

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 9 February 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 Andrew Jones, Cabinet Member for The Economy

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 Jose Afonso

Councillor Adronie Alford

Officers

Sharon Lea, Chief Executive

Grant Deg, Director of Legal Services

David Abbott, Head of Governance

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2026 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX LEVELS 2026/27

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the report that set out the Council's Revenue Budget for 2026/27 and provided an update on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy including the impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement and the adequacy of the balances and reserves to ensure that the Council can maintain long term sustainability and maintain the strong financial governance of its resources.

Councillor Ree said the budget provided financial resilience and funded the services residents rely on, including services that were unique to Hammersmith and Fulham, such as universal free breakfasts to our primary schools (later taken up by national Government), the local Law Enforcement Team, and free home care. He noted that the budget also funded the borough's expanded Council Tax support scheme, including the newly added 25% cut for military veterans.

Councillor Jose Afonso (Leader of the Opposition) noted the impact of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 and Business Rates Reset from April 2026 which meant lower funding levels from central Government and asked what the Government's problem was with Hammersmith and Fulham and its residents. The Leader said the Council had one of the best Council Tax cutting records in the Country and, unlike some neighbouring boroughs, did so while increasing services for residents rather than reducing them. He said the borough had only ever received praise from the current Government, particularly in reference to free primary school breakfasts (which had been adopted as national policy) and free home care.

Councillor Afonso noted that the report showed the budget gap in the worst case scenario was £70m and asked how much of that gap was covered by transformation programmes. The Leader said the Administration had saved over £156m from the Council's budget since getting elected in 2014, a record amount in the borough in real terms. He said the transformation programmes would move at that pace and the figure quoted was not an unusual budget gap, with similar numbers in previous years. He said the Council was continually moving efficiency programmes forward.

Councillor Ree discussed the Council's transformation programmes, designed to drive spending reductions over the medium-term and make the Council more efficient. The programmes focussed on staffing, maximising income generation, making the most of the Council's property portfolio, and taking advantage of the latest technological developments and the data the council holds. He noted that a number of initiatives had already had an impact and highlighted the Fraud, Recovery and Error Detection (FRED) programme which used data and AI and had saved over £1m a year.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet considered the report, and made the following recommendations to Full Council for approval, for the reasons set out in this report and appendices:

1. To note the three-year settlement numbers for the General Fund, covering 2026/27, 2027/28, and 2028/29
2. To approve a balanced budget for 2026/27 as set out in the report, including the underlying principles and assumptions.
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 and children's services.
6. To approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and to note the impact of funding reform from 2026/27 onwards, and budget projections to 2029/30 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.
8. To approve the reserves strategy and forecast as set out in Appendix G.
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 2026/27 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 2026/27 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 (£)	672.67	784.78	896.89	1,009.00	1,233.22	1,457.44	1,681.67	2018.00

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 (£)	340.34	397.06	453.79	510.51	623.96	737.40	850.85	1,021.02

13. That the overall Council Tax to be set at £1,519.51 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 (£)	672.67	784.78	896.89	1009.00	1,233.22	1,457.44	1,681.67	2018.00
b) GLA (£)	340.34	397.06	453.79	510.51	623.96	737.40	850.85	1,021.02
c) Total (£)	1,013.01	1,181.84	1,350.68	1,519.51	1,857.18	2,194.84	2,532.52	3,039.02

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).

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. FOUR YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026-30 AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2026/27

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the report that presented the Council's Capital Strategy 2026/27 and four-year Capital

Programme for the financial years 2026/27 to 2029/30. He noted that the Council was investing over £450m in building a better borough including improving housing stock, upgrading schools, place shaping, investing in parks, regenerating high streets, and improving the CCTV network.

Councillor Jose Afonso asked when the Civic Campus was due to open. The Leader said there would be a phased opening, starting in February and completing in the summer. He explained that, despite a delay due to an accident involving a subcontractor, the Civic Campus scheme was significantly lower cost than the scheme the Administration inherited. He added that the Civic Campus scheme was designed to rejuvenate the central belt of the borough with an arthouse cinema, public sky park, affordable work space for local start-up entrepreneurs, restaurants, cafes, shops and other public facilities, and over 200 new homes for local people of which 52% were genuinely affordable.

