

COUNCIL AGENDA

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 9 July 2025



The Mayor – Councillor Sharon Holder
Deputy Mayor – Councillor Daryl Brown

ADDISON

Jacolyn Daly (L)
Ross Melton (L)

AVONMORE

Laura Janes (L)
David Morton (I)

BROOK GREEN

Stala Antoniadis (L)
Adam Peter Lang (L)

COLLEGE PARK & OLD
OAK

Wesley Harcourt (L)
Bora Kwon (L)
Alexandra Sanderson (L)

CONINGHAM

Lisa Homan (L)
Rowan Ree (L)
Rory Vaughan (L)

FULHAM REACH

Lucy Richardson (L)
Omid Miri (L)
Nikos Souslous (L)

FULHAM TOWN

Victoria Brocklebank-
Fowler (C)
Liam Downer-Sanderson
(C)

GROVE

Stephen Cowan (L)
Helen Rowbottom (L)

HAMMERSMITH
BROADWAY

Callum Nimmo (L)
Patricia Quigley (L)

LILLIE

Sharon Holder (L)
Lydia Paynter (L)

MUNSTER

Adronie Alford (C)
Alex Karmel (C)
Dominic Stanton (C)

PALACE & HURLINGHAM

Aliya Afzal-Khan (C)
Jackie Borland (C)
Amanda Lloyd-Harris (C)

PARSONS GREEN &
SANDFORD

Jose Afonso (C)
Adrian Pascu-Tulbure (C)

RAVENSCOURT

Liz Collins (L)
Patrick Walsh (L)

SANDS END

Paul Alexander (L)
Ashok Patel (L)
Ann Rosenberg (L)

SHEPHERDS BUSH
GREEN

Zarar Qayyum (L)
Mercy Umeh (L)

WALHAM GREEN

Trey Campbell-Simon (L)
Genevieve Nwaogbe (L)

WENDELL PARK

Rebecca Harvey (L)
Asif Siddique (L)

WEST KENSINGTON

Daryl Brown (L)
Florian Chevoppe-Verdier
(L)
Sally Taylor (L)

WHITE CITY

Andrew Jones (L)
Natalia Perez (L)
Frances Umeh (L)

WORMHOLT

Max Schmid (L)
Nicole Trehly (L)

SUMMONS

Councillors of the London Borough of
Hammersmith & Fulham are requested to
attend the Council meeting at 7.00pm on
Wednesday, 9 July 2025 at the Irish Cultural
Centre, 5 Black's Road, Hammersmith, W6
9DT

Watch the meeting live

Watch live on YouTube: youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham

Public attendance

This meeting is open to the public, but spaces are limited. If you would like to attend please contact: David.Abbott@lbhf.gov.uk

Accessibility

For wheelchair users there is level access from the street to the meeting room. There are accessible toilets on the ground floor of the venue. The livestream will have live captions. If you have any additional accessibility requirements please contact: David.Abbott@lbhf.gov.uk

Full Council Agenda

9 July 2025

<u>Item</u>		<u>Pages</u>
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS 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. 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. 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. Councillors are not obliged to withdraw from the meeting where a dispensation to that effect has been obtained from the Standards Committee.	
3.	MINUTES To approve the minutes of the Annual and Special Council meetings held on 21 May 2025 as accurate records.	6 - 16
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5.	YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATE	Verbal
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COUNCIL MINUTES

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 21 MAY 2025



PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Sharon Holder
Deputy Mayor – Councillor Daryl Brown

Councillors:

Jose Afonso	Laura Janes	Rowan Ree
Aliya Afzal-Khan	Adam Peter Lang	Helen Rowbottom
Paul Alexander	Amanda Lloyd-Harris	Alex Sanderson
Adronie Alford	Omid Miri	Max Schmid
Stala Antoniadis	David Morton	Asif Siddique
Jackie Borland	Nimmo	Nikos Souslous
Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler	Genevieve Nwaogbe	Dominic Stanton
Florian Chevoppe-Verdier	Adrian Pascu-Tulbure	Sally Taylor
Stephen Cowan	Ashok Patel	Nicole Trehay
Jacelyn Daly	Paynter	Frances Umeh
Wesley Harcourt	Natalia Perez	Mercy Umeh
Rebecca Harvey	Zarar Qayyum	Rory Vaughan
Lisa Homan	Patricia Quigley	Patrick Walsh

1. ELECTION OF THE MAYOR

7.07pm – Councillor Patricia Quigley, as the outgoing Mayor, took the Chair at the start of the meeting.

Councillor Max Schmid proposed, seconded by Councillor Genevieve Nwaogbe, that Councillor Sharon Holder be elected Mayor of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

There being no further nominations, the proposal was formally put to the vote:

FOR:	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	0

The recommendation was declared **CARRIED**.

7.10pm – RESOLVED

That Councillor Sharon Holder was duly elected Mayor of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham for the 2025/26 Municipal Year, following which she made the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and signed the statutory undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

The Mayor then made a brief speech thanking her constituents, her fellow Councillors, the outgoing Mayor Patricia Quigley, and her family for their support. She announced that she was appointing Nubian Life, Fulham Good Neighbours, and the Fulham Pearly Kings and Queens as her charities for the Mayoral year.

The Mayor announced that she was appointing her husband, Jim Shoesmith, to act as her Consort for the Mayoral year.

Councillor Stephen Cowan moved, seconded by Councillor Max Schmid, that the past Mayor's badge be presented to Councillor Patricia Quigley in recognition of her service to the Council in undertaking the office of Mayor, and in carrying out other associated civic duties as a Councillor, which was unanimously agreed. Councillor Quigley was taken ill and had to leave the meeting.

Speeches of thanks were given to the outgoing Mayor by Councillors Stephen Cowan, Jose Afonso, Nicole Trehy, and Stala Antoniadis.

A vote of thanks was given to the past Consort, Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier in undertaking his civic role in support of the past Mayor. Councillor Chevoppe-Verdier then came forward to receive the past Consort's badge and a gift of appreciation.

The Mayor announced that she had appointed Councillor Daryl Brown to be Deputy Mayor for the 2025/26 Municipal Year and she had appointed Mr Benito Brown to act as her Deputy Mayor's Consort.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

7.43pm – Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ann Rosenberg, Lucy Richardson, Bora Kwon, Andrew Jones, Trey Campbell-Simon, Ross Melton, Liz Collins, Alex Karmel, and David Morton.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Laura Janes (who joined at 8.16pm).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

7.44pm – There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES

7.44pm – RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. MAYOR'S/CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Resignation of Councillor Andrew Dinsmore

7.44pm – The Mayor noted that Andrew Dinsmore had resigned as a councillor of Fulham Town ward earlier in May. On behalf of the Council, she thanked him for his hard work over the years, serving his local community.

Speeches were made by Councillor Stephen Cowan (for the Administration) and Councillor Jose Afonso (for the Opposition).

6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1 Party Appointments for the 2025/26 Municipal Year

7.47pm – The report on the appointments made by the party groups on the Council for 2025/26 was noted.

6.2 Review of the Constitution

7.47pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillor Max Schmid (for the Administration) and Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure (for the Opposition).

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR:	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	0

The recommendations were **CARRIED**.

7.51pm – RESOLVED

1. That Full Council approve the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks for Councillors policy attached as Appendix 1.
2. That Full Council create a General Purposes Committee with the membership and terms of reference as detailed in Appendix 2.
3. That Full Council approve the changes to the size of the membership of the Standards Committee from 6 to 5.
4. That Full Council approve the changes to Lead Member responsibilities detailed in paragraph 10.

6.3 **Appointment by the Leader of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet**

7.51pm – The report on the appointment of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members was noted.

6.4 **Allocation of Seats and Proportionality on Committees**

7.52pm – The report on the allocation of seats and proportionality on committees was noted.

6.5 **Appointment of Chairs and Committee Memberships**

7.52pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR:	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	0

The recommendations were **CARRIED**.

