. Joanna McCormick replied that the best opportunity for residents to be involved in procuring new services or programmes was to be involved in co-producing the design and specifications, which would feed into the questions asked during

tendering. There were limitations to what involvement there could be during the tendering process and the team had worked to ensure that residents were involved in the questions that were most relevant to them. They were cautious about involving residents in evaluation because they would like to avoid opening residents to the complications of legal process should the process be challenged at any point.

Councillor Natalia Perez commended the report and welcomed the commitment to co-production and the work of the DAG. She found the co-production away day she attended very informative with residents and officers coming together and looked forward to hearing updates from other departments.

Councillor Jacolyn Daly asked about the position of data and AI in procurement co-production and what directions these might take. Nicola Ellis responded that there was risk in co-production moving in a different direction from that of technology procurement. Developing knowledge alongside residents and taking residents on the AI adoption journey were important. Co-production could not be seen as a barrier but a tool for understanding residents' concerns and informing the Council's communications strategy.

The Chair asked if the H&F Community Compass was live yet. Matthew Sales (Assistant Director, Programmes, Assurance and Analytics) replied that it was set to go live to the sector early in 2025, after which contributions from the sector would be invited for setting out the directory of their services and offers, including digital inclusion. It would be a sign-posting platform for residents and voluntary and community service organisations to search for what services were available against particular needs and interests. It was hoped that residents would have better control over what services they could access, and services could reach people earlier through self-servicing. The platform was co-produced with members from DAG and other residents.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and noted that the Board would like to see updates in the future in time.

ACTION: Nicola Ellis

RESOLVED

1. The Policy and Oversight Board noted and endorsed the report.

6. GREENING THE GREY WORKSHOP

Matthew Sales (Assistant Director, Programmes, Assurance and Analytics) introduced John Galsworthy (Director of Climate Change and Transport) and Sam Baldock (Policy Officer), who organised the Greening the Grey workshop and summarised the feedback received from the workshop held on 5 September 2024, covering the following areas:

- Background of the workshop
- Purpose of the workshop
- The reason for exploring how 'grey' public areas could be improved
- Key findings from the workshop

- Future work

It was noted that this was an important part of placemaking of Hammersmith & Fulham given that the borough had the second highest population of greenspaces in London and was the third most at-risk of flooding. How people wanted to use or interact with public spaces changed over the decades, for example there was a lot more active travel now than before. It was highlighted that the public realm would continue to be a key part of the Industrial Strategy and play an important role in enabling communities to interact. The future placemaking and transport vision included a focus on active travel and the infrastructure needed to achieve this, such as reallocating public realm spaces. As one resident put it, the key message which came out of the workshop was to “be bold” with related policies.

The Chair invited Cabinet Members to share their thoughts on the workshop and if there was anything that could be done better.

Councillor Sharon Holder (Cabinet Member for Public Realm) agreed that the event went very well and the people who attended understood what “greening the grey” was about. Residents were very grateful to have been invited, and they made great contributions towards the policy decisions around improving the infrastructure for the public realm.

Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology) found the workshop very useful and highlighted that most people who attended were keen to move this agenda forward. It was interesting to see what their priorities were and how the work around climate change was impacting people, not just around carbon emission but also around topics of air pollution and flooding. It was important to consider how to bring residents along with the Council’s work and to overcome people’s resistance to changes in their local environment.

Councillor Jacolyn Daly noted that it was an inspiring workshop and a fantastic opportunity to meet residents with brave and bold ideas. The rambling society had great ideas about how to join up parks and greenspaces to create safe green routes for people to take. Reflecting on the varied feedback received from residents during consultation on school streets and rain gardens in her ward, she asked if there was anything that could be done to help residents with different opinions engage in conversations among themselves.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom welcomed this workshop and its findings and asked the following questions:

- Could the Report It app be expanded for residents to give suggestions on their local environment?
- Would access to green and clean tech be democratised across the borough, such as the WellHome Initiative by Dr Frank Kelly at Imperial College?

Councillor Helen Rowbottom also asked to see any notes from the workshop on democratising access to green and clean tech.

ACTION: Matthew Sales/John Galsworthy

Councillor Wesley Harcourt said that getting the health message of the WellHome Initiative across was necessary for changing people's behaviour. Work to understand people's perception around climate change was underway and would feed back into the work with Dr Frank Kelly in the new year. There was also an ongoing project with Imperial College on installing physical pollution barriers along curb sides. It was key to link health and climate change together in the communications of these projects.

Councillor Natalia Perez was curious about the boldest idea received from the workshop. John Galsworthy said that during a further session with residents of Harwood Terrace, the residents preferred the bolder idea of planting an architectural garden over installing more traditional humps, showing that the more transformational the team was being the more support they received.

Councillor Rory Vaughan commended the great work done by Councillor Holder and noted that a number of the initiatives were already in progress and had been discussed by the Economy, Arts, Sports and Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee. He suggested reprioritising the key workshop findings according to how long it would take to see results. For example, regulating utility companies' roadworks would take a primary legislation and was more aspirational at the moment. It was also important to evaluate how well the Council was doing on these initiatives, such as how the Sustainable Drainage Systems were performing in some of the major rainfall events recently. Recent work such as installing extra cycle storage, developing the tree strategy and the results of the park satisfaction survey could be shared with attendees of the workshop in order to identify what gaps there were.

ACTION: Matthew Sales/John Galsworthy

Councillor Sharon Holder said that the wide scope of public realm allowed the team to work across areas and with each other at the same time. The crucial thing was to let the public know better how it worked together as a system and more work could be done on communicating this better with residents.

John Galsworthy said that the workshop highlighted that good communication was needed and common consensus could only be forged with continuous conversations with residents, which was the biggest change delivered by the workshop.

Councillor Nicole Trehy also agreed that communication was key and enquired about the people who attended the workshop. Noting that a masculine view of the world had long dominated discussions on the public realm, it would be interesting to see how the workshop came together and how the workshop was being communicated to residents.

The Chair noted that the people who attended had a wider range of interests comparing to those who attended specific consultations held in the past. The attendees had similar views on policies, but they might not know much about things that were done outside of the areas of their interest, which linked back to the communication issue discussed. The Chair thanked officers for the workshop and the report, noting that the Board would consider bringing this model to other policy areas.

RESOLVED

1. The Policy and Oversight Board noted the report and provided comments and feedback on H&F's Greening the Grey workshop.

7. POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEES UPDATE REPORT - NOVEMBER 2024

As the Chair of the Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee, Councillor Helen Rowbottom expressed that she looked forward to discussing the exemplary co-production of Children's Services. The Chair noted that it would be useful for the committees to discuss co-production at some point in the future.

RESOLVED

1. The Policy and Oversight Board noted the work programmes of the Policy and Accountability Committees and discussed any areas for future review or collaboration.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair highlighted that the Board would be looking at the Council's Budget and Corporate Performance Indicators in the February meeting. The May meeting would look at the drug strategy, which was being developed to combat drugs, crime and antisocial behaviour.

RESOLVED

1. The Policy and Oversight Board noted the draft work programme and suggested any additions or amendments.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates of future meetings were noted:

- 5 February 2025
- 6 May 2025

Meeting started: 7.02 pm
Meeting ended: 9.05 pm

Chair

Contact officer: Tiffany Yip
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Policy and Oversight Board Action Sheet 2024/25

18 September 2024

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
1.	Item 4. Resident Experience Briefing	Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler asked for figures breaking down how many contact centre staff were office based and how many were working from home.	Response circulated on 15/11/2024	Yvonne Hadlames	Complete
2.	Item 4. Resident Experience Briefing	Members asked for a breakdown of fly-tipping complaints across all channels.	Response circulated on 15/11/2024	Yvonne Hadlames	Complete
3.	Item 4. Resident Experience Briefing	Councillor Vaughan asked for more information on the recently piloted customer feedback tool in the telephony system in the form of a survey offered at the end of every call.	Response circulated on 15/11/2024	Yvonne Hadlames	Complete
4.	Item 5. Changes to Voting Entitlements and Updates to Elections Act 2022 Implementation	Members asked for data on how many people were refused a postal vote.	Response circulated on 25/11/2024	Zoe Wilkins	Complete
5.	Item 5. Changes to Voting Entitlements and Updates to Elections Act	Councillor Daly asked if the rule changes had driven changes in voter behaviour – i.e. did the numbers of proxy and postal voters increase vs in-person voting. Zoe Wilkins said it	Response circulated on 25/11/2024	Zoe Wilkins	Complete

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
	2022 Implementation	was difficult to answer based on the data collected and needed more research. She offered to provide the relevant statistics to members.			

25 November 2024

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
1.	Item 4 - Update on AI Adoption and Governance	Councillor Jacolyn Daly asked for more information on how AI was being used in the Housing department. She was interested in how AI could be used in budgeting, predicting demand, and making information more accessible to residents as well as the use of data for predictive analytics.		Tina Akpogheneta	Pending
2.	Item 4 - Update on AI Adoption and Governance	The Board asked for another update once scaled-up uses of AI were in place.	Item added to work programme	David Abbott	Complete
3.	Item 5 - Update on Finance & Corporate Services Co-Production Activities	Councillors asked if there had been reflection on the groups of people being reached and whether that mirrored everyone who was being provided for by the Council - and noted that there might be people who did not have time to come to meetings and enquired if the Council's digital channels were used to reach a wider group of people.		Nicola Ellis	Pending

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
		Nicola Ellis acknowledged that it was challenging for some residents to co-produce with the Council and so the issue would be taken to the team for them to investigate further.			
4.	Item 5 - Update on Finance & Corporate Services Co-Production Activities	Councillors asked for more info about the feedback from the young inspector programme for semi-independent living. Councillors also suggested looking at the evaluation and how the contract could be amended mid-stream or at re-procurement.		Joanna McCormick	Pending
5.	Item 5 - Update on Finance & Corporate Services Co-Production Activities	The Board requested further updated in time.	Item added to work programme	David Abbott	Complete
6.	Item 6 - Greening the Grey Workshop	Councillor Helen Rowbottom also asked to see any notes from the workshop on democratising access to green and clean tech.		Matthew Sales / John Galsworthy	Pending
7.	Item 6 - Greening the Grey Workshop	Councillors suggested reprioritising the key workshop findings according to how long it would take to see results. E.g. regulating utility companies' roadworks would take primary legislation and was more aspirational. It was also important to evaluate performance of the		Matthew Sales / John Galsworthy	Pending

No.	Item	Item / Action	Response / Update	Officer	Status
		Council's current initiatives, such as Sustainable Drainage Systems.			

Last updated: 24/01/2025

Report to: Policy and Oversight Board

Date: 05/02/2025

Subject: 2025/26 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Report author: Andre Mark, Head of Finance (Strategic planning and investment)
Alex Pygram, Head of Finance (Finance and Corporate Services)

Responsible Director: Sukvinder Kalsi, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services

SUMMARY

Cabinet will present their revenue budget and Council Tax proposals to Budget Council on 26 February 2025. This report provides an update on the overall preparation and proposals for the 2025/26 revenue budget, risks, financial resilience, and the impact of those proposals.

This report also sets out the budget proposals for the services covered by this Policy and Oversight Board, and the board is invited to comment on the budget proposals set out in detail in the appendices. Risk schedules and Equalities Impact Assessments of any budget changes are provided in the appendices alongside an update on any proposed changes in fees and charges in the budget where applicable.

Nationally, the strategic operating environment for public services (including local government) has been challenging over the past decade with continuing demographic, legislative and regulatory demands. Combined with the recent macro-economic turmoil, and fluctuations in interest and inflation rates, this has resulted in considerable financial pressures. The Autumn Budget combined with other central government communications on the local government finance settlement suggest that it is likely that there will be more collaborative and partnership working in the future combined with reforms to the existing funding frameworks for local authorities. The Council will work with national government on this reform programme.

The Council welcomes new resources for Extended Producer Responsibility (for waste collection and disposal costs), additional resources for Social Care, Children Services, Homelessness, and funding for the extra national insurance levies, in addition to an extension of Household Support Fund (Round 7).

The overall objectives of the revenue budget proposals for 2025/26 are intended to:

- continue to protect the delivery of core services valued by residents, businesses and visitors
- ensure the safety of our borough
- support prosperity across Hammersmith and Fulham
- promote an exceptional, innovative and efficient Council
- maintain strong financial governance and resilience across the Council and

- preserve one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the country.

