

# **COUNCIL MINUTES**

**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2025**



## PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Patricia Quigley  
Deputy Mayor – Councillor Daryl Brown

### Councillors:

Jose Afonso	Rebecca Harvey	Rowan Ree
Paul Alexander	Sharon Holder	Alex Sanderson
Adronie Alford	Lisa Homan	Max Schmid
Stala Antoniadou	Laura Janes	Asif Siddique
Jackie Borland	Adam Peter Lang	Nikos Souslous
Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler	Amanda Lloyd-Harris	Dominic Stanton
Trey Campbell-Simon	Ross Melton	Sally Taylor
Florian Chevoppe-Verdier	Omid Miri	Nicole Trehay
Liz Collins	Genevieve Nwaogbe	Frances Umeh
Stephen Cowan	Adrian Pascu-Tulbure	Mercy Umeh
Jacolyn Daly	Ashok Patel	Rory Vaughan
Andrew Dinsmore	Natalia Perez	
Wesley Harcourt	Zarar Qayyum	

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bora Kwon, Andrew Jones, Lucy Richardson, Patrick Walsh, Ann Rosenberg, Helen Rowbottom, Sally Taylor, Aliya Afzal-Khan, Alex Karmel and David Morton.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Laura Janes (who entered the room at 8.24pm).

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. MINUTES**

#### **7.08pm – RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 October 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

#### **4. MAYOR'S/CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

##### **Resignation of Councillors**

The Mayor noted the resignations of Ben Coleman MP and Emma Apthorp, who served as ward councillors for Lillie and Hammersmith Broadway respectively, from the Council and thanked them for their hard work and service to their constituencies. Councillors Stephen Cowan, Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler and the Mayor made speeches of thanks.

##### **New Year Honours 2025**

The Mayor extended the Council's congratulations to the following people who were recognised in the New Year Honours List for their outstanding contributions:

- Professor Frank Kelly at Imperial College London who was awarded a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for his work fighting toxic air pollution and his work with H&F as part of our Better Air, Better Health partnership with Imperial.
- Community organiser Sharon Tomlin who received a British Empire Medal (BEM) for bringing communities together with her work at Sobus, an organisation providing support for local charities, community groups and social enterprises.

Councillors Stephen Cowan and Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler made speeches thanking them for their hard work and service to the community.

##### **Deaths of Former Councillors**

With great sadness, the Mayor informed the Council of the death of former Conservative Councillor Sonya Hilton. Speeches of remembrance were made by Councillors Amanda Lloyd-Harris, Adronie Alford, and Stephen Cowan.

With much regret, the Mayor informed the Council of the death of former Labour Councillor Louanne Tranchell. Speeches of remembrance were made by Councillors Adronie Alford, Wesley Harcourt and the Mayor.

The Mayor then led the Council in a minute of silence in memory of Sonya Hilton and Louanne Tranchell.

#### **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (20 MINUTES)**

7.36pm - The Mayor thanked the residents who submitted questions. Questions 2 and 5 were taken in the meeting. The Mayor explained that any questions not addressed in the meeting would receive written responses. The questions and responses can be found at Appendix 1.

#### **6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **6.1 Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26**

7.44pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, Councillor Rowan Ree.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillors Adam Peter Lang, Jacolyn Daly, and Rowan Ree (for the Administration) and Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler (for the Opposition).

The report and recommendations were put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>UNANIMOUS</b>
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

### **7.58pm – RESOLVED**

That Full Council approved the following recommendations:

1. That the Council Tax Support Scheme in operation in 2024/2025 (included at Appendix 1) shall continue in 2025/2026.
2. That the Council shall apply the annual uprating of allowances, applicable amounts and income, set out in the DWP Housing Benefit circular, to the Council Tax Support scheme for 2025/2026.

## **6.2 Council Tax Base and Collection Rate 2025/26 and Delegation of the Business Rates Estimate**

7.58pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, Councillor Rowan Ree.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillors Florian Chevoppe-Verdier and Rowan Ree (for the Administration).