7.52pm – RESOLVED

1. That the Council agrees the appointments of Chairs and Memberships of Regulatory, Policy and Accountability and other Committees under its Constitution for the Municipal Year 2025/26, as set out in Appendix 1.
2. This Council also notes their respective portfolios and terms of reference, as set out in the constitution.

6.6 **Council Appointments to Local Government Organisations and Outside Bodies**

7.52pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR:	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	0

The recommendations were **CARRIED**.

7.52pm – RESOLVED

1. That the Council's appointments to Local Government Organisations for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix 1, be agreed.
2. That the Council's appointments to Outside Bodies for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix 2, be agreed.

6.7 **Members Allowances Scheme Annual Review 2025/26**

7.52pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR:	30
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	10

The recommendations were **CARRIED**.

7.54pm – RESOLVED

1. That the recommendations of the Independent Panel on the remuneration of Councillors in London (January 2024) outlined in Appendix 2 be noted.
2. That the Members' Allowances Scheme 2025/26 as set out in the report and attached as Appendix 1, be approved.
3. That the Members' basic allowance be increased in line with the average basic allowance paid across London for the previous year and the special responsibility allowance be uplifted in line with the national local government pay settlement for employees.

6.8 **Appointment of Independent Person**

7.54pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR:	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	0

The recommendations were **CARRIED**.

7.54pm – RESOLVED

1. That His Honour Judge John Rylance be re-appointed as Independent Person for another 2 years fixed term.
2. That the Council pay each appointed person a flat rate allowance of £1000 per annum payable in line with the Members' Allowance scheme.

6.9 **Dispensation of Absence**

7.54pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR:	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	0

The recommendations were **CARRIED**.

7.54pm – RESOLVED

1. That a special dispensation be granted to Councillor Alex Karmel for non-attendance at meetings of the authority due to ill health pursuant to Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

6.10 The Leader's Annual Report (Verbal)

7.55pm – The Council received a verbal report from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan. The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Jose Afonso, made a speech on behalf of the Opposition.

6.11 Redevelopment of Avonmore Primary School and Building New Homes

8.04pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillors Frances Umeh and Alex Sanderson (for the Administration) and Councillors Aliya Afzal-Khan and Jose Afonso (for the Opposition).

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR:	30
AGAINST:	9
NOT VOTING:	1

The recommendations were **CARRIED**.

8.17pm – RESOLVED

That Full Council:

1. Agrees that appendix 1 is not for publication on the basis that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
2. Approves a capital budget to deliver the new homes and new school which will include contingency and internal costs, as set out in exempt appendix 1.

7. INFORMATION REPORTS - TO NOTE

7.1 Annual Report of the Policy and Oversight Board and Policy and Accountability Committees 2024/25

Minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting as a correct record of the proceedings and any amendments arising will be recorded in the minutes of that subsequent meeting.

8.17pm – Councillor Lisa Homan made a speech on the report.

8.22pm – The Annual Report of the Policy and Oversight Board and the Policy and Accountability Committees 2024/25 was noted.

7.2 Special Urgency Decisions - Monitoring Report

8.22pm – The Special Urgency Decisions Monitoring Report was noted.

7.3 Petitions Monitoring Report 2024/25

8.22pm – The Petitions Monitoring Report was noted.

Meeting started: 7.07 pm
Meeting ended: 8.23 pm

Mayor

COUNCIL MINUTES

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 21 MAY 2025

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Sharon Holder
Deputy Mayor – Councillor Daryl Brown

Councillors:

Jose Afonso	Lisa Homan	Rowan Ree
Aliya Afzal-Khan	Laura Janes	Helen Rowbottom
Paul Alexander	Adam Peter Lang	Alex Sanderson
Adronie Alford	Amanda Lloyd-Harris	Max Schmid
Stala Antoniadis	Omid Miri	Asif Siddique
Jackie Borland	David Morton	Nikos Souslous
Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler	Nimmo	Dominic Stanton
Florian Chevoppe-Verdier	Genevieve Nwaogbe	Sally Taylor
Liz Collins	Adrian Pascu-Tulbure	Nicole Trehay
Stephen Cowan	Ashok Patel	Frances Umeh
Jacolyn Daly	Paynter	Mercy Umeh
Wesley Harcourt	Natalia Perez	Rory Vaughan
Rebecca Harvey	Zarar Qayyum	Patrick Walsh

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

8.30pm – Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ann Rosenberg, Lucy Richardson, Bora Kwon, Andrew Jones, Trey Campbell-Simon, Ross Melton, Liz Collins, Patricia Quigley, Alex Karmel, and David Morton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

8.30pm – There were no declarations of interest.

3. FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

8.30pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR:	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	0

The recommendations were **CARRIED**.

Following the vote, speeches on the report were made by Councillors Stephen Cowan, Rowan Ree, Jacolyn Daly and Patrick Walsh (for the Administration) – and Councillors Jose Afonso and Adrian Pascu-Tulbure (for the Opposition).

Major Rudy Vandaele-Kennedy gave a speech of thanks on behalf of the Coldstream Guards.

8.56pm – RESOLVED

1. That the Council confer the Honorary Freedom of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham on The Coldstream Guards – a Regiment of the British Army in recognition of their gallant and outstanding military service to the Country.

Meeting started: 8.30 pm
Meeting ended: 8.56 pm

Mayor

Full Council Public Questions – 9 July 2025

Question 1

From: Olga Aguilera-Lopez, Resident
To: The Leader of the Council

“What is the rationale behind the Council’s current petition thresholds? A petition with 100 signatures triggers a response from a single Cabinet Member, while 250 signatures lead to a full Cabinet debate. In contrast, 5,000 signatures are required for a Council debate—representing an increase of 1,900%. This significant leap appears disproportionate and may unintentionally discourage public participation, creating the impression that the system is structured to favour inaction. This is significantly out of line with other boroughs in London.”

Question 2

From: Richard Cazenove, Resident
To: Cabinet Member for Public Realm

“At the March 2024 Full Council meeting, Cllr Holder kindly reported that LBHF officers were working to implement – by the “early summer” – a scheme which would provide automatic exemption for vehicles travelling to/from the Hurlingham Club from the Hurlingham Road CAN camera. 12 months since it was promised (and nearly three years since the CAN trial started) nothing, unfortunately, has happened even though the technology is already being used on Broomhouse Lane. Trying to get a clear answer from LBHF officers on the status of this initiative is near impossible. As such, please can the Cabinet Member confirm if the exemption is ever going to be implemented, and, if so, when.”

Question 3

From: Anonymous, Resident
To: The Leader of the Council

“What are you doing to improve Uxbridge Road from an ASB and visual perspective over the next 12 months?”

Question 4

From: Alex Coleridge, Resident
To: Cabinet Member for Public Realm

“In the council’s recent post on Nextdoor, they mentioned that an architect’s report had been commissioned from Jan Katteit to assess and improve the Uxbridge road. This is obviously a welcome move given the visual decline of the area, and also given the successes other boroughs have had with applying visual standards. When will the council release this report and what plans does the council have for implementing the recommendations?”

Question 5

From: Jack Dryden, Resident

To: Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology

“What plans does the council have to improve the green environment around Uxbridge Road utilising its Green Investment scheme in the next 6-12months? Following recent campaigning by locals, including myself, what projects are planned to introduce more trees, rain gardens or improve cycle infrastructure as has recently been celebrated along King Street and in Fulham?”

Question 6

From: Angela Gomes, Resident

To: The Leader of the Council

“We have over 10 fried chicken takeaways on the Uxbridge Road from The Green to Askew Road. There are 2 primary schools and one Secondary school within 400 meters of these establishments. Since there is a huge problem with obesity among children and the NHS is over stretched, why has there been no Town Planning been carried out?”

