

COUNCIL MINUTES

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY 2024



PRESENT

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

Councillors:

Jose Afonso	Andrew Dinsmore	Genevieve Nwaogbe
Aliya Afzal-Khan	Wesley Harcourt	Adrian Pascu-Tulbure
Paul Alexander	Rebecca Harvey	Ashok Patel
Adronie Alford	Sharon Holder	Rowan Ree
Emma Apthorp	Lisa Homan	Helen Rowbottom
Jackie Borland	Laura Janes	Alex Sanderson
Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler	Alex Karmel	Max Schmid
Florian Chevoppe-Verdier	Bora Kwon	Nikos Souslous
Ben Coleman	Adam Peter Lang	Nicole Trehy
Liz Collins	Amanda Lloyd-Harris	Frances Umeh
Stephen Cowan	Ross Melton	Mercy Umeh
Jacolyn Daly	Omid Miri	Rory Vaughan

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stala Antoniades, Andrew Jones, Sally Taylor, Zarar Qayyum, Trey Campbell-Simon, Patrick Walsh, Natalia Perez, Ann Rosenberg, Lucy Richardson, Dominic Stanton, and David Morton.

Councillor Asif Siddique attended the meeting remotely. He did not participate or vote on committee reports.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

7.05pm - RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. MAYOR'S/CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Year Honours List 2024

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

- Louisa Mitchell who was awarded an MBE for her work with West London Zone, a charity which targets inequality and helps youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds find paths to success.
- Vivienne Wood, who was awarded a BEM for her service to one of Hammersmith's most treasured community centres – the Grove Neighbourhood Centre.
- Professor Carol Black who was made a Dame for a lifetime of public service and her role as Independent Adviser on Combatting Drugs.
- Charlie Mackesy, author of the international bestseller *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*, who was made an OBE for services to Art and Literature.
- Chelsea Women's captain Millie Bright, who was awarded an OBE for services to Association Football.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan, and the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Victoria Brocklebank Fowler, made speeches thanking them for their hard work and service to the community.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (20 MINUTES)

The Mayor thanked the residents who submitted questions. Questions 1, 2, 4, and 7 were taken in the meeting. The Mayor explained that any questions not addressed in the meeting would receive written responses. All questions and responses can be found at Appendix 1.

Under Standing Order 15(e)12, Councillor Alex Karmel called for an extension of the time limit for public questions. The motion was then put to the vote:

FOR	9
AGAINST	28
NOT VOTING	1

The motion was declared **LOST**.

6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1 Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25

7.35pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, Councillor Rowan Ree.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillors Omid Miri, Jacolyn Daly, Ross Melton, and Rowan Ree (for the Administration) and Councillor Andrew Dinsmore (for the Opposition).

The report and recommendations were put to the vote:

FOR	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

7.48pm – RESOLVED

That Full Council approved the following recommendations:

1. That the Council Tax Support Scheme in operation in 2023/2024 (included at Appendix 1 of the report) shall continue in 2024/2025.
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 2024/2025.
3. That the Council shall re-affirm the discretionary disregards for War Pensions and War Widow(er)'s Pensions in order to safeguard the finances of war pensioners and war widow(er)s in both the Housing Benefit Scheme and the Council Tax Support Scheme.

6.2 Council Tax Base and Collection Rate 2024/25

7.48pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, Councillor Rowan Ree.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillors Rowan Ree, Adam Peter Lang, and Max Schmid (for the Administration) and Councillor Alex Karmel (for the Opposition).

The report and recommendations were put to the vote:

FOR	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

8.01pm – RESOLVED

1. That Full Council approves the following for the financial year 2024/25:
 - a. The estimated numbers of properties for each Valuation Band as set out in this report.
 - b. An estimated collection rate of 97.0%.
 - c. The Council Tax Base of 86,113 Band “D” equivalent properties.
 - d. The delegation of authority to the Strategic Director of Finance to determine the business rates tax base for 2024/25.
 - e. That the Council charge the full relevant council tax premium allowed on dwellings unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least one year and properties designated as second homes, as soon as the legislation allows.

6.3 Appointment of the Monitoring Officer

8.01pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

Councillor Max Schmid made a speech for the Administration. Councillor Alex Karmel made a point of personal explanation.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor thanked the outgoing Monitoring Officer, David Tatlow, and welcomed the incoming Monitoring Officer, Grant Deg.