Councillor Afonso noted the ‘third, third, third’ deal (a proposal to cover the cost of the bridge where a third would be paid by the Council, a third by Transport for London, and a third by the Department for Transport) was not mentioned in the papers. The Leader said the deal was between the Mayor of London and the Government at the time. The Council never accepted it. The Leader recounted the history of the discovery of the bridge’s structural failures and its closure due to the risk of catastrophic collapse. He urged members to engage with the detail and support the Council in finding a practical solution.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the four-year General Fund Capital Programme budget of £135.5m for the period 2026/27-2029/30 detailed in Appendix 1.
2. To approve rolling programmes included within this four-year Strategy. These are perennial capital investments required across the Borough to keep items of public infrastructure in good working condition.

Programme	4-Year Budget £m
Corporate Planned Maintenance	12.4
Footways and Carriageways	7.5
Column Replacement	1.4
Total	21.3

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 of £318.8m for the period 2026/27-2029/30 as set out in Appendix 1.

5. To approve the Capital Strategy 2026/27, as set out in the report.
6. To approve the annual Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement 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. THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET (2026/27), RENTS & SERVICE CHARGES (2026/27) & HRA 10 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN (2026/27 - 2035/36)

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the report that set out the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for the financial year 2026/27 including changes to rent levels and other charges as well as an updated HRA 10-year Business Plan. Councillor Ree paid tribute to Councillor Frances Umeh (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness) for her help delivering another balanced HRA budget. He noted that a few years ago the Council eliminated the structural deficit in the Account and was now adding to its reserves, while securing some of lowest rents in London and improving the housing stock.

Councillor Adronie Alford asked for more detail on the efficiencies mentioned in the report. Councillor Ree said efficiencies would come from capitalising costs, the new housing company, and staff reorganisation.

Councillor Alford welcomed the additions to reserves, but asked how the Council was achieving it. Councillor Ree said they had built in additions to balances in the budget, through the 10 year rents plan and operational efficiencies.

The Leader thanked Richard Shwe, Councillor Frances Umeh, and Councillor Rowan Ree for their work on the HRA budget.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agreed:

1. To approve the Housing Revenue Account 2026/27 budget for council homes as set out in Table 1.
2. To approve the HRA 10-year Business Plan for Council Homes (2026/27 – 2035/36) as set out in paragraphs 3 - 4 of this report and Appendices 1 - 5.

3. To approve a rent increase of 4.8% from 6 April 2026 (in line with September 2025 CPI+1%), which equates to an average weekly increase for tenants of £6.69 in 2026/27.
4. To approve an increase to shared ownership rents of 4.8% from 1 April 2026 (in line with September 2025 CPI+1%).
5. To approve changes to tenant service charges to reflect the costs of providing communal services from 6 April 2026, which equate to an average weekly increase for tenants of £1.52 in 2026/27.
6. To approve a reduction to charges for heating and hot water to reflect the costs of provision of the district heating service from April 2026, which equate to an average weekly reduction for tenants and leaseholders on the scheme of £0.29 (communal heating), £1.27 (tenants' personal heating) and £2.08 (leaseholders' personal heating) in 2026/27.
7. To approve an increase to the management fee for temporary on licence properties of 3.8% (in line with September 2025 CPI) from 6 April 2026.
8. To approve an increase to the rent and service charges for hostels of 4.8% from 6 April 2026 (in line with September 2025 CPI+1%).
9. To increase garage charges for council tenants, resident leaseholders, and for other customers from 6 April 2026 by 3.8% (in line with September 2025 CPI).
10. To note that any change to parking charges on housing estates were considered separately with the Council's parking plans at Cabinet in January 2026.
11. To increase car space rental charges for all customers by 3.8% from April 2026 (in line with September 2025 CPI).
12. To approve an increase in the Leasehold After Sale – Home Buy fees by 3.8% from April 2026 from £237 to £246 (in line with September 2025 CPI).
13. To approve an increase in the Leasehold Property Alterations fees by 3.8% from April 2026.

