

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

Policy and Accountability Committees (PACs) have the following key responsibilities:

- To hold the Cabinet to account.
- To be a critical friend to the Executive and to challenge the assumptions behind the policies and actions of the Council and other local service providers.
- To amplify the voice and concerns of residents and to give them a mechanism to comment on, participate in, and determine Council policy.
- To improve the Council's services by listening to residents and user groups.
- To scrutinise decisions made by partner organisations in the interest of the residents of the Borough.
- To be independent of party politics and ensure an informed evidence-based approach to policy development.

In May 2022, Full Council created the Policy and Oversight Board to oversee the Council's overview and scrutiny function, delivered through the PACs. The members of the Board include the Chairs of each of the PACs, who report their work and emerging issues to the Board for consideration.

In 2024/25, there were six PACs:

- Children and Education
- Climate Change and Ecology
- Health and Adult Social Care
- Housing and Homelessness
- Social Inclusion and Community Safety
- The Economy, Arts, Sports, and Public Realm

The Policy and Oversight Board and the PACs have continued to deliver engaging work programmes and have given residents the opportunity to be heard on the issues that matter to them. The following pages give an overview of the work of the Board and the PACs in 2024/25.

Policy and Oversight Board

Members

Councillor Lisa Homan (Chair)
 Councillor Jacolyn Daly
 Councillor Natalia Perez
 Councillor Helen Rowbottom
 Councillor Nikos Souslous
 Councillor Nicole Trehy
 Councillor Rory Vaughan
 Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler

The Committee was supported throughout the year by Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform), Councillor Sharon Holder (Cabinet Member for Public Realm), Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology), Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier (Lead Member for European Co-operation and Digital Innovation), Matthew Sales (Assistant Director, Programmes and Assurance), and officers from across the Council.

The Board is responsible for the creation and monitoring of new policy development via the PACs and task and finish groups. It is also responsible for scrutinising the corporate budget, finance and resources, human resources and performance management, shared services, communications, elections, IT, research and innovation, customer care and complaints, corporate programmes and assurance, and other major cross-cutting functions of the Council. Below are the key issues that the Board looked at in the 2024/25 municipal year.

Residents Experience Briefing

In September the Board received a briefing on residents' experience. Members discussed the performance of contact centres and made recommendations around digitalisation, which would help residents interact with services quickly and efficiently online and enable officers to focus on more complex queries. The Board noted that the ambition of the Resident Experience Access Programme was for all services to be accessible 24/7 digitally.

Changes to Voting Entitlements and Updates to Elections Act 2022 Implementation

In the September meeting, the Board received an update on the implementation of Elections Act 2022, including a review of voting and candidacy entitlements for European Union citizens resident in the borough, and the results of changes to absent voting and voter ID rules at the recent elections. Members discussed what more could be done to make residents aware of the new voter ID rules, the work around reaching European Union voters about the changes to voting entitlements and the application process for postal votes.

Update on AI Adoption and Governance

In November the Board requested an update on the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) at Hammersmith & Fulham. Members invited Sam Nutt (Researcher & Data

Ethicist at the London Office of Technology and Innovation) to speak about how other London councils were using AI and the public attitude towards AI.

Members discussed how AI could be used in different Council services, how to nurture public trust in the Council's use of AI and the procurement process for AI technology. The Board continues to monitor the expansion of the use of AI in the Council.

Update on Finance & Corporate Services Co-Production Activities

In the November meeting, the Board received an update on co-production in relation to Finance & Corporate Services, including the work of the Digital Accessibility Group, the Resident Experience and Access Programme and co-production in the Cost-of-Living Programme, People & Talent and procurement.

Members discussed engagement with local businesses and how best to involve residents in the procurement process. Members made recommendations around making it easier for residents to co-produce with the Council using digital tools, such as a one-stop shop on the Council's website, using AI and the H&F Community Compass online platform.

Greening the Grey Workshop

The Board considered feedback received from the Greening the Grey Workshop, which was held with residents in September 2024. Members made recommendations around organising more workshops to allow residents to engage with each other and giving more access to green and clean tech to residents. Members also suggested reprioritising the key workshop findings and highlighted the importance of good communication in working with residents and forging common consensus.

2025 Medium Term Financial Strategy

In February the Board welcomed the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform and officers from the Finance and Corporate Services teams to discuss the budget for 2025/26.

Members discussed the Council's priorities for the budget – keeping residents safe, protecting statutory and additional services like free Home Care and free breakfasts for primary school children, the Law Enforcement Team (LET), and the council tax support scheme – while also preserving low council tax. Members spoke about the positive impact of the LET and focus on the safety of women and girls, funding for the Council's climate team, the Council's green bond finance initiative, investment in the Upstream London industrial strategy, funding for digital inclusion work, and how the Household Support Fund was being spent to help residents in need. Members raised concerns about the impact of National Insurance increases on the Council and its suppliers.

