

# **COUNCIL MINUTES**

**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY 2022**



## PRESENT

### **Attended In Person**

PJ Murphy (Mayor)  
Stephen Cowan  
Ben Coleman  
Sharon Holder  
Rachel Leighton  
Rory Vaughan  
Lisa Homan  
Andrew Jones  
Iain Cassidy  
Frances Umeh  
Bora Kwon  
Wesley Harcourt  
Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler  
Alex Karmel  
Mark Loveday

### **Attended Remotely**

Daryl Brown (Deputy Mayor)  
Frances Stainton  
Adronie Alford  
Alex Sanderson  
Amanda Lloyd-Harris  
Belinda Donovan  
Christabel Cooper  
Andrew Brown  
Asif Siddique  
Dominic Stanton  
Fiona Smith  
Helen Rowbottom  
Matt Uberoi  
Natalia Perez  
Patricia Quigley  
Mercy Umeh

### **Attended Remotely**

David Morton  
Guy Vincent  
Jonathan Caleb Landy  
Larry Culhane  
Lucy Richardson  
Matt Thorley  
Max Schmid  
Rowan Ree  
Sue Macmillan  
Zarar Qayyum

*NOTE: This meeting was held as a hybrid meeting. 15 members attended in person and voted on decision reports. You can watch the meeting online: <https://youtu.be/PJd6HZzayLY>*

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue Fennimore, Rebecca Harvey, Adam Connell, Ann Rosenberg, and Donald Johnson.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **3. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

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

##### **Queen's Birthday Honours List**

The Mayor, on behalf of the Council, congratulated the following people who were recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours for their outstanding achievements:

- Angela Joan Mooney, who was awarded an MBE for services to Social Care in Hammersmith & Fulham.
- Jacqueline Patricia Boyce, Caesar President, Savraj Kaur Singh, Maria Sturdy-Morton, and Julian Nicol Sturdy-Morton who were all awarded British Empire Medals for their services to the community in Hammersmith & Fulham during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Mayor thanked them for their hard work and service to the community.

Speeches of congratulations were also made by Councillors Stephen Cowan (Leader of the Council), Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler (Leader of the Opposition), and Councillor Amanda-Lloyd Harris.

##### **Death of Former Councillor Tony Hennessey**

With great sadness, the Mayor noted the death of former Councillor Tony Hennessey, who passed away on Friday the 3rd of December 2021. Mr Hennessey was elected as a Councillor representing Brook Green from 1978 until 1994. His areas of focus were housing and care for older residents, and he was the President of Age UK in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Councillors Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for the Environment), Stephen Cowan (Leader of the Council), Adronie Alford, Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler (Leader of the Opposition), Alex Karmel, and Amanda-Lloyd Harris made speeches of remembrance.

The Council observed a minute of silence in his memory.

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

The Mayor thanked all of the residents who submitted questions. He noted that public question time was limited to 20 minutes, and it would not be extended as there was a full agenda.

Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 were addressed in the meeting. The Mayor noted that any questions not addressed in the meeting would receive written responses which would also be published in the minutes. All the questions and responses can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of the minutes.

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

## 6.1 Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23

The Mayor noted that an amendment to the report had been published and circulated.

7.49pm – The amended report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services, Councillor Max Schmid.

Councillor Max Schmid made a speech on the report (for the Administration).

The amended report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

### 7.49pm – RESOLVED

That Full Council approved the following recommendations:

1. That the Council Tax Support Scheme in operation in 2021/2022 (included at Appendix 1) shall continue in 2022/2023.
2. That the Council shall apply the annual uprating of allowances, applicable amounts and income, set out in the DWP Housing Benefit circular, to the Council Tax Support scheme for 2022/2023.

## 6.2 Council Tax Base and Collection 2022/23 and Delegation of the Business Rates Estimate

7.49pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services, Councillor Max Schmid.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

### 7.49pm – RESOLVED

That Full Council approved for the financial year 2022/23: -

1. The estimated numbers of properties for each Valuation Band as set out in this report.
2. An estimated collection rate of 97.0%.
3. The Council Tax Base of 82,263 Band “D” equivalent properties.
4. The delegation of authority to the Director of Finance to determine the business rates tax base for 2022/23.

## 6.3 Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

The Mayor noted that an amendment to the report had been published and circulated.

7.49pm – The amended report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The amended report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

### **7.50pm – RESOLVED**

1. That Council approved the adoption of parliamentary polling districts and parliamentary polling places as set out in the scheme contained in Appendix 1.
2. That Council approved the adoption of the scheme contained in Appendix 1 in relation to all other referenda and elections held within the borough.
3. That Council instructed the Electoral Registration Officer to make the necessary amendments to polling districts and to revise and republish the electoral register on 1 February 2022.