The report and recommendations were put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>UNANIMOUS</b>
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

### **8.08pm – RESOLVED**

That Full Council approved the following for the financial year 2025/26:

1. The estimated numbers of properties for each Valuation Band as set out in this report.

2. An estimated collection rate of 97.0%.
3. The Council Tax Base of 88,304 Band “D” equivalent properties.
4. The delegation of authority to the Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Services to determine the business rates tax base for 2025/26.

### **6.3 Hammersmith & Fulham Council's new Air Quality Action Plan 2025-30**

8.08pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for noting by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Alex Sanderson.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillors Sharon Holder and Stala Antoniades (for the Administration) and Councillor Jose Afonso (for the Opposition).

#### **8.24pm – RESOLVED**

1. That Full Council noted and commented on the report.

### **6.4 Update on Upstream London: the vision for the next phase of the Council's Industrial Strategy**

8.24pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for noting by the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Skills, Councillor Zarar Qayyum.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillors Zarar Qayyum, Frances Umeh, Rory Vaughan and Stephen Cowan (for the Administration) and Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler (for the Opposition).

#### **8.48pm – RESOLVED**

1. That Full Council noted and commented on the report.

### **6.5 H&F Private Rented Sector Policy**

8.48pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for noting by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness, Councillor Frances Umeh.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillors Frances Umeh and Lisa Homan (for the Administration) and Councillor Adronie Alford (for the Opposition).

The Council adjourned for a short break from 8.59pm to 9.15pm.

#### **9.17pm – RESOLVED**

1. That Full Council noted and commented on the report.

## 6.6 Review of the Constitution

9.17pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>UNANIMOUS</b>
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

### 9.18pm – RESOLVED

1. That Full Council approved the updates to the Constitution detailed in Appendices 1 and 2.
2. That Full Council agreed the following changes to committee appointments:
  - Replace Councillor Zarar Qayyum with Councillor Jacolyn Daly on the Licensing Committee.
3. That Full Council agreed to delete the Lead Member for Flood Mitigation role.

## 6.7 Council Calendar of Meetings 2025/26

9.18pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>UNANIMOUS</b>
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

### 9.18pm – RESOLVED

1. That Full Council approved the 2025/26 Council calendar of meetings at Appendix 1.

## 6.8 Review of the Statement of Gambling Policy

9.18pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

Councillor Dominic Stanton made a speech on the report for the Opposition.

The report and recommendations were put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>UNANIMOUS</b>
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

### **9.22pm – RESOLVED**

1. To note that Appendix 8 is not for publication on the basis that it contains information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings as set out in paragraph 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
2. That the Council carefully considered and noted the responses to the consultation attached at Appendices 4 and 5.
3. That the Council approved the revised Statement of Gambling Policy 2025 – 2028 (Appendix 9) and associated Local Area Profile (Appendix 2).
4. That the Council agreed to retain an existing no casino resolution within the Council’s Statement of Gambling Policy although this can be withdrawn at any time.
5. That Section 6.9 of the proposed policy in line with the consultation responses be amended.

## **7. SPECIAL MOTIONS**

9.22pm – Councillor Max Schmid moved, seconded by Councillor Genevieve Nwaogbe, a motion under Standing Order 15(e)(3) to change the order of the special motions as follows: 3, 1, 2, 4 and 5.

The motion was agreed.

### **7.3 Special Motion 3 - The Future of Charing Cross Hospital**

9.23pm – Councillor Andrew Dinsmore moved, seconded by Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris, the special motion in their names.

*“This council calls on the Government to secure the future of Charing Cross Hospital for all our residents.”*

Speeches on the motion were made by Councillors Andrew Dinsmore and Amanda Lloyd-Harris (for the Opposition).