Following discussion at the Board, the budget was endorsed by Cabinet, then went to Full Council on the 26th of February for final approval.

Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee

Members

Councillor Helen Rowbottom (Chair)
Councillor Daryl Brown
Councillor Mercy Umeh
Councillor Trey Campbell-Simon
Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan
Nandini Ganesh (Co-optee)
Nadia Taylor (Co-optee)

The Committee was supported by Councillor Alex Sanderson (Deputy Leader with responsibility for Children and Education), Jacqui McShannon (Executive Director for People), and officers from across Children's Services.

The Committee covers a wide range of services aimed at children and families in the borough including education, children's social services, safeguarding, child protection, children in care, and services for children and young people with special educational needs. Below are the key issues that the Committee looked at in the 2024/25 municipal year.

Youth Voice

The Youth Council gave a presentation highlighting their work to ensure youth voices were being heard, covering priorities and identified actions in the areas of mental health, work readiness, life skills and staying safe. They also outlined the launchings of the co-produced Youth Hub and the healthy relationship podcast at the event on 5 December 2024. Members also noted that in close collaboration with the Economy, there was a co-produced youth focus section linked to H&F Works to ensure young people in the borough could access all local opportunities.

Outcomes for Children and Young people with SEND in H&F

The Committee noted the positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND in H&F, including the increase in new birth visits, positive feedback on Educational Psychology's support services, training focusing on speech and language, the consistent reduction in autism assessment waiting times and improvements in rates of absence, suspension and permanent exclusion. Members also discussed about the outcomes of mental health intervention and their measurement, the number of EHCP applications received last year and the focus of enhancing the quality of the plans, SEND placements, and autism's referral and diagnosis.

Family Hubs

The Committee discussed about ways in stepping up marketing and promotion of the Family Hubs and the expected outcomes a year after launching. In addition to better the attendance figures over time, it was hoped that the third sector organisations would deliver community services at the Hubs in the evenings.

Summer in the City 2024

It was another year of success. Young people had taken part in “Summer in The City 2024” activities linked to the Council’s commitments around climate emergency, young people’s mental health needs, Olympics and STEM.

2025/26 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

In receiving the report of 2025/26 Revenue Budget and MTFS, members noted the Government’s announcement about the national Children’s Social Care reforms, “Keeping children safe, helping families thrive” and the associated Prevention Grant in December 2024. It was expected that the reforms funding could bring about a different model under which a lead professional of high-level skills and nurtured standards would stay with a family. The Committee would be briefed when more details about the reforms and grant were known.

Members also discussed about Upstream, the local industrial strategy embarked by the Council to benefit all children growing up in H&F, the “Travel Care and Support” service which had become increasingly complex and costly and the Safety Valve arrangements which allowed early intervention hence might have slowed down the growth of EHCPs.

Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee

Members

Councillor Nichole Trehy (Chair)
Councillor Laura Janes
Councillor Ross Melton (*Member from 2022- Jan 2025*)
Councillor Stala Antoniadis
Councillor Jose Afonso

The Committee was supported throughout the year by Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology), Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform), Bram Kainth (Executive Director - Place), Hinesh Mehta (Assistant Director Climate Change), and other officers from across the Council.

Chair's Introduction

This committee has continued to scrutinise essential areas that ensure everyone enjoys a greener and safer borough.

The Committee welcomed several reports including the Hammersmith and Fulham Green Investment Bond which is successfully into its third tranche. Circular Economy and Sustainable Procurement - inviting Western Riverside Waste Authority (WRWA) to give an overview of the communications and education programme carried out for waste prevention including the ReWork facility reuse project. ReLondon on the circular neighbourhood's scheme who also provided an overview of key aspects that could be delivered in Hammersmith & Fulham.

Presentations from officers on H&F actions on Flooding and Greening the Grey showed a huge increase in the amount of green infrastructure and SuDS features such as rain gardens and engineered tree pits on the public highway. As well as two schemes which involve working with local schools.

It is noted that Thames Water did not accept the invitation to follow up on the 'Actions' required from the committee of Feb 6 which found that, following the floods of July 2021, Thames Water needed to allocate further funding to accommodate the resilience programme and tackle the issues raised effectively. And for Thames Water to offer further clarity on their plans regrading communication with residents. And follow up on how Thames Water would be meeting regulatory requirements set by Ofwat on sewage dumping.

I would like to thank all residents and experts who have shared their knowledge and views, contributing greatly to this committee.

I'd also like to give thanks to all Council officers for prioritising this committee's work and delivering a balanced budget. Thanks also to committee members for their contributions.

The committee looks forward to hearing about the continued work to progress the Council's climate change mitigation and ecology work programmes in the next municipal year.