#### **6.4 Review of the Statement of Gambling Policy**

7.50pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Wesley Harcourt.

A speech on the report was made by Councillor Alex Karmel (for the Opposition).

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

### **7.54pm – RESOLVED**

1. The Council noted that Appendix 11 was not for publication on the basis that it contains information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings, as set out in paragraph 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
2. That the Council carefully considered and noted the responses to the consultation attached at Appendix 5.
3. That the Council approved the revised Statement of Gambling Policy 2022 – 2025, at Appendix 1.
4. That the Council agreed to retain an existing no casino resolution within the Council's Statement of Gambling Policy.

#### **6.5 Review of the Constitution**

7.54pm – The updates to the Economy Register of Authorities were noted.

#### **6.6 Council Calendar of Meetings 2022/23**

7.55pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

### **7.55pm – RESOLVED**

1. That the 2022/23 Council calendar of meetings at Appendix 1 was approved.

## 7. **SPECIAL MOTIONS**

7.56pm – Councillor Bora Kwon moved a motion under Standing Order 15(e)3 to reorder the special motions in the following order: 7, 3, 4, 2, 6, 5, 1. Councillor Iain Cassidy seconded the motion, and it was put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>31</b>
AGAINST	10
NOT VOTING	0

7.58pm – The motion was declared **CARRIED**.

### 7.7 **Special Motion 7 - Home Care**

7.58pm – Councillor Ben Coleman moved, seconded by Councillor Sharon Holder, the special motion in their names:

*“The Council supports free home care for elderly and Disabled residents and welcomes the Labour administration’s commitment to maintaining it.*

*The Council recognises that the last Conservative administration promised to keep home care free when they were in opposition but introduced charges very quickly after they became the administration.*

*The Council calls on the government to bring forward a national plan which ensures all councils are fully funded to give everyone in our country free home care.”*

Speeches on the motion were made by Councillors Ben Coleman, Sharon Holder, Rory Vaughan, and Lucy Richardson (for the Administration) and Councillors Amanda Lloyd-Harris and Andrew Brown (for the Opposition).

Councillor Ben Coleman made a speech winding up the debate before the motion was put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>31</b>
AGAINST	10
NOT VOTING	0

The motion was declared **CARRIED**.

### **8.23pm – RESOLVED**

The Council supports free home care for elderly and Disabled residents and welcomes the Labour administration’s commitment to maintaining it.

The Council recognises that the last Conservative administration promised to keep home care free when they were in opposition but introduced charges very quickly after they became the administration.

The Council calls on the government to bring forward a national plan which ensures all councils are fully funded to give everyone in our country free home care.

### 7.3 **Special Motion 3 - Thanking Our NHS and Celebrating the Importance of Charing Cross Hospital**

8.23pm – Councillor Ben Coleman moved, seconded by Councillor Patricia Quigley, the special motion in their names:

*“This Council gives its heartfelt thanks to the NHS on behalf of the residents of Hammersmith & Fulham for working so valiantly throughout the pandemic and this winter’s health crisis. It recognises how its staff have made huge personal sacrifices to keep people safe.*

*The Council notes that there would have been a devastating impact on the people of Hammersmith & Fulham if Charing Cross Hospital had been demolished as the Conservative government had planned. It recalls how Hammersmith & Fulham’s Conservative councillors energetically and wholeheartedly supported the demolition plan, which would have seen:*

- 1. Charing Cross Hospital bulldozed with most of the site sold off to developers*
- 2. Charing Cross Hospital replaced with clinics which would have been just 13 per cent the size of the current hospital*
- 3. The clinics cynically rebranded as a “local hospital”*
- 4. The A&E closed and replaced with an Urgent Care Clinic*
- 5. The Urgent Care Clinic cynically rebranded as a “Class 3 A&E”*

*The Council agrees these plans were dangerous and calls on Hammersmith & Fulham Conservatives to apologise for their repeated comments which misled the public about the danger to Charing Cross Hospital, including:*

**“Andrew Brown 28/10/2013**

*It’s crucial for patients’ lives & outcomes that @NHS\_NWLondon plans to reorganise its hospitals for C21st to go ahead.”*

**“Andrew Brown 29/05/2014**

*NHS NWL’s plans aren’t about taking away services they are about reorganising them to provide better higher quality care.”*

