

COUNCIL MINUTES

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 10 JULY 2024



PRESENT

The Mayor Councillor Patricia Quigley
Deputy Mayor Councillor Daryl Brown

Councillors:

Jose Afonso	Lisa Homan	Rowan Ree
Aliya Afzal-Khan	Laura Janes	Lucy Richardson
Adronie Alford	Andrew Jones	Alex Sanderson
Stala Antoniadou	Alex Karmel	Max Schmid
Jackie Borland	Bora Kwon	Asif Siddique
Trey Campbell-Simon	Adam Peter Lang	Nikos Souslous
Ben Coleman	Amanda Lloyd-Harris	Dominic Stanton
Liz Collins	Ross Melton	Sally Taylor
Stephen Cowan	Omid Miri	Nicole Trehay
Jacolyn Daly	Genevieve Nwaogbe	Frances Umeh
Andrew Dinsmore	Adrian Pascu-Tulbure	Mercy Umeh
Wesley Harcourt	Ashok Patel	Rory Vaughan
Rebecca Harvey	Natalia Perez	
Sharon Holder	Zarar Qayyum	

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Patrick Walsh, Florian Chevoppe-Verdier, Helen Rowbottom, Paul Alexander, Emma Apthorp, Ann Rosenberg, Ben Coleman, Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler, and David Morton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

7.05pm – RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Annual and Special Council meetings held on 22 May 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. MAYOR'S/CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor's Charities for 2024/25

The Mayor announced that, in addition to Fulham Reach Boat Club, Action on Disability, and Solidarity Sports, she would also be appointing H&F Foodbank as one of her charities for the Mayoral year.

5. YOUTH COUNCIL

The Mayor invited members of the Youth Council to address the meeting. Albi Fenner (Youth Mayor), Precisa Getsevich (Deputy Youth Mayor), and Anushka Sharma (Youth Councillor) gave a short verbal presentation on their manifesto and goals for 2024/25.

Speeches on the item were made by Councillor Alex Sanderson (for the Administration) and Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan (for the Opposition).

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (20 MINUTES)

The Mayor thanked the residents who submitted questions. Question 2 was taken in the meeting. The Mayor explained that as the second questioner was unable to attend they would receive a written response. The questions and responses can be found at Appendix 1.

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Review of the Constitution

7.20pm – The Mayor noted that an amendment to the report had been published and circulated prior to the meeting.

The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were put to the vote:

FOR	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

7.20pm – RESOLVED

That Full Council noted:

1. The amended composition and new appointments made by the Leader to the Executive:
 - Deputy Leader (with responsibility for Children and Education) – Councillor Alex Sanderson
 - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health – Councillor Bora Kwon
 - Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Skills – Councillor Zarar Qayyum
2. The creation of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Skills post and deletion of the Cabinet Member for Civic Renewal post.
3. The creation of a new Lead Member role (H&F Industrial Strategy Ambassador) – Councillor Helen Rowbottom.
4. The amended Executive Members responsibilities and portfolios at appendix 1.
5. The appointment of Councillor Bora Kwon to the Health and Wellbeing Board (Committee membership change).
6. The Local Government Organisations and Outside Bodies appointments outlined in paragraph 8 below made by the Leader.
7. The changes to senior officer job titles detailed in paragraph 14 of the report.
8. The Monitoring Officer will make the changes to the Constitution to reflect the recommendations of the report.

8. SPECIAL MOTIONS

8.1 Special Motion 1 - The Ethical Implementation and Use of Artificial Intelligence in Hammersmith and Fulham

The special motion was withdrawn.

8.2 Special Motion 2 - Climate Change

The special motion was withdrawn.

8.3 Special Motion 3 - H&F Law Enforcement Team

The special motion was withdrawn.

8.4 Special Motion 4 - Council-Owned Properties Leaseholders' Repair Bills

7.30pm – Councillor Adronie Alford, seconded by Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure, the special motion in their names.

“This Council notes with concerns the repair bills charged to residents in Council-owned properties across the borough, including at Verulam House where leaseholders have received bills of up to £21,500 for replacement windows an independent surveyor deemed to be unnecessary. This Council vows to protect leasehold residents against being hit with inflated bills for works that aren't needed and calls upon the Administration to ensure fair treatment for Council leaseholders.”

Speeches on the motion were made by Councillors Alford and Pascu-Tulbure (for the Opposition).

Under Standing Order 15(e)(6), Councillor Frances Umeh moved, seconded by Councillor Max Schmid, an amendment:

“The council is committed to providing the best possible homes to council tenants and leaseholders. As a landlord the council has a moral and legal duty to ensure our homes are safe and kept in good repair.

The council notes that it is putting right H&F's repairs and planned maintenance, tackling a backlog created through a long period of underinvestment under the Conservative administration. Across H&F, the council is undertaking a £1.4million-a-week refurbishment programme of its homes – including required upgrades to cladding and windows, roofing, structural repairs, electrical infrastructure, lift upgrades and fire safety enhancements such as fire doors, sprinklers and evacuation systems.