Under Standing Order 15(e)(6), Councillor Jacolyn Daly moved, seconded by Councillor Adam Peter Lang, an amendment:

*“Amend all after “This Council” and replace with:*

*... agrees the Labour administration and local Labour MPs have a proven record of fighting to secure the future of Charing Cross hospital. The Council recognises that the future of Charing Cross Hospital is secure and reaffirms that Hammersmith & Fulham’s Labour councillors and MPs will always defend it without fear or favour.*

*The Council recognises the dreadful state the former Conservative government left our National Health Service in - both locally and across our country. It notes that hospitals across the UK suffered chronic underinvestment which now requires billions of pounds to fix and make fit for purpose.*

*The Council remembers that on 25 May 2023, the Rt Hon Stephen Barclay MP, the Conservative Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, announced he had removed Charing Cross, Hammersmith and St Mary’s hospitals from the list of hospitals that were up to then a part of the New Hospital Programme announced in 2019 for rebuilding and refurbishment by 2030.*

*The Council recognises that from then on the Conservative government did not provide any plan, guarantee any funding or offer any date when the refurbishment of Charing Cross, Hammersmith or St Mary’s hospitals would begin - let alone be finished.*

*The Council therefore welcomes the Labour government’s announcement of a record £25 billion investment into our NHS and notes that Charing Cross Hospital has now been reinstated to the New Hospital Programme with pre-construction work to start in 2030 and the physical works beginning in 2035.*

*The Council understands the challenges faced by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, which runs Charing Cross, Hammersmith and St Mary’s hospitals. It pledges to work with them and our newly elected local MPs to protect and improve services, urgently refurbish our hospitals and defend our local NHS.*

*The Council remembers that until the Conservative government capitulated to the Labour Council’s campaign to save Charing Cross Hospital in 2019, Conservative MPs and Hammersmith & Fulham Conservative councillors had worked from 2013 to:*

- Demolish the current Charing Cross Hospital*
- Sell off most the Charing Cross Hospital site*
- Replace the current hospital with a small clinic no more than 13% the size of the current hospital*
- Re-brand the clinic as a “local hospital”*
- Replace the current A&E with an Urgent Care Clinic*
- Re-brand the Urgent Care Clinic a "Class 3 A&E"*
- Lose more than 300 and possibly all the acute care beds.*



*The Council recalls how, rather than tell residents that this was their actual plan, Conservative MPs and our local Conservative councillors falsely claimed they had “saved” Charing Cross Hospital – while knowing full well that calling a small new clinic Charing Cross would be no replacement for the hospital.*

*The Council also recalls that the previous Conservative MP for Chelsea and Fulham claimed on numerous occasions last year to have secured the funding for the refurbishment of Charing Cross Hospital when this was evidently not the case.*

*The Council agrees that the public have a right to be told the truth about what has happened and is happening with their local NHS. It therefore deplores the long record of deliberate attempts by Conservative MPs and councillors to mislead local people about Charing Cross Hospital.*

*This Council recognises the considerable body of evidence that proves people simply cannot trust the Conservatives with our NHS.”*

Speeches on the amendment were made by Councillors Jacolyn Daly, Adam Peter Lang, Natalia Perez, Rory Vaughan, Florian Chevoppe-Verdier and Stephen Cowan (for the Administration) and Councillors Adrian Pascu-Tulbure and Jose Afonso (for the Opposition).

The amendment was put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>27</b>
AGAINST	8
NOT VOTING	1

The amendment was declared **CARRIED**.

Councillor Dinsmore made a speech summing up the debate and the amended motion was put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>27</b>
AGAINST	8
NOT VOTING	1

The amended motion was declared **CARRIED**.

### **10.10pm – RESOLVED**

This Council agrees the Labour administration and local Labour MPs have a proven record of fighting to secure the future of Charing Cross hospital. The Council recognises that the future of Charing Cross Hospital is secure and reaffirms that Hammersmith & Fulham’s Labour councillors and MPs will always defend it without fear or favour.

The Council recognises the dreadful state the former Conservative government left our National Health Service in - both locally and across our country. It notes that hospitals across the UK suffered chronic underinvestment which now requires billions of pounds to fix and make fit for purpose.