At the upcoming meeting in May we have invited an item on active travel be presented and for representatives from Ghent to attend and present to the Committee remotely.

- *Councillor Nicole Trehy, Chair of the Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee*

The Committee is tasked to monitor the administration and spending in services within its scope, including climate change and the response to Climate Emergency, transport, parking and traffic management, planning policy, recycling and environmental sustainability, waste management and ecology & biodiversity. Below are some of the key issues that the Committee looked at in the 2024/25 municipal year.

Circular Economy and Sustainable Procurement

Sarah Jane Widdowson, Western Riverside Waste Authority (WRWA), joined to provide an overview of the communications and education programme carried out for waste prevention. It was noted that 95 class visits at Smugglers Way and 2 in school workshops had taken place. She provided a summary of the ReWork facility reuse project. Staff were employed as apprentices in electrical engineering and maintenance, helping them to gain the experience and skills necessary to embark on a new career. Amy Casey (ReLondon) attended and provided an overview on the circular neighbourhood's scheme and how this could be delivered in Hammersmith & Fulham.

The Committee discussed:

- How the Circular neighbourhood project would continue to support behaviour change in the future.
- The plans for collaborative working across various sectors within the circular economy and the building materials reuse initiative.
- Levers that could be introduced to measure how much was being recycled and levers to encourage fines.
- The excellent work carried out by WRWA, including the reuse of white goods. Including how the WRWA worked with the Chairty Rework and used a network of other charities to supply residents with these goods.
- The possibility of implementing measures to make recycling mandatory for large businesses rather than relying on voluntary participation.
- Plans for new recycling regulations to be introduced – The Simpler Recycling Regulations. These regulations would require all businesses to recycle more

and to collect food waste. It was anticipated that these changes would significantly increase recycling rates.

The Committee agreed actions around issues related to the use of the recycling bins in Ravenscourt Park and improving access to healthy and sustainable food within the borough.

H&F Green Investment Update

For this item, the Committee was joined by Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) to discuss the new Hammersmith and Fulham Green investment scheme. On 6th November 2023 Cabinet approved the launch of this scheme: an innovative community investment scheme primarily aimed at engaging residents and businesses in H&F's climate change objectives. The Council was ambitious in its climate and ecological aims and was therefore targeting £5m of funding in total – the largest ever green investment scheme of its kind.

The Committee discussed participation in the scheme and that this was not limited to H&F residents; it was also open to individuals from outside the borough. The scheme welcomed involvement from businesses and community groups. Councillor Rowan Ree explained that for the next tranche, the Council intended to finalise which projects to invest in before opening it. He encouraged residents to share any ideas or suggestions with the Council, emphasising that now would be an ideal time to get involved.

2025/26 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

During the budget discussion, the Committee heard that the budget headlines for 2025/26 included investing £3.5m in community safety and crime prevention, relieving pressure on statutory services, investing in the Upstream Industrial Strategy, tackling climate change and investing in sports facilities. The Committee was also updated on the recent achievements and budget implications relevant to the department and future strategic budget issues. This included significant funding requirements for addressing the climate and ecological emergency.

The Committee enquired whether the council was confident it would achieve its net zero goal by 2030 and were assured that the net zero carbon target by 2023 remained in place. The Committee was informed that although this was a challenging goal, the Council had spent much of early 2019 developing strategies and was now focused on their implementation. The Committee discussed the work being carried out by the Council with regards to Climate Change and Ecology and noted that capital projects would play an increasingly significant role, alongside measures to protect the community as the conditions evolved.

Motion for the Ocean – Inland Council Sign Up

For this item on Motion for the Ocean – Inland Council Sign up, the Committee was joined by Grace Clifford (Ocean Conservation Trust) to provide details on the Ocean Conservation Trust, a charity dedicated to resorting and protecting the ocean through people centred, positive action. The Committee discussed:

- The local government model for the “Motion for the Ocean” proposal for the Council to sign and how various councils had successfully implemented the “Motion for the Ocean” model.

- The proactive measures the council could adopt to support the motion.
- The River Thames, which ran through the borough, was increasingly polluted, emphasising that its protection and restoration were key priorities for the Council.
- The impact of animal agriculture on the ocean and whether the 'Think Ocean Challenge' addressed dietary influence.

Members expressed that they were collectively in favour of presenting the motion to Full Council as soon as possible and requested key highlights on additional actions the Council could take to enhance the motions impact within the borough.

Active Travel

In May, members received an update on Active Travel in Hammersmith & Fulham. The Committee was provided with a summary of the many workstreams that were being delivered in the borough to improve active travel. The committee discussed:

- The development of a Net Zero Transport Strategy for the borough and the important role active travel plays in addressing the many transport challenges facing the H&F.
- That a separate Active Travel Strategy would be developed as a subsidiary document to the Transport Strategy.
- The context for active travel in the borough and how we compare to the rest of London and neighbouring boroughs. Including active travel initiatives and schemes H&F was currently delivering.
- The Committee welcomed representatives from OurBike, OMA bikes, Zip Car and YoGo to discuss ongoing smart travel initiatives within the borough. Members explored opportunities to expand these schemes to reduce car use and examined their key features. In addition, the committee held discussions on pedestrian safety, potential improvements, the council's vision and timeline, key milestones toward achieving its net zero target and plans to respond to the key issues mentioned.

