



C O U N C I L

All Members of the Council are
HEREBY SUMMONED

to attend a meeting of the Council
to be held on:

Wednesday, 24 January 2024 at 7.00 pm
Hackney Town Hall,
Mare Street, E8 1EA

Live stream link: <https://youtube.com/live/LIxJV57eHaw>

Back up link: <https://youtube.com/live/-gd50CQOEI4>

Dawn Carter-McDonald
Interim Chief Executive
Published on: 16 January 2024
www.hackney.gov.uk

Contact: Natalie Williams
Senior Governance Officer
governance@hackney.gov.uk

MEETING OF COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2024

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Speaker's Announcements

3 Declarations of Interest

Members are invited to consider the guidance which accompanies this agenda, having particular regard to the restrictions on voting for Members with [council tax arrears](#) and make declarations of interests as appropriate.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Enclosed (Pages 19 - 54)

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2023: Enclosed

5 Cazenove Results of the By-Election – Report of the Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive: This report is **to follow** as the by-election date falls after the date of the agenda publication.

6 Questions from Members of the Public

A member of the public who lives, works, or studies in the Borough can participate in Full Council meetings by asking a question.

The deadline for questions from members of the public is 12 noon, four clear working days before the meeting (Wednesday, 17 January) If you wish to submit a question you can do so by emailing governance@hackney.gov.uk or via the Council's website <https://hackney.gov.uk/ask-a-question/#fullcouncil>

A supplementary agenda setting out any public questions received after the publication of the main agenda will be circulated shortly after this deadline.

7 Questions from Members of the Council

7.1 From Cllr Binnie-Lubbock to the Mayor

Beloved soft-play small business Kidzmania has served Hackney children for over two decades. Before dropping objections to development of their Powell Road site, they were told they could return to a like-for-like space when completed. Will you work with Peabody to ensure a proper fit-out to accommodate this Hackney institution?

7.2 From Cllr Patrick to the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture

Following years of Tory cuts on Adult Social Care and an increase in demand, can the Cabinet Member give examples of the challenges the Council is facing because of this, highlighting the overall effect of the past 13 years?

7.3 From Cllr Garbett to the Cabinet Member For Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

The UK has some of the longest working hours in Europe but one of the least productive economies. Does the administration agree with the data that suggests a four-day, 32 hour working week with no loss of pay would benefit Hackney Council, its employees, our local economy, society and environment?

7.4 From Cllr Lufkin to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

The Council's Community Energy Fund has initiated the second round of funding to assist community organisations transition to net zero. Could the Cabinet Member confirm how community energy aligns with the overall energy and environmental objectives of the borough?

7.5 From Cllr Binnie-Lubbock to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services

Following several incidents of serious violence and tragic fatalities in the borough over the last months, what measures are the Council and its partners taking to ensure residents feel safe?

7.6 From Cllr Laudat-Scott to the Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

Does the Council have plans to transition from celebrating Black History Season to integrating Black history consistently into the year-round curriculum, events, and discussions, emphasising the importance of recognising Black contributions and experiences throughout the year?

7.7 From Cllr Garbett to the Mayor

To consolidate its first-in-the-country scheme for community parklets, can the Council confirm how many parklets have been constructed to date, and whether there are plans to make the process less onerous on applicants - to allow more diverse communities to participate?

7.8 From Cllr Turbet-Delof to the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture

This year is Hackney Carnival, one of the most anticipated, inclusive, culturally diverse and vibrant events in the country. Can we hear updates on how communities, businesses and residents will be able to participate, apply

for available funds and make this another amazing year for our borough's carnival?

7.9 From Cllr Rathbone to the Deputy Mayor for Delivery, Inclusive Economy & Regeneration

Could the Deputy Mayor please let us know what is happening about The Tram Depot in Upper Clapton Road which has recently been put up for auction, and what the Council intends to do to ensure it is preserved, along with 25 businesses and 50 jobs?