**“Andrew Brown 14/04/2014**

*Just caught up on yesterday’s #bbccsp with my Town Ward colleague @gregsmithsw6 demolishing Labour lies & myths on CX & Comms. Very proud!”*

**“Andrew Brown 15/05/2014**

*CX will retain an A&E + many other services will specialise in oncology, geriatrics & world class elective surgery.”*

**“Andrew Brown 08/09/2014**

*As IMPERIAL NHS trust have confirmed they have no plans to close CX A&E”*

**“Andrew Brown 27/11/2017**

*STP plan states that CX will continue to provide its current A&E & wider services for at least lifetime of the plan”*

**“Greg Hands 22/05/2017**

*Anyone getting a Labour or H&F Council leaflet about Charing Cross, remember local NHS has rebuked their falsehoods!”*

Speeches on the motion were made by Councillors Ben Coleman, Patricia Quigley, Rory Vaughan, and Stephen Cowan (for the Administration) and Councillor Andrew Brown (for the Opposition).

Councillor Ben Coleman made a speech winding up the debate before the motion was put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>31</b>
AGAINST	10
NOT VOTING	0

The motion was declared **CARRIED**.

**8.54pm – RESOLVED**

This Council gives its heartfelt thanks to the NHS on behalf of the residents of Hammersmith & Fulham for working so valiantly throughout the pandemic and this winter’s health crisis. It recognises how its staff have made huge personal sacrifices to keep people safe.

The Council notes that there would have been a devastating impact on the people of Hammersmith & Fulham if Charing Cross Hospital had been demolished as the Conservative government had planned. It recalls how Hammersmith & Fulham’s Conservative councillors energetically and wholeheartedly supported the demolition plan, which would have seen:

1. Charing Cross Hospital bulldozed with most of the site sold off to developers
2. Charing Cross Hospital replaced with clinics which would have been just 13 per cent the size of the current hospital
3. The clinics cynically rebranded as a “local hospital”
4. The A&E closed and replaced with an Urgent Care Clinic
5. The Urgent Care Clinic cynically rebranded as a “Class 3 A&E”

The Council agrees these plans were dangerous and calls on Hammersmith & Fulham Conservatives to apologise for their repeated comments which misled the public about the danger to Charing Cross Hospital, including:

**“Andrew Brown 28/10/2013**

*It’s crucial for patients’ lives & outcomes that @NHS\_NWLondon plans to reorganise its hospitals for C21st to go ahead.”*

**“Andrew Brown 29/05/2014**



NHS NWL's plans aren't about taking away services they are about reorganising them to provide better higher quality care.”

**“Andrew Brown 14/04/2014**

Just caught up on yesterday’s #bbccsp with my Town Ward colleague @gregsmithsw6 demolishing Labour lies & myths on CX & Comms. Very proud!”

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CX will retain an A&E + many other services will specialise in oncology, geriatrics & world class elective surgery.”

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As IMPERIAL NHS trust have confirmed they have no plans to close CX A&E”

**“Andrew Brown 27/11/2017**

STP plan states that CX will continue to provide its current A&E & wider services for at least lifetime of the plan”

**“Greg Hands 22/05/2017**

Anyone getting a Labour or H&F Council leaflet about Charing Cross, remember local NHS has rebuked their falsehoods!”

**7.4 Special Motion 4 - The West Kensington and Gibbs Green Estates**

8.55pm – Councillor Andrew Jones moved, seconded by Councillor Lisa Homan, the special motion in their names:

*“This Council welcomes the return of the West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates. It deplores the fact that they were ever sold.*

*The Council notes that the estates were sold by the previous Conservative administration at a knock down price and that the obligations placed on the Council in the deal done by the Conservatives would have significantly damaged the Council’s finances.”*

Speeches on the motion were made by Councillors Andrew Jones, Lisa Homan, Zarar Qayyum, and Larry Culhane (for the Administration) and Councillor Matt Thorley (for the Opposition).

Councillor Andrew Jones made a speech winding up the debate before the motion was put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>31</b>
AGAINST	10
NOT VOTING	0

The motion was declared **CARRIED**.

**9.22pm – RESOLVED**

This Council welcomes the return of the West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates. It deplores the fact that they were ever sold.

The Council notes that the estates were sold by the previous Conservative administration at a knock down price and that the obligations placed on the Council in the deal done by the Conservatives would have significantly damaged the Council's finances.