A balanced budget for 2025/26 is proposed (whilst protecting our reserves and in year contingencies) including £5.1m of efficiencies, plus additional investment of £12.3m across many services and will allow the continued delivery of the best services to our residents, businesses and visitors. This builds on the administration's record of prudential financial management, running a budget surplus in the last full financial year (2023/24) and increasing reserves at a time when many other councils are utilising them to balance the books.

The key investment proposals of £12.3m for 2025/26 include:

- £3.4m for community safety and social inclusion through permanent funding for our Law Enforcement Team and Gangs Unit, including additional investment to tackle Violence against Women and Girls.
- £2.8m for Adult Social Care (primarily residential and nursing care in addition to existing free home care services).
- £2.2m for Children Services (including family hubs, travel support, looked after children and supporting school attendance).
- £1.8m for Waste Collection and Disposal Services (extra packaging waste, contractual costs on pensions, fuel, and addressing cost pressures).
- £1.2m for Homelessness (in addition to a further £3.5m from the Homelessness Prevention Grant and inflationary uplifts).
- £0.3m to support the continued delivery of the Upstream Strategy (this will promote the long-term economic growth and prosperity of the Borough).
- £0.6m across a range of services including our Climate Team, Sports Facilities, Insurance Services and enhancing protection against fraud through digital inclusion.

The proposed increase of Council Tax by 2.99% and the additional social care precept (which equates to a total increase of 88p per week) will generate an additional £4m (or 2% of the council's net budget) per annum to fund Council services. This is essential funding for the Council to ensure continuing financial resilience, protect its funding position over the medium term, meet the challenges posed by increasing demand and inflation, whilst balancing the impact on local council taxpayers.

Council Tax in Hammersmith & Fulham remains the third lowest in the country. Since coming to power in 2014, this administration has cut or frozen council tax five times in ten years. But who pays council tax is just as important as how much they pay, which is why we are rightly proud to have one of the most comprehensive Council Tax Support Schemes in the country. Almost four in ten households receive some sort of discount, with those least able to pay paying nothing at all, and the administration choosing to exclude care leavers and foster carers entirely.

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 obliges the Council to set a balanced budget, and the detailed proposals contained in this report will put the Council in a strong position to be able to do so for the next financial year. Cabinet in February will need to consider these alongside the outcome of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement and any other funding statements that may follow.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Policy and Oversight Board considers the budget proposals and makes recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.
2. That the Board considers the proposed changes to fees and charges and makes recommendations as appropriate.

Wards Affected: All

Our values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F values
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The council has a proud record of maintaining low Council Tax to its residents. The revenue budget for 2025/26 proposes savings and efficiencies across services and corporate functions that rationalise its estate and reduce its operating costs, whilst also delivering value for money from external contractors.
Creating a compassionate council	The proposals in the revenue budget for 25/26 supports the ongoing investment in services that directly support residents in living, healthy and independent lives. This includes continuing to provide free homecare for older residents, continuing to provide comprehensive Council Tax support to those eligible and increasing investment to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.
Building shared prosperity	The budget proposals support the launch of the next phase of the industrial strategy (Upstream London) which sets a clear strategy to grow a localised economic ecosystem, with a focus on the sectors that are set to grow and that are deemed right for the local area.
Doing things with residents, not to them	The budget for 25/26 will continue investment in our Family Hubs, ensuring that every child, young person, and family is able to access the right support at the right time. The Hubs will also be developed by collaborating with children and young people and their families, family groups, the local third sector, the NHS and the council's children's services in genuine partnership.
Taking pride in H&F	The council's revenue budget will invest over £50m in public realm services. These

	services will provide access to safe clean, green spaces for all to enjoy, visit and live in. It will deliver improvements to highways, whilst continuing to invest in the Law Enforcement Team and regulatory services to crack down on anti-social behaviour and rogue traders.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The council has an ambitious target to become a net zero borough. To help achieve this, the budget will support work to increase engagement and investment in green energy and technologies, increase investment in its waste services, continue to keep our streets and parks clean, and take a tough stance against anyone dropping litter, creating graffiti, or dumping rubbish.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND REFORM FOREWORD

Concern about crime is by far the most common issue that my residents in Coningham ward contact me about, in my role as a councillor. Across the borough, residents are frustrated that despite regularly reporting crimes committed in their communities, they do not see action taken to address them.

The local police work extremely hard, but resource constraints mean that they often are not able to work as effectively as they would like. The numbers of police officers allocated to wards has reduced in the last decade and a half, and in recent years my own Safer Neighbourhood Team has, at times, just had one officer. This makes it impossible to provide a visible presence across the ward to reassure the public.

Since 2010, centrally imposed reductions in numbers of police and police stations have made it harder for neighbourhood policing to combat crime in our communities. Residents are increasingly contacting the council for help, and while the council has no control over the police or police numbers, we see it as our duty to act to keep our streets safe.

Cuts to police numbers and police stations in the borough since 2010 have undoubtedly had a major impact on residents' perception of crime. Although crime prevention is the responsibility of the police, rather than the council, this administration sees it as its duty to act when we can to keep residents safe. We will do what we can to support them in this, the most important part of any area of government.

This is why we established the Law Enforcement Team, a unique service among councils in the UK, which provides a visible presence on our streets to tackle anti-social

behaviour. This is why we established the innovative Gangs Unit, which works with the police to keep young people out of a life of organised crime. This is why we have funded more CCTV cameras per person, than any other local authority in the country. This is why we were the first council in the country to establish a borough wide Public Spaces Protection Order to prevent street harassment of women and girls in the area.

This work is now more important than ever, which is why this budget funds the fight against crime here in Hammersmith & Fulham. This is a budget which, to borrow a phrase, is tough on crime, but tough on the causes of crime too.

It does so with new resources allocated to stop truancy from our schools and educate residents of the growing risk of fraud.

In this budget we have chosen to:

- Secure the funding of the Law Enforcement Team, moving this to the base budget so that it is protected against fluctuations in the economic cycle and residents can be reassured that it will be there when they need it.
- Fully fund the innovative Gangs Unit, which has so successfully choked off organised crime at its roots in recent years.
- Invest new resources in the prevention of violence against women and girls here in our borough.
- Allocate additional funding to a school attendance strategy, which will keep young people in education and reduce the risk of the falling into a life of crime or committing anti-social behaviour; and
- Ensure that residents have the digital skills and awareness to avoid fraud, the fastest growing crime in the country.

Public safety cannot be done on the cheap. This budget is vital to keep our streets safe and to protect the residents of Hammersmith & Fulham. Criminals across the borough will desperately hope that this is not passed, but the message should go out from this council that their days of terrorising residents are numbered, and that we are coming for them.

The objectives of the General Fund revenue budget proposals for 2025/26 as set out in the report are to:

- continue to protect the delivery of core services valued by residents, businesses, and visitors.
- ensure the safety of our borough.
- support prosperity across Hammersmith & Fulham.
- promote an exceptional, innovative and efficient Council.
- maintain strong financial governance and resilience across the Council; and
- preserve one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the country.

In recent years a combination of statutory requirements placed on councils without corresponding funding, and the lacklustre performance of the economy creating additional need for council services, have stretched local government finances. This budget recognises pressures placed on areas like school transport, temporary accommodation and social care, and provides new funding to address these.

Anyone involved in local government over the last decade and a half should appreciate how difficult budget setting has become. The national public finance policies adopted since 2010 and the economic turmoil from events like Brexit and the 2022 “mini budget” directly caused significant pressure on services and the finances of the Council. This has increased the costs for both provision of and delivery of key services, and has eroded the disposable income for many, increasing the demand for the provision of and delivery of key services. The high interest rates directly impact on the cost of mortgages for homeowners whilst making it more expensive for the council to borrow and resource its capital programme.

However, the cumulative impact of austerity imposed by the previous Government has meant funding from central government has reduced by 54% in real terms¹ and 19% in cash terms, from £164m in 2010/11 to £132m in 2025/26².

A change in Government after 14 years of continued austerity for local government has provided the opportunity for the relationship between local and central government to be reset and planned reform of the financial funding framework for local authorities. The Chancellor’s Budget on 30th October 2024 outlined a set of measures aimed at fixing the foundations of the economy and delivering change.

Despite the financial pressures being experienced across all local authorities, our ruthlessly financially efficient approach (by generating more than £123m of efficiencies since 2014/15, securing more than £100m in contributions from developing the Borough and generating more than £60m in annual income) has allowed the council to ease financial burdens on residents by keeping taxes low, freezing key charges and providing one of the country’s most comprehensive Council Tax Support Schemes.

Few organisations would be able to deliver the same services they delivered over a decade ago with less than half of the resources available. In Hammersmith & Fulham we have not just maintained front line services that residents rely on, but we have gone further, providing new services like the local Law Enforcement Teams to keep our streets and communities safe and clean, maintain weekly bin collections, free breakfasts in primary schools and establishing three Family Hubs at the heart of our communities.

We have also eased financial burdens that residents face by abolishing home care costs, using an Ethical Debt Collection Policy to support those struggling with Council Tax rather than taking further enforcement action, and providing one of the country’s most comprehensive Council Tax Support Schemes.

While the national tax burden reached historically high levels due to the previous government, there is nowhere better to be a Council Taxpayer than right here in Hammersmith & Fulham. Not only have we set the third lowest Council Tax in the country by cutting or freezing rates in five of the last ten years, but we have one of the most comprehensive Council Tax Support Schemes, which ensures that those least able to pay, pay the least.

¹ As per RPI indices - [Retail Prices Index: Long run series: 1947 to 2023: Jan 1974=100 - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/retail-prices/index/long-run-series/1947-to-2023)

² Funding includes Revenue Support Grant, Business Rates Funding Baseline, Social Care and other general grants.

We are one of just three London councils that has maintained no minimum payment, meaning the most vulnerable residents will not need to pay a penny of their Council Tax when they are struggling to make ends meet. We have also taken the decision to exclude Care Leavers and Foster Carers from Council Tax entirely, in recognition of the unique difficulties that they face and their inspiring contribution to our community.

This has only been possible because of the ruthlessly financially efficient approach that we have taken to managing residents' money. We will continue to reform the council to ensure that we provide the best value for their money possible. This budget does this through innovative use of new technology and data, and council-wide efficiency programmes to streamline operations and ensure the best use of resources.

This council will continue to manage its financial resources effectively to ensure financial resilience and sustainability (including a good level of reserves and in year contingencies). Despite the wider challenges faced by councils across the country, the council will continue to rise to the financial challenges faced to protect its residents, businesses and visitors services, and deliver on its commitment to make the borough a stronger, safer, and kinder place for everyone.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

National Financial Context and Outlook

1. Local government continues to operate in a volatile and uncertain financial environment for the short and medium term. Although inflation has fallen in recent months, inflationary price rises over the last twelve months continue to impact the Council's budgetary position and increase the cost of living for its residents and businesses.
2. CPI (Consumer Price Index) inflation has returned to the Bank of England's 2% target level in 2024/25, falling to 1.7% in September. However there has been an upward turn in recent months mainly attributed to the rise of the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) energy price cap in October 2024.
3. Whilst CPI inflation is no longer at the peak of 11.1% experienced in October 2022 (this was the highest rate in over 40 years), the lower level of inflation is applicable to prices which have seen a cumulative increase of more than 20% over the last 3 years.
4. As part of its fiscal policy and to meet the Government's 2% inflation target, the Bank of England have put up the UK base interest fourteen times over the past two years, and the base rate now stands at 4.75%, although this is down from a peak of 5.25% from August 2023 to July 2024. For the council, its main source of borrowing is via the Public Works Loan Board, whose rates vary slightly from those issued by the Bank of England, being based on gilt rates.

5. This will have an impact on the Council's capital programme as much careful consideration will have to be given by Members on how to finance and pay back any sums borrowed and repayable soon.
6. The table below sets out some of the Office of Budget Responsibility's (OBR) key economic and fiscal indicators over the medium term.