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. SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS BUDGET (DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT) 2026/27

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the report which sought approval of the final proposed 2026/27 Dedicated Schools Grant

budgets for the Schools Block, Central Services Schools Block, and Early Years Block and Maintained Nursery Supplement funding.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

1. Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant Budget 2026/27 Financial Year:
 - a. To approve the Local Authority formula for allocating resources to Hammersmith & Fulham schools for 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 1, the Authority Proforma Tool (APT) for setting school budgets.
 - b. To approve the National Funding Formula (NFF) transitional funding formula factor rates (as set out in Appendix 1) as the basis for calculating the 2026/27 schools funding formula, together with a minus 0.5% per pupil Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) protection for individual schools versus 2025/26 levels with respect to pupil led funding.
 - c. To approve the transfer of £1.262m being 1.0% of the total schools' block allocation from the schools' block to the high needs block in the 2026/27 financial year. This is to support high needs education expenditure for special educational needs in Hammersmith and Fulham and follows Minister of State approval received on 9th January 2026.
 - d. To approve de-delegation budgets of £0.564m for maintained mainstream schools only as confirmed by Schools Forum on 20 January 2026.
 - e. To approve the education functions budgets of £0.285m for maintained mainstream schools only, as confirmed by Schools Forum on 20 January 2026.
2. Central Services Schools Block Budget 2026/27.
 - a. To approve the proposed budget allocation for Central Services Schools Block DSG totalling £1.758m.
3. Early Years Block Budget 2026/27
 - a. To approve the proposed budget allocation for Early Years Block Dedicated Schools Grant of £24.854m based on the provisional funding allocation December 2025.
 - b. To approve the allocation of Maintained Nursery School Supplementary Funding of £0.991m based on the provisional funding allocation December 2025.

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. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2026/27

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the report that set out the Council's proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2026/27. The report demonstrated compliance with the Local Government Act 2003, and other regulations and statutory guidance for ensuring that the Council's borrowing and investment plans were prudent, affordable and sustainable, and complied with statutory requirements.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

It is recommended that:

1. Approval is given to the future borrowing and investment strategies as outlined in this report.
2. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, be delegated authority to manage the Council's cash flow, borrowing and investments in 2026/27 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.

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.

9. ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION - SMALL HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Councillor Andrew Jones (Cabinet Member for the Economy) introduced the report which sought approval to prepare an Article 4 Direction for small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). This included the commissioning of consultants to produce a robust evidence base that supports the making of the Article 4 Direction and the geographic area to which the Direction will apply.

Councillor Jones explained that the policy responded to concerns from residents and tenants' associations about HMOs. Requiring planning permission for smaller HMOs would ensure minimum standards were met in regard to home and room sizes, parking and cycle storage facilities, and waste collection.

Councillor Adronie Alford said she supported the principle, but raised concerns about the policy having unintended consequences and asked what size properties the policy would apply to. Councillor Jones said small HMOs were defined as properties housing between three and six unrelated people who shared amenities. He added that the policy would not prevent smaller HMOs from being created, but would enforce standards. The Leader asked officers to arrange a briefing on the issue for Councillor Alford.

ACTION: Bram Kainth

Councillor Wesley Harcourt noted this issue had been raised by residents and the Council was responding. He said there was a need for family accommodation in the borough and it was right to look at the appropriateness of small HMOs.

Councillor Frances Umeh added that the Council had a private sector rented team and she ensured members that the Housing department would work closely with the Planning team to ensure the Council was aligned on this issue.

The report and recommendations were unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet approve the making of an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the change of use of a property from a Class C3 (residential) use to a Class C4 HMO.
2. That Cabinet approve the commissioning of a robust evidence study, estimated at £50,000, to support the making of the Article 4 Direction, including its geographic extent.
3. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Chief Planning Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, to make a 'non immediate' Article 4 Direction.
4. To note that Cabinet approval will be required to confirm the Direction in 12 months' time following the statutory period of publication and consultation.

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.

10. KEY DECISIONS LIST (TO NOTE)

The Key Decision List was noted.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 7.42 pm

Chair