## 7.2 **Special Motion 2 - The Borough's Housing Stock**

9.22pm – Councillor Adronie Alford moved, seconded by Councillor Mark Loveday, the special motion in their names:

*“This Council notes with serious concern, the report from the October 2021 Housing Ombudsman Service report “Spotlight on: Damp and Mould: It’s not lifestyle”, which found that Hammersmith and Fulham Council has:*

- 1. The highest rate of mismanagement in damp and mould cases for any social landlord in England.*
- 2. The highest maladministration rate for dealing with reports of damp and mould for any social landlord in England.*
- 3. The highest maladministration rate for complaint handling for any social landlord in England.*

*This Council calls upon the Administration to provide a clear and detailed plan of how it is going to address the repairs crisis in the borough’s housing stock.”*

Under Standing Order 15(e)(6), Councillor Lisa Homan moved, seconded by Councillor Max Schmid, an amendment in their names:

*“Remove all after “This Council notes with serious concern, the report from the October 2021 Housing Ombudsman Service report “Spotlight on: Damp and Mould: It’s not lifestyle” and replace with:*

*“This Council apologises to the residents that are affected by damp and mould and commits to eradicating all the long-standing damp and mould issues within the next six months, with works currently underway. This Council supports its record £600m investment to refurbish council homes.*

*This Council recognises that the following actions have been taken to secure and improve the Borough’s council homes: -*

- Negotiated a successful early ending to the atrocious 10-year repairs contract (awarded by the previous Conservative administration) which underfunded repairs, did not meet service standards, had record customer dissatisfaction, and seriously impeded the council’s maintenance of its stock*
- The introduction of an extensive planned preventative maintenance program which had not existed between 2006 to 2014.*
- Ended the Conservatives’ ideologically inspired policy of selling off the Borough’s council estates so they could be demolished, and replaced with*

*new developments of luxury apartments targeted at overseas property speculators*

- *Ended the Conservatives' ideologically inspired policy of selling off all council street properties at knock down prices to property developers – a scheme that was even featured on the BBC's Homes Under The Hammer.*
- *Ended the Conservatives' program of depleting the council housing management service which had been part of its scheme to significantly reduce the borough's housing stock*
- *Is working with tenant and leaseholder residents to continuously improve the Council's housing management services*
- *Introduced a £20m Fire Safety Plus program*
- *Is investing a record £600m to improve Councils homes and reduce energy bills despite 12 years of government Austerity.*

*This Council agrees to support these actions.*

*This Council reaffirms its commitment to residents of all the Borough's council housing which recognises they have a right to affordable rents and service charges, and never have to suffer a political administration that sells their homes against their wishes. Furthermore, it restates that council homes must always be maintained to excellent standards and the housing management service is required to continuously improve to deliver the highest levels of customer satisfaction. The Council will take all necessary measures to deliver on these commitments.”*

Speeches on the amendment were made by Councillors Lisa Homan and Max Schmid (for the Administration) and Councillor Mark Loveday (for the Opposition).

The amendment was then put to the vote:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>31</b>
AGAINST	10
NOT VOTING	0

The amendment was declared **CARRIED**.

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

<b>FOR</b>	<b>31</b>
AGAINST	10
NOT VOTING	0

The amended motion was declared **CARRIED**.

## **9.48pm – RESOLVED**

This Council notes with serious concern, the report from the October 2021 Housing Ombudsman Service report “Spotlight on: Damp and Mould: It's not lifestyle”.

This Council apologises to the residents that are affected by damp and mould and commits to eradicating all the long-standing damp and mould issues within the next six months, with works currently underway. This Council supports its record £600m investment to refurbish council homes.

This Council recognises that the following actions have been taken to secure and improve the Borough's council homes: -

- Negotiated a successful early ending to the atrocious 10-year repairs contract (awarded by the previous Conservative administration) which underfunded repairs, did not meet service standards, had record customer dissatisfaction, and seriously impeded the council's maintenance of its stock
- The introduction of an extensive planned preventative maintenance program which had not existed between 2006 to 2014.
- Ended the Conservatives' ideologically inspired policy of selling off the Borough's council estates so they could be demolished, and replaced with new developments of luxury apartments targeted at overseas property speculators
- Ended the Conservatives' ideologically inspired policy of selling off all council street properties at knock down prices to property developers – a scheme that was even featured on the BBC's Homes Under The Hammer.
- Ended the Conservatives' program of depleting the council housing management service which had been part of its scheme to significantly reduce the borough's housing stock
- Is working with tenant and leaseholder residents to continuously improve the Council's housing management services
- Introduced a £20m Fire Safety Plus program
- Is investing a record £600m to improve Councils homes and reduce energy bills despite 12 years of government Austerity

This Council agrees to support these actions.