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
CPI	2.6	2.2	2.1	2.1
Average Earnings	3.0	2.1	2.0	2.3
Interest Rates	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.5
Gilt Rates	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.5

7. The Provisional 2025/26 Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) was published by MHCLG on the 18th of December 2024. This statement outlines provisional funding allocations for local authorities for 2025/26 alongside the Core Spending Power for each authority.
8. The 2025/26 PLGFS continues the recent trend of single year funding settlements with no grant allocations confirmed beyond next year. However, in the statement, the new Government has set out its intention to simplify the wider local funding landscape, reducing the number of grants and consolidating them into the Local Government Finance Settlement, as well as moving towards a multi-year settlement for local government from 2026/27 so local authorities can plan more effectively.
9. A consultation was also launched at the PLGFS asking authorities for their views on the reforms. The proposed reforms will have no impact on funding for 2025/26 but are expected to have an impact for future years. No assumptions are made in the budget until further details are known.
10. Core Spending Power estimates total revenue funding available to authorities. The provisional settlement provided a real terms increase in Core Spending Power of 3.5% however within this calculation what is shown as funding for local authorities is in large part, the ability for local authorities to raise Council Tax locally as opposed to direct grant funding from central government.
11. The settlement assumes that local authorities will need to increase local tax by 5% each year until 2028/29. It also includes assumptions on business rates income (including compensation for under indexing the multiplier) as well as growth in the Council Tax base.
12. A summary of the Council's Core Spending Power in comparison to the previous financial year is set out in the table below

Table 1 - Core Spending Power 2025/26

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	Change between years £m
Revenue Support Grant and Estimated Retained Business Rates	89.1	90.4	1.3
Government Grants	53.2	58.3	5.1
Estimated Council Tax	78.8	84.2	5.4
Total	220.3	232.9	11.8

13. It should be noted that whilst the overall Core Spending Power for the Council has increased by £11.8m, £5.5m (47%) of this relates to grant funding distributed directly to local authorities as part of the LGFS, as both Council Tax and business rates income are locally generated sources of income.

An explanation of the key funding streams is outlined below:

- **Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)** – The SFA is made up of two elements: The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and the Baseline Funding Level (BFL). RSG is given to local authorities and can be used to finance revenue expenditure on any service. This grant has increased by £0.42m. The BFL is the estimated retained Business Rates as calculated by the Government, usually updated in line with the small business rates multiplier. The actual business rates estimated by the Council is set out in the business rates section below.
- **Social Care funding** – An additional £1.13bn of new funding was announced for local authorities targeted at adult and children social care (with £250m of this being a new Children’s Social Care Prevention Grant, distributed using a new children’s needs-based formula).

This funding is in addition to £1.05bn continuing ringfenced funding for adult social care in relation to the Local Authority Better Care Grant (which now includes the Discharge Fund) and the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund.

- **Compensation for the under-indexing of the business rates multiplier** – this is funding to compensate local authorities for lost business rates income arising from the decision to freeze the small business rates multiplier.
- **New Homes Bonus** - There will be new rounds of New Homes Bonus (NHB) payments in 2025/26. In line with last year, these payments will not attract new legacy payments. It was announced that this will be the last year of the funding, with further announcements on alternative funding to be determined.

The statement confirmed the repurposing of the **Services Grant** to simplify the system, in line with the assumptions set out in the MTFS.

Other Funding

- **Household Support Fund (HSF)** - In 2021, the Department for Work and Pensions announced that vulnerable households across the country would be able to access a new support fund to help them with essentials over the winter. The total HSF

allocated to Hammersmith and Fulham during 2024/25 was £2.8m, all of which is planned to be spent as part of the council's Cost of Living response.

- It was confirmed by the Chancellor in her Autumn Statement that the HSF will continue until the end of 2025/26 (with £740m distributed to councils in England) which is welcome news given how vital this additional funding has been to support those most vulnerable and affected by the Cost-of-Living crisis.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR)** – This income will cover the existing costs local authorities incur for managing household packaging waste, provide additional funding for new legal duties, and support much needed investment in the waste and recycling industry. The council will receive an estimated £1.87m as a guaranteed payment in 2025/26 towards these costs. However, the government will assess the impact of additional pEPR income on the relative needs and resources of individual local authorities, and how it factors into the measurement of local authority spending power, ahead of the 2026/27 Settlement.

The Government has outlined as part of the terms of the funding that councils will be subject to monitoring and evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of its waste management functions. The council may be subject to improvement actions if it is not deemed 'efficient and effective', and potential deductions on payments from 2027/28 if improvements are not delivered.

- The Council will receive £24.3m for the Public Health Grant, £6.6m for the Homelessness Prevention Grant (although in a change in policy it should be noted that 49% of this grant cannot be spent on temporary accommodation and must be spend on prevention, relief and staffing activity) plus a further £1.0m for rough sleeping prevention and recovery, plus £188.3m for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). These grants are ringfenced within departmental budgets and are assumed to have a neutral impact in the current budget proposals.

The Budget Requirement and Gap

14. The proposals for balancing the budget for 2025/26 are included in the table below:

Table 2 – Proposals for balancing the 2025/26 budget

	Proposed (£m)
Base Budget 2024/25 (Balanced Budget)	-
Provision for Price Inflation (2.7% plus some targeting)	6.2
Provision for Pay Inflation (2%)	3.1
Provision for Growth and Investment in Services	12.3
Other Changes (cost of borrowing/minimum revenue provision/concessionary fares/interest on balances)	7.2

Recognition of current income projections	(3.0)
Savings and Efficiencies	(5.1)
Resources	
Increase in Central Govt Grants	(7.9)
Collection Fund (business rates and prior year surpluses)	(6.8)
Increase in Council Tax Base (Households)	(2.0)
Additional Council Tax Income (from April 2025)	(4.0)
Budget Gap 25/26	-

Investment and growth pressures

15. Additional investment and growth of £12.3m is being provided following the budget setting and review process. The proposed investment and growth items are summarised in Table 3 by department and for those relevant to this board in Table 4. The detailed investment proposals for this board are set out in Appendix 1 to this report and as part of the Executive Director's comments section below.

Table 3: 2025/26 Investment Proposals

Department	£m
People	5.0
Place	5.5
Housing Solutions	1.2
Finance and Corporate Services	0.6
Total	12.3

Table 4: Investment and growth proposals relevant to this board

Proposal	£m
Budget to fund increased cost in insurance premiums	0.425
Enhancing corporate and resident anti-fraud measures through the Digital Inclusion Strategy	0.124
Total	0.549

Savings and Income Generation

16. After more than a decade of austerity, it is increasingly difficult to identify and deliver substantive savings. However, further savings are necessary if the financial challenge of real terms government funding cuts, unfunded burdens, inflation, and demand and growth pressures is to be met, and the council has been able to find

these. In the future, the Council must consider all available options to operate within the funding available to it.

17. The proposed savings (including additional income) for 2025/26 are set out in Table 5. The savings proposals for this board are set out in Appendix 1 to this report and as part of the Executive Director’s comments section below.

Table 5: 2025/26 firm savings and additional income

Department	£m
People	(1.8)
Place	(2.1)
Finance and Corporate Services	(1.3)
Total	(5.1)

18. The savings relevant to this board are summarised in table 6 below.

Table 6: Summary of savings relevant to this board

Proposal	£m
An organisational review of the senior chief officer structures of the Council	(0.750)
An increase in digital advertising rental income based on contractual inflation where applicable.	(0.100)
Review of registrars fees and charges	(0.100)
Reduction in mobile phone contract costs	(0.080)
Local Support Payments - bringing the service in-house and reducing administration costs	(0.150)
Removal of 2 out of 3 vacant community engagement posts	(0.080)
Total savings	(1.260)

Fees and Charges

19. Charges governed by statute are set in accordance with those requirements and not varied in accordance with inflation. For non-statutory **fees and charges** levied by the council, it is recommended that:

- They are frozen for Adult Social Care, Children’s Services and Housing in line with administration policy.
- Commercial services that are charged on a for-profit basis, will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in response to market conditions and changed as appropriate, with due authorisations according to the Council constitution.
- Parking charges and fines are to be set in line with transport policy objectives and not considered as part of the budget process.
- A standard uplift of 1.7% is applied for other non-commercial and non-parking fees, as per September 2024 CPI.

Exceptions to these assumptions are set out in Appendix 4.

Equalities Implications

20. Each budget proposal has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) review. These are attached in Appendix 3. A consolidated EQIA report will be presented to Budget Council in February 2025.

Comments of the Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Services on the 2025/26 Budget Proposals

Departmental Overview

21. The new department was created in May 2024 and brought together the previous Finance and Corporate Services Departments.

The net spend of the new department was £36m and included 482 full time equivalent employees.

The department is responsible for a range of back-office and customer facing functions that support the strategic aims of the Council. Functions include:

- Resident Services – Customer Services, Benefits and Revenues
- Communications and Community Engagement
- Registrars & Coroner's Services
- Governance and Scrutiny
- Electoral services
- Legal Services
- People and Talent
- Finance (including Treasury Management)
- Business Assurance, Intelligence and Assurance (including project management office and Chief Executives office)
- Audit, Fraud, Risk and Insurance
- Digital Services – provision and maintenance of our IT, storage and security of our data, and transforming the way we work.
- Procurement and Commercial

The budget information for the new department in 2025-26 is set out in table 7 (section 26)

Our Vision and Strategy

22. Along with delivery of services provided directly to residents the Department's primary focus is to ensure the strong financial governance of resources to deliver the Council's key priorities in the H&F Plan, and to support front line services in the delivery of exceptional services. The department will therefore continue to focus on:

- Exceptional front-line services and back-office functions

- Effective and efficient governance
- Ensuring statutory duties discharged
- The delivery of our transformation programmes
- Ensuring we have customer focused workforce that is motivated to deliver exceptional services

Service Objectives

23. The objectives below aim to give a sense of the range of services delivered within Finance and Corporate Services:

- Establishing a clear Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure the Council resources are well managed, completing statutory obligations, year-end accounts and ensuring the Council's financial resilience.
- Increasing the use of data and analytics to target resources and maximise effectiveness.
- Complying with procurement rules and regulations and ensuring economic and social value through the Council's commissioning activities.
- Detecting and prosecuting instances of fraud to ensure Council Services are provided to those who need them.
- Tracking delivery of commercial activity and ensuring effective mechanisms for securing new opportunities.
- Billing, collection and recovery of Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit overpayments and sundry debts.
- Assessment and payment of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, free school meals, uniform grants and discretionary housing payments. Provision of accessible transport solutions e.g. Blue Badge, Freedom Pass etc.
- Provision of face-to-face customer services and the Council's corporate contact centre and Housing Repairs contact centre and the administration of parking permits.
- Coordinating and managing resident's complaints, requests for information and Ombudsman cases, and ensuring that the Council learns from these to enable service improvement.
- Delivery of the Council's Resident Experience and Access Programme
- Delivering our Registrars, Mortuary and Coroners' Service.
- Providing governance and democratic services support to the Council and delivering Electoral Services.
- Supporting our services and workforce through People and Talent delivering HR support, recruitment, training and development, including supporting our apprenticeship and graduate schemes.
- Delivering the Communication function for the Council, ensuring our residents are well informed and the positive promotion of the Council and its work.
- Supporting Coproduction across the Council through the corporate team.
- Providing the necessary digital hardware, systems and support to all areas of the Council, leading on digital change and projects, and keeping our data safe.

- Support assurance on delivery of the Council's H&F Plan, Third Sector Investment Strategy and major projects and programmes.

Key Achievements

24. The department continues to review and challenge current service delivery models and budgets, to ensure that services are effective and efficient, and reflect the council's priorities. Some notable examples are:

- Work on end-to-end processes, utilising the latest technology has reformed our Benefits Team moving their performance into the top quartile nationally.
- The Council's 2023/24 final accounts were approved in November 2024. The Council's external auditor, having issued an unqualified opinion, has now completed all audit work and certified the audit as complete in December 2024.
- Following the council's ethical debt policy to support those unable to pay their Council Tax, helping them get into a position where they can pay but ensuring that action is taken to recover from those that can pay and do not.
- Investment in digitalisation, automation technologies and cyber security along with the commencement of an upgrade and device refresh for our workforce.
- Successful Local Government Association peer review of the Council's cyber security approaches.
- Delivery of the Household Support Grant funding along with additional investment from the Council to protect residents most in need.

As well as maximising efficiency from current service budgets, the Finance and Corporate Services departments are helping to mitigate the significant medium-term financial challenges faced by the council through cross cutting workstreams focused on use of property, workforce, digital and automation, and commercialisation.

Financial Performance 2023/24 and 2024/25

25. Spend across both the Finance and Corporate Services departments was kept within budget in 2023/24. It is currently projected that the outturn for 2024/25 will be within budget for the Department although there are some pressures that will need to be resolved during 2025/26.

Budget 2025/26

26. Finance and Corporate services are proposing a net budget before capital and corporately managed budgets of £37.1m. Within the departments there are many

services which support frontline Council business. As such £26.564m of the budget is expected to be recovered as corporately controlled income (Table 7).