The Committee agreed actions around temporarily improving the cycle lanes on Uxbridge Road and welcomed an update on the transport strategy on 4th November 2025.

Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee

Members

Councillor Natalia Perez (Chair)
Councillor Genevieve Nwaogbe
Councillor Ann Rosenberg
Councillor Lydia Paynter
Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris
Victoria Brignell (Co-optee)
Lucia Boddington (Co-optee)
Jim Grealy (Co-optee)

The Committee was supported throughout the year by Councillor Alex Sanderson (Deputy Leader, acting Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health), Jacqui McShannon (Executive Director – People), Katherine Willmette (Director of Adult Social Care) and other officers from across the Council.

Chair's introduction

As the Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee, I am pleased to introduce this brief report summarising the Committee's work over the 2024/25 municipal year.

Over the past year, the Committee has continued its important role in scrutinising the health and wellbeing of our residents, covering both children and adults, the provision and improvement of NHS services, and the delivery of mental health and adult social care in the borough. Our work has aimed to ensure that services are accessible, responsive, and meet the needs of all residents.

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to all members of the Committee for their commitment, insight, and constructive scrutiny throughout the year. Your efforts have ensured that we have remained focused on the issues that matter most to our residents.

My thanks also go to the council officers whose guidance and support have been invaluable in enabling the Committee to carry out its responsibilities effectively. Their expertise has helped us navigate the issues discussed and make informed recommendations.

We are also grateful to the many stakeholders who have engaged with us this year – whether reporting back on local health initiatives, providing evidence, or participating in our discussions.

Looking ahead, the Committee remains committed to ensuring the high standards in health and adult social care provision in Hammersmith & Fulham. We will continue to work collaboratively with partners and the community to drive improvement, support innovation, and champion equity in health outcomes across the borough.

- *Councillor Natalia Perez, Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee*

The Committee is responsible for scrutinising the health of both children and adults, the provision and improvement of primary and acute NHS services, the provision of mental health services, and adult social care services in the borough. Below are the key issues that the Committee looked at in the 2024/25 municipal year.

Hammersmith & Fulham Health and Care Partnership Update

In November, members received an update on the Hammersmith & Fulham Health and Care Partnership that worked with and for local residents to improve health, care and wellbeing outcomes. Members noted the ongoing refresh of the Partnership and discussed what improvements could be made, how to ensure residents' voices were heard and plans to respond to the key issues mentioned.

Disabled People's Experiences of The NHS - A Report by Action on Disability

The Committee also invited Victoria Brignell and Ashley Pearce from Action on Disability to discuss disabled people's experiences of the NHS. Key issues were identified and the Committee agreed that a workshop would be held with disabled residents to explore new ways of working together and a more focused approach to finding solutions.

H&F Immunisation and Vaccination Briefing

Members received briefing on some of the interventions in place to improve vaccination coverage in the borough. The Committee discussed vaccine uptake in asylum hotels, among school aged children and in care homes as well as the outreach training delivered by officers.

Old People's Care Homes in Hammersmith and Fulham

In the same meeting, members noted an update on care homes for older people in the borough. The Committee discussed:

- Which nursing homes were given to residents and why
- The supply and demand of care home places
- The work of the Council's Quality Assurance team
- How the Council supported residents who moved out of the borough

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2029

For the last item, the Committee noted the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2029. Members were interested in the factors which determined a person's health outcomes and the new affordable homes in the borough.

2025 Medium Term Financial Strategy (including the corporate budget and the Adult Social Care and Public Health budgets)

During the meeting on the budget in January, members discussed the achievements in Adult Social Care and the challenges facing the service, including the demand pressure on placements and the impact of rising wages on the delivery of independent living. The Committee noted that Health Partnerships were working with the rich community sector in the borough to address needs locally.

Under the Public Health update, members discussed the achievements of the Reach Out (suicide prevention) campaign and the integrated Drug and Alcohol services meeting their treatment targets and providing comprehensive services to address the complex needs of patients.

Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee

Members

Councillor Jacolyn Daly (Chair)
Councillor Asif Siddique
Councillor Sally Taylor
Councillor Omid Miri
Councillor Adronie Alford

The Committee was supported throughout the year by Councillor Frances Umeh (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness), Cllr Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform), Richard Shwe (Director of Housing), and officers from across the Council.