It is further noted that under longstanding Right to Buy legislation introduced by the Thatcher government, leaseholders are legally required to contribute towards the cost of improvements according to the terms of their lease. Hammersmith & Fulham's last Conservative administration charged leaseholders under this legislation.

It is notable that the Borough's Labour administration has acted to reduce leaseholder charges despite the challenges of rampant inflation brought about in large part by the mismanagement of the national economy over the last fourteen years.

This Council is strongly sympathetic with leaseholders facing large bills that improve their homes. For that reason, it offers support with repayment support including interest-free payment plans that extend longer than many other councils.”

Councillor Frances Umeh made a speech on the amendment (for the Administration). Councillor Adronie Alford made a point of personal explanation (for the Opposition).

The amendment was then put to the vote:

FOR	35
AGAINST	9
NOT VOTING	0

The amendment was declared **CARRIED**.

A speech on the amended motion was made by Councillor Pascu-Tulbure (for the Opposition).

Councillor Alford then made a speech winding up the debate before the amended motion was put to the vote:

FOR	35
AGAINST	9
NOT VOTING	0

The amended motion was declared **CARRIED**.

7.54pm – RESOLVED

The council is committed to providing the best possible homes to council tenants and leaseholders. As a landlord the council has a moral and legal duty to ensure our homes are safe and kept in good repair.

The council notes that it is putting right H&F's repairs and planned maintenance, tackling a backlog created through a long period of underinvestment under the Conservative administration. Across H&F, the council is undertaking a £1.4million-a-week refurbishment programme of its homes – including required upgrades to cladding and windows, roofing, structural repairs, electrical infrastructure, lift upgrades and fire safety enhancements such as fire doors, sprinklers and evacuation systems.

It is further noted that under longstanding Right to Buy legislation introduced by the Thatcher government, leaseholders are legally required to contribute towards the cost of improvements according to the terms of their lease. Hammersmith & Fulham's last Conservative administration charged leaseholders under this legislation.

It is notable that the Borough's Labour administration has acted to reduce leaseholder charges despite the challenges of rampant inflation brought about in large part by the mismanagement of the national economy over the last fourteen years.

This Council is strongly sympathetic with leaseholders facing large bills that improve their homes. For that reason, it offers support with repayment support including interest-free payment plans that extend longer than many other councils.

8.5 Special Motion 5 - UK Parliamentary Election

7.54pm – The Mayor noted that an amendment to the special motion from the Administration had been published and circulated prior to the meeting.

Councillor Max Schmid moved, seconded by Councillor Nikos Souslous, the amended special motion in their names.

“The council notes the results of the general election on Thursday 4th July 2024 and congratulates Ben Coleman, Rupa Huq and Andy Slaughter, who each now represent residents in Hammersmith and Fulham in parliament.

The council expresses its sincere appreciation to all candidates who stood for election, as well as the police, Law Enforcement Team, council officers, and all staff involved in running the election. Their efforts strengthened our precious democracy.

The council resolves to work closely with its Members of Parliament and the new Labour Government to deliver a stronger, safer, and kinder Hammersmith and Fulham for all residents and businesses.”

Speeches on the amended motion were made by Councillors Souslous, Harvey, Lang, Vaughan, and Antoniadis (for the Administration) – and Councillors Dinsmore, Pascu-Tulbure, Lloyd-Harris, and Karmel (for the Opposition).

The amended motion was then put to the vote:

FOR	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The amended motion was declared **CARRIED**.

At the end of the item, the Mayor took a moment to thank the officers and staff for their hard work on the election. She also thanked all of the candidates for taking part, congratulated the winners, and wished them the best of luck in their roles. Finally, the Mayor gave thanks to Greg Hands who had served as the Member of Parliament for Chelsea and Fulham for 19 years. She wished him the best in his future endeavours.

8.20pm – RESOLVED

The council notes the results of the general election on Thursday 4th July 2024 and congratulates Ben Coleman, Rupa Huq and Andy Slaughter, who each now represent residents in Hammersmith and Fulham in parliament.

The council expresses its sincere appreciation to all candidates who stood for election, as well as the police, Law Enforcement Team, council officers, and all staff involved in running the election. Their efforts strengthened our precious democracy.

The council resolves to work closely with its Members of Parliament and the new Labour Government to deliver a stronger, safer, and kinder Hammersmith and Fulham for all residents and businesses.

9. INFORMATION REPORTS - TO NOTE

9.1 Annual Report of the Policy and Oversight Board and Policy and Accountability Committees 2023/24

8.22pm – The report was noted.

9.2 **Petitions Monitoring Report 2023/24**

8.22pm – The report was noted.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 8.22 pm

Mayor

Appendix 1 – Public Questions and Responses

Question 1

Question from Philip Jones, Resident:

What tools and metrics does the Council use to measure local critical need for low-cost social housing?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness, Councillor Frances Umeh (provided as a written response):

Hammersmith and Fulham Council has a range of tools and metrics to measure housing needs for general and social housing. These are considered below:

Housing Register

The main indicator of social housing need is the Hammersmith and Fulham Housing Register. The Register provides a list of individuals and families who qualify for social housing within the borough. To qualify, individuals and families must apply to join the register. Their applications are then assessed in line with our Allocation Scheme and prioritised according to four priority 'Bands'.

