

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes



Monday 2 February 2026

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Stala Antoniadou (Chair), Lucy Richardson, Sally Taylor and Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler

Other Councillors: Councillors Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety) and Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform)

Guest: Casey Abaraonye (Resident)

Officers:

Bram Kainth (Executive Director of Place)
James Newman (Assistant Director of Finance)
Kellie Gooch (Head of Finance – Place)
Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm)
Neil Thurlow (Assistant Director of Community Safety, Resilience and CCTV)
Mo Basith (Law Enforcement Manager)
Debbie Yau (Committee Coordinator)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Omid Miri.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler and Neil Thurlow, Assistant Director of Community Safety, Resilience and CCTV were attending remotely.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2025 were agreed as accurate record.

On matters arising from the last meeting, the Chair informed the Committee that three members had taken part in the Police's live facial recognition operation to observe the deployment in action at Westfields near the end of last November.

4. 2026/27 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) gave an overview of the 2026/27 Medium-Term Financial Strategy (pages 26 to 33), covering the strategic context (including Chancellor's Budget Statement), policy statement on Fair Funding Review, the revenue budget strategy and Budget 2026/27, essential pressures and savings proposals 2026/27.

Kellie Gooch (Head of Finance – Place) presented the revenue budget 2026/27 in respect of social inclusion and community safety, including key budget changes and budget risks. She also outlined the impacts of the initiatives of investing in keeping local people safe and investing in social inclusion,

NOTE: The presentation slides are attached in Appendix A

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler said she shared the disappointment on the Fair Funding Review as it was not fair to H&F's residents for the devastating cut. She sought clarification whether the reduction of £135 m would span across two or four years. She remarked that austerity of such a scale never happened to this council before and it would put the next Administration in a difficult position.

Councillor Ree acknowledged that it was not a fair settlement to LBHF. He said that the funding formula was set on deprivation and LBHF was positioned 120 out of 296 local authority districts. Given nearly 60% of local authority districts were less deprived than LBHF, it was bad to see this council still got a reduction in funding. He noted that the impact of Fair Funding Review, as shown on page 30, would phase in over three years and the reduction in 2026/27 was £8.9 m. As such, £135 m for two or four years was not a recognisable figure. The current settlement lasted for three years, and the council needed to do a lot of work to tighten its belt and put aside resources to dampen the transition.

Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler noted that the Collection Fund which was mainly made up by the double council tax payable in respect of the lots of second homes which was a policy she disagreed with. She was also very concerned about raising the collection rate to 98%.

In response, Councillor Ree considered the second homes premium was a fair scheme for people having second homes in H&F to contribute more to council tax. He noted that the council had already hit past the 97% collection rate, that was why

98% was put up in the budget to reflect the efficiency at collecting council tax. Addressing her further concern about bailiffs, Councillor Ree said according to LBHF's debt collection policy, bailiffs were used only for people who could pay but choose not to do so while enjoying the services.

Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler asked how the Homeless Reduction Strategy helped save £1.2 m in 2026/27. Councillor Ree highlighted that a lot of savings and efficiencies in the proposals stemmed from solving the problems before they developed into bigger ones. The Homeless Reduction Strategy was a case in point. If the potential client's problem was tackled before they were out on the streets becoming homeless, it could help obviate the need for temporary accommodation.

Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler expressed concerns about the CCTV coverage in Fulham where crime cameras were wanting. At a meeting held earlier with Councillor Ben Coleman, MP on business crimes in Fulham, it was noted that installation of more cameras further to the current few required digging up the road surfaces.

In response, Councillor Ree pointed out that LBHF had the highest number of cameras per head of population in the country which could not be achieved by just putting a few in half of the borough. He encouraged her to vote for the relevant initiatives in the budget if she wanted the council to fight crimes more proactively. Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler discussed the reason for moving funding for the Law Enforcement Team into the General Fund budget. Councillor Ree said it was to protect the team's funding in future years.

In reply to Councillor Lucy Richardson's question on changes brought by local demographic expectations, Councillor Ree noted that following the property price hikes, people with children had moved away and came back later on. As such, the number of young residents was decreasing, the population was now older pitching at 45+. The council had been keeping track of the demographic changes with a view to delivering the services according to the plans.