This Council reaffirms its commitment to residents of all the Borough's council housing which recognises they have a right to affordable rents and service charges, and never have to suffer a political administration that sells their homes against their wishes. Furthermore, it restates that council homes must always be maintained to excellent standards and the housing management service is required to continuously improve to deliver the highest levels of customer satisfaction. The Council will take all necessary measures to deliver on these commitments.

## 7.6 **Special Motion 6 - Thanking Volunteers**

9.48pm – Councillor Stephen Cowan moved, seconded by Councillor Rowan Ree, the special motion:

*“The Council thanks all the people who have volunteered to make Hammersmith & Fulham a better, safer, and stronger place.*

*The Council recognises the many unpaid people who give their time, money, and effort in so many different ways because they care about their fellow citizens, their neighbourhoods and building a better future for our wonderful borough.*

*The Council notes the extremely wide range of volunteering activity in the borough, and that this work has been and remains particularly important during the Covid pandemic.”*

Speeches on the special motion were made by Councillors Stephen Cowan, Rowan Ree, and Iain Cassidy (for the Administration), and Councillor Belinda Donovan (for the Opposition).

The guillotine fell at 10.05pm. All subsequent special motions and amendments were taken as moved and seconded.

Councillor Stephen Cowan summed up the debate before the motion was put to the vote:

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

The motion was declared **CARRIED**.

#### **10.06pm – RESOLVED**

The Council thanks all the people who have volunteered to make Hammersmith & Fulham a better, safer, and stronger place.

*The Council recognises the many unpaid people who give their time, money, and effort in so many different ways because they care about their fellow citizens, their neighbourhoods and building a better future for our wonderful borough.*

*The Council notes the extremely wide range of volunteering activity in the borough, and that this work has been and remains particularly important during the Covid pandemic.*

#### **7.5 Special Motion 5 - Funding Hammersmith & Fulham**

10.06pm – The guillotine had fallen so the special motion was taken as moved and seconded:

*“The Council recognises that austerity is and has always been economically illiterate, unnecessarily cruel, and a huge mistake for British people and the economy. It notes it was introduced for ideological, conservative reasons by the Conservative / Liberal Democrat government in 2010. It agrees that Austerity has damaged our country and been bad for Hammersmith & Fulham.*

*The Council notes that, despite this, Hammersmith & Fulham’s Labour administration has delivered some of the lowest council tax in Britain, made homecare free, kept other costs to our residents low, maintained council tax*

*support and other key payments to poorer residents, created a new Law Enforcement Team of over 70 officers to drive down environmental crime and anti-social behaviour, introduced social value procurement to prioritise spend on local businesses and delivered new services.*

*This Council notes that the Labour administration has done this by cutting huge levels of wasteful council spending, leaving costly tri-borough arrangements and modernising how the council works.*

*The Council calls on the Conservative government to bring forward a plan that will return its funding of Hammersmith and Fulham and other councils to 2010 levels within a reasonable timescale.”*

The motion was put to the vote without debate:

<b>FOR</b>	<b>31</b>
AGAINST	10
NOT VOTING	0

The motion was declared **CARRIED**.

### **10.07pm – RESOLVED**

The Council recognises that austerity is and has always been economically illiterate, unnecessarily cruel, and a huge mistake for British people and the economy. It notes it was introduced for ideological, conservative reasons by the Conservative / Liberal Democrat government in 2010. It agrees that Austerity has damaged our country and been bad for Hammersmith & Fulham.

The Council notes that, despite this, Hammersmith & Fulham’s Labour administration has delivered some of the lowest council tax in Britain, made homecare free, kept other costs to our residents low, maintained council tax support and other key payments to poorer residents, created a new Law Enforcement Team of over 70 officers to drive down environmental crime and anti-social behaviour, introduced social value procurement to prioritise spend on local businesses and delivered new services.

This Council notes that the Labour administration has done this by cutting huge levels of wasteful council spending, leaving costly tri-borough arrangements and modernising how the council works.

The Council calls on the Conservative government to bring forward a plan that will return its funding of Hammersmith and Fulham and other councils to 2010 levels within a reasonable timescale.

#### **7.1 Special Motion 1 - Eel Brook Common**

The special motion was withdrawn.

Meeting started: 7.05 pm  
Meeting ended: 10.07 pm

Mayor .....

### Public Questions and Responses – 19 January 2022

#### Question 1 – Controlling Drug Dealing

From: Rebecca Emerick, Resident

To: The Leader of the Council

*“What is being done to control levels of drug dealing in the borough? Although this is not something that can likely be stamped out, residents are complaining that it has become excessively visible, that the dealers have no fear of the police and that school children frequently witness it on their way home from school.”*

#### Response

Thank you for your question.

