



putting residents first

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Councillor Stephen Greenhalgh, Leader of the Council
Room 225, Hammersmith Town Hall, King Street, London W6 9JU

Tel: 020 8753 1077

Email: leaderofthecouncil@lbhf.gov.uk

Web: www.lbhf.gov.uk

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Dear resident,

Hammersmith & Fulham Buildings Consultation

Like councils across the country, Hammersmith & Fulham Council is under serious financial pressures as a result of the national budget crisis.

All indications are that we will have to reduce our spending by around £55 million over the next three years. We have stated very publicly that our focus will be on selling under-used assets to protect front-line services. We have to put services before buildings and safeguard as much of our budget as possible for voluntary sector grants, child protection and services for the elderly.

In order to protect front line services from the impact of tightening finances, we have made a commitment to reduce the council's levels of debt. We currently owe £133 million which costs us £5 million a year in interest payments alone – money which could otherwise be spent on vital services.

Our priority has to be services not buildings.

I am therefore seeking your views on our decision to consider whether nine council buildings, that are either underused or provide poor value for money, could be sold.

Reducing our debt means selling under-used assets that do not currently provide value for money. We plan to dispose of buildings we no longer need, or where services could be better and more cost-effectively delivered from alternative sites. If these proposals go ahead, we would use the proceeds from these sales to cut our debts and to protect spending on vital front line services such as home care for the elderly, child protection and voluntary sector grants.

The estimated £20 million proceeds would contribute towards paying off debt and cutting interest repayments. Rental payments will also be saved. In total £2.5 million in cash would be freed up for frontline services every year.

We would welcome your views on our approach to reducing our debt and focusing as much of our resources as possible on vital services. Please take the time to give us your views by completing the enclosed questionnaire, or attending one of our open days listed at the end of this document.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Councillor Stephen Greenhalgh Leader of Hammersmith & Fulham Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Greenhalgh'.