The Chair and Councillor Ree discussed about seeing a slight increase of pre-school children while having schools consolidating at the same time. Councillor Ree said the council would monitor the situation to see if parents would move out of the borough when the children reached school age.

Responding to the Chair's question on the impacts of having a reduced budget for an aging population, Councillor Ree said it was expected to see more demands for some social care services in the years to come.

The Chair noted the budget for social inclusion and community safety looked very positive and asked whether any policy had been compromised. Kellie Gooch referred to the budget risks due to national inflationary and public finance pressures. As some of the programmes relied on the grant funding, the Finance Office would keep an eye to ensure those projects/schemes would continue to receive the required funding.

Councillor Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety) highlighted the exceptional investment made by LBHF in community safety.

She expressed her appreciation on the commitment and dedication of Councillor Ree and officers in working out the community safety budget to keep borough residents and visitors safe. Echoing her view, the Chair remarked that it was always good to reflect on what had been done for improvements and learning.

RESOLVED

That the Policy and Accountability Committee agreed

1. To make recommendations on the budget proposals to Cabinet as appropriate.
2. To make recommendations on the proposed changes to fees and charges as appropriate.

5. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TEAM (FOR INFORMATION)

Mo Basith (Law Enforcement Manager) presented the report on the work of the Law Enforcement Team (LET) between April and December 2025. He highlighted the impact of an inhouse built "LET App" on service delivery including faster response times, greater ground coverage, improved resident experience, enhanced data accuracy and operational efficiency. He also gave a performance analysis for the said period.

Councillor Sally Taylor asked whether all officers on patrol carried Naloxone, a medication that reversed opioid overdoses. Mo Basith said the life-saving medication were kept safe on the vehicles around the patrolling areas. Sometimes, the LET worked in partnership with the CCTV team and Police in administering Naloxone.

Councillor Lucy Richardson noted that there was a lot of crimes near the area of Charing Cross Hospital and Margravine Cemetery, some of which were associated with individuals who worked in the area having mental health problems and/or substance use issues. She asked whether the LET would act according to the crime demographic and target the specific area in question.

Mo Basith acknowledged the situation and added that students from a nearby college were seen congregating in the cemetery vaping/smoking, with some said to be taking drugs. The LET, upon receiving reports, had spoken to the students, the head teachers and teachers at the school. As regards handling individuals with mental health issues, the LET's community safety officers, similar to the Police, would refer those adults to the safeguarding team of adult social care.

On Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler's question about staff strength in each ward, Mo Basith noted the varying levels of service demand among the 21 wards, so staff would be moved around to provide the required support while there was always one named officer for every ward.

Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler was concerned that the South had recorded the fastest growth (+27.9%) of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Neil Thurlow (Assistant Director of Community Safety, Resilience and CCTV) said the design of the LET was to build trust and confidence in the community. It was a positive sign to see an

increase in reports to the service of ASB which was one of the LET's core pillars at the start. The increase might mean that residents were comfortable and confident to reach out to the LET. Neil noted that in line with the nature of 24/7 services, the LET would move resources around to help areas in need. He added that the night teams were not ward specific and could be moved around.

As regards the changes in the budget for the LET over the years, Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm) said he understood the budget was sufficient to fully fund the 72 full-time equivalent officers. He undertook to provide the relevant figures after the meeting.

ACTION: Mark Raisbeck

Questions from the floor

Casey Abaraonye (Resident) asked about the installation of a defibrillator outside his work premises. Mo Basith agreed to contact him after speaking with the council's first aid team.

ACTION: Mo Basith

Councillor Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety) noted about a defibrillator-like life-saving device called EpiPen were put in key places like streets/shops and schools. It was an emergency rescue device for severe allergic reactions. The Committee then discussed about the ways in locating the devices and promotion on its use. At the suggestion of Casey Abaraonye, the Chair agreed that the council should consider consolidating the apps it was using for different purposes, including parking and health.

Casey Abaraonye invited interested members to attend the Cycle Crime Conference to be held in the summer. Mark Raisbeck said his team aimed at reducing all kinds of crime and would be very interested in receiving more information about the conference.

ACTION: Mo Basith

6. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted the next meeting would be held on 27 April 2026. The Chair reminded members that the meeting would be cancelled if the date fell within the pre-election period.

Meeting started: 6.33 pm
Meeting ended: 7.47 pm

Chair

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[Appendix A: SICS Budget 2026/27](#)