The Allocations Scheme also has provision for awarding medical priority. This is in cases where a household has health or welfare needs which can be alleviated by rehousing into low-cost social housing.

Certain applicants do not qualify for social housing in Hammersmith and Fulham. This includes households without 5 years local residency, homeowners, and applicants with an income above the top of the Home Buy income range.

As with other Local Authorities in London and England, social housing need significantly exceeds social housing supply. As of 9 July 2024, there were 2,651 applicants on the housing register. Over the last five years, the Council has allocated an average of 598 social housing homes each year, including homes provided by Registered Social Providers.

The council also uses other indicators of housing need to inform service delivery, including homelessness applications and the Local Plan.

Homelessness

Homelessness is the primary indicator of acute housing need in Hammersmith and Fulham. The main drivers of homelessness are poverty, inequality the cost-of-living crisis, the reduction in the supply of affordable private rented housing – because of policy reforms and mortgage interest increases – and sustained cuts to public services, including Housing Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payment. Over the same period, progressive homeless policy reforms, including the Homelessness reduction Act and Domestic Abuse Act, have strengthened the rights of homeless people, notably single homeless people and survivors of domestic abuse.

The homelessness indicator is used to shape the development and delivery of private rented housing and temporary accommodation services – as well as inform the implementation of Hammersmith and Fulham's Allocation Scheme, such as Annual and Local Lettings Plans.

Local Plan

Hammersmith and Fulham's current target is to deliver a minimum of 1,609 additional homes a year. This is to be achieved in partnership with landowners, developers and other social housing providers.

The additional homes target comes from the collaborative working with the Mayor of London on the London Plan 2021 and the evidence that informs London's housing needs and land availability.

H&F's Local Plan also sets out proposals to increase the supply and improve the mix of affordable housing to help achieve more sustainable communities in the borough.

The Plan sets the strategic target of 50% affordable homes, delivered on site when a scheme delivers 11+ self-contained homes.

Further, the policy states that 60% of the affordable housing proportion should be "*for social or affordable renting, especially for families...*" This reflects the shortage of family-sized dwellings available to the Council's social housing register.

Policy HO5 'Housing Mix' goes on to detail this further. It states that *for social and affordable rented housing approx.:*

- 10% of homes to be 1 bedroom:
- 40% to be 2 bedrooms
- 35% to be 3 bedrooms, and
- 15% to be 4+ bedrooms

The Local Plan policies for housing were informed by a Strategic Housing Market Assessment and an Affordable housing viability assessment. The background data for these studies was derived from sources including the council's Housing Register which provides data on social housing need/demand. This register is supplemented by information from the Homelessness service and use of Temporary Accommodation and close working with social care for supported housing provision.

Question 2

Question from Diego Bertoni, Resident:

I'm the Chairman of the Tenant's and Resident's Association at Verulam House. (LBHF is the Freeholder in our block of flats.). We are facing a huge bill of £18k-£22k per flat for windows replacement and associated works. The Council has not performed a survey before starting this works and is not able to provide the signed contract in relation to such project. This would be unacceptable in private environment: incurring £1.1M expenses without a proper survey on the need of works and proper documental evidence. How is the council going to remedy to such poor approach to major works for Verulam House?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness, Councillor Frances Umeh:

Across H&F, we are currently undertaking a £1.4million-a-week refurbishment programme of our homes – including required upgrades to cladding and windows,

roofing, structural repairs, electrical infrastructure, lift upgrades and fire safety enhancements such as fire doors, sprinklers and evacuation systems.

Keeping residents safe in their homes is our number one priority. We also have a legal duty as a landlord to ensure our buildings are safe and kept in good repair for all residents.

This includes having the best fire safety protocols and required improvements to the highest standard, in line with the important new Building Safety rules that have been introduced after the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower.

The council undertook a survey of the external façade of its Higher Risk Buildings as defined by the Building Safety Act which included Verulam House. The survey confirmed combustible cladding on the external façade of Verulam House so we are replacing with non-combustible A1 rated panels to improve the fire safety of the building and make it compliant.

Our asset information also indicated the windows were at their end of life. The windows were installed approximately in 1998/99, before the Government introduced the FENSA scheme in 2002 which ensures all windows are compliant with building regulations. We subsequently requested a sample window condition survey alongside further analysis. The survey showed the windows to generally be in poor condition.

At Verulam House, we held a competitive tender process and had an independent external consultant confirm that we were giving all residents value for money with the required improvement works. This has also been done by combining essential fire safety works with the upgrade of windows and ancillary works.

Officers engaged with leaseholders over a series of meetings before the works started including the chance to review project documents. Due to Right to Buy legislation, under the terms of their lease, leaseholders are required to contribute towards the cost of these required improvement works.

We recognise the concerns of some leaseholders about the costs of the required works. The council strongly empathises with leaseholders facing large bills to improve their homes and have established ways to help support with repayment included extended interest-free repayment plans. Officers have invited all those leaseholders to meet with them individually to discuss their personal circumstances and offer an appropriate repayment option plan options to suit the individual leaseholder circumstances.