Table 7 – Corporate budgets 2025/26

Directorate	Expenditure £000's	Income £000's	Net £000's	Employees FTE
Digital Services	14,555	-891	13,664	101
Resident Services	9,156	-2,752	6,404	132
Assurance, Programmes & Analytics	6,910	-2,536	4,374	47
Democratic, Registrars & Coroner's Services	5,736	-2,964	2,772	40
Finance	4,437	-657	3,780	57
Legal Services	2,971	-2,992	-21	37
People & Talent	2,913	-272	2,641	37
Managed Services	2,154	0	2,154	0
Audit, Fraud, Risk and Insurance	1,148	-36	1,111	14
Corporate Procurement	1,101	-410	690	13
Commercial Advertising	73	-2,673	-2,600	0
Comms and Communities	1,089	-200	890	16
Corporate Services	881	0	881	6
Members Support	362	0	362	4
Total budget before capital and Corporately Managed budgets	53,484	-16,384	37,100	503
Corporately Managed Budgets	8,905	-35,719	-26,814	
Capital Charges	250	0	250	
Total capital and Corporately Managed budgets	9,154	-35,719	-26,564	
Total Corporate Budgets	62,638	-52,102	10,536	

Table 8 - Subjective budgets breakdown

Directorate	2025/26 Budget (£000's)				
	Employee Spend	Contracts, Supplies & Services	Total Expenditure	Income	Total Net Budget
Digital Services	7,344	7,211	14,555	-891	13,664
Resident Services	7,356	1,800	9,156	-2,752	6,404
Assurance, Programmes & Analytics	2,973	3,937	6,910	-2,536	4,374
Democratic, Registrars & Coroner's Services	3,980	1,756	5,736	-2,964	2,772
Finance	4,363	74	4,437	-657	3,780
Legal Services	2,803	168	2,971	-2,992	-21
People & Talent	2,470	443	2,913	-272	2,641
Managed Services	0	2,154	2,154	0	2,154
Audit, Fraud, Risk and Insurance	911	237	1,148	-36	1,111
Corporate Procurement	1,037	64	1,101	-410	690
Commercial Advertising	0	73	73	-2,673	-2,600
Comms and Communities	1,057	32	1,089	-200	890
Corporate Services	865	15	881	0	881
Members Support	358	4	362	0	362
Total	35,516	17,967	53,484	-16,384	37,100

Table 9 - Movements from previous year

	Value £000's
2024-25 Net Budget	36,007
Savings	-510
Growth	124
Contract Inflation	410
2024/25 Pay Award	1,022
Movements between departments	47
Total movement	1,093
2025-26 Net Budget	37,100

Savings and Investments

27. There are savings proposed of £0.510m which will impact Finance and Corporate Services budgets in 2025/26. In addition, there are council wide savings of £0.750m which will impact budgets across the council. Proposals totalling £1.260m are outlined in Appendix 1.

28. Investment of £0.124m is proposed for 2025/26 in the Digital Inclusion Strategy, as discussed by the Board in previous meetings. An added benefit of this investment is that it will reduce vulnerabilities to cyber security for residents and enhance corporate anti-fraud. It will fund a Programme Manager to lead on the delivery and continued development of the strategy co-produced with residents. It will also fund digital inclusion activities such as voluntary and community sector engagement, focus groups, events, and participation in partnership opportunities.
29. £0.425m will be added to centrally managed budgets to address increases in insurance premiums. There are considerable financial pressures in the insurance industry, particularly in the property sector due to regulation changes and market conditions, and this has resulted in significant increases in premiums. Growth items are shown in Appendix 1.
30. Contractual inflation of £0.410m on externally provided services has been allowed for in the Finance and Corporate Services budgets. A further £0.155m of inflation is to be added to centrally managed budgets. The council will continue to work with contractors and suppliers to minimise any adverse impact.
31. £1.022m of the movement shown in the movements table above relates to the 2024/25 pay award, which has been added since 2024/25 budgets were agreed. Provision for the 2025/26 pay award is to be held centrally and distributed to departments during 2025/26.

Fees and Charges

32. Within Finance and Corporate Services fees and charges are made in relation to the Registrars service and for the Mortuary service. The department is proposing to apply the recommended Council inflationary uplift of up to 1.7% on fees and charges from April 2025, with the exception of the fees and charges set out in Appendix 4. Statutory charges which the department cannot influence, will be set according to the relevant statute. Where proposed changes require consultation under statute this will be undertaken as necessary.

List of Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Savings and Investment proposals
- Appendix 2 – Service Risks
- Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessments for Savings and Investments
- Appendix 4 – Fees and Charges
- Appendix 5 – Trend Data

FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

Change and Savings Proposals	Change and Savings Proposals				
Service	Summary	2025-26 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2026-27 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2027-28 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2028-29 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)
ALL	An organisational review of the senior chief officer structures of the Council	(750)	(750)	(750)	(750)
Procurement and Commercial	An increase in digital advertising rental income based on contractual inflation where applicable.	(100)	(175)	(175)	(175)
Registrars	Review of fees and charges	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Digital	Reduction in mobile phone contract costs	(80)	(80)	(80)	(80)
Resident Services	Local Support Payments - bringing the service in-house and reducing administration costs	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)
Community Engagement	Removal of 2 out of 3 vacant posts	(80)	(80)	(80)	(80)
Total Firm Change and Savings Proposals	Total Firm Change and Savings Proposals	(1,260)	(1,335)	(1,335)	(1,335)

	Investment, Demand and Demographic Growth				
Service	Summary	2025-26 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2026-27 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2027-28 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)	2028-29 Budget Change Cumulative (£000's)
Insurance	Increase in cost of insurance premiums.	425	425	425	425
Resident Services	Enhancing corporate and resident anti-fraud measures through the Digital Inclusion Strategy	124	124	124	124
	FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES - Total Investment, Demand and Demographic Growth	549	549	549	549

Finance and Corporate Services Risk/Challenges

Department & Division	Short Description of Risk	Mitigation
Corporate		
Council wide	Contract and pay inflation in excess of current budget assumptions	The budget proposals include a retained contingency reserve for inflationary risk.
Council wide	Uncertainty over medium term future government and partnership funding and continuation of existing funded programmes (e.g. TfL, Household Support Fund, Homelessness Prevention, Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund)	Continue to work proactively with our partners and highlight the major outcomes being achieved through the grant funded programmes. Develop alternative funding strategies as practical.
Council wide	Increasing risks on IT systems (cyber security)	The budget proposes additional investment in cyber security processes and infrastructure, plus maintain a strong level of General Balances. There will also continue to be regular cyber security updates to staff as appropriate.
Council wide	Abortive costs for development and other capital schemes which cannot be capitalised and therefore would need to be funded by revenue resources.	Continue to work with service contractors to manage within existing budgets
Council wide	The outcome of the latest triennial pension review is due late 2025 with the impact to be reflected in the 2026/27 budget.	Robust review and challenge with independent advisors to obtain best outcomes for the council and pension members

Budget 2025/26 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**Finance and Corporate Services Investment and Growth Proposals****Increase in insurance premiums budget - £425,000**

1. This additional ongoing investment is required to ensure the insurance premiums budget is sufficient to match current expenditure. There have been significant cost increases across the sector in recent years and this investment will address the current pressure being reported. There is no change to the current provision so the proposal will not impact any of the groups that share protected characteristics.

Enhancing corporate and resident anti-fraud measures through the Digital Inclusion Strategy - £124,000

2. Ongoing investment is required to implement the Digital Inclusion Strategy for the borough. The Strategy vision is for Hammersmith and Fulham to be a more digitally inclusive borough by 2025 (aligned with the Greater London Authority); a place where residents have access to the digital skills, devices and support they need to achieve their aspirations. The proposal is for a digital inclusion programme manager and resource budget to be allocated to ensure the ambitions set out in the strategy are delivered. There are no direct negative equality implications for groups with protected characteristics, under the Equality Act 2010. The implementation of the strategy Individual actions as part of the digital inclusion programme will be evaluated appropriately prior to delivery, however the overall impact on equalities is expected to be positive.

Finance and Corporate Services Savings Proposals**Local Support Payments - £150,000**

3. The proposal is based on the reduction of administration costs in delivering the Local Support Payments scheme by bringing it in-house. Legal implications of bringing the service in-house are currently being investigated. This cannot currently be confirmed and if this is not achievable the budget will need to be supplemented by the Household Support Fund (HSF). This proposal will have a neutral impact on groups that share protected characteristics as the mitigation proposed will ensure that the value of awards are maintained. There is a dependency on HSF round 7 to achieve this.

Digital Advertising - £100,000

4. An increase in the income target budget for digital advertising based on increasing the rental income in line with contracted annual inflation based increases. There is no change to the current provision so the proposal will not impact any of the groups that share protected characteristics.

Increase in increase in income budgets from a review of Registrars fees and charges - £100,000

5. An annual review provides Registrars with an opportunity to benchmark against other register offices (particularly those in neighbouring boroughs). This allows the Council to remain competitive and responsive to trends, introduce innovative ideas and create additional streams of income. The proposal to review and benchmark fees and charges annually will not negatively impact groups that share protected characteristics. An Equality Analysis will be undertaken as part of the process to move from paper-based system to electronic registration to consider the potential impacts on groups that share protected characteristics, including socioeconomic factors.

Removal of two vacant Community Engagement posts - £80,000

6. Removal of two vacant posts in the existing Community Engagement team. This team has three posts in total but has been dormant since COVID. The proposal involves recruiting to one of the posts and removing the other two. A portion of the total saving made will be used to address existing budget shortfalls in the wider Communications team leaving £80,000 to be taken as an MTFs saving. As the posts are currently vacant, and have not been filled since their creation, there should be no impact on any of the groups that share protected characteristics. The proposal will impact the opportunity to improve service provision of Community Engagement from the corporate centre, but it should be noted that community engagement work is carried out by officers throughout the Council for their respective departments and campaigns.

Reduction in mobile phone contract costs - £80,000

7. A reduction in contract cost allows for mobile phone budgets across the Council to be reduced in line with reduced charges. There is no impact on services and therefore no impact on groups that share protected characteristics.

Council Wide Savings Proposals

Corporate redesign - £750,000

8. The Corporate Redesign has reduced the Council from 6 to 3 departments, each of which is led by a director. A £250k saving was made in 2024/25 and the further £750k is planned to be delivered in 2025/26 from a review of Chief Officer posts in People, Place, and Finance & Corporate Services. It is anticipated that there will be a reduction in posts and there will be redundancies arising from the proposal. Staff consultations will take place and full EIAs will take place as plans are developed.