7.10 From Cllr Joseph to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service

Following pressure from Hackney Council and London Councils, the Government uplifted Local Housing Allowance in the Autumn Statement. What is the Council doing to ensure the Government funds social housing and provides local authorities with the resources to ensure that local families can afford to stay in Hackney?

7.11 From Cllr Adejare to the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture

As we continue to work to ensure the voices of our communities are amplified, can the Cabinet Member please advise how our grants funding ensures all communities, especially minoritised groups are supported in terms of accessing these funding streams to ensure their needs are reflected in Council activities?

7.12 From Cllr Premru to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Following the disruption and damage done to canal dwellers, homes, businesses and arts institutions following the heavy rain and flooding in Hackney Wick, can you confirm what support the Council provided for residents and what further measures we need to put in place to deal with future extreme weather conditions?

8 Elected Mayor's Statement

9 Proposed Changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme - Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service: Enclosed (Pages 55 - 106)

Members should be aware of the provisions of [Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992](#), which applies to all elected members

10 Calculation of 2024/25 Council Tax Base and Local Business Rate Income - Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service: This report is **to follow** due to the Government's recent introduction of changes to the Business Rates system, additional time is required to process information for inclusion in the report.

Members should be aware of the provisions of [Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992](#), which applies to all elected members

- 11 **Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap 2023** - Report of the Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities: Enclosed (Pages 107 - 130)
- 12 **Members' Allowances Scheme** -Report of the Interim Chief Executive: Enclosed (Pages 131 - 158)
- 13 **Licensing Committee Annual Report 2022/23** - Report of the Licensing Committee: Enclosed (Pages 159 - 176)
- 14 **Pensions Committee Annual Report 2022/23** - Report of the Pensions Committee: Enclosed (Pages 177-194)
- 15 **Confirmation of Political Proportionality and Appointments to Committees and Commissions** - Report of the Acting Director of Legal, Governance and Electoral Services: Deferred to February's meeting.
- 16 **Motions**
- 16a **Green Motion – Defending Our Democratic Rights**

This Council notes that:

- On 2 May 2023 the final stages of the Public Order Bill passed through the House of Lords, which gives the Police greater powers to restrict people's democratic right to protest in England and Wales.
- The Act grants the Police new powers to prevent protests occurring outside of major transport networks, oil and gas and energy supplies, making "locking on" a new criminal offence, expanding Stop and Search to include suspicionless stop and search, and enacts new individual protest bans under 'Serious Disruption Prevention Orders'.
- Article 11 of the Human Rights Act 1998 enshrines the Right to Peaceful Assembly into British law, guaranteed by Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- A Legislative Scrutiny Report published by the Joint Committee on Human Rights called for key measures in the Public Order Bill to be amended or removed in order to reverse the "chilling effect" it is likely to have on the right to protest.
- This report found that these offences have a very wide scope and criminalise those legitimately exercising their Article 10, 11, 8 and Article 6 rights.

This Council also notes that:

- The Public Order Act 2023 has been criticised by Amnesty International, Liberty, Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), and the UN Human Rights Commissioner.
- It follows on from the Police, Crime, and Sentencing Act 2022 which was also accused of infringing upon democratic freedoms by human rights organisations.

- The Government lost a vote in the Lords on the Public Order Bill 2023 to change the interpretation of 'serious disruption' of other people's day-to-day activities to mean 'anything more than minor'. The Lords opposed this change by 254 votes to 240 in May
- The government reintroduced the change by Statutory Instrument.
- Green peer, Jenny Jones, put forward a fatal motion to stop this unprecedented and anti-democratic move by the government. Unfortunately, Labour peers abstained, so it passed.