Question 7

From: Malcolm Vernon, Resident

To: The Leader of the Council

“5 years ago there was one Cafe on the Uxbridge Road that catered to a male mostly mini-cab driving clientele. Now there are seven. The cafes are open from 7am to almost midnight. The impact on nearby residential streets of the consequent ASB from this wave of commercial vehicles and their drivers is horrendous. We can't sleep in bedrooms in the front of our houses because of the noise. We need these cafes shut by 8pm, and their customers stopped from driving into or parking in our streets. Will the council support measures to cut back on these cafes and restaurants that draw in all this traffic, or give residents the right to object to their hours and the impact on the area?”

Question 8

From: Simon Julien, Resident

To: Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

“How many council homes have been sold off since Labour have been in power?”

Question 9

From: Victoria Eccles, Resident

To: Cabinet Member for Public Realm

“What is the Council doing to reduce the amount of rubbish and recycling dumped on the Uxbridge Rd? This is an issue contributing to the neglected and dirty appearance of this important street. Rubbish is dumped at all times of the day, contrary to Council policy, although it's not clear what exactly this is. Your website for commercial waste states it should be left out between 6pm and 10pm, the LET Littering Offence Notice says between 9pm and 6am, and the collection spot stickers and posters say by 6am - but not from when.

Agenda Item 7.1

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Full Council

Date: 09/07/2025

Subject: Results of the Local Government By-Election on 3 July 2025

Report of: The Returning Officer

Report author: David Abbott, Head of Governance

Responsible Director: Sharon Lea, Chief Executive

SUMMARY

As Returning Officer for the Authority, I report that the Councillor named in Appendix 1 was elected to the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham at the by-election held in Fulham Town ward on 3 July 2025. This report was amended on 4 July 2025 as the election took place after publication of the agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the information in Appendix 1 to this report be noted.

Sharon Lea
Returning Officer

RETURNING OFFICER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

The Returning Officer submits the name, address, and political party of the person elected as Councillor for the Borough at the by-election held on 3 July 2025.

Fulham Town

Name:

Liam Downer-Sanderson

Political Party:

The Conservative Party

Address:

Address in Hammersmith and Fulham

Agenda Item 7.2

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Full Council

Date: 09/07/2025

Subject: Allocation of Seats and Proportionality on Committees

Report of: The Leader of the Council - Councillor Stephen Cowan

Report author: David Abbott, Head of Governance

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

SUMMARY

The Council is required to confirm the proportional division of seats on the standing committees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the allocation of seats set out in Appendix 1 be noted.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Taking pride in H&F	Ensuring a high standard of governance across the Council.

Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications from this decision.

Alex Pygram, Head of Finance - Corporate Services, 24/04/2025
Verified by Andre Mark, Head of Finance –Strategic Planning and Investment, 24/04/2025

Legal Implications

The legal implications are set out in the body of the report.

Glen Egan, Assistant Director of Legal Services, 12/02/2025

Background papers used in preparing this report

None.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Allocation of Seats

1. Political Groups on the Council are formed in accordance with the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 when two or more councillors notify the Chief Executive, as Proper Officer, of their wish to be treated as a group.
2. Section 15 (1) (b) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (“the 1989 Act”) imposes a duty on the local authority to review the allocation of seats on the committees of the Council between the political groups at its annual meeting or as soon as possible thereafter. The Council may carry out such a review at any other time and may do so if requested by a political group.
3. In accordance with the 1989 Act the following principles apply to the allocation of seats:
 - (a) That not all the seats on the body to which appointments are being made are allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) That the majority of seats on each committee are allocated to a particular group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority’s membership;
 - (c) That, subject to (a) and (b), when allocating seats to a political group, the total number of their seats across all the ordinary committees of the Council, must reflect their proportion of the authority’s membership; and
 - (d) Subject to (a) to (c), that the number of seats on each committee is as far as possible in proportion to the group’s membership of the authority.
4. Sub-committees, with the exception of the Licensing Sub-Committee, are also governed by the political balance rules, but it is not necessary to add up all the sub-committee seats and then allocate them in proportion. As far as this is practicable, the allocation of seats on each sub-committee should reflect the proportional representation of the political groups on the Council.
5. The 1989 Act requires that, once the Council has determined the allocation of committee places between the political groups, the Council must then appoint the nominees of the political groups to the committees.

6. The Cabinet, Health and Wellbeing Board and the Licensing Committee are not required to be proportional and so are outside of the political balance calculation.
7. On 24 June 2025, Jim McMahon, Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, updated Parliament on “the Government’s ambitious plans to introduce legislation which will simplify governance arrangements for local authorities in England and to ensure local communities have the right mechanisms to engage with their council.” The Government’s proposals include:
 - Plans to legislate to abolish the committee system.
 - Preventing the introduction of any new directly elected local authority mayors – but allowing the continuation of the legacy local authority mayors where they exist.
 - Making regulations to pause any change processes between governance models currently underway

As a result, the Council will no longer be able to carry out a review of its current governance arrangements, the Leader and Cabinet model.

Political proportionality

8. The political balance of the Council can be calculated by using the simple formula below (to two decimal places):

$$\text{No. of Group Members} \times 100 / 50$$

9. The political balance of the Council is set out in Table 1 below:

	No of seats on the Council	Proportionality
Labour	39	78%
Conservative	10	20%
Independent	1	2%
Total	50	100%

PROPOSAL AND ISSUES

10. The Labour and Conservative Groups hold respectively, 39 and 10 of the 50 Council seats. While there is one Independent Member. The proportion by which seats on Committees should be allocated is 78% Majority Group, 20% Minority Group and 2% Independent member. This equates, on the basis of 88 committee seats to: 69 Majority Party, 18 Minority Party and 1 Independent seats.
11. Membership of the Council’s Standing Committees (except the Licensing Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board) and Sub-Committees is governed by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, as amended, which provides for Members of Standing Committees and Sub-Committees to be those whose names have been notified to the Chief Executive, who is the duly appointed proper officer for

these purposes. The Chief Executive has the power to appoint to all Standing Committees (except the Licensing Committees) and Sub-Committees in accordance with any notification received under the Regulations.

12. Both political groups on the Council have to notify the Chief Executive of the names of the Members to serve on the Standing Committees, Sub-Committees and subsidiary bodies.

REASONS FOR DECISION

13. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities, where Members are divided into political groups, to review periodically the representation of the political groups on their Committees and Sub-Committees to ensure a political balance.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Allocation of Seats

Allocation of Seats and Proportionality

Seats are allocated with the following calculation:

$$\text{councillors in political group} \div \text{total number of councillors} \times \text{seats on committee} \\ = \text{allocation of seats (rounded to nearest whole number)}$$

Administration councillors (Labour): 39

Opposition councillors (Conservative): 10

Independent councillor: 1

Total number of councillors: 50

Committees	Total seats	Administration's allocation	Opposition's allocation	Independent allocation
Planning and Development Control Committee	8	6	2	0
Policy and Oversight Board	8	7	1	0
Appointments Panel (A)	5	4	1	0
Appointments Panel (B)	5	4	1	0
Appointments Panel (C)	5	4	1	0
Appointments Panel (D)	3	2	1	0
Audit Committee	5	3	1	1
Pension Fund Committee	5	4	1	0
Standards Committee	5	4	1	0
General Purposes Committee	5	4	1	0
Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee	5	4	1	0
Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee	5	4	1	0
Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee	5	4	1	0
Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee	5	4	1	0
The Economy, Arts, Sports and Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee	5	4	1	0
Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee	5	4	1	0
Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust	3	2	1	0
Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1	1	0	0

Sub-Committees	Total seats	Administration's allocation	Opposition's allocation	Independent allocation
Licensing Sub-Committee	3	2	1	0

Report to: Full Council

Date: 09/07/2025

Subject: Review of the Constitution

Report of: The Leader of the Council - Councillor Stephen Cowan

Report author: David Abbott, Head of Governance

Responsible Director: Grant Deg, Monitoring Officer

SUMMARY

This report recommends a change to committee memberships. This report was amended following the by-election on 3 July 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Full Council agree that Councillor Liam Downer-Sanderson replace Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris on the Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Taking pride in H&F	Ensuring a high standard of governance across the Council.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no direct financial implications.