The report and recommendations were put to the vote:

FOR	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

8.05pm – RESOLVED

1. That Grant Deg, Principal Legal Adviser to the Council, be confirmed as the Council’s Monitoring Officer.

6.4 Council Calendar of Meetings 2024/25

8.05pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were put to the vote:

FOR	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

8.05pm – RESOLVED

1. That the 2024/25 Council calendar of meetings at Appendix 1 be approved.

7. SPECIAL MOTIONS

7.1 Special Motion 1 - Tackling Violent Crime

8.05pm – Councillor Andrew Dinsmore moved, seconded by Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure, the special motion in their names.

“This Council recognises the significant harm caused by violent crime across the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

Whilst this Council champions the excellent work of the Law Enforcement Teams, it recognises that they do not have the necessary powers of arrest and are not properly equipped nor trained to deal with violent crime.

Further, whilst the Council thanks the Gangs Unit, it accepts that more must be done to tackle gangs and violent crime.

This Council therefore calls upon the Administration to review its current policy of funding substantial numbers of Law Enforcement Officers at the expense of additional Police Officers who have the powers, training and equipment to tackle the violent crime that is now widespread in the Borough.”

Councillor Andrew Dinsmore made a speech on the motion for the Opposition.

Under Standing Order 15(e)(6), Councillor Rebecca Harvey moved, seconded by Councillor Nikos Souslous, an amendment:

“Delete all after “This Council” and replace with:

“deeply regrets that Conservative opposition councillors are soft on crime.

The Council notes how the opposition group opposed the creation of the H&F Law Enforcement Team, campaigned to abolish it during the local elections and continues to demand that funding for the Law Enforcement Team is cut, which would be devastating to the safety of local people.

The Council notes that despite crime-fighting being the responsibility of national and regional governments, H&F’s Labour administration has stepped in to provide the biggest investment in fighting crime of any comparative council in the UK and

the largest investment in this Borough's history. The administration's comprehensive approach includes the following:

- *H&F has deployed Britain's most comprehensive CCTV network;*
- *H&F is investing an extra £5.5 million on CCTV to improve and grow the borough's 24/7 network of CCTV cameras over the next five years;*
- *H&F created the country's largest Law Enforcement Team, with 72 Law Enforcement Team officers solely dedicated to making Hammersmith & Fulham's streets safer;*
- *H&F pioneered a specialised Gangs Unit dedicated to safeguarding children and young people;*
- *H&F has deployed dedicated protection officers to support women and girls; and*
- *H&F works closely with the Met to coordinate crime-fighting actions.*

The Council recognises that after 13 years of bad Conservative government, crime is out of control in many parts of England. It notes that this places huge pressure on the Met in London. It recognises that Hammersmith & Fulham's allotted Met police officers continue to be diverted outside of the Borough to other tasks such as protecting public buildings, policing protests, policing football matches and police other public order tasks outside of Hammersmith & Fulham. The Met therefore needs support in Hammersmith & Fulham – something the Administration's crime-reduction strategy does more comprehensively than ever before.

The Council is deeply concerned by the recent attack on a man in Bishop's Park, Fulham and expresses its sympathy to the victim and his family. It notes that H&F council have reacted swiftly and in a targeted way working closely with the police drawing on our excellent CCTV system and Law Enforcement officers. It notes that the Law Enforcement Team has increased patrols in the park and resolves to maintain this with the support of the police.

The Council recognises that the Conservative Government has cut policing, broken the criminal justice system and overseen huge increases in dangerous crimes across the UK.

It also notes that in H&F violent crime is down and recognises how the Council's investment is tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime – and that this plays a crucial role in contributing to these decreases.

The Council regrets the attack on crime-fighting by Conservative councillors and thanks H&F's Law Enforcement Team, the Gangs Unit, the Met and all the other teams who fight to cut crime in the borough day-in, day out."

Speeches on the amendment were made by Councillors Rebecca Harvey, Nikos Souslous, Liz Collins, Adam Peter Lang, Mercy Umeh, Ben Coleman, and Stephen Cowan (for the Administration) and Councillors Andrew Dinsmore and Adrian Pascu-Tulbure (for the Opposition).