The Council further notes that:

- The Right to Protest is a fundamental pillar of democracy.
- The objective of a protest is to peacefully disrupt and agitate for change. The anti-apartheid and Civil Rights Movement, Women's Suffrage, Gay Pride, workers' rights and a government commitment to carbon zero by 2050 have been achieved through protest and public disruption.
- The Public Order Act is already having a 'chilling effect' on our right to protest.
- The King's Coronation in May saw over 60 people arrested by the Police, many of those on grounds of public nuisance and breaches of the peace for holding signs, chanting, reporting on the protests and standing in close proximity to those protesting.
- The police initially used the 'lock on' ban in the Public Order Act to justify some of these arrests and deployed the largest ever use of live facial recognition technology in the UK
- Police have written to residents of the Hackney area, warning them that Live Facial Recognition will be deployed at an unknown time and location in September 2023.
- This technology is over 80% inaccurate according to the Met's own statistics.
- Amnesty International, Liberty and the EHRC have called for a ban of facial recognition technology, with reports from Amnesty International finding that it is a violation of privacy rights, is antithetical to democracy, disproportionately impacts people of colour, exacerbates systemic racism, and puts Black people at a greater risk of being misidentified.
- Baroness Casey's Report into the Metropolitan Police Service found that there was a deepening mistrust of the force which is institutionally racist, sexist, homophobic and 'broken', compounded by a culture of denial and obfuscation.
- Expanding the use of stop and search at protests without reasonable suspicion is likely to unjustly impact Black and Asian heritage people, and infringe upon their Article 14 right to non-discrimination.
- The Met Commissioner himself has stated that the present use of stop and search 'burns through trust'.

This Council welcomes:

- The Administration's ongoing work with the Met Police Commissioner and local Borough Commander on improving standards after the Casey Report and City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Panel Child Q reports.
- The co-production of a local action plan with Hackney communities, the Met and the council on improving trust and confidence.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Prime Minister to urge him to repeal the draconian Public Order Act and protect our fundamental democratic freedoms.
- Meet with the Met Commissioner to express strong dissatisfaction with the heavy-handed policing witnessed at the King's Coronation and the increasing use of live facial recognition technology across London.
- [U2]“Follow Newham and Lambeth Council's request for an urgent suspension of the use of live recognition technology in Hackney, due to the risk it poses to privacy and freedom of expression, a lack of sufficient safeguards against discrimination and an absence of biometrics regulations, and write to the Home Office, the Mayor of London, and the Metropolitan Police Service to make its opposition to LFR technology clear.
- Ensure Hackney's local action plan on policing involves consideration of alternative ways to keep communities safe, and includes community education on the Police, Sentencing and Crimes Act 2022, and the Public Order Act 2023, so that Hackney residents are briefed on their rights.

Proposer: Cllr Zoë Garbett

Seconded: Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock

16b Green Motion – Standing up for Responsible Tax Conduct – Councils for Fair Tax Declaration**Hackney Council notes that:**

- The pressure on organisations to pay their fair share of tax has never been stronger.
- Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that “corporate tax avoidance” has, since 2013, been the clear number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.
- Two thirds of people (66%) believe the Government and local councils should at least consider a company's ethics and how they pay their tax, as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when awarding contracts to companies.
- Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens.
- It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £17bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.
- The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by a wide range of businesses across the UK, including FTSE-listed PLCs, co-operatives, social enterprises and large private businesses.

Hackney Council believes that:

- Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn't be.
- Tax enables us to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defence, roads, policing and defence. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.

- As recipients of public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring contractors are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.
- Where councils hold substantive stakes in private enterprises, influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned.
- More action is needed, however, as current and proposed new UK procurement law significantly restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct (as exclusion grounds are rarely triggered) or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.
- UK cities, counties and towns can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct - doing what they can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.
- The following local authorities have approved the "Councils for Fair Tax Declaration" to date: Barnet, Brent, City of Westminster, Enfield Council, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Lambeth, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Royal Borough of Greenwich, Southwark Council in addition to thirty-nine other Councils across the UK and the London Assembly.