Alex Pygram, Head of Finance – Corporate Services, 02/05/2025

Legal Implications

The Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council to have and maintain a Constitution. The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that the Council's Constitution continues to fulfil its stated purposes, as set out in Article 1 of the Constitution.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Proposals and Analysis of Options

1. Each local authority is required to publish the arrangements it has made to discharge its functions in a 'constitution' prepared in accordance with Section 37 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure business is conducted in an efficient, transparent, and accountable manner. Some of the content of the Constitution is required by law, the remainder is for the Council itself to determine.
2. The Constitution is reviewed at least annually to ensure it continues to promote timely, effective, transparent, and lawful decision making reflecting the arrangements Members have put in place for the running of the Council.
3. In-year amendments were approved by Council to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers to reflect recent changes in organisational structure and changes to the responsibilities of Chief Officers.
4. The Monitoring Officer has a duty to keep the Constitution under review and has delegated authority to amend the Constitution where there has been a change in law, job title, structure, rearrangement of job responsibilities or for general administrative convenience. All extensive changes to the Constitution, however, must be approved by Full Council.

Committee Appointments

5. This report recommends a change to the membership of the Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee following the by-election on 3 July 2025.

Reasons for Decision

6. The Council's Monitoring Officer is required to review the Council's Constitution each year to ensure that its aims and principles are given full effect in accordance with Article 14 of the Constitution.

LIST OF APPENDICES

None.

Report to: Full Council

Date: 09/07/2025

Subject: Finance Peer Challenge Review (April 2025)

Report of: Cllr Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform

Report author: Matthew Sales, Assistant Director, Programmes, Assurance and Analytics

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

SUMMARY

The report sets out the findings from a Finance Peer Challenge (FPC) conducted of the Council in April 2025. The overview presentation and the detailed report is included at Appendix 1 and 2. In summary, the FPC highlighted the following findings with regard to the Council:

- The council has highly visible and effective political and officer leadership
- The council is very ambitious and financially well-run
- The organisation's financial track-record has enabled investment in clear political priorities
- The strong focus on Value for Money and Ruthless Financial Efficiency is led and supported by very capable members and officers
- The council is self-aware and recognises its future financial challenge will require a different response and is continuing to plan for this change
- The council has a strong track-record in both commissioning and contract managing external services – demonstrating its commitment to service improvements and social value
- There are some differing perceptions and understandings of the council's transformation approach and activity across the organisation – there is value from the council articulating its overall approach
- The council's leadership and effective working with public and private sector partners, including on economic growth, has important learning for the wider sector.

The report will be considered by Cabinet on 14 July and Policy and Oversight Board on 16 July 2025 (the latter specifically to review and consider the plan to implement the recommendations from the FPC).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the overview presentation and final report at Appendices 1 and 2 of the Local Government Association Finance Peer Challenge of H&F.

2. To note monitoring the implementation of actions against the recommendations has been referred to the Policy and Oversight Board.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Corporate Plan and the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	The financial peer challenge final report concluded that strong financial management and planning has allowed the Council to invest in services to support residents to prosper – for example, free Homecare and low council tax levels. Upstream London was identified for its proactive leadership, delivering tangible benefits to the borough and offering valuable learning for the wider local government sector.
Creating a compassionate and inclusive council	The peer team noted that a strong financial track record had allowed H&F to avoid the closure of frontline and valued community services, including those that support creating a compassionate and inclusive council.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	The final report noted the engagement undertaken as part of consultation on the budget and made observations on opportunities to extend this given future financial challenges ahead.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The final report found a strong focus amongst members and officers on the RFE value, supported by good financial governance and a culture that recognises the importance of value for money.
Taking pride in H&F	Residents can be proud of the fact that they have a well-run council that is recognised for its exceptional management of its finances by its peers.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The peer team reviewed background documentation relating to the Council's financial strategy, including plans in the revenue budget for 2025/26 and four-year capital programme to support action against the Climate and Ecology Strategy, such as the £5m H&F Green Investment scheme, accessing external grants, ecology projects and climate engagement. The peer team noted the Council is very ambitious.

Financial Impact

Any financial impact of the implementation of recommendations from the Finance Peer Challenge will be subject to separate decision reports, although they are not expected to exceed existing budget envelopes.

Alex Pygram, Head of Finance, Finance and Corporate Services, 19th June 2025

Verified by Andre Mark, 19th June 2025

Legal Implications

The recommendations in the action plan all fall within the powers of the Council. The proposals are calculated to better enable the Council to fulfil its general duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to ensure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The enhancement of the audit and scrutiny functions are an important means of ensuring sound decision-making and minimising the risk of legal challenges.

John Sharland, Special Projects Lawyer, 18 June 2025

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Proposals and Analysis of Options

1. The Local Government Association (LGA) is the national membership body representing local authorities across England and Wales, of which H&F is a member. The LGA supports sector-led improvement through a range of peer reviews, including corporate, financial, and service- or topic-specific assessments.
2. H&F has a strong tradition of inviting independent scrutiny of its services and policies. This includes robust arrangements for external inspections, co-production of services with residents, service users, and partners, and peer reviews conducted by local government and other experts. Notably, in April 2024, the Council invited the LGA to undertake a cyber peer review, which yielded positive findings.
3. Finance Peer Challenges (FPC) are a key component of the LGA's sector-led improvement offer. They provide in-depth scrutiny of financial leadership and planning, focusing on the interconnected challenges of delivering a balanced annual budget, achieving medium-term financial sustainability, and maintaining resilience in the face of external pressures and unforeseen events.
4. In April 2025, H&F hosted an LGA-led FPC. The review took place over three days (23–25 April) at Council offices. The peer team conducted over 40 meetings and engaged with more than 70 individuals, including the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Members, scrutiny and opposition councillors, the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), senior officers, finance and budget managers, and external partners. The team also visited the Council's CCTV control room, met with Law Enforcement officers, and toured the Upstream Innovation District at Imperial College London.

5. The FPC was delivered by a team of highly experienced elected members and senior officers. We are grateful for the significant time and expertise they dedicated to this process, and for their commitment to sector-wide improvement. We also extend our thanks to all Members, officers, and external partners who participated, and to the LGA for their coordination and support throughout the review.

Key Findings

6. The FPC explored five core themes:
- **Financial leadership:** Does the authority have plans for its long-term financial sustainability, which are owned by members and officer leaders?
 - **Financial strategy, planning and forecasting:** Does the authority understand its short, and long-term, financial prospects?
 - **Decision-making:** Are key decisions taken in the understanding of the financial implications, risks and options? Are Audit and Scrutiny effective?
 - **Financial outcomes:** Are financial results (including those of the Council's investments and transformation projects) monitored and acted upon to realise the authority's intentions? Are financial controls robust?
 - **Partnership & innovation:** Is finance at the cutting edge of what the authority is working to achieve, working with partners and seeking innovative approaches?
7. In addition, we asked the peer team to provide feedback on our approach to transformation and commissioning decisions.

Strong Financial Management and Track Record

8. The independent review concluded that H&F is a financially well-managed authority with a strong track record of sound financial planning. The peer team recognised that the Council's consistent focus on its RFE value has enabled it to meet savings targets while funding key political priorities, including maintaining one of the lowest council tax levels in the country.

Capable Leadership and a Culture of Value for Money

9. The review found that financial leadership at H&F is driven by highly capable elected members and officers, supported by a strong culture of political engagement and challenge. The peer team observed a management ethos that places a high value on achieving value for money across all areas of service delivery.