We deeply share the concern about drug dealing, but not just drug dealing, about gangs and about the increase in violent crime that has occurred across the United Kingdom over the last decade or more.

To that end, and I stress that crime fighting is predominantly the strategic responsibility of the London Mayor and the Home Secretary and that's how those agencies are dealt with, but despite that I don't think it is tenable to not act and so what we have done is put the largest funding into crime fighting in the borough's history by spending 4.7 million pounds a year on an extensive series of actions.

There are 72 law enforcement officers that are now patrolling the streets, indeed I was with them on the Clem Atlee [Estate] today, providing reassurance, providing the eyes and ears of the council, gathering intelligence and working hand in hand with the Metropolitan Police Service – and they have started to great success.

Secondly, we now have one of the most extensive CCTV programs in Britain. The manning of that CCTV and the feeding of that information through to the police allows us to capture people very quickly.

We've also set up a gangs unit because there's been a step change in the way gangs operate over the last decade. It used to be that people would often use the term that young people as young as eight are being coerced – groomed into gang life. Now it is that they're pressed ganged into a type of slavery that terrorises the young people. It's a new phenomenon which for police forces around the United Kingdom are having to deal with. We took the view that that is simply unacceptable and proposed to the police that we set up a first of its kind gangs unit, compiling specialist police officers, specialist social workers, specialist gangs professionals, and many others, and they have made significant headway.

Finally we have introduced a new strategy to protect women and girls following the increase both in crimes but also in the fear of crime on that issue.

In the mid-part of last year over 600 serious drug-running criminals were arrested in one of London's biggest gang heists, and the police openly say that would not have happened without the Hammersmith and Fulham gangs unit. So there are many things that Hammersmith and Fulham Council is doing to step into that breach.



It is simply not acceptable for crime to be on our streets, it is a sign of a broken society. And as we look around there are many more signs of that and we will stamp crime out wherever we find it – that is a determined commitment.

I believe when you look at all the priorities that any political administration should have the number one priority is keeping people safe. This is the biggest investment in Britain for the size of the Council, and we will increase it more as time goes on. And we're doing that at a time of huge challenges, but I commit that we will always be on the side of the crime issue and we will always continue to prioritise investment in fighting crime.

## **Question 2 – Expanding the number of bike hangers in Fulham**

From: Jon Burden, Resident

To: The Cabinet Member for the Environment

*"Given the general encouragement to cycling declared in the Council's recently published Climate and Ecology Strategy, can the Council explain their plans to expand the number of bike hangers in Fulham in order to encourage more cycling and help to reduce bike crime?"*

### **Response**

The council is fully committed to increasing cycling and the safety of cycling in the borough and you are right that this is part of our Climate and Ecological Emergency strategy. We do, however, understand that one of the major obstacles to increasing cycling participation in the borough is residents not having access to a safe and secure space in their properties where they can store a bicycle.

Bike hangars are proving to be very popular, and we already have 40 of them located across the borough with another 28 to be in place by April this year making 68 in total or some 408 spaces. Five of the residential hangars are in the Fulham area but this is due to be significantly expanded with a further 300 residential hangers to be installed across the borough making 368 in total and 2208 spaces.

Additionally, a large cycle storage unit is also due to be built under Hammersmith Flyover in later this year providing over 80 rentable spaces near to the key transport interchange in the borough – Hammersmith Broadway.

## **Question 3 – Water Billing Safeguards**

From: Aliya Khan, Resident

To: The Cabinet Member for Housing

*"LBHF has now changed from charging council tenants for their water and handed over the responsibility to Thames Water for direct billing. What safeguards have been put in place to prevent tenants being overcharged and threatened with bailiffs?"*

### **Response**

Thank you for your question.

As it wasn't the Council's decision to change to direct billing by Thames Water and we were unable to stop this from happening, the Council has no control over the safeguards that

Thames Water may have put in place to prevent overcharging and visits from debt enforcement agencies.

However, the Council did work with Thames Water to help them manage the transition and to set up a tariff that minimises any difference to residents' previous charges under the Council's billing arrangements, thereby reducing the risk of residents getting into debt on their water bills. We also advised Thames Water about what we would have charged communally metered homes (those with the greatest risk of higher charges) if the arrangement had continued as before so that when Thames Water initially made contact with residents to tell them about their full range of services, this included information for those people who may need extra help and support from Thames Water.