The Council remembers that on 25 May 2023, the Rt Hon Stephen Barclay MP, the Conservative Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, announced he had removed Charing Cross, Hammersmith and St Mary's hospitals from the list of hospitals that were up to then a part of the New Hospital Programme announced in 2019 for rebuilding and refurbishment by 2030.

The Council recognises that from then on the Conservative government did not provide any plan, guarantee any funding or offer any date when the refurbishment of Charing Cross, Hammersmith or St Mary's hospitals would begin - let alone be finished.

The Council therefore welcomes the Labour government's announcement of a record £25 billion investment into our NHS and notes that Charing Cross Hospital has now been reinstated to the New Hospital Programme with pre-construction work to start in 2030 and the physical works beginning in 2035.

The Council understands the challenges faced by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, which runs Charing Cross, Hammersmith and St Mary's hospitals. It pledges to work with them and our newly elected local MPs to protect and improve services, urgently refurbish our hospitals and defend our local NHS.

The Council remembers that until the Conservative government capitulated to the Labour Council's campaign to save Charing Cross Hospital in 2019, Conservative MPs and Hammersmith & Fulham Conservative councillors had worked from 2013 to:

- Demolish the current Charing Cross Hospital
- Sell off most the Charing Cross Hospital site
- Replace the current hospital with a small clinic no more than 13% the size of the current hospital
- Re-brand the clinic as a "local hospital"
- Replace the current A&E with an Urgent Care Clinic
- Re-brand the Urgent Care Clinic a "Class 3 A&E"
- Lose more than 300 and possibly all the acute care beds.

The Council recalls how, rather than tell residents that this was their actual plan, Conservative MPs and our local Conservative councillors falsely claimed they had "saved" Charing Cross Hospital – while knowing full well that calling a small new clinic Charing Cross would be no replacement for the hospital.

The Council also recalls that the previous Conservative MP for Chelsea and Fulham claimed on numerous occasions last year to have secured the funding for the refurbishment of Charing Cross Hospital when this was evidently not the case.

The Council agrees that the public have a right to be told the truth about what has happened and is happening with their local NHS. It therefore deplores the long record of deliberate attempts by Conservative MPs and councillors to mislead local people about Charing Cross Hospital.

This Council recognises the considerable body of evidence that proves people simply cannot trust the Conservatives with our NHS.

## 7.1 **Special Motion 1 - Commending the Government on Planning Reform**

10.10pm – Councillor Omid Miri moved, seconded by Councillor Genevieve Nwaogbe, the special motion in their names.

*“This Council commends the new Labour Government on its commitment to build 1.5 million new homes and end the housing crisis through radical planning reform, getting Britain building the homes and infrastructure desperately need after 14 years of Conservative neglect and austerity. This will help accelerate and expand the delivery of genuinely affordable homes to residents in Hammersmith and Fulham.*

*This Council welcomes the new Government's recognition that local authorities have an important role to play and, after 14 years of Conservative sidelining, dithering and de-funding, looks forward to working with the Government to solve the housing crisis.”*

Councillors Genevieve Nwaogbe (who made her maiden speech) and Stala Antoniadis made speeches (for the Administration). The motion was then put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>27</b>
AGAINST	8
NOT VOTING	1

The motion was declared **CARRIED**.

### **10.21pm – RESOLVED**

This Council commends the new Labour Government on its commitment to build 1.5 million new homes and end the housing crisis through radical planning reform, getting Britain building the homes and infrastructure desperately need after 14 years of Conservative neglect and austerity. This will help accelerate and expand the delivery of genuinely affordable homes to residents in Hammersmith and Fulham.

This Council welcomes the new Government's recognition that local authorities have an important role to play and, after 14 years of Conservative sidelining, dithering and de-funding, looks forward to working with the Government to solve the housing crisis.

The guillotine fell at 10.21pm.

