

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 19 January 2026

PRESENT

Executive Members

Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader of the Council

Councillor Alex Sanderson, Deputy Leader (with responsibility for Children and Education)

Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier, Cabinet Member for Public Realm

Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology

Councillor Rebecca Harvey, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety

Councillor Bora Kwon, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Councillor Zarar Qayyum, Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Skills

Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform

Councillor Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Other Councillors

Councillor Adronie Alford

Officers

Sharon Lea, Chief Executive

Grant Deg, Director of Legal Services

David Abbott, Head of Governance

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Jones.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026/27

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the report which sought to approve the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27. The scheme provided up to 100% support for the most vulnerable residents, exempted care leavers and foster carers from Council Tax entirely and in recognition of the brave service of our nation's Armed Forces, and to mark 80 years since VE Day, provided a 25% discount for veterans living in the borough.

The Chair and Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan, said he was grateful for Councillor Ree's leadership in this area.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agreed the following recommendations to be approved by Full Council:

1. That the Council Tax Support Scheme in operation in 2025/2026 (included at Appendix 1) shall continue in 2026/2027.
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 2026/2027.

The reasons for decision and alternative options are set out in the report.

There were no declarations of interest and no dispensations in respect of any declared conflict of interest.

5. COUNCIL TAX BASE AND COLLECTION RATE 2026/27 AND DELEGATION OF THE BUSINESS RATE ESTIMATE

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the report that set the Council Tax base for the purposes of the 2026/27 revenue budget. The proposed 2026/27 Council Tax base was 91,726, an increase of 3,422 on the figure agreed for 2025/26 which would result in increased income of £3.48m. The report also delegated authority to the Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Services to determine the business rates tax base for 2026/27.

Councillor Ree noted that the Council had increased its collection rate to 98% and said the Council continued to charge second home and empty home premiums.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet agreed to refer this report to Full Council and recommend approval by Full Council for the financial year 2026/27 of:

- a. The estimated numbers of properties for each Valuation Band as set out in this report.
- b. An estimated collection rate of 98.0%.
- c. The Council Tax Base of 91,726 Band “D” equivalent properties.
- d. The delegation of authority to the Executive Director for Finance & Corporate Services to determine the business rates tax base for 2026/27.

The reasons for decision and alternative options are set out in the report.

There were no declarations of interest and no dispensations in respect of any declared conflict of interest.

6. FUTURE RESIDENT FACING ENERGY PROPOSALS

Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology) introduced the report which sought approval for a package of programmes aimed at streamlining access to clean energy opportunities and technologies for H&F residents. The heart of these proposals was a new ‘Healthy Homes’ service to guide residents through the design, funding and implementation of housing retrofit projects.

Councillor Harcourt highlighted that the two proposed Healthy Homes pilot areas would receive intensive community engagement to further drive and scale clean energy and sustainability measures. One of the pilots was based around social housing and one was in private housing. The proposals built on work underway in H&F to:

- Work with the HFCE green energy co-op to install solar PV on selected H&F.
- Schools, enabling residents to invest in solar energy in the borough.
- Trial innovative green energy flex tariffs in social housing units.
- Support fuel poor residents to save energy and access government grants.
- Design clean heat networks for larger H&F Housing estates.
- Commission the innovative new clean energy network on the Civic Campus.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

1. To approve a new H&F service, as part of the H&F ‘Healthy Homes’ programme, to help residents design and install measures including insulation, solar PV, heat pumps and energy storage to their homes. A proposed small grant scheme, administered by H&F, is linked to this to help less well-off residents to pay for measures.
2. To approve the selection of the portion of Wormholt and College Park & Old Oak wards that is H&F social housing as a social housing place-based decarbonisation scheme, including solar energy, batteries, heat pumps, insulation and innovative money saving energy tariffs.

3. To approve the selection of Wendell Park as a private housing place-based decarbonisation scheme, using intensive, targeted communications and engagement, alongside innovative measures such as thermal drone scans, to drive clean energy measures in the neighbourhood. The European Horizon 2020 programme, which covers leading innovative climate initiatives, has shown an interest in this. H&F proposes to work with an engagement partner who will support on research, development, implementation and measurement of this hyper-localised approach to engagement.
4. To note the other schemes already underway and expanding, including the HFCE green energy co-op, feasibility studies for large scale clean energy networks, support for residents in fuel poverty, and social housing retrofit projects in the West Kensington and White City estates among others.