**FINANCE AND CORPORATE
Department
Fees & Charges**

Exceptions to the standard uplift

2025/26

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS & MARRIAGES Fees and Charges 2025/26

Fee Description	2024/2025 Charge (£)	2025/26 Charge (£)	Proposed Variation (£)
Civil Marriage/Civil Partnership/Naming Ceremonies/Vow Renewals			
Notices			
Notice of marriage/civil partnership	£42.00	£42.00	£0.00
Notice of marriage/civil partnership (subject to Home Office referral)	£57.00	£57.00	£0.00
Consideration of Divorce/Dissolution (outside of British Isles) by LRS	£55.00	£55.00	£0.00
Consideration of Divorce/Dissolution (outside of British Isles) by GRO	£83.00	£83.00	£0.00
Waiver (reduce 28 day notice period)	£66.00	£66.00	£0.00
RG's Licence	£18.00	£18.00	£0.00
Conversion of a Civil Partnership into Marriage			
At Register Office	£50.00	£50.00	£0.00
Completing the declaration	£30.00	£30.00	£0.00
Signing the declaration in a religious building registered for same sex couples	£101.00	£101.00	£0.00
Register Office, Clockwork Building			
Wednesday PM	£56.00	£56.00	£0.00
The Rose Gold Room (Clockwork Building - Capacity of 12) Wedding & Civil Partnership Renewal of Vows Naming Ceremonies			
Monday - Thursday	£206.00	£226.00	£20.00
Friday	£266.00	£286.00	£20.00
Saturday	£326.00	£346.00	£20.00
Sunday	£406.00	£456.00	£50.00
Saturday (5pm and 6pm and 7pm)	N/A	£436.00	NEW FEE
The Copper Suite (Clockwork Building - Capacity of 60) Wedding & Civil Partnership Renewal of Vows Naming Ceremonies			
Monday - Thursday	£380.00	£390.00	£10.00
Friday	£437.00	£447.00	£10.00
Saturday	£497.00	£507.00	£10.00
Sunday	£552.00	£652.00	£100.00
Saturday (5pm and 6pm and 7pm)	N/A	£607.00	NEW FEE
Approved Venue Wedding & Civil Partnership Renewal of Vows Naming Ceremonies			
Monday - Thursday	£506.00	£556.00	£50.00
Friday	£606.00	£616.00	£10.00
Saturday	£656.00	£686.00	£30.00
Sunday/Bank Holidays	£796.00	£806.00	£10.00
Monday - Thursday (after 5pm)	£771.00	£771.00	£0.00
Friday (after 5pm)	£834.00	£834.00	£0.00
Saturday (after 5pm)	£897.00	£897.00	£0.00
Sunday/Bank Holidays (after 5pm)	£1,028.00	£1,028.00	£0.00
Fee for attendance at a religious building			
Fee for attendance at a religious building	£104.00	£104.00	£0.00
Fees for attendance at House bound or Detained			
Registrar attending a marriage at the residence of a housebound person	£98.00	£98.00	£0.00
Registrar attending a marriage at the residence of a detained person	£106.00	£106.00	£0.00
Superintendent attending the marriage of a housebound person	£101.00	£101.00	£0.00
Superintendent attending the marriage of a detained person	£113.00	£113.00	£0.00
Copy Certificates			
Copy certificate	£12.50	£12.50	£0.00
Priority service for copy certificate - 24 hours	£38.50	£38.50	£0.00
Copy certificate from historical records - administration fee	£5.00	£5.00	£0.00
While You Wait service for copy certificates - Price on application	£45.00	£48.50	£3.50
Search indexes (no more than 6 hours)	£20.00	£20.00	£0.00
Fees for Changes to Initial Registration			
Consideration of Space 17	£44.00	£44.00	£0.00
Consideration of Space 17 (On the day certificate issue Admin Fee)	£10.00	£10.00	£0.00
Consideration of Corrections by LRS	£83.00	£83.00	£0.00
Consideration of Corrections by GRO	£99.00	£99.00	£0.00
Cancellation & Booking Changes			
Non-refundable deposit per form 48 notice	£42.00	£42.00	£0.00
Non-refundable deposit per form 49 notice	£54.00	£54.00	£0.00
Non-refundable deposit for ceremony bookings	£150.00	£150.00	£0.00
Amendment administration fee for ceremony bookings	£40.00	£50.00	£10.00
Cancellation within one month	N/A	50% of the remaining fee (non-refundable booking fee non-inclusive)	NEW FEE
Postal Charges	At Cost	At Cost	

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS & MARRIAGES Fees and Charges 2025/26

Fee Description	2024/2025 Charge (£)	2025/26 Charge (£)	Proposed Variation (£)
Citizenship Ceremony fees			
Individual citizenship ceremony (Monday - Thursday)	£150.00	£180.00	£30.00
Individual citizenship ceremony - Friday	£170.00	£180.00	£10.00
Individual citizenship ceremony - Saturday	£200.00	£210.00	£10.00
MARRIAGE LICENCES (including Civil partnership ceremonies)			
Marriage Licence 3 Years			
PART A - Application fee (Capacity up to 100 people)	£700.00	£700.00	£0.00
PART B - Ongoing costs (visits, enforcement etc)	£200.00	£200.00	£0.00
Application Total	£900.00	£900.00	£0.00
PART A - Application fee (Capacity between 101 - 200 people)	£900.00	£900.00	£0.00
PART B - Ongoing costs (visits, enforcement etc)	£200.00	£200.00	£0.00
Application Total	£1,100.00	£1,100.00	£0.00
PART A - Application fee (Capacity over 201 people)	£950.00	£950.00	£0.00
PART B - Ongoing costs (visits, enforcement etc)	£350.00	£350.00	£0.00
Application Total	£1,300.00	£1,300.00	£0.00
First Time Approved Venue Application - 1 Year Trial			
PART A - Application fee (Capacity up to 100 people)	£225.00	£225.00	£0.00
PART B - Ongoing costs (visits, enforcement etc)	£75.00	£75.00	£0.00
Application Total	£300.00	£300.00	£0.00
PART A - Application fee (Capacity between 101 - 200 people)	£281.25	£281.25	£0.00
PART B - Ongoing costs (visits, enforcement etc)	£93.75	£93.75	£0.00
Application Total	£375.00	£375.00	£0.00
PART A - Application fee (Capacity over 201 people)	£300.00	£300.00	£0.00
PART B - Ongoing costs (visits, enforcement etc)	£100.00	£100.00	£0.00
Application Total	£400.00	£400.00	£0.00
Religious premises who already hold religious marriage ceremonies to include civil partnership ceremonies			
PART A - Application fee	£263.00	£263.00	£0.00
PART B - Ongoing costs (visits, enforcement etc)	£52.00	£52.00	£0.00
Application Total	£315.00	£315.00	£0.00
Changes to Marriage Licences	£150.00	£150.00	£0.00

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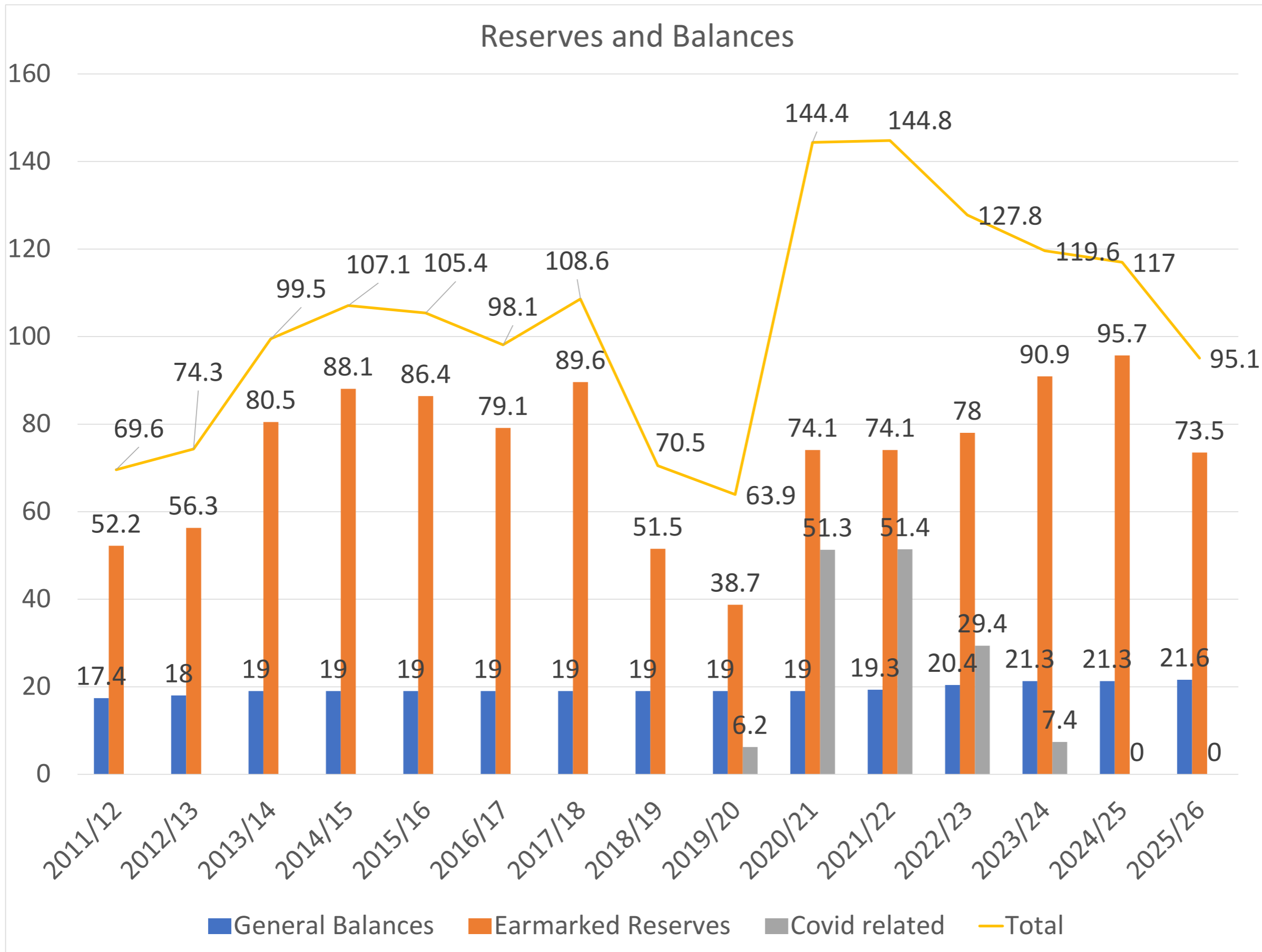
- 2 Draft Objective and Subjective Budget
- 3 General Balances and Reserves
- 4 5 Year Savings and Growth by Department
- 5 Budget Requirement Before Savings
- 6 Savings and Investment Categorisation
- 7 Current Year Monitor
- 8 Social Care - Cost and Trend Analysis
- 9-12 Children's Services Trend Analysis Data
- 13 Digital Services Data
- 14 Place Dept Services Data
- 15 Housing Solutions Data

Expenditure

Department	£'m	By type of spend	
Adult Social Care	121	Employees	148
Children's Services	177	Transfer payments (eg schools)	168
Housing Solutions	46	Supplies and services	64
Public Health	25	Borrowing/miscellaneous	4
Place	145	Premises	16
		Transport	2
Corporate	74	Third party payments (eg commissioned services)	186
Housing Benefit payments	91	Housing benefit payments	91
Total	678	Total	678

Income

Department	£'m	By type of income	£'m
Adult Social Care	42	Business rates	63
Children's Services	108	Council tax	85
Housing Solutions	28	Revenue Support Grant	22
Public Health	25	Other unringfenced grants	45
Place	97	One-off funding	8
Corporate	72	Housing benefit grant	91
Housing Benefit Grant	92	Specific grants (eg public health)	70
General Grants	45	Education grants	97
Revenue Support Grant	22	Miscellaneous (eg recharges)	80
Council Tax	85	Fees and charges	68
Business Rates	63	Contributions (eg health)	50
Total	678	Total	678



5 Year Investment & Savings by Department

Saving by Department	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Cumulative
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
People Dept	3,500	2,203	2,370	3,684	1,803	13,560
Place	1,907	1,219	534	2,500	2,064	8,224
Housing Solutions	296	200	-	450	-	946
Corporate	1,000	1,229	20	1,435	1,260	4,944
Total	6,703	4,851	2,924	8,069	5,127	27,674

Investment by Department	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Cumulative
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
People Dept	4,000	5,565	6,749	6,334	5,028	22,648
Place	1,700	1,528	2,272	438	5,530	11,468
Housing Solutions	540		939	1,500	1,212	4,191
Corporate	1,600	341	691	2,450	549	5,631
Total	7,840	7,434	10,651	10,722	12,319	43,938

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	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Base Budget	156,902	160,416	166,608	191,959	208,407
Contract & Pay Inflation	4,132	10,000	17,400	13,742	9,297
Employee Costs (on going effect of pay award in 22/23)			(1,250)		
Growth and Investment	5,235	4,793	10,651	10,722	12,319
One off cost of living / Council Tax support			1,000		
Covid-19 Contingency	1,096	1,500			
Impact of Covid-19/ Economic Downturn	2,650	2,641			
Net Cost of Borrowing	800	400	600	1,000	3,700
Recognition of current income projection		(3,400)	(2,000)	(2,880)	(3,000)
Income from investment of cash balances			(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
One off corporate items (Concessionary fares, Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit)	(1,100)	(2,300)	(2,245)	(3,480)	17
Employee Budget Management			(2,500)		
Contribution to reserves / contingencies	1,100	3,890	5,287		
	170,815	177,940	188,551	206,063	225,740
Revenue Support Grant	(17,500)	(18,046)	(20,198)	(21,540)	(21,956)
Other Revenue Grants	(20,772)	(27,186)	(32,891)	(35,120)	(44,451)
Retained Business Rates	(57,217)	(57,217)	(59,358)	(62,509)	(69,343)
Council Tax Income	(67,331)	(68,440)	(73,180)	(78,825)	(84,864)
One-Off Resources/Developer Contributions	(1,295)	(1,700)			
Budget Gap Before Savings	6,700	5,351	2,924	8,069	5,126