The amendment was then put to the vote:

FOR

28

AGAINST	9
NOT VOTING	1

The amendment was declared **CARRIED**.

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

FOR	28
AGAINST	9
NOT VOTING	1

The amended motion was declared **CARRIED**.

8.55pm - RESOLVED

This Council deeply regrets that Conservative opposition councillors are soft on crime.

The Council notes how the opposition group opposed the creation of the H&F Law Enforcement Team, campaigned to abolish it during the local elections and continues to demand that funding for the Law Enforcement Team is cut, which would be devastating to the safety of local people.

The Council notes that despite crime-fighting being the responsibility of national and regional governments, H&F's Labour administration has stepped in to provide the biggest investment in fighting crime of any comparative council in the UK and the largest investment in this Borough's history. The administration's comprehensive approach includes the following:

- H&F has deployed Britain's most comprehensive CCTV network;
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- H&F pioneered a specialised Gangs Unit dedicated to safeguarding children and young people;
- H&F has deployed dedicated protection officers to support women and girls; and
- H&F works closely with the Met to coordinate crime-fighting actions.

The Council recognises that after 13 years of bad Conservative government, crime is out of control in many parts of England. It notes that this places huge pressure on the Met in London. It recognises that Hammersmith & Fulham's allotted Met police officers continue to be diverted outside of the Borough to other tasks such as protecting public buildings, policing protests, policing football matches and police other public order tasks outside of Hammersmith & Fulham. The Met therefore needs support in Hammersmith & Fulham – something the Administration's crime-reduction strategy does more comprehensively than ever before.

The Council is deeply concerned by the recent attack on a man in Bishop's Park, Fulham and expresses its sympathy to the victim and his family. It notes that H&F council have reacted swiftly and in a targeted way working closely with the police drawing on our excellent CCTV system and Law Enforcement officers. It notes that the Law Enforcement Team has increased patrols in the park and resolves to maintain this with the support of the police.

The Council recognises that the Conservative Government has cut policing, broken the criminal justice system and overseen huge increases in dangerous crimes across the UK.

It also notes that in H&F violent crime is down and recognises how the Council's investment is tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime – and that this plays a crucial role in contributing to these decreases.

The Council regrets the attack on crime-fighting by Conservative councillors and thanks H&F's Law Enforcement Team, the Gangs Unit, the Met and all the other teams who fight to cut crime in the borough day-in, day out.

7.2 **Special Motion 2 - The Housing Department**

8.55pm – Councillor Adronie Alford moved, seconded by Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan, the special motion in their names:

“The Council calls upon the Administration to urgently deal with the problems in the Housing Department and thereby improve the lives of tenants and leaseholders in the Borough.”

Councillor Adronie Alford made a speech on the motion for the Opposition.

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

“Delete all after “The Council” and replace with:

“recognises the difficulties that have been experienced in the housing repairs service, the detrimental impacts this has had on residents and reasserts its pledge to deliver a service they will be proud of.

The Council believes in the critical importance of council housing, and social housing more widely, to residents and the local economy. It is committed to investing in council homes and is working at pace to make improvements to the repairs service, customer service and complaint handling. It will continue to listen and co-produce with residents to deliver the best possible service.”

Speeches on the amendment were made by Councillors Francis Umeh, Jacolyn Daly, Liz Collins, Omid Miri, Ashok Patel, Stephen Cowan, and Ben Coleman (for the Administration) and Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan (for the Opposition).

The amendment was put to the vote:

FOR	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The amendment was declared **CARRIED**.

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

FOR	Unanimous
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The amended motion was declared **CARRIED**.

9.34pm – RESOLVED

The Council recognises the difficulties that have been experienced in the housing repairs service, the detrimental impacts this has had on residents and reasserts its pledge to deliver a service they will be proud of.

The Council believes in the critical importance of council housing, and social housing more widely, to residents and the local economy. It is committed to investing in council homes and is working at pace to make improvements to the repairs service, customer service and complaint handling. It will continue to listen and co-produce with residents to deliver the best possible service.

7.3 Special Motion 3 - The Ethical Implementation and Use of Artificial Intelligence in Hammersmith and Fulham

The motion was withdrawn.