Thames Water are best placed to advise about the safeguards they have in place. I will send you a link to [Thames Water's financial support pages](#) which provide advice and support on a variety of ways Thames can support its customers who are struggling to pay their bills. You can also contact Thames Water on 0800 980 8800 or using their website at [www2.thameswater.co.uk](http://www2.thameswater.co.uk)

There's also some very helpful advice available from [Citizens Advice](#) which residents may find useful.

#### **Question 4 – Council Tax**

From: Constance Campbell, Resident

To: The Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services

*“When you, the current Labour administration were in opposition, you consistently claimed you would reduce council tax faster and more than the Conservative Administration's 20% reduction from 2006-14. Why have you failed?”*

#### **Response**

Thank you, Ms Campbell, for your question. Unfortunately, though it's based on a false premise. What we actually said in our 2014 election manifesto was and I quote, “We guarantee to cut taxes and root out waste. We will do this while sticking to the Council's current overall spending forecasts. We will not increase spending in one area without matching it with efficiencies elsewhere”.

We've done exactly that. In our first administration we cut council tax in the first year and we froze it for the rest of the term – a real terms cut. This was when councils across the country, including in Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, and Wandsworth were increasing council tax above inflation. This led John O'Connell, the Chief Executive of the TaxPayers Alliance to say in 2018, and I quote, “Hammersmith & Fulham council has a proud record of cutting council tax”.

In 2018 our manifesto promised, and I quote, “we will continue to keep council tax and council charges low”. Again, we have delivered on that with council tax increases below most of the rest of London. Overall since 2014 council tax is nine percent lower in real terms.

We have the third lowest council tax in the country and the best council tax record in London over the period of our administration.

Just as important is our record on fees and charges paid by Hammersmith and Fulham residents. While in opposition we likened the then conservative administration to an octopus giving council tax reductions with one hand while taking money from residents pockets with the other seven through massive increases in over 600 fees and charges. We have done the opposite over the last seven years, cutting or freezing charges in adult social care, children's services, and housing each year since we have been in office.

We also abolished home care charges which the conservative administration that preceded us introduced – which we'll discuss later this meeting in a special motion.

We also slashed meals on wheels charges and froze many others, so no we haven't failed, quite the opposite. We've delivered exactly what we promised residents when they elected us in 2014 and 2018.

### **Question 5 – Covid Vaccination and Booster Rates**

From: Adrian Pascu-Tulbure, Resident

To: The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

*“What exactly is the council doing to address LBHF's dreadfully low anti-Covid vaccination and booster rates?”*

### **Response**

#### **Vaccination rates**

The Council has taken a wide range of steps to work with the NHS (which is the lead organisation and ultimately responsible for vaccination) to encourage and enable residents to get vaccinated. We are pleased that, using the most accurate figures available, our borough has among the highest vaccination rates in London, at 88.3% for first vaccinations, 80.4% for second vaccinations and 52.9% for boosters as of 17 January 2022.

Unfortunately, the government is choosing to publicise a less accurate measure of vaccine uptake based on the number of patients registered with GPs, which in H&F is 225,000 people. This grossly overstates H&F's actual population, which the Office for National Statistics projects as being 192,060 in 2022.

A more accurate population estimate we use is the population projection created by Greater London Authority (GLA). This puts the actual H&F population eligible for vaccination at 160,000 people. The government's preferred measurement thus inflates our eligible population by 40 per cent and depresses our vaccination success by upwards of 25 per cent.

We have raised this with NHS North West London, pointing out that the inaccurate figures worry residents and discourage those working so hard to get residents vaccinated. They have told us they agree with our view but are powerless to change the population basis as this is a national decision.

#### **Vaccination activity**

From our experience since June 2021, the key to vaccination is ease of access. We successfully encouraged NHS England to reverse its decision last year not to approve any more pharmacies as vaccination hubs and H&F now has ten pharmacies offering vaccinations. We are still working for more to be approved.

Currently, there are also two large hospital sites and five primary care networks (GP groupings) providing vaccinations in H&F, and we regularly organise “pop ups” (eg vaccine buses) in the lowest vaccinated areas, based on data from our Business Intelligence Unit.

We believe this to be the highest concentration of vaccine sites in the country. On average we have between 8,000 and 9,000 bookable appointments available a week to our residents.

We advertise all vaccination locations and times on the LBHF and NWL CCG websites. We also undertake targeted local advertising and text messaging to estates and areas for planned pop-ups.

We have engaged closely with our communities about the benefits of the vaccine and to understand and address vaccine reluctance. This has included over 50 outreach sessions with community groups, including Somali groups. We have found a notable lack of trust in some communities as a result of lived experience and are working with the NHS to tackle this over time by taking a new approach which shapes services directly with communities.