## 7.2 **Special Motion 2 - Celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Macbeth Centre**

The special motion was withdrawn.

7.4 **Special Motion 4 - The Safety of Cyclists**

The special motion was withdrawn.

7.5 **Special Motion 5 - Free Breakfasts for Primary School Children**

The special motion was withdrawn.

Meeting started: 7.03 pm  
Meeting ended: 10.21 pm

Mayor .....

## **Appendix 1 – Public Questions and Responses**

### **Question 1**

**From:** Caroline Shuffrey, Resident

**Question:**

LBHF commissioned a professional safety audit of the Wandsworth Bridge Road transformation involving road surface dressing and parklet installation but has rejected or refuted most of its recommendations. If accidents occur in the manner foreseen by the safety audit professionals who in LBHF will take responsibility and who will pay compensation to the victims if LBHF is successfully sued.

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Realm, Councillor Sharon Holder (provided as a written response):**

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the Wandsworth Bridge Road Interim improvement measures and associated road safety audit report. Below is some explanatory text to clarify the audit process and hopefully allay some of your concerns.

The road safety audit was carried out by qualified road safety auditors independent from either the design organisation or the Council. The first stage once the audit report has been issued is for the design organisation's engineers to review the issues and recommendations and apply sound professional engineering judgement to formulate initial responses.

The Council's role within the road safety audit process as the overseeing organisation is to evaluate the issues raised by the road safety auditors and the initial responses of the design organisation in a dispassionate and objective manner, using the knowledge of our own experienced traffic engineering staff. Within this process, it is reasonable, and quite usual for the design organisation and/or the overseeing organisation to reach a different conclusion to that of the safety auditor as to the likelihood and/or severity of some of the risks and issues identified. Where views differ, justification for these is provided in full within the audit report.

On reviewing the RSA documents, we have determined that the Council's responses align with most of the designer's responses, demonstrating that a high degree of professional rigour has been applied to reach a broad consensus across both responding organisations. Where issues have been partially accepted or rejected by the design or overseeing organisation, we are reasonably assured that the associated risks are relatively small and that the recommendations made by the safety auditors are either disproportionate and/or not justifiable given the nature and intent of the scheme.

We would stress that the interventions are experimental at this stage and are subject to monitoring. As overseeing authority, the safety of our residents and visitors are our utmost priority and you can be rest-assured that adjustments or modifications can, and will, be implemented as required to ensure that the highest level of safety is maintained at all times.

### **Question 2**

**From:** Brian Mooney, Resident

**Question:**

Cannabis smoke contains over fifty carcinogens and hundreds of toxins. It can produce mental health problems and disorientation at street level constituting a threat to road safety. In spite of my input to last year's consultation, no actions are featured in the Air Quality Action Plan. Can H&F Council please explain this omission and what it will do to remove the regular stench from our streets?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology, Councillor Wesley Harcourt:**

Residents are able to report smoke and odour nuisances through the Report It function on the Council's website. However, complaints about odour from Cannabis, given cannabis is an illegal substance, should be reported to the Police. This would not be investigated by the council as a Statutory Nuisance.

Smoke produced from cigarettes, tobacco, cannabis or otherwise, is not considered within the scope of our Air Quality Action Plan. While there have been studies showing the air pollution impact of smoking indoors, the smoke produced outside, where pollution is more readily dispersed into the air, is not considered a material source of air pollution.

As part of the consultation for our Air Quality Action Plan 2025-30, we received 122 responses to the online survey. A summary consultation response document, showing where we made changes to the Action Plan as a result of resident feedback, was published online alongside the Action Plan itself ahead of its adoption in December. This will be published on the Council's air quality webpages shortly alongside the final version of the Action Plan.