7.4 Special Motion 4 - Calling on the Government to Tackle Sewage Discharges

9.35pm – Councillor Helen Rowbottom moved, seconded by Councillor Lisa Homan, the special motion in their names:

“The Council notes that:

- Thames Water is regularly using sewage overflows as the standard reaction to increased rainfall. There are four local discharge sites in Hammersmith and Fulham, with more than 100 dumping sites across London.*
- These discharges pose a significant threat to public health and to the ecosystem and biodiversity of the Thames. Four local boat clubs and those living on houseboats near Hammersmith Bridge, near one of the local discharge sites, are particularly exposed. Over 125 species of fish, a large range of resident and migratory birdlife, and other animals depend on the river, including endangered species.*

- *This problem was both predictable and preventable. London’s sewage system has remained largely unchanged since the Victorian era, but population growth and climate change – leading to increased instances of high-volume rainfall – have led to a foreseeably overloaded sewage system.*
- *More widely, raw sewage being pumped into our rivers and the ocean is a huge national problem, with urgent action needed to overhaul our outdated sewage systems.*

The council is disappointed that Greg Hands, MP for Chelsea and Fulham, voted against the national Labour Party’s plan to address the sewage problem. The Labour party is calling for:

- *Mandatory monitoring of all sewage outlets*
- *The introduction of automatic fines for discharges*
- *Water bosses who routinely and systematically break the rules to be held professionally and personally accountable*

The council regrets that Mr. Hands has failed to acknowledge the urgency of the issue and has undermined efforts to safeguard the Thames, local residents and wildlife.

The council believes there is a need for significant investment to upgrade and modernise London and national sewage infrastructure. This should include sustainable infrastructure schemes, which help lower the risk of flooding by diverting rainwater to the ground instead of roadside gullies that push it directly into the sewer network.”

Speeches on the motion were made by Councillors Helen Rowbottom, Lisa Homan, Nicole Trehy, and Emma Aphorp (for the Administration) and Councillors Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler and Jose Afonso (for the Opposition).

The guillotine fell at 10.00pm.

The motion was put to the vote:

FOR	28
AGAINST	8
NOT VOTING	0

The motion was declared **CARRIED**.

10.01pm - RESOLVED

The Council notes that:

- Thames Water is regularly using sewage overflows as the standard reaction to increased rainfall. There are four local discharge sites in Hammersmith and Fulham, with more than 100 dumping sites across London.
- These discharges pose a significant threat to public health and to the ecosystem and biodiversity of the Thames. Four local boat clubs and those living on houseboats near Hammersmith Bridge, near one of the local discharge sites, are particularly exposed. Over 125 species of fish, a large

range of resident and migratory birdlife, and other animals depend on the river, including endangered species.

- This problem was both predictable and preventable. London’s sewage system has remained largely unchanged since the Victorian era, but population growth and climate change – leading to increased instances of high-volume rainfall – have led to a foreseeably overloaded sewage system.
- More widely, raw sewage being pumped into our rivers and the ocean is a huge national problem, with urgent action needed to overhaul our outdated sewage systems.

The council is disappointed that Greg Hands, MP for Chelsea and Fulham, voted against the national Labour Party’s plan to address the sewage problem. The Labour party is calling for:

- Mandatory monitoring of all sewage outlets
- The introduction of automatic fines for discharges
- Water bosses who routinely and systematically break the rules to be held professionally and personally accountable

The council regrets that Mr. Hands has failed to acknowledge the urgency of the issue and has undermined efforts to safeguard the Thames, local residents and wildlife.

The council believes there is a need for significant investment to upgrade and modernise London and national sewage infrastructure. This should include sustainable infrastructure schemes, which help lower the risk of flooding by diverting rainwater to the ground instead of roadside gullies that push it directly into the sewer network.

7.5 **Special Motion 5 - Climate Change**

The motion was withdrawn.

7.6 **Special Motion 6 - H&F Law Enforcement Team**

The motion was withdrawn.

7.7 **Special Motion 7 - Local Government Finance**

The motion was withdrawn.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 10.02 pm

Mayor

Appendix 1 – Public Questions and Responses

Questions 1, 2, 4, and 7 were taken in the meeting. The remaining questions received written responses.