The Committee is tasked to monitor the policy, administration and spending of all aspects of housing (including privately owned, council, housing association, sheltered and supported housing), provision of homes for local residents and tackling and reducing homelessness. Below are the priority areas that the Committee considered during the 2024/25 municipal year.

Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness continues to increase across London and the associated costs for the borough are escalating. Members asked officers to report on both prevention and temporary housing for residents. The Committee noted the Homelessness Prevention team is challenged with reversing the current proportion of households approaching the Service at the Prevention stage (30%) and Relief stage (70%). To achieve this, the team will strive to ensure that residents served an eviction notice are aware of council services and encouraged to approach the council as early as possible, and before they are made homeless by the courts.

Members noted a multi-agency approach could help avoid misplacing people living with homelessness out of the borough, but the allocation/transfer of temporary accommodation within the borough was subject to availability at the time of need.

Rough Sleeping

The Committee was briefed by council officers alongside third-sector partners on the support and services they provided in H&F, including Housing First support (Thames Reach), weekly outreach (Thames Reach and Turning Point), training on substance use and treatment pathways (Turning Point), day centre support to people with mental health conditions (Baron Courts Project), accommodation pathways for homelessness with health needs (St Mungo's), joint commissioning through central government's Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant (West London Homelessness and Rough Sleeping), employability and wellbeing services (The Upper Room), emergency accommodation and casework service (Glass Door), and personalised budget and financial planning support (Greater Change).

Members discussed the borough's rough sleeping statistics as well as the situation on any 'typical' night. The committee also scrutinised the borough's capacity during Severe Weather Emergency Protocol alerts, the impact of government policy changes leading to asylum seekers leaving temporary Home Office accommodation, and health conditions of rough sleepers. It was also noted that H&F had the highest increase of homelessness in 2023/2024 across London because the borough was a major transport hub which brought passer-by for a short-term stay.

Hidden Homelessness

In addition to receiving the report, the Committee was briefed on five lived experiences of hidden homelessness shared by the Director of Barons Court Project.

Members and officers discussed the lack of good quality, affordable accommodation for low-income single people, and the need to ensure housing safety compliance, maintaining/stretching non-statutory services under a tight budget, safe space for people of hidden homelessness, assistance to sofa surfing young college graduates, and reporting of hidden homelessness cases. The Committee agreed to revisit hidden homelessness within this financial year.

Private Rented Sector (PRS) Policy

In receiving the draft PRS Policy, members noted that the Council used environmental health power and public health power to intervene with the private landlords who would become more effective in their role through the future national landlord register. They also noted that in addition to HMO licensing, the Council had also run licensing scheme for private rental properties on 24 selective streets. It was agreed to enhance renters' awareness about their rights by briefing the ward councillors on the PRS policy and stepping up publicity through social media.

Voids

The Committee noted that by early summer 2025, the voids' target business-as-usual position would be maintained at 60 properties while the rental loss at any given time would be less than 40 days. The target dates for recovery completion for major voids and capital works was 90+ days and for the remaining cases within 60 days. These targets had helped streamline the recovery process recognised by the audits and return empty homes recovered to meet the Decent Home Standards into the stock under the HRA. Private voids and those from housing associations, once possessed by the Council, were also recovered to supplement temporary accommodation.

2025/26 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

On Housing Solutions under the 2025/26 Revenue Budget and MTFs, members noted the rising number of homelessness approaches since 2019/20 and the Council's commitment of £1.2m dedicated spending for Homelessness and a further £3.5m from the Homelessness Prevention Grant. It was also noted that the Homelessness team needed to ensure more effective communication with the homeless people and manage their expectations.

HRA Budget 2025/26

Regarding the HRA Budget 2025/26, members discussed the details of the efficiency savings of £5.3m, reduction of void rent loss to 1.6%, reduction in repair spending,

and the level of compensation of disrepairs and ambulance chasing. Members also noted the Housing Services' reply to a resident's question about leasehold and commonhold.

Housing Safety Compliance

The Committee received the report which set out the Council's performance in key health and safety areas and provided an overview of H&F response to date to the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 report. The Station Commander of Hammersmith Fire Station and the Chair, Fire, Building Safety and Repairs Working Group also joined the meeting and addressed members.

Members and officers/guests exchanged views on communication and engagement with residents, safeguards in place done to construction and refurbishment materials to minimise fire risks, proper locations for e-bikes and enforcement, policy adopted in respect of Lithium Ion batteries and alike, strengthening civic/lease contract to protect residents, and public awareness after the Grenfell incident.

Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee

Members

Councillor Nikos Souslous (Chair)
Councillor Omid Miri
Councillor Lucy Richardson
Councillor Sally Taylor
Councillor Andrew Dinsmore

The Committee was supported throughout the year by Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety), Bram Kainth (Executive Director of Place), Neil Thurlow (Director of Public Protection), and other officers from across the Council.

