

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Policy and Oversight Board Minutes



Tuesday 6 May 2025

PRESENT

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

Other Councillors

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform)

Officers

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

Nicola Ellis (Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services)

Mary Lamont (Assistant Director, People & Talent)

David Abbott (Head of Governance)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nikos Souslous and 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 5 February 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. WORKFORCE STRATEGY - UPDATE

Nicola Ellis (Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services) and Mary Lamont (Assistant Director, People & Talent) introduced the report that provided an update on the Council's commitment to embedding an inclusive culture through recruitment,

internal development, progression and retention of key skills aligned to the Council's overall objectives and continually improving the employer value proposition.

Mary Lamont gave a presentation on the report and then took questions from members.

Councillor Jacolyn Daly noted that the reported turnover figure of 10.22% seemed positive and asked if there was a further breakdown per department to see if they had lower or higher than average turnover. Mary Lamont said Resource Management Board monitored turnover closely on a monthly basis and she could provide the information after the meeting.

ACTION: Mary Lamont

Councillor Daly asked if the Council collected 'soft' metrics on staff around satisfaction with pay, wellbeing, and social conscience. Mary Lamont said the wider staff survey looked at those elements and departments did their own 'pulse' surveys. She said she could share those questions with members. She added that wellbeing was really important to the organisations, with wellbeing a key part of the one-to-one conversations managers should be having with staff.

ACTION: Mary Lamont

Councillor Daly asked how the metrics fed into the workforce strategy? Mary Lamont said the datasets and the workforce strategy they informed were discussed monthly at Resource Management Board to ensure the feedback was continuous.

The Chair asked if officers had information about length of service across the entire workforce. Mary Lamont said that data was tracked and she could share it after the meeting.

ACTION: Mary Lamont

Councillor Natalia Perez asked about the challenges around recruitment for roles such as social workers and if the Council has seen a positive impact from these policies. Mary Lamont said being one of 32 London boroughs meant many areas of recruitment were very competitive. But H&F had a very positive attraction rate due to the initiatives the Council was running and positive word of mouth.

Councillor Perez asked about how the various accreditations mentioned translated into support for members of staff. Mary Lamont said the Council had regular 'Wellbeing Wednesday' sessions that covered a range of subjects. Occupational Health were invited to speak with staff. There were also staff support groups that met regularly to discuss these issues – and an employee assistance programme that covered a wide range of wellbeing issues.

Councillor Perez asked if there were exit interviews when staff left and if so, what did the Council do with that information. Mary Lamont said there were exit interviews but they were not mandatory. The data from them was taken to Resource Management Board to look at any emerging themes, gaps, and learning points.

The Chair asked what the main reason for people moving on was. Mary Lamont said the majority of leavers were moving on for another job opportunity.

Councillor Rory Vaughan asked, in terms of recruiting and retaining staff, what were people attracted to. Mary Lamont said it was a combination of the benefits and the work the Council did. She spoke with many of the new people joining the workforce through the corporate induction programme and people were excited to work for the borough. She also noted that the element of flexible and hybrid working helped.

Councillor Vaughan asked what points was the Council putting in job adverts to attract people. Mary Lamont said they included a section about the exciting things going on in the borough, the 'total reward' benefits, and generous pension and annual leave.

Councillor Vaughan asked how officers were measuring and benchmarking the quality of management across the organisation. Mary Lamont said a new online appraisal process was launching soon which would help officers to understand management competencies, objectives, and performance through streamlined, centralised reporting. She added that this would help with skills needs analysis to further develop managers and staff.

Councillor Vaughan asked how the Council measured co-production training and how well it had been embedded across the organisation. Mary Lamont said the first phase of training had taken place and an analysis of the impact would take place before the next phase.

Councillor Vaughan requested the following:

- He would like the Council to be more rigorous about exit interviews
- Data on management and how it could be fed in to training and workforce strategy
- More information on the impact of co-production training across the Council.

ACTIONS: Mary Lamont

Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked how many of the Council's new starters were local residents. She raised concerns about the difficulties of living, or staying, in an expensive borough and asked if there was anything the Council could do to mitigate that.

Mary Lamont said she could provide workforce data following the meeting. She noted that officers were aware many of the workforce were not local but they were trying to attract more residents.