Discussions at the borough’s Faith Forum have led to additional popup clinics, including in mosques. We have also worked with the NHS to support uptake among children and young people, residents with a learning disability and those with severe mental illness.

Overall, since June 2021, there have been 72 pop-up vaccination clinics in the borough, including at the Claybrook Mental Health Centre and schools for disabled children.

We secured the Novotel as a mass vaccination centre that vaccinated over 100,000 people, and we provided operational management and staffing support for the NHS there.

Working with the NHS, we facilitated three “Super Saturday” events which vaccinated over 10,000 people at Chelsea FC’s Stamford Bridge stadium.

We have supported GP vaccination centres with site management, security and marshalling staff; and have supported local pharmacy vaccination hubs with outdoor furniture, marquees and banners.

We have recently won fresh government funding to deploy more outreach workers to target those least likely to be vaccinated or boosted. A new team will also be calling unvaccinated individuals to encourage them to get the jab.

Finally, it is worth noting that although the infection rate in H&F has fallen since late December, our seven-day Covid rate is still worryingly high at 1,291 per 100,000 people as of 17 January 2022. We will continue to pursue dynamic ways to increase vaccination and keep our borough safe.

It is further worth noting that the council has enabled a high amount of Covid testing throughout the pandemic, consistently ensuring reliable testing facilities for people both with symptoms (PCR testing) and without (lateral flow testing). We were the first council in London to be approved to implement targeted lateral flow testing in November 2020. We also wrapped a protective ring around our care homes in March 2020 and provided rapid PCR

testing, ahead of any government guidance, to make sure the spread of infections was reduced.

### **Question 6 – Air Pollution**

From: Ted Townsend, Resident

To: The Cabinet Member for the Environment

*"The public consultation on the Council's Climate and Ecology Strategy document identified 'Air pollution' and 'Traffic on our streets' as two of the issues of most concern to residents. However, the big emphasis on transitioning to electric vehicles in order to reduce greenhouse gas as well as NO<sub>2</sub>, benzene and sulphur dioxide emissions seems not to have considered the increase in particulate matter that comes from brakes and tyres on heavy electric vehicles, some of which can be up to 30% heavier than their petrol or diesel equivalent. Given that 96% of H&F's super output areas are in the worst 10% in the country for particulate matter pollution, and 100% in the worst 20%, could the Council give an indication of the trade-off analysis that has been done to support the promotion of electric vehicle usage potentially at the expensive of worse air pollution?"*

### **Response**

There is not a trade-off analysis as described, although shifting existing polluting traffic to zero emission vehicles will improve current air pollution from tailpipe emissions, the council recognises the need to reduce overall traffic levels and therefore particulate levels that also come from brakes and tyres. The aims of the Climate and Ecological Strategy sets out a hierarchy of interventions with travelling less at the top, indicating a need to reduce vehicle numbers as a priority. Second in the hierarchy is the promotion of active travel which contributes similarly to reduction air pollution. To encourage this we have started to explore the reallocation of road space for example the recently opened Safer Cycle Pathway on King Street.

### **Question 7 – New Enforcement Team**

From: Andrew Dinsmore

To: The Deputy Leader

*"I note that the H&F magazine delivered to all residents before Christmas highlighted the council deploying '72 new enforcement officers'. Prior to this, the Council disbanded the highly regarded Parks Police.*

*What was the cost of setting up the new Enforcement team (including without limitation a breakdown of the costs of making Parks Police redundant, re-employing them in the new Enforcement team, transferring staff from other departments and the recruitment of individuals that had not previously worked for the Council)?"*

### **Response**

The safety of our residents is our top priority, which is why in December 2020, Cabinet made the historic decision to invest £4.6m in creating what is the largest local authority enforcement team in the country. Following this decision, we rapidly set up the team who were in place and operational from May 2021

The Law Enforcement Team is made up of 72 trained and accredited Officers who are operational in H&F every day and every night, 24/7, seven days a week, patrolling housing estates, residential streets, and open spaces to deter crime and anti-social behaviour. Patrolling and locking parks is a core function of the team who in the Summer of 2021 were responsible for dealing with a wide range of anti-social and criminal issues in our parks as well as being instrumental in shutting down several unlicensed music events and anti-social parties. At all times, the Law Enforcement Team act as the eyes and ears of the residents and the council, working in conjunction with the police, our expansive CCTV network, and our newly created Gangs Unit to ensure everything possible is being done to improve the safety of our residents.

The total one off set up costs for the new Law Enforcement Team came to £447,000. Of this figure, redundancy costs for the Parks Police accounted for £119,000.