Hackney Council resolves to:

- Approve, and publicly declare its support for, the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration and enact the Declaration through the points below.
- Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.
- Ensure IR35 is implemented robustly and contract workers pay a fair share of employment taxes.
- Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
- Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately by suppliers as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.
- Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers UK and overseas and their consolidated profit & loss position, given lack of clarity could be strong indicators of poor financial probity and weak financial standing.
- Promote Fair Tax Mark certification especially for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
- Support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses are proud to promote responsible tax conduct and pay their fair share of corporation tax.
- Support calls for urgent reform of UK procurement law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.

Proposer: Cllr Zoë Garbett

Secunder: Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock

16c Green Motion – The Crisis in Israel and Palestine: Call for a Ceasefire, Release of All Hostages and More Support for Local Community Cohesion

This Council notes:

1. Across Hackney residents have been horrified by the violent conflict in Israel and Palestine and are grief stricken at the loss of lives, including thousands of children. Many, especially in Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities, are concerned for the safety of friends, family and work colleagues in the region.
2. Previous conflicts in the region have been associated with increases in community tensions, Islamophobia, antisemitism and hate crime in the UK.
3. There has been a worrying rise in antisemitic and Islamophobic hate crime in Hackney since the attacks by Hamas on Israelis on 7th October and the latest siege, bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza.
4. A range of international humanitarian organisations have been calling for a ceasefire, including Oxfam, Save the Children, Medecins Sans Frontières, Muslim Aid, War on Want, War Child and Amnesty International.
5. Hackney is twinned with Haifa city in Israel. Haifa is 160km from the Gaza Strip.
6. The brilliant work by faith and community groups and leaders across the borough to hold our community together, provide solace for today and hope for the future.

This Council believes:

7. There must be an immediate ceasefire to end the violence. Humanitarian aid and basic services must be immediately restored. Hostages must be immediately released.
8. A just and lasting peace in the region cannot and will not be brought about through violence, but will only be the result of a political negotiation based on democratic principles, equal rights for all and an end to occupation negotiated by the people of the region. Peace, justice and reconciliation in the region is likely to have a positive impact on community cohesion in Hackney.
9. There can be no place for hate in our Borough. Hackney must be a safe place for those of all faiths and nationalities. We must support those whose families and loved ones are caught up in this conflict. And as a Borough of Sanctuary we extend a special welcome to those fleeing war and persecution and must do all we can to avoid that journey becoming a necessary last resort of many who would not otherwise wish to leave their homes.

This Council resolves:

10. To ask the Mayor to write to the UK government to:
 - a) Ask them to call for an immediate ceasefire and immediate release of all hostages.
 - b) Ask them to call for a renewed peace process to establish a political settlement that guarantees freedom, justice and safety for both Israelis and Palestinians.
 - c) Request central government funding to support community cohesion and peace-making at a local level.

11. To continue to work with borough partners to ensure safety for our Muslim and Jewish communities, hold interfaith events more regularly, and to be ready to welcome refugees from the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
12. Encourage interfaith and community groups to bid for funding, like Local Initiative Funding, to support community cohesion, peace-making and celebrating how Hackney fosters harmony between our diverse communities.

Proposed by: Councillor Alastair Binnie-Lubbock

Seconded by: Councillor Zoë Garbett

16d Green Motion - Reduce Glyphosate to Zero Now

Hackney Council notes:

- The use of herbicides has a significant impact on the environment by removing plants that are an important food source for a wide variety of native insects. Pesticide product mixtures have also been shown to be toxic to bees and earthworms. There is also a risk of runoff from hard surfaces into waterways, putting aquatic ecosystems at risk. We not only face a climate emergency, we also face the related emergency of collapsing biodiversity that is increasingly referred to as the 'sixth mass extinction' (1):
- That 99% of pesticides are made from fossil fuels (2). Furthermore, pesticides exacerbate the climate emergency throughout their lifecycle via manufacturing, packaging, transportation, application, and even through environmental degradation and disposal;
- There is a growing body of scientific evidence showing a link between glyphosate exposure and an increased risk of cancer; the World Health Organisation (WHO) deemed glyphosate a 'probable carcinogen' (3). It has been also shown to worsen chronic conditions such as asthma, and particularly affects children and pregnant people. In addition, it poses a health hazard to workers who spray Hackney's streets.
- The spraying of glyphosate in Hackney is causing concern among residents and elected representatives about its potential harmful effects on children, animals, wildlife and biodiversity on our streets, housing estates and parks;