Question 1

From: Philip Jones, Resident

Question: In previous correspondence the Council said that it does not categorise residential units under the category “Luxury”. I would like to find out how the Council measures local demand for affordable social housing and what safeguards has it put in place to ensure a suitable balance of types of homes have been built between 2010-2023, if it doesn't categorise the developments that it authorises to be built through its local planning and housing development plan to ensure local demand for affordable social housing has been met, which I believe ought to be its principle duty and responsibility?

Response from Councillor Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness: To understand the local demand for housing the Council produces a Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This assessment then analyses local demand and identifies critical needs, particularly for affordable housing where demand consistently outstrips supply. The assessment is then used to develop policies in the Local Plan which will deliver the different types of housing.

The housing mix policy for example includes percentages for affordable housing categories within developments. This means that the Council can determine the best mix of housing on individual schemes across the borough based on the size of the scheme, its location, and current priorities (such as housing register needs, decant requirements, specialist housing, larger family size and affordable homes). This dynamic approach means the Council can respond to the changing housing needs over the local plan's lifespan.

There are different categories of housing - Market Housing, rented or owned at market rates, and Affordable Housing, which covers a range of elements. These include:

- Social rents which is owned and managed by Local Authorities and registered social landlords, and this rent is set nationally.
- Affordable rents, similar to social rents, capped at 80% of local market rents.
- And intermediate housing which includes shared ownership, Intermediate Rents and other options priced above social rent but below market rent.

The planning permission specify the form, type and tenure of approved housing, with an accompanying Section 106 Planning Obligation to ensure its delivery. Deviations do require permission to be varied.

There are safeguards including the Local Plan, the H&F Housing Strategy, which helps to ensure a balanced housing mix across the borough.

There is also continuous monitoring through annual reports which allows us to adapt policies and meet housing and affordable targets. The results of the monitoring is published every year in our Annual Monitoring Reports, which are available on the website.

More broadly the Administration is committed to delivering affordable homes in the borough, as evidenced in the manifesto and the Council's latest business plan, ensuring that we build more than 3,000 new energy efficient affordable homes, making sure they are built or underway over the next 4/5 years.

And there are some examples of this – where the Council is leading the way. For example, Hartopp and Lannoy where we have 134 energy efficient homes, 84% of which will be affordable. Farm Lane and Lillie Road, 73 energy efficient homes, 50% of which will be affordable. Ed City where we will deliver 24 affordable homes this month and 108 more affordable homes by autumn next year. And we're working in partnerships to deliver more affordable housing.

This diversified approach really demonstrates the Council's dedication to providing much more affordable homes and helping to build a brighter future for everyone.

Question 2

From: Richard Cazenove, Resident

Question: In relation to the CAN, when will the Council release the data from the traffic monitoring camera at the junction of the New Kings Road and Grimston Road? It has been conspicuous by its absence from all Council communication in relation to the scheme including the CAN flyer sent to residents in May 2022. Much has been made of the 1,000+ drop in vehicles using the western end of Hurlingham Road, but a large portion of this reduction is due to traffic having been shifted to Grimston Road (and across to Ranelagh Avenue). This is because vehicles continue to access the Hurlingham Club and the 400 adjacent flats – they just use a different route get there. As such the overall decline in the immediate neighbourhood is much smaller than publicly advertised. I have been told the camera has been vandalised on a number of occasions, but it cannot have been out of action for the entire time since the trial began and there must therefore be some indication of how traffic flows have changed. With proper statistics we can work constructively on potential solutions.

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm:

Thank you for your question and can I say I always appreciate the genuine concerns you raise on behalf of your street and neighbouring streets.

The trial was designed by residents and it is important that where residents raise suggestions about how we can improve the scheme, we should do so.

You are right that the monitoring camera has been damaged on several occasions. However, we are able to share some data and I have asked the Director for Climate Change and Transport to send this to you.

The Grimston Road camera counts vehicles going northbound and southbound for a typical day. The data I can share with you compares the number of cars before the trial and the number of cars during the trial.

The data indicates that the number of cars is broadly similar before and during the trial. Also, the busiest and slowest times of day are much the same now as previously.

Two things have increased though. One is pedestrian activity – people are walking more in the area throughout the whole day. The other is light goods vehicles – around five more an hour between 8am and 9pm. We believe this is the result of local deliveries from online shopping accessing your area.