The Committee is responsible for improving social inclusion, community safety and anti-social behaviour, licensing and gambling, neighbourhood governance, community engagement, the Council's equalities and diversity programmes and support for vulnerable groups, the Council's Voluntary Sector strategy, and increasing access to opportunity in all aspects of social and economic life in the borough. Below are the key issues that the Committee looked at in the 2023/24 municipal year.

CCTV service update and the Annual Report on the Council's use of Investigatory Powers

The Committee was updated on the work and progress of the borough's £5.4m capital investment programme for CCTV upgrade and scrutinised the Council's conduct in relation to directed surveillance, covert human intelligence sources in accordance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and Council policy. The following issues were discussed:

- The upgrade would bring less faulty cameras and uninterruptible power supply for up to 4 hours.
- The ownership and storage of the CCTV data.
- Communication with the Police in utilising the footages to tackle crimes.
- Staffing at the CCTV control room and emotional support to operating officers.
- Benefits of the CCTV partnership with the WCC and RBKC.
- Installation of new cameras and their deterrence or displacement effect.
- Direct access to the control room by 45 businesses within Hammersmith BID.
- The Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office was pleased with the regime that H&F had put in place.

Annual Performance Report for the Law Enforcement Team (LET)

Members received a LET update for the period between December 2023 and May 2024 and exchanged views on the following:

- LET officers' assistance to rough sleepers while serving warning notices to/ taking enforcement actions against those who were council residents but engaged in begging, using drugs or ASB.
- Capacity of LET in enforcing altogether seven Public Space Protection Orders and ways of assessing their effectiveness.
- Joint operations with the local Police team and the two sides' discussion about strategic issues of drug supply, demand/dependence and exploitation.
- The Council's emergency out-of-hour phone number and LET's 24/7 email service.
- Updated emails about the LET's expanded duties and functions to all Councillors.

Update report on policing in Hammersmith and Fulham

Chief Superintendent Christina Jessah and Superintendent Craig Knight gave an update on policing in H&F. The Committee noted/discussed the following:

- The projected £450m budget gap might have an impact on frontline service delivery.
- There was a 6% reduction (FYTD) in overall crime in H&F and actions had been taken to tackle theft of mobile phones and anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- Joined-up working and strategy against drug-related activities and related crimes, and the impressive work of the Public Health in rehabilitation.
- The recordings, impact and training concerning non-crime hate incidents.
- The increase of 'Stop and Search' by 40% in H&F bringing positive outcomes of 31.2% versus a 17% decrease across London with an outcome around 30%. Measures including training and the 'Stop and Search' Charter on the pipeline taken to address concerns about the approach in carrying out the tactic, in particular among vulnerable adults such as autistic residents with learning difficulty or social communication disorder.
- Implementation of the borough-wide Street Harassment Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and 16-Day of Actions to end VAWG, along with increased reporting of sexual offences.
- Recommendations in Casey Review and New Met for London (NMFL) Plan, including staff training, restoring visible neighbourhood policing, and outcomes of the quarterly NMFL meetings.
- Partnership between LET and MET, and to provide more information on the proposed crime summit.
- Use of live facial recognition technology and to provide information on the frequency of false positives, if any.
- Recruitment and retention and to provide information on the numbers of PCs and PCSOs in H&F.

Six-month performance report for the Law Enforcement Team

The Committee was briefed on the LET's report for the period between June and December 2024 and noted/discussed the following:

- Engagement with rough sleepers and support in collaboration with the Homelessness Team.
- Increasing levels of drugs being removed and knives being found.
- Staff recruitment, DBS checks and training.

- To review residents' engagements further to community safety updates on e-news and TRA meetings.
- To provide updates in respect of the borough-wide Street Harassment PSPO.

2025/26 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

In receiving the budget proposals for the services covered by this Committee, members noted/discussed the following:

- Additional external income for CCTV services and exploration to generate further revenue from the network.
- Efficiency savings and assessment of service effectiveness.
- Use of extra investment in VAWG.
- Repurposing external funding for LET and Gangs Unit for general use.
- Savings from running the Local Support Payments services in-house.
- To provide details about the baseline survey conducted among residents in respect of the digital inclusion strategy.

Violence Against Women and Girls spotlight

The Committee received detailed briefings from officers as well as representatives from Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse and Advance Charity. The key partners spoke through their services and the journeys of the victim/survivors they supported.

Members and officers/partners exchanged views on the following:

- In terms of changes over the last 30 years, women today were better at recognising domestic violence which had an increased understanding throughout the society. There were also more challenges such as accessibility of pornography and young men's view of masculinity.
- On the anticipated changes in the next few decades, there might be more funded service opportunities for survivors and perpetrators.
- Support for survivors and their children in receiving mental health services at the refuges and after leaving there.
- Arrangements for the survivors and perpetrators while waiting for court hearings noting the lengthy waiting time.
- Therapeutic support to be delivered by charity's in-house therapists.
- Perpetrators' programmes for repeated offenders and schoolboys.
- Challenges of Met Police changing the information sharing access.