**Follow-up Question:**

The vast majority of incidences of lung cancer come from smoking for daily heavy smoking, ionising radiation like X-rays, industrial solvents and that type of pollutant. You might find that not even 7.4%, the figure which is attributed for deaths due to air pollution, features in lung cancer. Smoking is also quite a bigger emission as is material to deaths from air pollution. Will you revise the policy you have just given us and include action against smoking?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology:**

Thank you, Mr Mooney. You're absolutely right about smoking and the problems that smoking causes lung cancer and such like. It took many years, if you recall, before it was recognised about the impact of smoking on lung cancer and furthermore after that actually providing evidence that proved the situation. As I've said, pollutants such as byproducts of people smoking tobacco or cannabis are more readily dispersed in the atmosphere.

I do take your point and I'm happy to go back and discuss further with officers whether this is something that we should include in there, because we are already doing work with Professor Frank Kelly about indoor air quality and toxic air indoor, and certainly things like smoking indoors, secondary tobacco inhalation, vaping and such like are all issues that perhaps we should look at. But they are in fact a health issue and it may be something that we need to look at as a wider issue rather than simply as part of the Air Quality Action Plan.

### **Question 3**

**From:** Simon Kane, Resident

**Question:**

Hammersmith and Fulham Council is targeting Net Zero CO2 emissions locally by 2030. It admits that this will require in excess of £2 billion and be dependent on substantial external funding. a) Please break down roughly how this will be spent. b) With the fragile state of public finances, how likely (%) is it that Net Zero 2030 will be met. c) If full government funding is not available, what will be the impact on residents?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology, Councillor Wesley Harcourt (provided as a written response):**

A) Reaching net zero by 2030 for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham will require an economy-wide transition away from carbon intensive and unsustainable practices and towards greener alternatives. This necessitates action from a broad range of local and national stakeholders including residents, property owners, large and small businesses and the UK Government. Hammersmith & Fulham Council has limited direct control over the borough's carbon emissions and will play an enabling role in a borough-wide transition towards net zero. The Council has direct control over approximately 10% of the borough's emissions, primarily from public buildings and council-operated vehicles. H&F is implementing energy efficiency upgrades in public buildings and transitioning the vehicle fleet to electric vehicles. The Committee on Climate Change projects that the net cost to decarbonise the UK will be less than 1% of GDP. The risks of climate change increase with higher cumulative emissions, so early action and investment will save significant costs in the future.

B) The target of net zero by 2030 for Hammersmith & Fulham reflects the time sensitivity and urgency of the climate and ecological emergency. The Mayor of London has also set a 2030 target for London as a whole, ahead of the UK's Net Zero target of 2050. The trajectories taken to reach these targets will be dependent on the deployment of investment across the city and a national policy environment that enables and incentivises ambitious climate action from a broad range of stakeholders.

C) One of the cross-cutting sustainable principles that guided the development of the H&F Climate & Ecology Strategy is that of a Just Transition – acknowledging that the damaging effects of climate change fall disproportionately on the vulnerable and that it is crucial to ensure that the costs and benefits of climate action fall justly. In delivering the H&F Climate & Ecology Strategy, H&F Council has launched initiatives that help local stakeholders to take action that supports net zero at no or a reduced cost including H&F Healthy Homes and SME Energy Efficiency Grant to complement national and London-wide funding opportunities. For example, if full government funding is not available, residents might face higher costs for energy efficiency improvements or delays in the implementation of green infrastructure projects. Additionally, there could be slower progress in retrofitting homes for energy efficiency, which might result in higher energy bills for residents in the short term.

### **Question 4**

**From:** Callum Nimmo, Resident

**Question:**

What steps is the Council taking to create jobs for young people in the Borough?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Skills, Councillor Zarar Qayyum (provided as a written response):**

***Upstream London – our approach to inclusive economic growth***

- Ensuring young people have access to the good jobs being created in H&F is central to **Upstream London**, our approach to inclusive economic growth, launched just before Christmas as the next phase in our Industrial Strategy.
- We established of a partnership with Imperial College London in 2017 to establish a cluster of science, technology, engineering, maths, medicines and media (STEM<sup>3</sup>) businesses around Imperial's existing research and development to create a world-leading economic ecosystem in future industries.
- Since the inception of our Industrial Strategy, the Council has helped to generate £6billion of high-growth business investment, **creating over 13,000 jobs**, increasing opportunities in the community through working closely with partners including anchor institutions, businesses and investors.