The contracting staff who carry out this work need to be protected from harm;

- The Mayor of London's commitment in the Environment Strategy to "reduce the use of pesticides and peat-based products, such as compost";
- The work of Transport for London (TfL) with suppliers and contractors to explore safer alternatives such as hot foam, for essential vegetation management and weed control.
- Glyphosate, the most used herbicide was narrowly relicensed in the EU with the condition that Member States "minimize the use in public spaces, such as parks, public playgrounds and gardens."

Hackney Council further notes:

- The work of the council to date in reducing the use of glyphosate with a 50% reduction in on-street spraying against 2017 levels.

Hackney Council has demonstrated:

- A commitment to further reducing spraying across the borough, including a total cessation of spraying in Hackney's Town centres, by removing weeds by hand; a successful year-long pilot for more than 200 out of a total 237 green areas across Hackney's housing estates which will now go glyphosate-free permanently, with an intention to upscale to all estate-based green areas; a change in how the council sprays, from operatives mounted on vehicles to spot-spraying with knapsacks; a no-spray 10x Green area around Daubeney Road to explore whether a no-spray approach is more beneficial to biodiversity by avoiding the removal of plants that support insect populations. These changes have been well received by the public.

The Council acknowledges:

- Several councils around the country have gone fully glyphosate-free including in London. The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham was the first council in London to cease the use of glyphosate, to support biodiversity and protect habitat against any long-term chemical effect by using chemical-free weedkillers, such as hot foam and hot steam. Lambeth and Westminster have also gone pesticide-free and are rolling out programmes for increased biodiversity. Lambeth has a community weeding scheme which encourages residents to leave some annual plants to grow, as well as other initiatives, and Westminster is developing a new 'Greening Project'.
- Where there is a duty to eradicate Japanese Knotweed because of risk to critical infrastructure or mobility issues risking residents' safety, then glyphosate may be used until an acceptable non-chemical alternative becomes available. But its use should be limited to stem injection rather than spraying.

The Council resolves to:

- Educate residents in the way that weeds are actually 'pavement plants' (4) and a much needed source of biodiversity in the city, by maintaining regular communications in all appropriate council forums and on estates, as well as with biodiversity events and workshops for residents if/where financially feasible;
- Bring forward an action plan which takes into consideration technical and financial concerns and cost-saving opportunities (5), including a timetable for a complete phase-out of the spraying of glyphosate and any other pesticides, substituting them with non-chemical alternative weed management methods including leaving areas for biodiversity in all council operations.
- Adopt a clear policy for the council's weed management strategy which details a phase-out plan and timetable.
- To engage with the Pesticide-Free London Leaders Network and use this space to create and keep to a clear phase-out plan, as well as share learnings with other councils in the network.

Proposer: Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock

Seconded: Cllr Zoë Garbett

Sources:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-52881831>

<https://www.pan-uk.org/pesticides-and-the-climate-crisis/>

<https://www.iarc.who.int/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/MonographVolume112-1.pdf>

https://issuu.com/pan-uk/docs/greener_cities_-_a_guide_to_our_pavement_plants?fr=sYjY5OTExOTMxNQ

<https://www.pan-uk.org/site/wp-content/uploads/Cost-saving-approaches-to-going-pesticide-free.pdf>

Dates of Future Meetings

The last meeting of Council for the Municipal Year 2023/24 will be held at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 28 February 2024. This meeting will consider the budget for 2024/25.