Future-Focused Financial Strategy

10. Looking ahead, the peer team noted that the Council is aware of the evolving nature of its financial challenges. Addressing these will require a strengthened

transformation agenda, continued efforts to manage demand growth, and building on the Council's strong performance in commissioning and contract management of external services.

Effective Partnerships and Innovation

11. The peer team also highlighted H&F's effective collaboration with public and private sector partners. In particular, Upstream London was identified for its proactive leadership, delivering tangible benefits to the borough and offering valuable learning for the wider local government sector.

Recommendations

12. The final report contains seven recommendations. They are:
 - a) Articulate the council's overall approach and strategy for transformation, including its scope and scale, as well as the respective roles of corporate centre and departments
 - b) Identify the capacity and capability needed to support the council's transformation agenda, including whether there should be a dedicated officer and member lead
 - c) Extend the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) scenario planning analysis to include optimistic and pessimistic forecasts of future demand pressures
 - d) Progress work to appoint an independent member to the Audit Committee
 - e) Enhance the council's scrutiny and audit functions with regular training and support to members
 - f) Consider the Shared Services arrangements for assurance, treasury and pension functions to ensure they are embedded and meet the needs of the organisation
 - g) Share the learning with the sector from the council's leading-edge work on economic growth 'Upstream London'.
13. An action plan will support the implementation of the recommendations, which will be monitored by the Policy and Oversight Board.

Reasons for Decision

14. The final report and recommendations of the FPC is brought to Council for noting ahead of future consideration at Cabinet.

Risk Management Implications

15. This report presents no determinable risks.

Jules Binney, Risk and Assurance Manager, 23rd June 2025

Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications

16. There are no climate and ecological emergency implications arising from the report.

Matthew Sales, Assistant Director, Assurance, Programmes and Analytics, 16 June 2025.

Consultation

17. No formal consultation has been undertaken on this report.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – LGA Finance Peer Challenge overview presentation

Appendix 2 – LGA Finance Peer Challenge Final Report

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

Feedback from the peer challenge team
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23 – 25 April 2025

25 April 2025



The peer challenge team

- Cllr Nazia Rehman, Labour Member Peer and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Transformation at Wigan Council
- Cllr Jason Cummings, Conservative Member Peer and Cabinet Member for Finance at LB Croydon
- Paul Thorogood, Chief Executive at LB Bexley and former Section 151 Officer
- Leanne McKnight, Director of Finance Improvement at Liverpool City Council
- Daniel Omisore, Director of Finance at LB Camden
- Kevin Kewin, LGA Peer Challenge Manager
- Olivia Saunders, LGA Impact Graduate





The purpose of peer challenge

Peer challenges are improvement focused and tailored to meet a council's needs. They are designed to complement and add value to the council's own performance and improvement activity. The peers used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read. The team provide feedback as critical friends – not as assessors, consultants or inspectors.



The process of peer challenge

Peers reviewed a range of information to ensure we were familiar with the council, the challenges it is facing and its plans for the future

The peer team gathered information and views from more than 40 meetings, in addition to further research

We spoke to more than 70 people including a range of council staff together with members and external stakeholders



Scope and brief for the peer challenge

We have considered the core components looked at by all finance peer challenges, namely:

1. Financial leadership
2. Financial strategy, planning & forecasting
3. Decision-making
4. Financial outcomes
5. Partnership & innovation

In addition, the council asked for a focus on transformation and commissioning decisions



Overall messages and observations

The council has highly visible and effective political and officer leadership

The council is very ambitious and financially well-run

The organisation's financial track-record has enabled investment in clear political priorities

The strong focus on VfM and 'ruthless financial efficiency' is led and supported by very capable members and officers

The council is self-aware and recognises its future financial challenge will require a different response and is continuing to plan for this change



Overall messages and observations

The council has a strong track-record in both commissioning and contract managing external services – demonstrating its commitment to service improvements and social value

There are some differing perceptions and understandings of the council's transformation approach and activity across the organisation – there is value from the council articulating its overall approach

The council's leadership and effective working with public and private sector partners, including on economic growth, has important learning for the wider sector





Financial leadership

The council has a strong financial track-record which has enabled investment in ambitious political priorities

The organisation benefits from very capable members and officers with a strong focus on value for money

The finance function is well-led and services value its work; it also provides a high-level of 'corporate grip' on finance

The development of the annual budget and MTFS is a well-established, corporately owned process conducted over a full-year





Financial leadership

Financial leadership – including from the Chief Executive – has supported the council to address some of its recent financial and service challenges e.g. HRA issues

The council is moving towards a much more challenging financial environment e.g. a projected savings gap of £44m by 2028/29

The organisation's leadership recognises that this requires a different response with transformation featuring more significantly in future years

It is also acknowledged that budget decisions may become more difficult, and this may mean a need for greater public engagement and consultation



Financial strategy, planning & forecasting

Financial plans are developed in the context of a clear corporate plan and wider vision for economic growth in the borough

The current MTFS reduces significantly budget provision for demand and demographic growth in 2027/28 and 28/29 – this is due to planned service change and transformation work

These are ambitious targets to achieve: progress in delivery will need to be closely monitored with risks managed



Financial strategy, planning & forecasting

The council has a strong financial planning framework

The corporate plan is being refreshed for 2026/27 – there is an opportunity to align the current 3-year MTFS and 4-year capital programme

The council recognises the need to step up its approach to transformation to meet its future financial and service needs



Financial strategy, planning & forecasting

There is progress to date both within departments and an emerging corporate transformation programme focused on Workforce, Property, Digital and Commercialisation

There are some differing perceptions and understandings of the council's transformation approach and activity across the organisation

There are potential opportunities for a more corporate approach to transformation in some areas, including the customer journey

There is value from the council articulating its overall approach to transformation, including its scope and scale, as well as the respective roles of the corporate centre and departments



Financial strategy, planning & forecasting

The council's transformation work will take time and require enhanced capacity and capability to support the organisational change needed

There is value in a dedicated officer lead for the council's transformation activity to ensure a coordinated approach across the council as this activity scales up



Decision making

The council has appropriate member and officer governance arrangements for finance

There is regular financial reporting, including to Finance SLT and Cabinet

There is member involvement in the budget, including at Policy and Oversight Board and Policy and Accountability Committees

There is potential to enhance the council's scrutiny and audit functions with regular training and support to members



Decision making

There is robust governance for commercial decision making and ongoing monitoring of market decisions

The council is working towards the appointment of an independent member for Audit Committee following an external auditor recommendation in 2023

The council is using data well to inform financial decision making

There is potential for further embedding arrangements for assurance, treasury and pension functions





Financial outcomes

The organisation understands the direct link between financial performance and better outcomes for residents

The council's 'entrepreneurial municipal government' approach directly supports financial outcomes

The council has a good track-record of delivering savings set out within its annual budget

As in other councils, demand led services are presenting significant budget pressures – these have been managed well in LBHF to date, including from contingencies and unbudgeted income





Financial outcomes

The council has good prudential indicators and strong treasury management

Financial outcomes are good with balanced General Fund outturns and annual budgets set to date protecting in-year contingencies / reserves

The council has a strong track-record in both commissioning and contract managing external services – demonstrating its commitment to service improvements and social value



Financial outcomes

The council should feel confident in its internal expertise to maintain and build on its approach further in adult social care

The organisation has been effective in securing external funding, including S106 and CIL



Partnership and Innovation

The council's leadership and effective working with public and private sector partners, including to develop the Innovation District, is impressive

It demonstrates both innovation and partnership working, and provides considerable learning for the sector

The council's work means its benefits from significant direct investment in the borough and maximises the value from the area's economic assets. This work reflects a very strong and successful politically-led approach





Partnership and Innovation

The council is partnering with Aston University to assess the broader impacts (including financial) of the council's free homecare policy - this will be of wider interest

Extensive engagement of schools (Schools Forum) and tenants (HRA) on the development of budget proposals is appreciated

The relationship between adult social care and the ICB has strengthened over the last 12 months and is vital for further transformation