I have asked officers to continue to monitor this. We are looking towards releasing more detailed data in a Cabinet report before any decision is made on the trial.

Question 3

From: Natale Giostra, Resident

Question: Lots of cars illegally turn right into WBR from NKR blocking the traffic flow. Would it be possible to extend and connect the two existing traffic islands to stop this illegal turn?

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm:

We are in the process of installing camera enforcement for the illegal right turn from New Kings Road into Wandsworth Bridge Road. With regard to the two existing traffic islands, as it may be necessary for emergency vehicles to make the illegal turn we would be unable to join the islands up.

Question 4

From: David Henderson, Resident

Question: As a resident in Fulham for more than 35 years we have never complained about requested developments. We have however submitted complaints to the Council for breaches of granted planning permission, for example use of roofs as roof terraces, noise from unapproved plant at commercial premises, and local residential building works. It is our view that action is rarely taken in response to apparent breaches and on occasions incomplete or no feedback was provided. Do planning officers routinely carry out post work checks and if not why not? Or is it left to local residents to inform the Council of these breaches and if so when residents do report them why are we left wondering about any enforcement action taken?

Response from Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader of the Council:

I'm giving a response because the Cabinet Members is not here. Thank you Mr Henderson for your question.

It's a very relevant point because what you have is a variety of different types of planning permission coming before a depleted Council planning team, year in year out.

And here we might have three football clubs, the third highest land prices in Britain, so we have some very big schemes from Olympia and Earls Court to, as you quite rightly say, someone's front Loft extension. And so there is certainly an awful lot of strain on the Planning Department. They do take regular proactive assessments of the work that's been done, but not on every single scheme because we simply don't have the people or resources to do that. So it is often the case that there're relying on some residents to say 'that's being built and it shouldn't have been built' to precipitate an investigation. And that's not just relevant to us here in how it's how all councils operate across the United Kingdom.

It's very hard to institute enforcement actions but we do it and we start a series of discussions where we voluntarily try and get the builder or developer to alter the scheme themselves. Often those resources are negotiated, and in a few occasions they'll take legal action but that is, as you quite rightly say, quite rare.

If you have anything in mind then I will make sure I look at that case for you and find out what buildings it is you're talking about and get you an answer. If you're saying that you have asked questions and not had answers all I can do is apologise and say I'll look into it. But I would just stress, to give an idea, back in 2010, a long time ago now, the total revenue budget of H&F Council was £184 million, now it's 132 million. We've had huge inflation in that period and yet we've had to manage services and try and not let anything slip. And on the whole, if you look, it hasn't. But Planning is one of those areas where it's hard to recruit people – the last questioner about housing – recruiting planners, a lot of our planners are from different countries where they come and work temporarily here for us. And when we do have them we have to focus them on priority schemes. So things can get through and if they do I can apologise. If you go to your Ward Councillor we'll pick it up for you and we will endeavour to get it right.

Question 5

From: Liam Downer-Sanderson, Resident

Question: The South Fulham camera trial ends in May. When is the council going to conduct a poll of residents views across the borough as it indicated that it would do? And what details can you provide of how the polling will be conducted?

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm:

We promised to deliver a full and proper consultation. And we are doing just that. Indeed, what we are doing goes beyond the government's own guidance.

This week, as you are no doubt aware, we have launched one of the most comprehensive ever surveys undertaken in this country into a neighbourhood scheme.

The survey is open to all residents, not just those within the direct Clean Air Neighbourhood area.

We have commissioned Opinium, one of the country's most-respected polling and market research agencies, to carry out the survey.

Alongside this, we have commissioned Opinium to carry out opinion polling both within the Clean Air Neighbourhood area and, again, across the borough.

The council is not doing the polling; one of Britain's leading pollsters is doing the polling - operating to British Polling Council standards as the government requires.

They will collate the data. They will write the report.

This is Premier League consultation from an administration that believes in listening to and working with residents.

Question 6

From: Vivienne Goldstein, Resident

Question: The South Fulham camera trial ends in May. When is the council going to conduct a poll of residents views across the borough as it indicated that it would do?