Public Attendance

The Town Hall is open. Information on forthcoming Council meetings can be obtained from the Town Hall Reception.

Members of the public and representatives of the press are entitled to attend Council meetings and remain and hear discussions on matters within the public part of the meeting. They are not, however, entitled to participate in any discussions. Council meetings can also be observed via the live-stream facility, the link for which appears on the agenda front sheet of each committee meeting.

On occasions part of the meeting may be held in private and will not be open to the public. This is if an item being considered is likely to lead to the disclosure of exempt or confidential information in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). Reasons for exemption will be specified for each respective agenda item.

For further information, including public participation, please visit our website <https://hackney.gov.uk/menu#get-involved-council-decisions> or contact: governance@hackney.gov.uk

Rights of Press and Public to Report on Meetings

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 give the public the right to film, record audio, take photographs, and use social media and the internet at meetings to report on any meetings that are open to the public.

By attending a public meeting of the Council, Executive, any committee or sub-committee, any Panel or Commission, or any Board you are agreeing to these guidelines as a whole and in particular the stipulations listed below:

- Anyone planning to record meetings of the Council and its public meetings through any audio, visual or written methods they find appropriate can do so providing they do not disturb the conduct of the meeting;
- You are welcome to attend a public meeting to report proceedings, either in 'real time' or after conclusion of the meeting, on a blog, social networking site, news forum or other online media;
- You may use a laptop, tablet device, smartphone or portable camera to record a written or audio transcript of proceedings during the meeting;
- Facilities within the Town Hall and Council Chamber are limited and recording equipment must be of a reasonable size and nature to be easily accommodated.

- You are asked to contact the Officer whose name appears at the beginning of this Agenda if you have any large or complex recording equipment to see whether this can be accommodated within the existing facilities;
- You must not interrupt proceedings and digital equipment must be set to 'silent' mode;
- You should focus any recording equipment on Councillors, officers and the public who are directly involved in the conduct of the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will ask any members of the public present if they have objections to being visually recorded. Those visually recording a meeting are asked to respect the wishes of those who do not wish to be filmed or photographed. Failure to respect the wishes of those who do not want to be filmed and photographed may result in the Chair instructing you to cease reporting or recording and you may potentially be excluded from the meeting if you fail to comply;
- Any person whose behaviour threatens to disrupt orderly conduct will be asked to leave;
- Be aware that libellous comments against the council, individual Councillors or officers could result in legal action being taken against you;
- The recorded images must not be edited in a way in which there is a clear aim to distort the truth or misrepresent those taking part in the proceedings;
- Personal attacks of any kind or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability status could also result in legal action being taken against you.

Failure to comply with the above requirements may result in the support and assistance of the Council in the recording of proceedings being withdrawn. The Council regards violation of any of the points above as a risk to the orderly conduct of a meeting. The Council therefore reserves the right to exclude any person from the current meeting and refuse entry to any further council meetings, where a breach of these requirements occurs. The Chair of the meeting will ensure that the meeting runs in an effective manner and has the power to ensure that the meeting is not disturbed through the use of flash photography, intrusive camera equipment or the person recording the meeting moving around the room.

Advice to Members on Declaring Interests

If you require advice on declarations of interests, this can be obtained from:

- The Monitoring Officer;
- The Deputy Monitoring Officer; or
- The legal adviser to the meeting.

It is recommended that any advice be sought in advance of, rather than at, the meeting.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)

You will have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (*DPI) if it:

- Relates to your employment, sponsorship, contracts as well as wider financial interests and assets including land, property, licenses and corporate tenancies.
- Relates to an interest which you have registered in that part of the Register of Interests form relating to DPIs as being an interest of you, your spouse or civil partner, or anyone living with you as if they were your spouse or civil partner.
- Relates to an interest which should be registered in that part of the Register of Interests form relating to DPIs, but you have not yet done so.