It is evident that the council is a well regarded and trusted partner, delivering strong place leadership, to deliver the best for residents and the borough





Recommendations

1. Articulate the council's overall approach and strategy for transformation, including its scope and scale, as well as the respective roles of the corporate centre and departments
2. Identify the capacity and capability needed to support the council's transformation agenda, including whether there should be a dedicated officer and member lead
3. Extend the MTFS scenario planning analysis to include optimistic and pessimistic forecasts of future demand pressures
4. Progress work to appoint an independent member to the Audit Committee



Recommendations

5. Enhance the council's scrutiny and audit functions with regular training and support to members
6. Consider the shared services arrangements for assurance, treasury and pension functions to ensure they are embedded and meet the needs of the organisation
7. Share the learning with the sector from the council's leading-edge work on economic growth 'Upstream London'


Finance Peer Challenge

London Borough of Hammersmith &
Fulham

23rd – 25th April

Feedback report





1. Executive summary	3
2. Key recommendations	4
3. Summary of the peer challenge approach	5
4. Feedback	7
5. Next steps	15

1. Executive summary

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) is very ambitious and financially well-run. The council has a track-record of delivering its savings targets and its balanced budget for 2025/26 enables more than £12m of additional funding for services.

The council's financial leadership has directly supported funding of political priorities, including low levels of council tax, free homecare and significant discretionary investment in community safety services.

LBHF's strong focus on 'being ruthlessly financially efficient' is led and supported by very capable members and officers. It was clear that there is a high-level of political support for, and challenge of, financial management. Robust financial governance is supported by a management culture that recognises the importance of value for money.

The council is self-aware and recognises that its future financial challenges will require a different response. LBHF's political and officer leadership is continuing to plan for this change. As part of this, there is value in the council articulating its overall approach and strategy for transformation, including the respective roles of the corporate centre and departments.

The council has shown its capability to deliver good financial outcomes. These attributes will be important for the council's ambitious work to significantly reduce demand growth in the borough. The council also has a record of achievement in commissioning and contract managing external services. This provides LBHF with a strong foundation as it seeks to make further financial savings and service improvements, including in adult social care.

The council's leadership and effective working with public and private sector partners, including on economic growth, has important learning for the wider sector. 'Upstream London' is an exemplar of strong political leadership, and a proactive approach, which has significantly benefited the borough and its residents.

2. Key recommendations

There are a number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

- 2.1. **Recommendation 1:** Articulate the council's overall approach and strategy for transformation, including its scope and scale, as well as the respective roles of the corporate centre and departments
- 2.2. **Recommendation 2:** Identify the capacity and capability needed to support the council's transformation agenda, including whether there should be a dedicated officer and member lead
- 2.3. **Recommendation 3:** Extend the MTFS scenario planning analysis to include optimistic and pessimistic forecasts of future demand pressures
- 2.4. **Recommendation 4:** Progress work to appoint an independent member to the Audit Committee
- 2.5. **Recommendation 5:** Enhance the council's scrutiny and audit functions with regular training and support to members
- 2.6. **Recommendation 6:** Consider the shared service arrangements for assurance, treasury and pension functions to ensure they are embedded and meet the needs of the organisation
- 2.7. **Recommendation 7:** Share the learning with the sector from the council's leading-edge work on economic growth 'Upstream London'

3. Summary of the peer challenge approach

3.1. The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected on the basis of their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- Councillor Nazia Rehman, Labour Member Peer and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Transformation at Wigan Council
- Councillor Jason Cummings, Conservative Member Peer and Cabinet Member for Finance at London Borough of Croydon
- Paul Thorogood, Chief Executive at London Borough of Bexley and former Section 151 Officer
- Leanne McKnight, Director of Finance Improvement at Liverpool City Council
- Daniel Omisore, Director of Finance at London Borough of Camden
- Kevin Kewin, LGA Peer Challenge Manager
- Olivia Saunders, LGA Impact Graduate

3.2. Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all Finance Peer Challenges. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement.

1. **Financial leadership:** Does the authority have plans for its long-term financial sustainability, which are owned by its members and officer leaders?
2. **Financial strategy, planning & forecasting:** Does the authority understand its short and long term financial prospects?
3. **Decision-making:** Are key decisions taken in the understanding of the financial implications, risks and options? Are Audit and Scrutiny effective?
4. **Financial outcomes:** Are financial results (including those of the council's investments and transformation projects) monitored and acted upon to realise

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Chief Executive: Joanna Killian

President: Baroness Grey-Thompson

the authority's intentions? Are financial controls robust?

5. **Partnership & innovation:** Is finance at the cutting edge of what the authority is working to achieve, working with partners and seeking innovative approaches?

In addition to these questions, the council asked the peer team to provide feedback on its approach to transformation and commissioning decisions.

3.3. The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent three days onsite at LBHF, during which they:

- Gathered information and views from more than 40 meetings and visits, in addition to further research and reading.
- Spoke to more than 70 people including a range of council staff together with members and external stakeholders.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members.

4. Feedback

4.1. Financial Leadership

The council has a strong financial track-record, including in delivering against its savings targets. Its balanced budget for 2025/26 preserves in-year contingencies, maintains General Fund reserves and enables more than £12m of additional investment in services. The council's financial leadership has directly supported funding of political priorities. LBHF is the only council in England to provide free homecare and has the third lowest level of council tax. The council's additional investment in priority areas for 2025/26 includes £3.4m on community safety initiatives.

The organisation benefits from very capable members and officers with a strong focus on value for money. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform demonstrated a detailed knowledge of, and strong interest in, financial issues across the council. The Cabinet Members that the peer team spoke to showed a strong understanding both of their respective financial challenges and the council's corporate approach. It was clear that there is a high-level of political challenge of, and support for, financial management overseen by the council's leader.

'Being ruthlessly financially efficient' is one of the council's six core values. This focus on value for money was evident when speaking to both senior officers and budget managers. The peer team found good financial governance arrangements and there is a dedicated guidance note for staff on financial efficiency. Most importantly, management practice is underpinned by a culture that recognises the importance of value for money. This was evidenced across a range of services from the chief registrars' work on additional income generation through to a commercial arrangement to support a neighbouring borough with CCTV provision.

The finance function is well-led and services value its work; it also provides a high-level of 'corporate grip' on finance. The departmental heads of finance report to a well-regarded Assistant Director of Finance (and the Deputy S151). Budget managers and departmental leaders are both supported and challenged by their corporate colleagues. Positively, the council has avoided the need for over-reliance on interim finance staff: financial skills are valued and developed. As a result, the

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council benefits from a stable team of finance professionals with strong organisational memory, including of previous decision making.

Strong financial leadership has supported the council to address some of its recent financial and service challenges. A clear example of this is its work, overseen directly by the Chief Executive, to turn around the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). LBHF's HRA has experienced significant overspends and poor performance, including in repairs and maintenance. The council's external auditor identified a significant weakness in the HRA's value for money arrangements for the financial year 2022/23. The council's work programme has significantly improved the performance of key metrics, including a reduction in the number of 'works in progress' cases over 12 weeks old from more than 4,000 cases in June 2023 to one in April 2025. The council is also confident that it has eliminated the HRA's structural deficit. The most recent external audit report (for 2023/24, issued in November 2024), recognises the progress made with an improved amber rating for both financial sustainability and economy, efficiency, effectiveness). Tenant satisfaction indicators also show a marked improvement.

The council is moving towards a much more challenging financial environment. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) shows a projected budget gap of £43.9 million by 2028/29. In comparison, the council's annual General Fund savings requirements in 2024/25 and 2025/26 are £5.4m and £5.1m respectively. The organisation's leadership recognises that the future budget challenge requires a different response, with transformation featuring more significantly in future years. The council accepts that this transformation will need to be backed by enhanced capacity and capability.