ACTION: Mary Lamont

Councillor Rowbottom noted that a quarter of the supported employment roles were with the Council and asked if we were fully utilising the major corporate organisations in the borough. Mary Lamont said People and Talent were working very closely with the Economy team on this to promote the scheme. She said there was more to do to bring in more external employers.

The Chair asked if the cost of living and housing came up regularly in exit interviews. Mary Lamont said it wasn't a common theme.

The Chair asked how the online appraisal system would work and if that meant the end of face-to-face appraisals. Mary Lamont clarified that the tool was online, but managers were still expected to have face-to-face meetings with staff. The online aspect was the system used to record the data and give the Council the ability to analyse data across the organisation.

Councillor Vaughan asked if People and Talent were involved in worked linked to the Industrial Strategy, e.g. the pathway bond and routes for local young people. Mary Lamont said there were ongoing conversations about opportunities linked to the Industrial Strategy.

The Chair noted the Council was an age friendly employer and asked what that looked like in practice. Mary Lamont said the Council was accredited a couple of years ago. She said the Council offered early retirement, phased retirement, pensions workshops, and recognised long service.

Councillor Daly asked about the ageing workforce and people looking for roles in their 50s and 60s. Mary Lamont said it was important the Council was inclusive and recruited according to competencies.

The Chair asked about staff safety. She noted she was on the Board of a voluntary sector organisation and this issue had been raised there too. Aggression incidents seemed higher now and it had been flagged as risk at Audit Committee. Mary Lamont said staff safety was incredibly important to the Council and there were a range of mechanisms for staff to raise concerns. She said the organisation would not put people at risk and a number of initiatives had been put in place with the Corporate Health and Safety team to mitigate these issues.

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) said the Council could not deliver quality public services without a top team behind them, which was what H&F had, thanks in part to the initiatives discussed at the meeting. He said it was important that staff were performing well, felt included, and broadly represented the borough. That came together to form an effective workforce.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the item and summarised the actions that had been raised.

RESOLVED

1. That the committee notes the progress made and plans going forward.

5. ANNUAL REPORT OF POLICY AND OVERSIGHT BOARD AND THE POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEES 2024/25

The Chair introduced the report outlining the annual report of the activities of the scrutiny function in Hammersmith & Fulham. She noted that after the meeting the report would go on to Annual Council on 21 May.

Councillor Rory Vaughan welcomed the report and highlighted some of the key issues discussed at the Economy, Arts, Sports, and Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee including a presentation from the Leader on UpStream London and a cross-cutting theme presentation on co-production in Public Realm. The Chair noted that the Board made an early commitment to have regular co-production updates and said it was important to continue them.

Councillor Natalia Perez highlighted the positive partnership working at the Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee with key stakeholders like the NHS and Healthwatch. She noted a report from Action on Disability on disabled people's experiences of the NHS, which addressed concerns and made recommendations to mitigate those challenges.

Councillor Jacolyn Daly discussed the Greening the Grey item that had come to the Board, noting it related to all of the Committees in different ways. She felt there were a lot of opportunities across the borough and the Council's housing estates to make progress.

She also highlighted recent successes with the Green Investment Fund and suggested an update on these areas. The Chair said a follow-up report on the Greening the Grey would come to a future meeting.

Councillor Rowan Ree noted the rain garden on King Street and four new grey gardens on Edith Road. He added that the Council was on the third iteration of the Green Investment Fund this year with over £2m of external investment into the scheme. He said the Council planned to continue this in future.

RESOLVED

1. That the Annual Report was received and noted.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board's draft work programme was presented for discussion and noting.

The Chair noted that an additional meeting was planning in July which was scheduled to receive a Cost of Living update and a report on Corporate Performance. She noted that the Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee had requested an item on the safety of women and girls, so asked that it was taken off the Board's work programme to avoid duplication. She also noted an item on the Transformation Programme would be scheduled for September or November.

Councillor Jacolyn Daly said she was exploring an item on civic contracts for the Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee and noted there was overlap with other committees including Social Inclusion and Community Safety. She said she would discuss a potential joint meeting with the other Chairs.

RESOLVED

1. The Board noted the draft work programme.

7. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The following dates of future meetings were noted:

- 16 July 2025
- 17 September 2025
- 24 November 2025
- 4 February 2026
- 29 April 2026

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 8.30 pm

Chair

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