

COUNCIL MINUTES

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2025



PRESENT

The Mayor Councillor Patricia Quigley
Deputy Mayor Councillor Daryl Brown

Councillors:

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Morton, Sally Taylor, Bora Kwon, Andrew Jones, Ann Rosenberg, Nicole Trehy and Alex Karmel.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Ross Melton and Natalia Perez.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

7.10pm – RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. MAYOR'S/CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anniversary of the War in Ukraine

The Mayor noted that Monday the 24th of February marked the three-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan, and the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler made speeches.

The Council then observed a minute of silence.

Councillor Laura Janes – Honorary King's Counsel

The Mayor noted that Councillor Laura Janes was awarded as one of nine new Honorary King's Counsel in January. The honour was awarded to those who had made a major contribution to the law of England and Wales, outside practice in the courts. Councillor Janes was nominated for her contributions to the legal profession promoting access to justice, her work to drive policy changes, representing vulnerable individuals in prison, advocating for the rights of children and young people in custody and reforms to the Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentence. The Mayor congratulated Councillor Janes on behalf of the Council.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (20 MINUTES)

The Mayor thanked the resident who submitted a question. The question was addressed in the meeting. The question and response can be found in Appendix 1.

6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1 Results of the Local Government By-Elections on 20 February 2025

7.25pm – The report on the results of the Local Government By-Elections on 20 February 2025 was noted.

Speeches were made by Councillor Max Schmid (for the Administration) and Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler (for the Opposition).

6.2 Allocation of Seats and Proportionality on Committees

7.25pm – The report on the allocation of seats and proportionality on committees was noted.

6.3 Revenue Budget and Council Tax Levels 2025/26

7.25pm – The report and recommendations were moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

In accordance with Council convention, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan, and the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler, were given unlimited time to speak on the Budget report.

The Council adjourned for a short break from 8.41pm to 8.54pm.

Speeches on the report were also made by Councillors Lydia Paynter, Callum Nimmo (who made their maiden speeches), and Rowan Ree (for the Administration) – and Councillors Adronie Alford, Adrian Pascu-Tulbure, and Amanda Lloyd-Harris (for the Opposition).

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan, then made a speech winding up the debate.

The report and recommendations were put to the vote and a roll call was undertaken, in accordance with Council convention when voting on the budget:

FOR	AGAINST	NOT VOTING
Alexander	Afonso	Quigley (Mayor)
Antoniades	Afzal-Khan	
Brown	Alford	
Campbell-Simon	Borland	
Chevoppe-Verdier	Brocklebank-Fowler	
Collins	Dinsmore	
Cowan	Lloyd-Harris	
Harcourt	Pascu-Tulbure	
Harvey	Stanton	
Holder		
Homan		
Janes		
Lang		
Melton		
Miri		
Nimmo		
Nwaogbe		
Paynter		
Patel		
Perez		
Qayyum		
Ree		
Richardson		
Rowbottom		
Sanderson		
Schmid		
Siddique		
Souslous		
Umeh (Frances)		
Umeh (Mercy)		
Vaughan		
Walsh		

FOR	32
AGAINST	9
NOT VOTING	1

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

9.41pm – RESOLVED:

That Full Council agrees, for the reasons set out in this report and appendices:

1. To approve a balanced budget for 2025/26 as set out in the report, including the underlying principles and assumptions.
2. To approve **£12.3m** of new investment on key services for residents.
3. To increase the Hammersmith & Fulham element of Council Tax by 2.99% as modelled by the Government in its spending power calculations for local government.
4. To apply the Adult Social Care precept levy of 2% as modelled by the Government in its spending power calculations for local government.
5. To approve fees and charges, as set out in Appendix E, including freezing charges in adult social care, children's services, and General Fund housing.
6. To approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and to note the proposed funding reforms from 2026/27 onwards and budget projections to 2028/29 made by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services in consultation with the Strategic Leadership Team. (Appendix B)
7. To note the statement of the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, regarding the adequacy of reserves and robustness of estimates (paragraph 66).
8. To approve the reserves strategy and forecast as set out in Appendix H.
9. To require all Directors to report on their projected financial position compared to their revenue estimates in accordance with the Corporate Revenue Monitoring Report timetable.
10. To authorise Directors to implement their service spending plans for 2025/26 in accordance with the recommendations within this report, the council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, relevant Schemes of Delegation and undertake any further consultation required regarding the Equalities Impact Assessment.
11. Set the council's element of Council Tax for 2025/26 for each category of dwelling, as outlined in the table below and in full in Appendix A and calculated in accordance with Sections 31A to 49B of the Localism Act 2011.

Category of Dwelling	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ratio	6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9
H&F (£)	640.69	747.47	854.25	961.04	1,174.60	1,388.16	1,601.73	1,922.08

12. To note, based on the Mayor of London's draft consolidated budget, the element of Council Tax to be charged by the Greater London Authority in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings as shown in the table below.

Category of Dwelling	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ratio	6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9
b) GLA (£)	326.92	381.41	435.89	490.38	599.35	708.33	817.30	980.76

13. That the overall Council Tax to be set at £1,451.42 per Band D property as follows:

Category of Dwelling	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ratio	6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9
a) H&F (£)	640.69	747.47	854.25	961.04	1,174.60	1,388.16	1,601.73	1,922.08
b) GLA (£)	326.92	381.41	435.89	490.38	599.35	708.33	817.30	980.76
c) Total (£)	967.61	1,128.88	1,290.14	1,451.42	1,773.95	2,096.49	2,419.03	2,902.84

14. To authorise the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services to collect and recover National Non-Domestic Rate and Council Tax in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended), the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

15. To note the Council's estimated position on the Collection Fund (as set out in paragraph 60).

16. To note the performance on the management of arrears across the Council on all debts due (as set out from paragraph 71).