5 Year Savings and Investment Categorisation

Savings by Category

	2021/22 Savings	2022/23 Savings	2023/24 Savings	2024/25 Savings	2025/26 Proposed Savings
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget reduced in line with spend	-	-	-	-	
Commercialisation / Income	500	650	147	1,675	1,664
Estate rationalisation	-	-	-	400	100
Outside investment secured (i.e. Section 106, NHS)	-	35	-	-	
Prevention	1,000	-	250	250	610
Procurement / Commissioning	1,400	1,828	880	2,125	807
Service reconfiguration	1,100	892	1,497	2,682	1,750
Staffing / Productivity	1,600	1,446	-	200	116
Pension triennial valuation	-	-	-	-	
Debt reduction and restructuring	-	-	-	-	
Service rationalisation / budget reduced in line with spend	1,100	-	150	737	80
Total	6,700	4,851	2,924	8,069	5,127

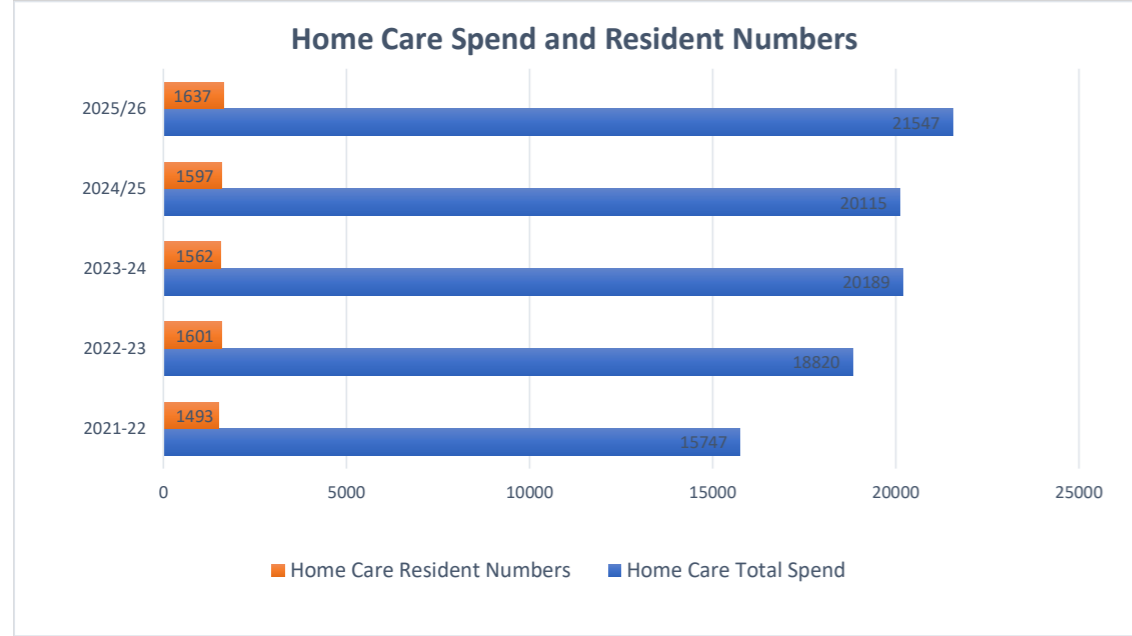
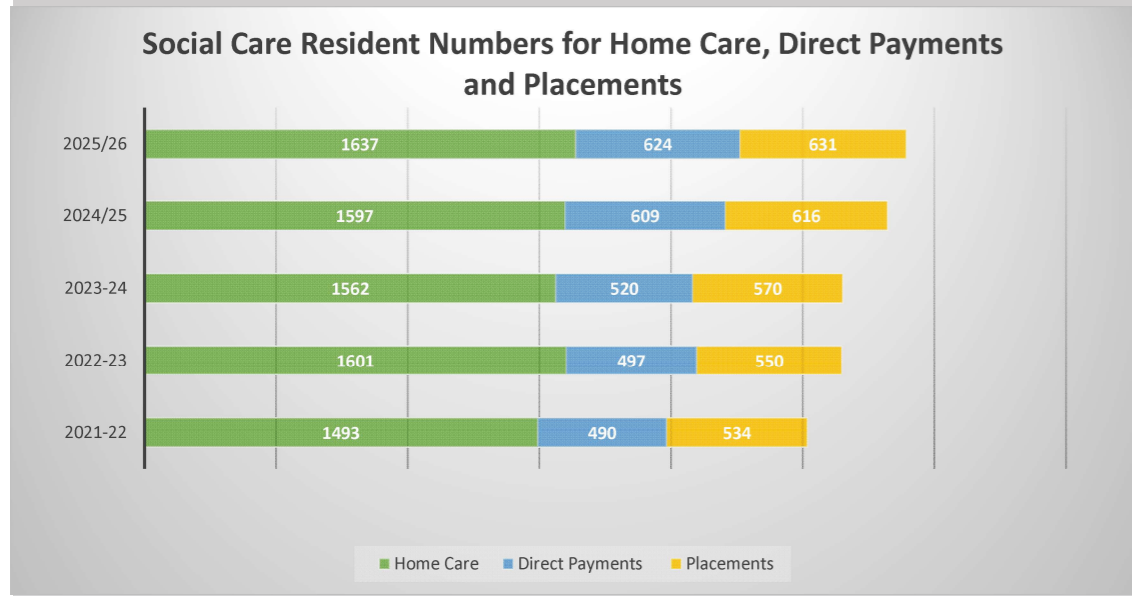
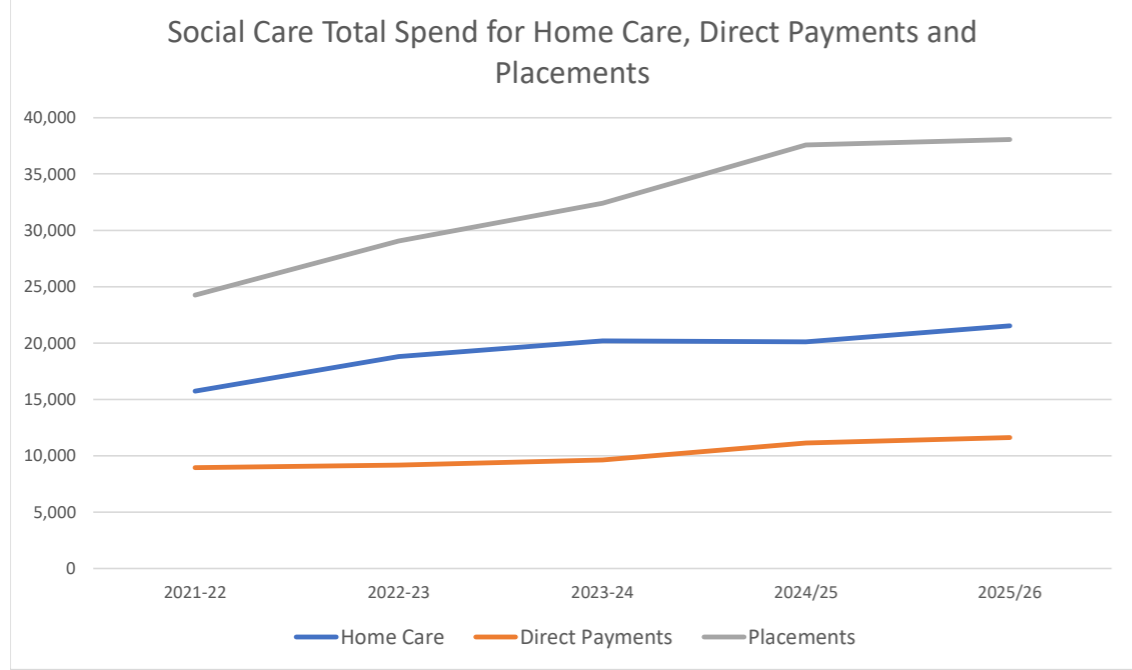
Investment by Category

	2021/22 Investment	2022/23 Investment	2023/24 Investment	2024/25 Investment	2025/26 Proposed Investment
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Government related	-	1,137	441	-	243
Increase in demand/demographic growth	2,400	2,311	6,846	7,852	5,366
Resident priority	500	690	2,358	470	4,485
Budget pressure	2,300	655	1,006	2,400	2,225
Impact of Covid-19 / economic downturn	2,700	2,641	-	-	
Total	7,900	7,434	10,651	10,722	12,319

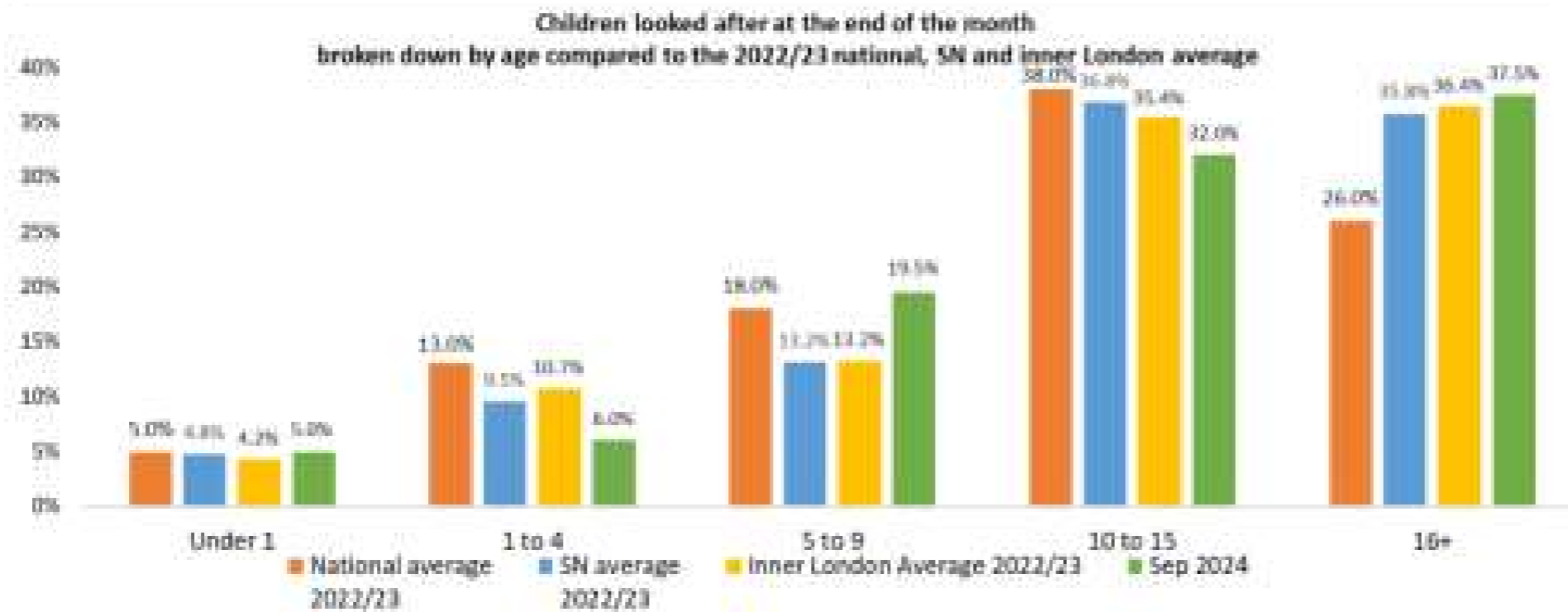
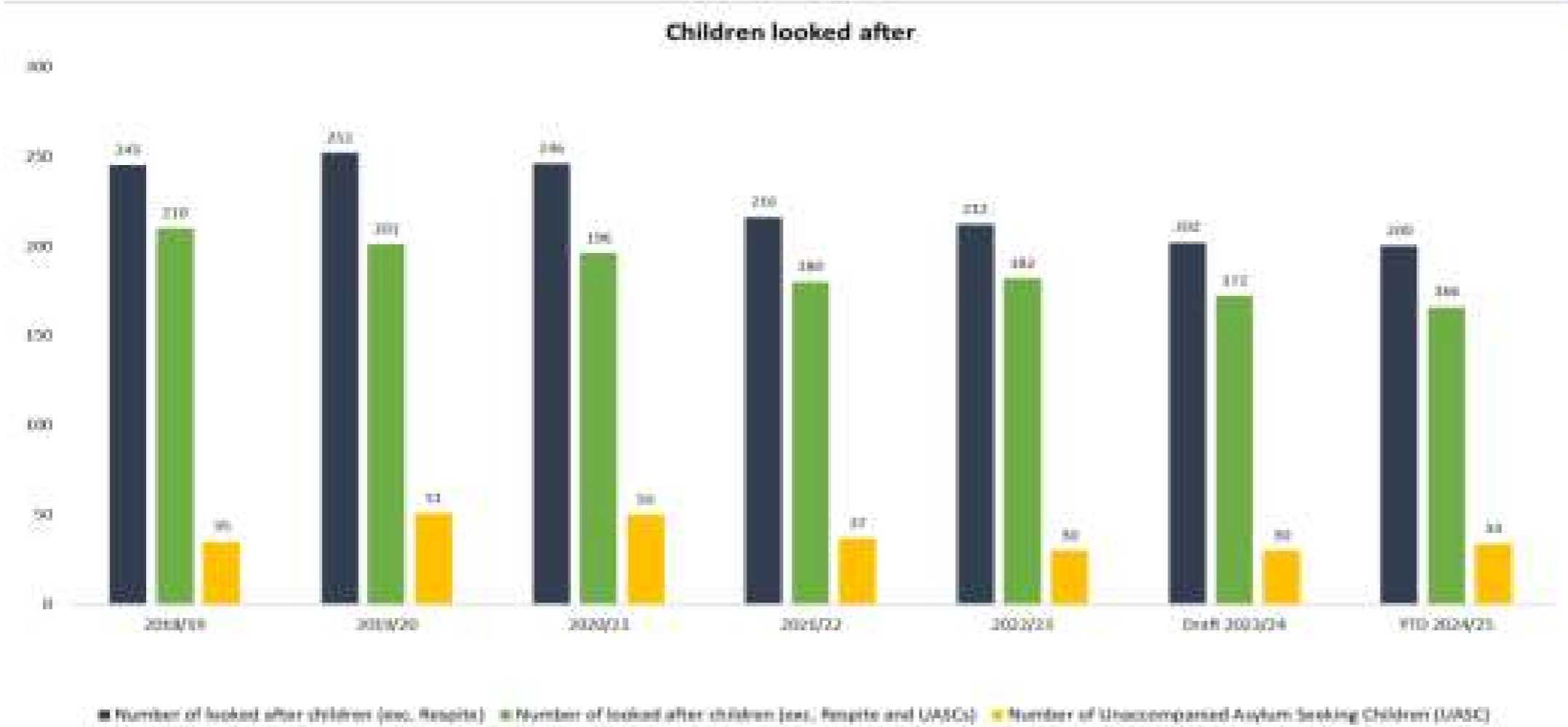
**Summary of net forecast outturn variances
(month 6 2024/25)**