Gangs, Violence & Exploitation Unit spotlight

The Committee was briefed on the report and received the experience sharing of representatives from Minaret Community Centre and Young Person's Action Group. Members were concerned about the future plan of GVEU and their collaborations with the neighbouring boroughs.

The Economy, Arts, Sports, and Public Realm Policy and Accountability Committee

Members

Councillor Rory Vaughan (Chair)
Councillor Liz Collins
Councillor Adam Peter Lang
Councillor Ashok Patel
Councillor Jackie Borland

The Committee was supported throughout the year by Councillor Sharon Holder (Cabinet Member for Public Realm), Councillor Andrew Jones (Cabinet Member for the Economy) and Councillor Zarar Qayyum (Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Skills).

Chair's introduction

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the work of the Economy Arts, Sports and Public Realm Arts PAC during 2024-25. As you will see from the summaries below, the PAC has covered a broad range of issues, reflecting its wide remit, including considering: H&F's cultural strategy; maintenance of the public realm; and the Council's sports and physical activity strategy. I'd note two other items in particular:

- Upstream London – H&F Council's strategy for inclusive economic growth: We heard from the Leader of the Council, Cllr Cowan, about Upstream London, the second phase of the Council's industrial strategy in partnership with Imperial College London and STEM³ businesses. The first phase of this strategy for inclusive economic growth successfully attracted £6bn of business investment and created over 13,000 jobs. The committee was also pleased to hear that the next phase of the strategy will also involve substantial benefits for local young people through work placements, mentoring and other career opportunities as part of the Upstream Pathway bond.
 - Coproduction in action: The committee was also pleased to hear about the work of the Inclusive Environment Disabled Residents Team. This provided an excellent demonstration of coproduction with disabled residents in action across a range of public realm policy issues – something that the committee has taken a keen interest in promoting over the past few years.
- *Councillor Rory Vaughan, Chair of the Economy, Arts, Sports and Public Realm Policy Accountability Committee*

The Committee is responsible for monitoring the policy, administration and spending on the local economy and support for local businesses, local employment, regeneration, parks and open spaces, public sports facilities, arts and cultural

services, libraries and adult education, and street scene. Below are the key issues that the Committee looked at in the 2024/25 municipal year.

An Update On ‘Upstream London’: The Vision for The Next Phase of The Council’s Industrial Strategy

The Leader of the Council provided a comprehensive update on the second phase of the Strategy.

The Industrial Strategy: *Upstream London* was launched in late November 2024 with the aim of making the borough a global hub of innovation and inclusive growth. To date, the Industrial Strategy has helped to generate £6billion of high-growth business investment and created over 13,000 jobs.

The Committee welcomed the news that there were plans to set up further innovation districts in Korea and Singapore. The Committee discussed the composition and roles of the Upstream London Delivery Board and the Upstream London Political Oversight Group, and noted that the Leader Chaired the Delivery Board, which was a formal body that steered decisions and ensured that land development connected with skills and entrepreneurial support.

The Committee discussed the delivery of Scale Space and how this worked in practice, as well as sharing innovations more widely within the borough. The Committee agreed it was important that Upstream was not purely focused on White City and there were also a number of places around the borough such as Fulham and Riverside which had focused particularly on health and well-being. Further topics included how the industrial and cultural strategy interacted with each other and helped to increase visitor numbers to the borough. The Committee thanked Councillors Stephen Cowan and Andrew Jones and the officers supporting Upstream and the Industrial Strategy work.

Cultural Strategy Update

The Committee was pleased with the progress that had been on the implementation of the Cultural Strategy which was adopted by Cabinet in October 2023. During discussions, Members highlighted the need for employment opportunities and the links these had to the Industrial Strategy.

In relation to the Cultural Forum, the Committee agreed it was important the Council listened to less prominent groups and also took on board their views (especially young people). With regards to the implementation of the Strategy, Members noted this was based on a 10-year framework, with some actions being delivered in the medium term.

The Committee noted the successful summer and winter events which had taken place on King Street, and discussed how these activities, as well as using green spaces and the river creatively, could contribute to the visitor economy. The Committee also discussed Heritage Partnerships and the Black History Museum and the unique selling points of Hammersmith and Fulham (in terms of attracting visitors). Further topics included co-production, Public Health and how the health economy

might be involved in culture in future. The Committee also commended the idea of an annual Hammersmith and Fulham award.

Public Realm Works Procurement

This outlined the strategic approach being developed for a Public Realm Maintenance & Project Works Contract for all Council Public Realm works from April 2026. Details were provided on:

- The scope of the Public Realm Contract – noting that it covered Highways, Parks & Consultancy Services.
- The objectives of the new contract.
- An overview of the Lot Structure.
- Details of the developmental timescales for the new contract.