It is also acknowledged that budget decisions may become more difficult. To date, the council – unlike many other local authorities – has largely been able to avoid the closure of frontline and valued community services. As such, the council's approach to budget consultation has focused primarily on statutory budget consultation requirements, including with local businesses, rather than resident engagement. Going forward, as budget decisions become more difficult, the council may need to engage with residents more actively about financial priorities and visible service changes. This is likely to require more community conversations and engagement

focused on the budget than there has been to date.

4.2. Financial strategy, planning & forecasting

Financial plans are developed in the context of a clear corporate strategy ('the H&F Plan') and wider vision for economic growth in the borough ('Upstream London'). The council has worked to develop its Medium-Term Financial Strategy over recent years, with a more multi-year approach, including detailed analysis of the projected General Fund budget gap. The development of the 2026/27 MTFS is already underway and the council is addressing its financial challenge in the context of its strategic and policy goals.

The peer team consider the planned corporate plan refresh as an opportunity to explore extending the duration of the council's service and financial planning framework – including the H&F Plan and MTFS – from three years to four. This would also align with the council's current 4-year capital programme. Notwithstanding the inherent financial uncertainty of later years, a moderate extension of the council's MTFS planning horizon, as the financial challenge increases, would potentially enhance an already strong financial framework.

The peer team reviewed the council's budget for demand and demographic growth and noted significantly reduced provision in 2027/28 and 2028/29. The council has made provision for £11.8m of growth in 2026/27, followed by a further increase of just £0.5m in each of the next two years. This is a conscious council decision informed by planned service and transformation work. These are ambitious targets to achieve and progress will need to be closely monitored with risks managed.

Positively, the council undertakes budget scenario sensitivity planning to inform its forecasting. However, this planning currently excludes explicit assessment of demographic and demand growth. Given the decision to reduce demand provision in later years, and its potential significance to the council's financial performance, the peer team recommends that the council extends the MTFS scenario planning analysis to include optimistic and pessimistic forecasts of future demographic and demand pressures.

The council recognises the need to step up its approach to transformation to meet its

future financial and service needs. There is progress to date within departments and an emerging corporate transformation programme focussed on workforce, property, digitalisation and commercialisation.

The peer team found some differing perceptions of the council's transformation approach and activity across the organisation. This includes different understandings of what is in scope of the corporate transformation programme and what will be left to departments to lead. There were also different perceptions of the scope of corporate programmes. For example, the workforce programme (sometimes referred to as the people programme) was considered by some to be focused on council workforce issues and others about adult and children's services. While there is a board governance for each of these programmes, there is not a published document which clearly sets out their purpose, scope and remit.

There are potential opportunities for a more corporate approach to transformation in some areas. For example, the peer team heard from service leads about their individual plans to optimise the customer experience for their respective services (e.g. how a resident uses the website). A more coordinated model to improving the customer journey would have benefits both in terms of providing better value for money and delivering better outcomes for residents. There is value from the council articulating its overall approach to transformation, including its scope and scale, as well as the respective roles of the corporate centre and departments.

The council's transformation work will take time to deliver both improved outcomes and savings. It will require enhanced capacity and capability to support the organisational change needed. While the council has a corporate PMO function, there is not a dedicated corporate transformation function with programme manager or business analysis support. There is potential merit in a dedicated senior officer lead to drive the council's transformation activity, and oversee the council's overall resourcing requirements, particularly as the council scales up its approach. This could be a hub and spoke model, providing central capacity that can drive transformation and be drawn upon across services.

4.3. Decision making

The council has appropriate governance arrangements for financial and commercial decision making. The council's S151 officer is a well-respected member of the council's Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and chairs a monthly Finance SLT that oversees financial performance, budget planning and major programmes. The council has put in place a board structure to address major initiatives, including where there is financial or commercial risk, such as the civic campus programme and for Hammersmith Bridge. Regeneration schemes are assessed and scrutinised through the Development Board, while an established Commercial Board evaluates commercial opportunities. The council is establishing a housing company – individual projects will be based on business cases – and is actively engaging with other authorities to learn from their experience.

There is regular financial reporting, including for both revenue and capital, to Cabinet members four times a year. Reporting is timely enough for action to be agreed and taken, including at officer level.

The council has extensive Overview and Scrutiny arrangements with six service-based Policy and Accountability Committees (PACs) overseen by a Policy Oversight Board (POB). These structures support budget scrutiny with each PAC undertaking relevant thematic budget consideration prior to discussion at POB. The peer team noted, for example, the discussion at PACs considering growth proposals, savings options and their service implications.

There is potential to further strengthen scrutiny arrangements. First, peers noted that that, for each of the PAC discussions, the primary Executive lead was the Cabinet member for Finance and Reform. There is potential benefit from a more joint approach with the relevant lead member, given the shared collective responsibility. Second, the peer team heard views that members could be more actively supported in their budget scrutiny roles, including through dedicated training and ensuring there are formal recommendations to the Executive. Third, in light of the council's bigger financial challenges in future years, there may be value in exploring MTFS and budget scrutiny at more than one set point in the year (currently January / February). This would support members to look at the broader financial picture as well as in-year budget pressures and the delivery of agreed financial savings.

The council is working towards the appointment of an independent member for Audit Committee. This follows a recommendation from its external auditor in 2023. The peer team encourage the council to progress with this appointment. The council is currently benchmarking its approach, and the role's remuneration, with neighbouring boroughs. The peer team would also recommend an assessment of support needs for Audit Committee members, including to help drive its work programme. The peer team heard some views that regular training is not provided.

The council is using data well to inform service and financial decision making. The peer team heard about the council's approach to internal administrative data, such as the use of Power BI to support its work on homelessness. The council also actively seeks out external benchmarking to understand its comparative position. Significantly, there was a shared understanding of the comparative cost of services by finance and departmental colleagues.

The council's audit, treasury and pension functions are managed under a shared services arrangement. Overall, council performance in these areas is not a cause of concern. However, the peer team noted some instances where these services could be more embedded in the operations of the organisation. There is, for example, potential in reviewing the council's current risk register as well as its alignment with the council's internal audit plan. While the shared services agreement was not a strong focus of the peer team's work, there is value in considering the current working arrangements to ensure that they fully reflect and meet the council's needs.

The council considers its formal financial accounting as an essential part of its governance framework. The peer team was pleased to note that the council has secured unqualified opinions on its Statement of Accounts up to and including 2023/24.

4.4. Financial outcomes

Financial outcomes are good with balanced outturns and annual budgets protecting in-year contingencies and reserves. For example, the council's 2023/24 General Fund outturn was an underspend of £0.3m (less than 0.2% of the total net budget). The council was able to maintain general balances and reduce the level of external borrowing and outstanding debts owed. Earmarked reserves did however decrease

by £4.8m.

The organisation understands the direct link between financial performance and better outcomes for residents. A practical example of this is the council's work to maximise Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy benefits from development. This funding has been used to support local political priorities such as the civic campus programme and a significant law enforcement team. S106 revenue scheme and CIL reserves remain significant at £42.5m and £22.9m respectively.

The council has a good track-record of delivering savings set out within its annual budget. For example, all but £0.4m of its £5.4m 2023/24 general fund savings target was achieved with most services delivering their proposals.

The council is also generally achieving well against its income budgets, although there is a large projected shortfall in parking income for 2024/25 – £8m. The peer team noted a range of reasons given for this variance including at month 6 (successful behaviour change and the introduction of business visitor permits) and month 9 (fraud and delays in the rollout of the camera network programme). It is important that the council fully understands the relative importance of the distinct factors to inform income projections for future years.

As in other councils, demand led services are presenting significant budget pressures. In 2023/24, overspends included £1.9m on adult social care specialist support and independent living, £2.3m on children and young people's services, and £2.3m on housing solutions (including temporary accommodation). The council has managed these pressures well, including using budgeted central contingencies and unbudgeted income.