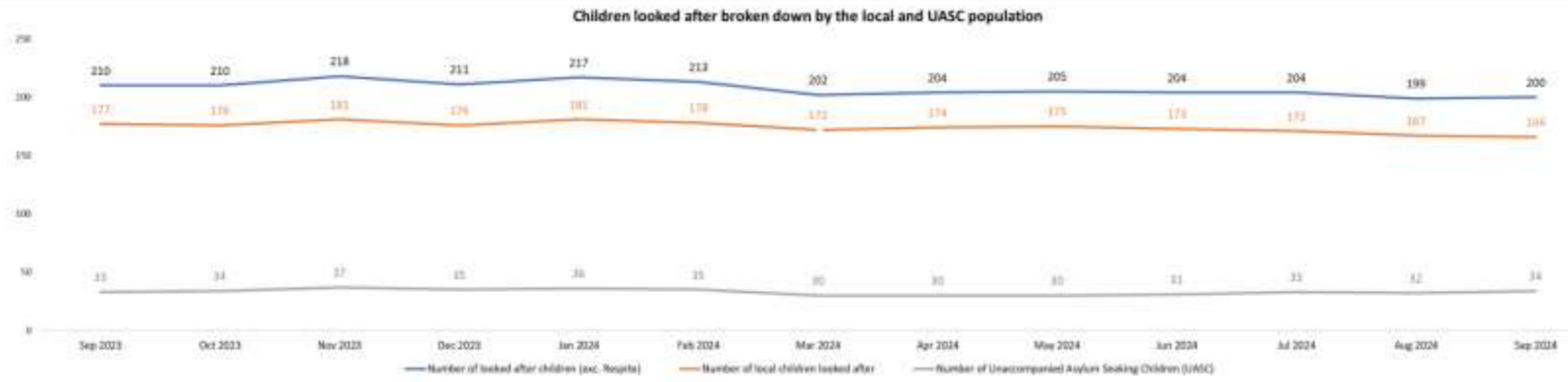
Directorate	Budget	Forecast Outturn
	£m	£m
People	133.697	5.735
Place	32.734	7.783
Housing Solutions	13.665	6.353
Finance and Corporate Services	14.537	0.006
Total Directorates:	194.632	19.877
Centrally Managed Budgets	29.062	(4.232)
Total General Fund Services:	223.694	15.645
Corporately held Contingencies		(9.000)
Sub Total		6.645
Release of one-off Collection Fund surpluses		(3.200)
Total		3.445

Key Activities Data - Social Care



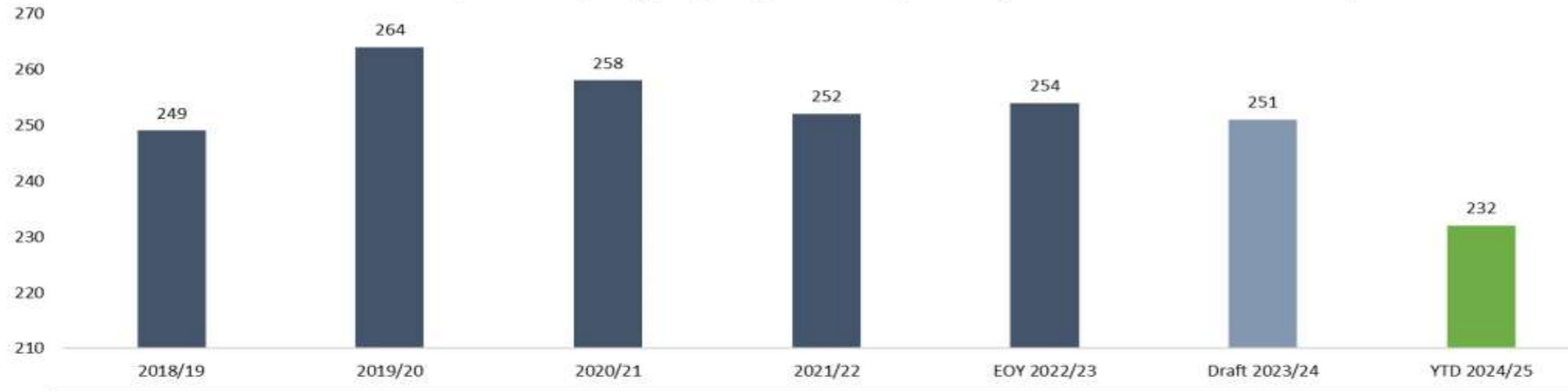
Key Activity Data -Children's Services and Education



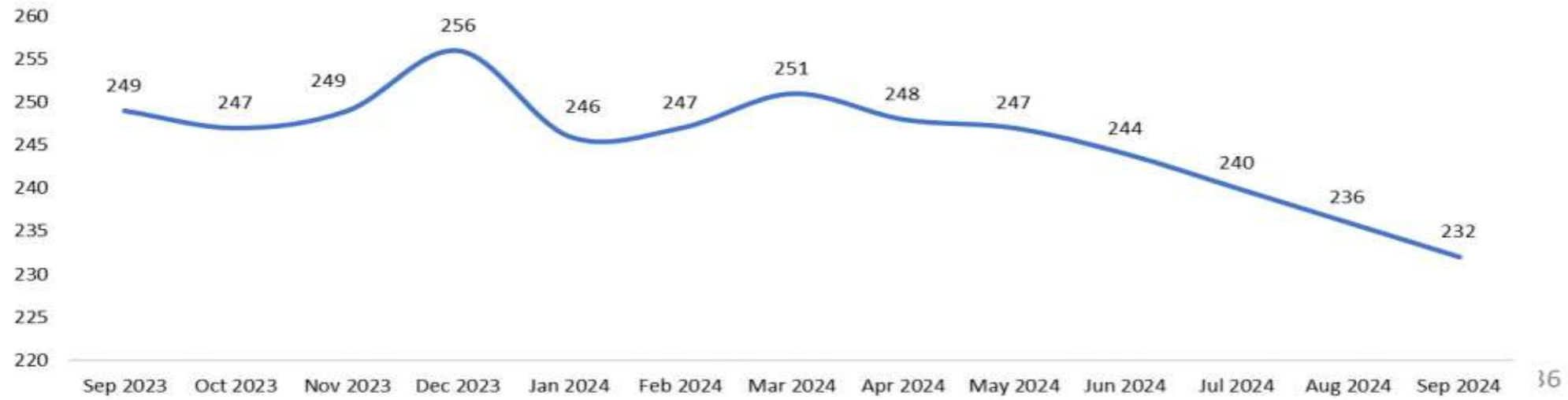


Care experienced young people

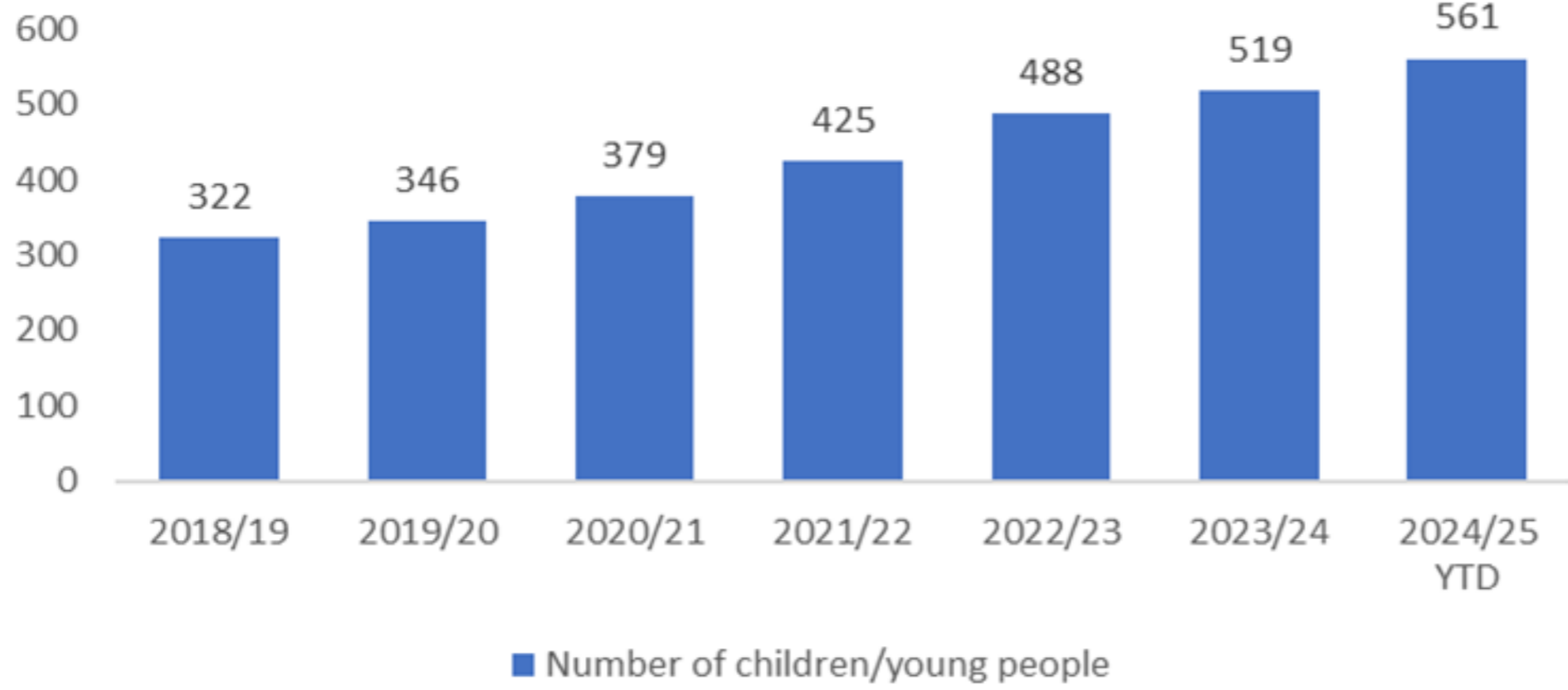
Number of care experienced young people aged 17 to 25 (relevant, former relevant and allocated)