***The Upstream Pathways Bond***

- As a central part of Upstream London, the Council recently launched the **Upstream Pathway Bond**, a groundbreaking initiative giving people a clearer pathway into new careers and more opportunities to develop new skills.
- By using relationships with businesses and with the international partnerships the Council has developed, young people will have more opportunities than ever before.
- Organisations who sign up offer advice, work experience, apprenticeships, interview skills, mentoring and inspiration - even travelling abroad to experience our partner innovation districts. In return, businesses have a highly-skilled workforce on their doorstep.

***Work underway to support young people into work***

Some examples of how we're already supporting young people into work.

- The Council is delivering a series of monthly science, technology, engineering, maths, medicines and media (STEM<sup>3</sup>) inspiration events within secondary schools and at Scale Space in White City. These '**Reveal**' events bring together key local employers to help raise awareness of pathways into work. Since April 2024, over 2,000 H&F students have had the chance to engage employers through these events.
- We are working with local employers to support the creation of high-quality **Apprenticeships** as well as delivering the Council's 'Earn While You Learn'



programme of local government apprenticeships. The Council also employs local graduates through a National Graduate Development Programme, 'Impact' where young people get the chance to gain experience in different departments within the Council. Over 100 young people from H&F have access these early career opportunities in 2024/25.

- The Council uses its levers as a **planning authority** and through its **procurement** to ensure developers and suppliers deliver community benefits including the creation of jobs, apprenticeships and work experience placements. For example, one of the Council's suppliers, PRP Architects, is delivering a training to work programmes offering work experience and apprenticeships to residents.
- Our Adult Learning and Skills Service is currently working with the London Skills Centre at Earls Court offering new **green skills, retrofit and construction courses** to young residents with a guaranteed job placement.
- In January 2026 our new **Skills Centre and Employment Hub** will open as part of EdCity in the White City Innovation District, offering courses in STEM<sup>3</sup> to develop future skills for future jobs in these growing industries.
- Through **H&F Works**, our Job Brokerage service, residents can access jobs with local employers as well as support with CVs, interview preparation and access to training. Over 800 residents have received employability support in 2024/25, with over 400 entering work.

### **Question 5**

**From:** Hannah Bulmer, Resident

**Question:**

What is the council doing to keep taxes low, especially for those least able to pay?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, Councillor Rowan Ree:**

This administration has been in office for around a decade, and for most of that time the national economy has either been sluggish or in crisis. So, it's no surprise that there are people across the whole country who are struggling.

Council tax is, as we know, a highly regressive tax. The amount that you pay bears no relation to what you can afford, and those on the lowest incomes often end up paying at the highest proportion of their earnings as a result. The fairest thing that we can do is to try and keep it as low as possible. That's why in Hammersmith and Fulham, this Labour administration has cut or frozen council tax five times in the last 10 years, giving residents the third lowest council tax rates in the country.

But who pays tax is just as important as how much is paid. That's why in Hammersmith and Fulham we have maintained one of the most comprehensive and inclusive council tax support schemes in the country, one that I am pleased to say we are proposing to continue this evening. Under this support scheme 4 in 10 households across the borough will qualify for some sort of discount on their council tax. We are one of only

three councils in the whole of London that will provide a 100% support for the most vulnerable residents, so those least able to pay, pay the least.

I've said it before and I will say it again, there is nowhere in this country better to be a council taxpayer than right here in Hammersmith and Fulham and as long as we have the Administration in this borough that is how it will stay.

**Follow-up Question:**

Is the discount you mentioned something that would automatically apply, or would people have to apply for it themselves?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform:**

In most cases this is automatically applied, depending on income rates, access to various benefits or pension credits.