The projected outturns for 2024/25 available to the peer team presented a similar situation – at month 9, the council was projecting gross service budget pressures of £21.1m. Alongside the parking shortfall, there were overspends for some demand-led services. These pressures will largely – but not entirely – be offset by projected corporate underspends, use of central contingencies and unbudgeted income resulting in a net forecast pressure of £1.1m. There is potential for the council to explore these patterns in further detail, including, for example, whether there is an overprovision in the budget for the net cost of borrowing.

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Local Government Association company number 11177145 Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government company number 03675577

Chair: Councillor Louise Gittins

Chief Executive: Joanna Killian

President: Baroness Grey-Thompson

The council has strong treasury management. It has good liquidity levels and is achieving good average interest rates on external debt and cash balances – 3.7% and 5% respectively. The council also benefits from good prudential indicators and interest finance costs are a relatively small proportion of revenue spending. The CIPFA Resilience Index demonstrates that the council has comparatively good levels of both reserves to income (39%) and debt to income (59%).

Many of the council's major services are provided by external providers and LBHF has a strong track-record in both commissioning and contract management. The council has a documented sourcing strategy which recognises the importance of both financial efficiency and social value, and underpins commissioning decisions. A weekly Contracts Assurance Board – with senior, cross-organisational representation – provides governance and supports compliance for planned procurements. The council seeks to continually improve its approach and, over the last year, has been successful in decreasing the use of waivers and taken full ownership of its web-based procurement system. The council also uses external benchmarking to understand how its contracts compare.

The peer team found evidence that the council is actively managing contracts to support better service outcomes and optimise costs. This includes recent housing activity where the council worked closely with providers but also, where necessary, exited underperforming contractors, as well its recent collaborative improvements in children's services. The council should feel confident in its internal expertise to maintain and build on its approach, including in adult social care.

4.5. Partnership & Innovation

The council's leadership and effective working with public and private sector partners is impressive. The council first launched an innovation district with Imperial College London (ICL) in 2017, which helped to create a thriving cluster of Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Media and Medicine (STEM³) businesses in the borough. The council's ongoing partnership with ICL – Upstream London Nexus – demonstrates innovation. The council refers to its approach as 'entrepreneurial municipal government' – LBHF is creative in its use of its place-making levers, alongside its soft power, to drive local growth and share the benefits. To date, the

council reports £6 billion of growth investment, 13,200 new jobs created and more spin-out start-ups than anywhere in the UK.

It was clear to the peer team that 'Upstream London' reflects a strong and successful politically led approach. While many authorities will not have Hammersmith and Fulham's economic assets, the council's work provides considerable learning for the sector. The council developed a clear vision, has a proactive focus on growth sectors that are right for the area, partners effectively with anchor institutions, provides targeted business support and works to ensure growth is genuinely inclusive.

The council is keen to share its good practice and learn from others. It has established 'cooperative growth partnerships' with innovation districts internationally, and with Barnsley and Swindon in England. These partnerships aim to share learning on inclusive growth, support mutual business investment and provide learning opportunities for residents and employees.

More generally, it is evident that the council is a well-regarded and trusted partner, delivering strong place leadership. The relationship between adult social care and the Integrated Care Board, for example, has strengthened over the last 12 months and is significant for further transformation. The peer team also noted that the council's engagement of schools and housing tenants on the development of relevant budget proposals was appreciated. This provides a firm foundation for wider future engagement on the council's budget and MTFS.

A final example of innovative partnerships is the council's current work with Aston University to assess the full impacts (including financial) of its free home care policy. The council's home care approach is unique in England and there is value in a clear evidence base. This is an important piece of research work, which can help shape the council's future decision making and will be of wider national interest.

5. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss and reflect on these findings.

Both the peer team and LGA are keen to build on the relationships formed through the peer challenge and further support can be discussed.

In the meantime, Kate Herbert (kate.herbert@local.gov.uk), Principal Adviser for London, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Kate is available to discuss any further support the council requires.

SPECIAL MOTION NO. 1 – CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MACBETH CENTRE

Standing in the names of:

- (i) Councillor Zarar Qayyum
- (ii) Councillor Andrew Jones

This Council congratulates the Macbeth Centre on its 150-year anniversary and notes that it has been a cornerstone of adult education and community engagement since its construction.

Over this time, the Centre has empowered countless residents, supporting personal development and lifelong learning. Its recent roof renovation, completed in October, ensures that this historic building will continue to serve the community for many years to come, forming a key part of the administration's commitment to skills-led economic growth.

Agenda Item 8.2

SPECIAL MOTION NO. 2 – FREE BREAKFASTS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

Standing in the names of:

- (i) Councillor Alex Sanderson
- (ii) Councillor Nikos Souslous

The Council commends the new Labour government's plans to provide free school breakfasts for primary school children nationally.

The Council notes that its Labour administration pioneered this policy in Hammersmith and Fulham in 2018. Since then, it has helped to ensure children in the borough are healthy and ready to learn.

SPECIAL MOTION NO. 3 – H&F AMONG THE BEST IN THE COUNTRY ON ACTION TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

Standing in the names of:

- (i) Councillor Wesley Harcourt
- (ii) Councillor Nicole Trehy

This Council notes that Climate Emergency UK's Action Scorecard for 2025 has ranked the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham as second best in the country – just one point behind first place.

The Council also notes that Hammersmith & Fulham improved its score in every assessed category.

The Council thanks the volunteer Climate and Ecological Emergency Commission, our Climate Champions, council officers and all our residents who are doing their bit to improve our local environment and tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergency. Their hard work helped deliver important climate measures such as the H&F Green Investment, Clean Air Neighbourhoods and progress on energy efficiency.

The Council recognises that the UK's net-zero targets are an important means of galvanising climate innovation and action. It understands how businesses and startup entrepreneurs in that sector are attracting vital new investment and that they are one of the fastest-growing sectors in the British economy - creating important new jobs, improving energy security, driving sustainable economic growth and securing a brighter environmental and economic future. It therefore calls on politicians of all parties to remain committed to these targets.

This Council notes that much has been done but there is much, much more to do to protect our planet for future generations.

Agenda Item 8.4

SPECIAL MOTION NO. 4 – PROTECTING AND IMPROVING UXBRIDGE ROAD FOR ALL RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

Standing in the names of:

- (i) Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier
- (ii) Councillor Rebecca Harvey

This Council recognises the unique character and identity of Uxbridge Road, which is home to a diverse mix of shops and restaurants, a well-attended market, and award-winning cultural venues that serve both residents and visitors from across London.

This Council welcomes the recent petition calling for improvements to the street and resolves to work closely with residents, businesses, cultural venues, and community groups to deliver enhancements that improve safety, cleanliness, and vibrancy while protecting the identity and diversity that make Uxbridge Road a place to be proud of.

This Council notes and resolves to accelerate efforts to improve the road, including decluttering street furniture, deep cleaning pavements, removing graffiti, working with businesses and local artists to improve shopfronts, and encouraging private firms and utilities to act responsibly and remove defunct phone boxes and flyposting. It also welcomes recent business investment on the road.

This Council notes the work of the Law Enforcement Team, who regularly patrol Uxbridge Road to keep it safe, and reaffirms its commitment to an unprecedented investment in producing the UK's most extensive CCTV network to support the work of the LET and the Metropolitan Police.

This Council notes ongoing planning enforcement actions to address untidy premises and will continue to engage with landlords and businesses to ensure compliance with licensing and planning standards that uplift the street's appearance, wherever it has the power to do so.

This Council welcomes the feasibility study for a Shepherd's Bush Business Improvement District, which would be led by local businesses and empower them to further enhance local amenities in a way that complements the unique character of the street's business offer.

SPECIAL MOTION NO. 5 – THE SAFETY OF CYCLISTS

Standing in the names of:

- (i) Councillor Jose Afonso
- (ii) Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure

This Council calls on the Administration to safeguard the safety of cyclists on our roads.