Number of care experienced young people aged 17 to 25 per month (relevant, former relevant and allocated)



Children and young people receiving travel assistance



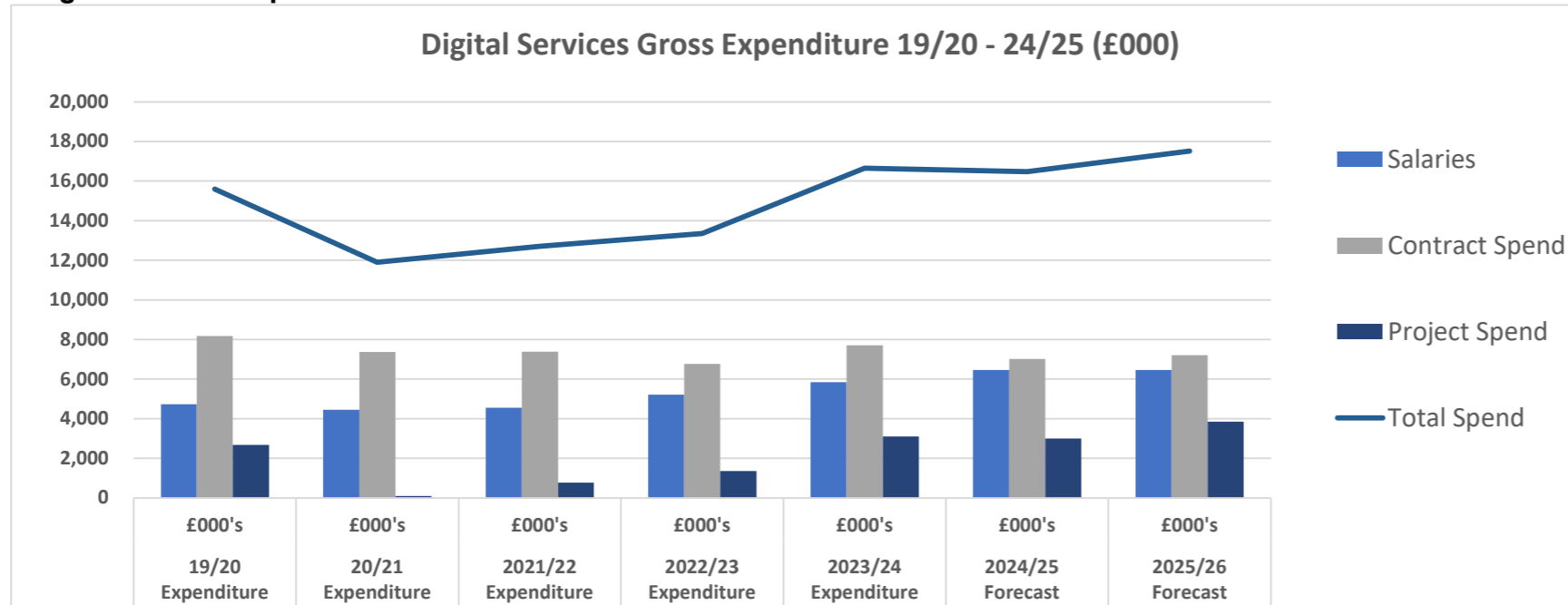
Place Department - Unit Costs and Trend Analysis

Service Area	Service	Unit Measure	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Notes
			2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	
Parks & Cemeteries	Parks Grounds Maintenance Cost - Per Hectare	£	21,250	21,958	22,728	23,661	24,491	Annual inflationary increases
Parks & Cemeteries	Cemeteries Grounds Maintenance Cost - Per Hectare	£	18,898	19,226	19,901	20,721	21,448	Annual inflationary increases
Parks & Cemeteries	Number of trees planted - parks (trees 2-3m+ when planted)	No.	104	220	76	160	100	Number of standard trees planted. A combination of replacements, donated and additional canopy cover trees as part of the emerging Tree Strategy 2024-2029
Parks & Cemeteries	Number of trees planted - parks (trees 0.3-0.6m when planted)	No.	1,810	3,400	2,125	2,000	2,000	Number of tree whips planted in parks and open spaces
Parks & Cemeteries	Leisure Centres - Number of Visits	No.	262,810	262,810	396,000	408,000	416,160	Reduced visits in 2021/22 due to the continued impact of the COVID pandemic across the wider leisure industry. Visits are forecast to return to pre-pandemic levels
Waste Disposal	General waste tonnages collected per annum	tonnes	55,435	52,853	51,803	49,896	47,900	Targeting to convert 4% of general waste tonnages into recycling from 2025/26
Waste Disposal	General waste tonnages collected - annual movement	%	0%	-5%	-2%	-4%	-4%	
Waste Disposal	Recycling tonnages collected per annum	tonnes	12,030	11,149	11,950	12,919	14,915	
Waste Disposal	Recycling tonnages collected - annual movement	%	-4%	-7%	7%	8%	15%	
Building Control	Number of chargeable jobs	No.	408	465	352	450	450	Difficult to predict future number of jobs due to continuing macroeconomic uncertainty
Public Lighting	Public lighting maintenance cost - per column	£	24.62	22.56	27.34	27.44	28.13	Annual inflationary increases
Highway Maintenance	Carriageways and Footways maintenance cost - Per KM	£	12,441	14,178	18,926	15,289	15,671	Reduced spend in 2021/22 due to ongoing impact of COVID pandemic
Libraries	Visits to libraries	No.	440,106	625,581	723,491	790,000	820,000	Library usage is predicted to increase based on increased engagement with the public and stakeholders as part of the H&F Cultural Strategy
Libraries	Cost Per Visit (£)	£	5.95	5.87	5.55	5.06	4.88	
Libraries	No. of physical items issued	No.	173,677	290,079	296,330	325,000	330,000	
Libraries	Active members	No.	13,701	20,465	20,418	23,000	24,000	

Digital Services Expenditure

Type of Spend	19/20 Expenditure	20/21 Expenditure	2021/22 Expenditure	2022/23 Expenditure	2023/24 Expenditure	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Forecast
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Salaries	4,730	4,443	4,555	5,209	5,848	6,458	6,455
Contract Spend	8,178	7,370	7,382	6,779	7,714	7,015	7,207
Subtotal	12,908	11,813	11,937	11,988	13,562	13,473	13,662
Project Spend	2,688	93	768	1,363	3,091	3,002	3,852
Total Spend	15,596	11,906	12,705	13,351	16,653	16,475	17,514

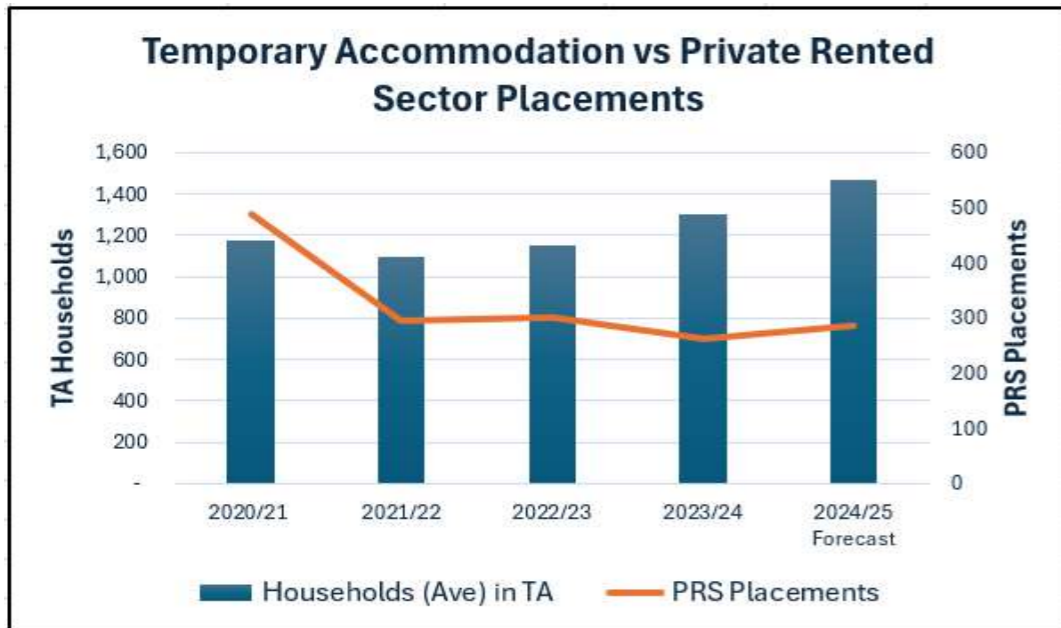
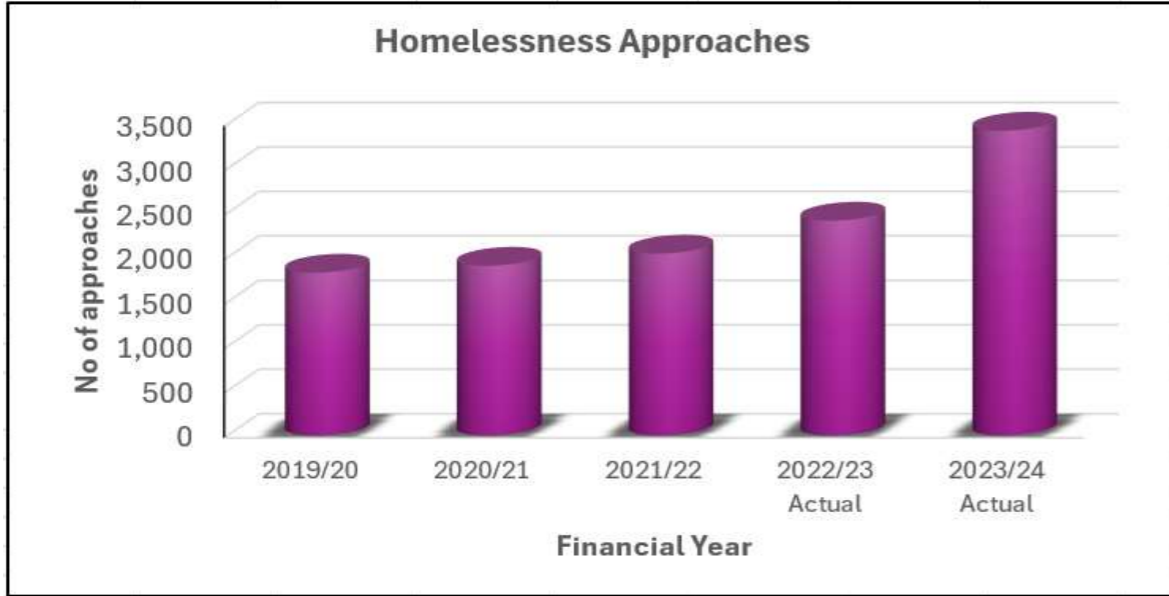
Digital Services Spend Chart



The salaried expenditure of the service reflects an in-house delivery model since the novation of contracts and staff to the Council from the Hammersmith and Fulham Bridge Partnership (HFBP), and disaggregation from shared services with Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster Councils. A further £600k was moved from contract spend to staffing in 2024/25 as a result of the new Desktop Services team moving in house. The increase in contract spend in 2025/26 is due to addition of contract inflation that has been factored into the 2025/26 budget.

The new desktop services strategy is underway, with new devices being rolled out across the Council with project spend included in 23/24 and 24/25. Investment to move to a modern cloud base from 23/24 onwards is continued into 24/25 as are ongoing investments in cybersecurity. This aligns with the Council's Digital and Information strategy and provides a modern platform that is agile, easily scalable and future proof, as well as with more cost effective technical services. Project spend in 25/26 also includes investment in automation technologies as the Council looks to utilise advances in technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Robotic Process Automation and workflow automation to improve the experience for residents accessing Council services and generate financial savings.

Housing Solutions trend data



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.

5 February 2025

- MTFS / Budget

6 May 2025

- Drugs Strategy
 - HR Update
 - PAC Chairs Update
-

Items to be scheduled

- Corporate Performance
- Affordable and flexible childcare in H&F
- Women's safety
- AI Adoption and Governance (update when projects have been scaled-up)
- Co-production activity in Finance and Corporate Services (annual update)