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm:

This week Opinium, a member of the British Polling Council, launched one of the most comprehensive ever surveys undertaken in this country into a neighbourhood scheme. It is open to all residents, not just those within the Clean Air Neighbourhood area. Opinium have also been commissioned to carry out opinion polling both within the Clean Air Neighbourhood area and, again, across the borough.

The council is not doing the polling - one of Britain's leading pollsters is, operating to British Polling Council standards as the government requires.

Question 7

From: Lauren Clark, Resident

Question: At a recent meeting that was brokered by a 'lead resident' who is in favour of the South Fulham CAN scheme, the council traffic official John Galsworthy told residents and businesses that some votes will count more than others, indicating that, in the extensive poll to be carried out borough wide, votes from residents living inside the South Fulham CAN trial would be favoured. This was also reported in The Sunday Telegraph. Do you think that this approach will meet approval standards from Mark Harper, Minister for Transport, as he conducts his review into Low Traffic Neighbourhoods across London?

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm: We promised a full and proper consultation, and Opinium's survey and opinion polling goes beyond the guidance set out by the Secretary of State for Transport.

This states: "In assessing how and in what form to make schemes permanent, authorities should collect appropriate data to build a robust evidence base on which to make decisions. This should include traffic counts, pedestrian and cyclist counts, traffic speed, air quality data, public opinion surveys and consultation responses.

Consultation and community engagement should always be undertaken whenever authorities propose to remove, modify or reduce existing schemes and whenever they propose to introduce new ones.

Engagement, especially on schemes where there is public controversy, should use objective methods, such as professional polling to British Polling Council standards, to establish a truly representative picture of local views and to ensure that minority views do not dominate the discourse. Consultations are not referendums.

Polling results should be one part of the suite of robust, empirical evidence on which decisions are made."

The results of the survey and polling, along with traffic and air quality data, and hundreds of emails and letters the council has received from residents, businesses and street groups

across South Fulham, will inform the decision at the end of the Clean Air Neighbourhood trial.

This will be one of the most comprehensive consultations ever carried out by a local authority in this country. Given that it both meets and exceeds the government's guidance, we would expect this approach to meet government approval.

Question 8

From: David Tarsh, Resident

Question: Since last July, I have tried via Freedom of Information Act questions to find out from the council how much money it is making from the traffic scheme around Wandsworth Bridge Road and how pollution levels have changed on Wandsworth Bridge Road and New Kings Road, as a consequence of the scheme. To date, I have been rebuffed with evasion and then admission that the council holds the data but refuses to release it before June 2024, which is after the deadline to decide whether to scrap or retain the scheme has passed.

Residents suspect that the scheme has not improved air quality on Wandsworth Bridge Road or New Kings Road, and it has either raised an obscene level of fines or not enough money to cover the cost of the infrastructure. Will the Leader of the Council allay those legitimate suspicions by revealing the answers to those specific questions now or will he leave residents concluding that the scheme is indeed a failure; and the council is trying to cover it up?"

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm:

Data demonstrating how toxic air pollution in South Fulham is being reduced and how many out-of-borough drivers have received fines for repeatedly cutting through local residential side streets will be published in a report which will be presented to Cabinet before any decision is made on the trial.

Question 9

From: Caroline Shuffrey, Resident

Question: The Council has recently downgraded the key decision 'Investment in the borough wide Clean Air Neighbourhoods Programme' to no longer a key decision. Does that mean that the Council now recognise that the LTNs in South Fulham are not producing clean air for the borough and therefore will now abandon the Clean Air Neighbourhood trial?

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm:

No. The Clean Air Neighbourhoods programme has not been downgraded. As its objectives are incorporated in existing financed projects there has been no further need at this stage to request further funds through a Key Decision.

Question 10

From: Caroline Brooman-White, Resident

Question: Two years ago Councillor Harcourt wrote to me saying that initial pollution data for Wandsworth Bridge Road has shown it is not significantly different to the side streets. Please could you kindly tell me whether this is still true and how we can see the pollution data on a regular basis.

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm:

Data showing how toxic air pollution in South Fulham is reducing will be published in a report which will be presented to Cabinet before any decision is made on the trial.