6.4 Four Year Capital Programme 2025-29 and Capital Strategy 2025/26

9.42pm – The report and recommendations were moved for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, Councillor Rowan Ree.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillors Frances Umeh, Florian Chevoppe-Verdier, Lisa Homan, and Adam Peter Lang (for the Administration) and Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan (for the Opposition).

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR	32
AGAINST	9
NOT VOTING	1

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

10.07pm – RESOLVED:

1. To approve the four-year General Fund Capital Programme budget at £103.8m for the period 2025/26-2028/29 (presented in Table 2 and Appendix 1).
2. To approve the continuation of rolling programmes for 2025/26 funded from the Council's mainstream resources. For financial modelling purposes, these programmes are assumed to continue at the same level until 2028/29:

	£m
Corporate Planned Maintenance	2.400
Footways and Carriageways	2.030
Column Replacement	0.346
Total	4.776

3. To delegate approval of the detailed programmes for use of the rolling programmes, in recommendation 2, to the relevant SLT Director in consultation with the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the relevant Lead Cabinet Member
4. To approve the four-year Housing (HRA) Capital Programme at £428.5m for the period 2025/26-2028/29 as set out in Table 6 and Appendix 1.
5. To approve the Capital Strategy 2025/26, as set out in the report.
6. To approve the annual Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix 2.
7. To note the potential financial impact of a number of development schemes not included in the current programme but being in the various predevelopment stages.

6.5 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26

10.07pm – The report and recommendations were moved for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, Councillor Rowan Ree.

Councillor Rowan Ree made a speech on the report (for the Administration).

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR	32
AGAINST	9
NOT VOTING	1

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

10.11pm – RESOLVED:

It is recommended that:

1. Approval be given to the future borrowing and investment strategies as outlined in this report.
2. The Strategic Director of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, be delegated authority to manage the Council's cash flow, borrowing and investments in 2025/26 in line with this report.
3. In relation to the Council's overall borrowing for the financial year, to approve the Prudential Indicators as set out in this report and the revised Annual Investment Strategy set out in Appendix E.

6.6 Pay Policy Statement 2025/26

10.12pm – The report and recommendations were moved for adoption by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, Councillor Rowan Ree.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR	32
AGAINST	9
NOT VOTING	1

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

10.16pm – RESOLVED:

1. That Council approve the pay policy statement for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 1.
2. That Council note the benchmarking of the Council's median pay multiple against the average of other Inner London Boroughs contained in paragraph 11 below.

6.7 Review of the Constitution

10.13pm – The report and recommendations were moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote:

FOR	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST	0
NOT VOTING	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

10.13pm – RESOLVED:

1. That Full Council approves the updates to Contract Standing Orders detailed in the report and Appendix 1.
2. That Full Council approves the updates to the Financial Regulations detailed in the report and Appendix 2.
3. That Full Council approves the updates to the Registers of Authorities attached at Appendix 3.
4. That Full Council agrees the following committee appointments:
 - Councillor Lydia Paynter – Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee.
 - Councillor Callum Nimmo – Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee.
5. That Full Council agrees the following changes to Outside Bodies appointments:
 - Remove Councillor Nikos Souslous from The Lyric Theatre.
 - Add Councillors Lydia Paynter and Callum Nimmo to The Lyric Theatre.

Meeting started: 7.06 pm
Meeting ended: 10.13 pm

Mayor

Appendix 1 – Public Questions and Responses

Question 1

From: Brian Mooney, Resident

Question:

The Air Quality Action Plan and Emission Based Parking Charges were recently approved. Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 16 Dec, show that when asked if the Council was going to consult over parking issues before implementing any changes, the Leader confirmed that consulting with residents was key to the way this Council operated. Prior consultation on the (swingeing) parking charges was also recommended by the council officer report (7 Oct). Was a decision to dispense with it related to a very adverse reaction from residents over the unfulfilled promise of 'emission based parking for less' and even 'free parking'?

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

Hammersmith & Fulham is the 10th worst area in England for air pollution – with 7.4 per cent of deaths in the borough linked to toxic air. Road pollution is the biggest culprit and doing nothing is not an option.

Almost 7,000 residents took part in a borough-wide parking survey prior to the Cabinet report of October 2024. There was strong support for the idea of charging higher charges to the highest polluters. This informed the Cabinet decision to introduce emissions-based banding to help tackle dangerous levels of air pollution.

As promised at the December Cabinet, the actual charges went through the statutory consultation process. As a result of representations received from the motorcycle lobby on behalf of residents during that process, further consultation work is being carried out on a revised charging schedule for motorcycles.

Follow-up Question:

The law in consultations is that if somebody is deprived of the benefit, for instance motorists, then you should make a special effort to go out and consult that party that's being disadvantaged. There was a very clear commitment to consultation at one of the Cabinet meetings and I think that gives rise to what's called legitimate expectation in law. Now I'm not going to ask you to come up with an off-the-cuff legal opinion, but if I write to you with the legal details supporting that case, perhaps you'd be good enough to come back to me within the week and maybe copying other people in the room as well, because it's a matter of much unhappiness for residents.

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

I would be more than happy to come back to you, but as you know the legal profession, a week is a very short time in anybody's books to try and get a response, but I will definitely come back to you if you send me your legal opinion.