Given resident feedback on drainage schemes, the Committee felt this area needed to be looked at differently within the new contract. Addressing street lighting, it was highlighted how this could have a positive impact on the night-time economy and also improve public safety. Members also asked about the co-ordination of street works to ensure that residents were kept informed, and steps were taken to minimise disruption to highways.

The Committee also explored further issues including key performance indicators within the contracts and the possible amalgamation of contracts/potential cost savings, the scope for officers to negotiate future contracts, as well as the selection and award criteria of future contracts. The Committee welcomed the update and asked for this to be revisited in due course.

Review Of Parks Satisfaction Survey 2024

The following key points were noted:

- Overall Satisfaction: 86.3% (up from 69% in 2023)
- Maintenance Satisfaction: 83% (up from 61% in 2023)
- Safety: 65.7% (down from 73% in 2023)
- Cleanliness: 80% (up from 67% in 2023)
- Quality: 81% satisfaction

The Committee discussed the variety of green and open spaces within the borough and agreed it was important the Council maintained and continued to improve the facilities in parks.

Numerous topics were discussed including toilet facilities, the importance and value of litter-picking and the need for good and appropriate lighting (in parks). Further points included the need to ensure parks were as accessible as possible (as many residents did not have an outdoor space or garden of their own) and anti-social behaviour. While the work of the Law Enforcement Team (LET) was commended, there was agreement that the Council could do more in relation to public safety.

The Committee also examined the timing of the Parks Consultation, the demographics of the respondents, the usage of parks and use by schools. The Committee was pleased that signage was being updated, and further work was

being done on the Council's website to improve information on parks and green spaces for residents

New Local Plan for Hammersmith & Fulham

The Committee agreed the Local Plan was a complex overarching framework which integrated the Council's other plans and policies. Therefore, it was important that residents understood how their feedback would be used in consultation phases as the New Plan developed.

The Committee discussed housing targets and agreed that public consultation was very important, as the scope and potential impact of the Local Plan was overwhelming. Members asked officers to think about the importance of communities and the impact on these, rather than simply aspiring to hitting housing and density targets. Officers confirmed the complexity of the development and implementation of the Local Plan which was why Spatial Planning had been moved from the Economy Directorate to Place. This meant that everyone who was responsible for communities had been drawn together under the Place umbrella.

Members were interested how other strategies fed into the Local Plan. And how diverse factors such as: land availability, health implications and infrastructure, the timetable and consultation period, as well as National Planning Policy and the London Plan would all feed into the process over the next couple of years.

2025/26 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The following 2025/26 budget headlines were discussed: Investing £3.5m in community safety and crime prevention, relieving pressure on statutory services, investing in the Upstream Industrial Strategy, tackling climate change and investing in sports facilities.

The Committee was also provided with updates on recent achievements, the budget implications for the Place Directorate, as well as future strategic budget issues. In relation to future strategic budget risks, these included Hammersmith Bridge works, waste collection and meeting service costs, national inflationary pressures and challenges to secure funding for the Corporate Business Plan objectives.

The Committee thanked officers for the improvements made to waste disposal, and general waste to recycling. The Committee welcomed the improvements to sports facilities across the borough, and noted the Linford Christie Stadium running track would also be upgraded later in the year which would boost user numbers and increase revenue.

The Committee welcomed that the LET had been moved into the base budget to secure its future funding as it was highly regarded and much needed. The Committee discussed the ramifications of the Council Tax Support Scheme, and it was highlighted that Hammersmith and Fulham was one of only three London Boroughs that offered 100% discount to the most vulnerable.

In addition, The Committee welcomed the work on enforcement around advertising boards and time banded commercial waste collections. Not only the revenue this

generated, but also in terms of ensuring clear footways, which were of particular concern to disabled residents as set out in the equalities impact assessment.

Inclusive Environment Disabled Residents Team Update

This update included an overview of the Team, the work undertaken to date and planned in the future, as well as key achievements and challenges.

The Committee congratulated the Group on its work to date and confirmed it would help to raise awareness of what the Group was doing as well as its need for new members. In relation to the issues posed by e-bikes, the Committee welcomed the Council rolling out additional parking stations off the footway and Lime (one of the largest providers of E-bikes) had recently announced a £20 million package for London to address the issue.

The Committee discussed the improvements to the step and railings at the crossing on Wood Lane, as well as how the disabled shopper's bays just off King Street were working.

The Chair thanked officers for the co-production report and was pleased that there was a significant amount of working being done across a range of issues throughout the Council.

The Committee also considered:

- Update On Waste and Recycling Service Developments
- Café Culture, Play Streets and Street Parties Initiative
- The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Hammersmith & Fulham