Question 11

From: Donald Grant, Resident

Question: The Council reports a reduction in vehicles and pollution in the area now restricted by the traffic camera schemes, but it does not report where the traffic goes to instead, nor the increases in pollution and journey times in those areas. The principles of public life mean you should tell the whole truth, not selected figures to suit your narrative, if in fact the figures promoted are accurate.

Please would you report the before-and-after vehicle and pollution figures in the areas the traffic and pollution has been displaced to, especially in the constituency of Chelsea and Fulham?

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm:

There is no displacement of traffic. There are 15,000 fewer vehicles a day coming over the Wandsworth Bridge and into Fulham. There is less traffic across the entire area. Data on pollution and vehicle numbers will be published in a Cabinet report.

Question 12

From: David Morris, Resident

Question: The Council's Green Investment Scheme launched in November 2023 with a target to raise £1 million by mid-February. Has it met its target, and can it tell us what projects will be undertaken with the funds raised?

Response from Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology: The Council's Green Investment has currently raised just over £846k as of 24th January 2024. This round of investment will close on 13th February at which point we will know how much of the £1m target has been raised. This funding is restricted in use and can only be applied to projects with green aims and outcomes. This includes projects to generate renewable energy, such as installing solar panels, projects to improve active travel, such as new bike hangars or improve cycle paths, and projects to mitigate the impact of climate change, like new flood defences.

The Council has ambitious targets to decarbonise its operations and wider borough and our H&F 2030: Climate and Ecology Strategy sets out a comprehensive Action Plan with many projects and initiatives. A range of funding sources will be required to achieve the targets, including government grants and investments like these. The Green Investment will fund a number of projects including initiatives that improve air quality around schools, green some of our grey spaces, and improve the borough's ecological environment.

Specific details of projects funded by the Green Investment will be communicated once the investment round has closed.

Question 13

From: Nick Smith, Resident

Question: Could Council explain why the quality of pavement on the north and south sides of Harwood Terrace still – after more than 10 years of complaining – presents a danger to all pedestrians? It is unlike any other paved area in the area as it is made of a combination of mixed gravel textured concrete and substandard paving slabs. As a result it is rough, uneven, razor sharp and unsightly.

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm: We are grateful to you for raising the issue and have carried out a highway inspection on receipt of your question. We found the footways are in reasonable condition and with no safety defects.

The back of the footway is constructed from paving slabs which although old are still in a safe, functional and level condition. Along the edge of the footway is a concrete verge, and whilst safe, it has begun to wear away creating a rough surface. Two areas of the concrete verge had already been marked up for repair by the Highway Inspector for the area and repair orders have been raised. That work is due to be completed this month.

However we can confirm that Harwood Terrace will be part of the first phase of public realm improvement works for the South Fulham East Clean Air Neighbourhood and it is anticipated this will include new paving.

Question 14

From: Siobhan Cummins, Resident

Question: There is already evidence in the public domain from other surveys that residents and businesses strongly support the removal of the LTN's in South Fulham. When the Council conducts its own poll will it make the results public and undertake to remove the LTNs in the event that the poll shows a majority in favour of doing so?

Response from Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm: The council has commissioned Opinium, a member of the British Polling Council, to undertake one of the most comprehensive surveys ever seen in this country into a neighbourhood scheme. This is open to all residents, not just those within the Clean Air Neighbourhood area. Opinium have also been commissioned to carry out opinion polling both within the Clean Air Neighbourhood area and, again, across the borough.

In deciding whether to make the trial permanent, the council will be following the guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Transport. This states:

“In assessing how and in what form to make schemes permanent, authorities should collect appropriate data to build a robust evidence base on which to make decisions. This should include traffic counts, pedestrian and cyclist counts, traffic speed, air quality data, public opinion surveys and consultation responses.

Consultation and community engagement should always be undertaken whenever authorities propose to remove, modify or reduce existing schemes and whenever they propose to introduce new ones.

Engagement, especially on schemes where there is public controversy, should use objective methods, such as professional polling to British Polling Council standards, to establish a truly representative picture of local views and to ensure that minority views do not dominate the discourse. Consultations are not referendums.

Polling results should be one part of the suite of robust, empirical evidence on which decisions are made.”

The results of this survey and polling, along with traffic and air quality data, and the hundreds of emails and letters from residents, businesses and street groups across South Fulham, will inform the decision at the end of the Clean Air Neighbourhood trial.