The reasons for decision and alternative options are set out in the report.

There were no declarations of interest and no dispensations in respect of any declared conflict of interest.

7. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR EDWARD WOODS TOWERS EXTERNAL FACADE AND WINDOW REPLACEMENT WORKS

Councillor Frances Umeh (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness) introduced the report that sought approval to run a procurement exercise to source a contractor to undertake the required works to the towers at the Edward Woods estate. Councillor Umeh added that the works would replace windows, improve fire safety, and improve thermal performance.

She then discussed the work that the Council had been doing on fire safety including:

- Personal evacuation plans and person-centred fire risk assessments had been put in place for residents. There was a partnership between the Adult Social Care and Housing teams to ensure vulnerable residents had evacuation plans.
- Sprinklers had been installed in 580 homes and upgrades had been made to wet rises.
- 15 minute fire doors had been installed, including for leaseholders at no additional charge.
- The Council provided free plug adapters and free portable appliance testing (PAT).
- Annual letters had been sent to residents with fire safety booklets.
- Strong governance processes had been put in place, with regular updates sent to Cabinet to give an overview on compliance. Regular update papers from the Director of Housing went to the Council's Senior Leadership Team meetings. And regular updates went to the Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee for member scrutiny. There was also robust resident scrutiny – a resident group had been set up to look at the fire safety works.

Councillor Umeh said the Council recognised the importance of taking proactive measures to ensure residents felt safe in their homes.

The Chair added that the Council's Fire Safety Plus programme had first been put in place in 2016 following fires caused by faulty whitegoods. The Council replaced at risk whitegoods, replaced front doors with higher quality fire doors, and put risk assessments in place for a high percentage of residents. He then highlighted the Grenfell tragedy and said the victims were always in the thoughts of members and officers. He said it was the Council's duty to avoid an event like that in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Councillor Adronie Alford addressed the meeting and gave her full support to the measures outlined above. She then noted her concerns about lithium batteries being stored improperly on estates and asked that the Council remained stringent about the issue. She also noted that she had a smart meter installed that later caught fire and asked that when the Council checked properties, they checked that smart meters were correctly installed too.

The Chair said he was sorry to hear about the fire. He said the Council was also concerned about lithium batteries (used in electric scooters for example) and was in the process of changing the tenant agreement to tackle this issue. Councillor Umeh gave assurances that smart meters were installed correctly and person-centred fire risk assessments were completed for residents. Regarding electric scooters, she noted that the London Fire Brigade has spoken about the dangers of them and how they are charged. They were responsible for a fire every two days, often due to incompatible chargers. To tackle this the Council would provide spaces to charge mobility scooters in sheltered accommodation and signage was put up in housing estates warning of the dangers. She said this issue was a top priority for the Housing team.

Councillor Wesley Harcourt also noted the dangers of the disposal of lithium batteries and how it had resulted in fires at the Western Riverside Waste Authority. The Chair said the Council was very alert to the risks of lithium batteries and he had discussed the issue many times with senior officers and members. He suggested a paper on this issue should go to one of the Council's Policy and Accountability Committees for further discussion and scrutiny.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

1. To note that Appendix 1 is not for publication on the basis that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
2. That Cabinet approves the procurement strategy proposing a mini-competition via the Pretium Building and Fire Safety Framework (Lot 8 – External Wall Works) to source a contractor to undertake external façade safety works at Norland House, Stebbing House, Poynter House Edward Woods estate W11.

3. That Cabinet notes that the procurement will be a two-stage design and build process with the Council entering into a pre-construction services agreement ("PCSA") with a preferred supplier. Following completion of the design phase the Council will seek to enter into a works contract with the preferred supplier.

The reasons for decision and alternative options are set out in the report.

There were no declarations of interest and no dispensations in respect of any declared conflict of interest.

8. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS (TO NOTE)

The Key Decision List was noted.

9. DISCUSSION OF EXEMPT ELEMENTS (IF REQUIRED)

There was no discussion of exempt elements.

Meeting started: 7.02 pm
Meeting ended: 7.29 pm

Chair