If you are present at any meeting of the Council and you have a DPI relating to any business that will be considered at the meeting, you **must**:

- Not seek to improperly influence decision-making on that matter;
- Make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of the DPI at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent; and
- Leave the room whilst the matter is under consideration

You **must not**:

- Participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business; or
- Participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

If you have obtained a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer or Standards Committee prior to the matter being considered, then you should make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of the DPI and that you have obtained a

dispensation. The dispensation granted will explain the extent to which you are able to participate.

Other Registrable Interests

You will have an 'Other Registrable Interest' (ORI) in a matter if it

- Relates to appointments made by the authority to any outside bodies, membership of: charities, trade unions,, lobbying or campaign groups, voluntary organisations in the borough or governorships at any educational institution within the borough.
- Relates to an interest which you have registered in that part of the Register of Interests form relating to ORIs as being an interest of you, your spouse or civil partner, or anyone living with you as if they were your spouse or civil partner; or
- Relates to an interest which should be registered in that part of the Register of Interests form relating to ORIs, but you have not yet done so.

Where a matter arises at any meeting of the Council which affects a body or organisation you have named in that part of the Register of Interests Form relating to ORIs, **you must** make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of the DPI at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent. **You may** speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

Disclosure of Other Interests

Where a matter arises at any meeting of the Council which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you **must** disclose the interest. **You may** speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

Where a matter arises at any meeting of the Council which **affects** your financial interest or well-being, or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate to a greater extent than it affects the financial interest or wellbeing of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest, you **must** declare the interest. You **may** only speak on the matter if members of the public are able to speak. Otherwise you must not

take part in any discussion or voting on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

In all cases, where the Monitoring Officer has agreed that the interest in question is a **sensitive interest**, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest itself

Advice to Members regarding restrictions on voting for Members with council tax arrears

Members should be aware of the provisions of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which applies to all elected members where:

They are present at a meeting of the Council, Cabinet or any Committee and at the time of the meeting an amount of council tax is payable by them and has remained unpaid for at least two months; and

Any budget or council tax calculation, or recommendation or decision which might affect the making of any such calculation, is the subject of consideration at the meeting.

In these circumstances, any such members shall at the meeting, and as soon as practicable after its commencement, disclose the fact that section 106 applies to them and they may not vote on any question concerning the matters outlined in paragraph 12(b) above, although they may speak on those matters.

The application of Section 106 is very wide and there have been successful prosecutions under this legislation. It can include meetings held at any time during the year, not just the annual budget meeting, and it may include meetings of committees or sub-committees as well as Council meetings. Members should be aware that the responsibility for ensuring that they act within the law at all times rest solely with the individual Member concerned.

Failure to comply with the requirements under section 106 is a criminal offence unless the member can prove that they did not know

- (a) that the section applied to them at the time of the meeting or
- (b) that the matter in question was the subject of consideration at the meeting.

Thus unwitting Members who for example can prove that they did not know and had no reason to suppose at the time of the meeting that their bank has failed to honour a standing order will be protected should any prosecution arise.

With regard to applications for benefits, it would not be enough to state that an application has been submitted which has not yet been determined, as the liability to pay remains pending any determination.

The application of Section 106 is very wide and there have been successful prosecutions under this legislation. It can include meetings held at any time during the year, not just the annual budget meeting, and it may include meetings of committees or sub-committees as well as Council meetings. Members should be aware that the responsibility for ensuring that they act within the law at all times rest solely with the individual Member concerned.



London Borough of Hackney
 Full Council Meeting
 Municipal Year 2023/24
 Date of Meeting: Wednesday, 29 November 2023

Minutes of the proceedings of
 the Meeting of Council held at
 Hackney Town Hall,
 Mare Street,
 London E8 1EA

<p>Councillors in Attendance:</p>	<p>Cllr Anya Sizer - Speaker of Hackney</p> <p>Mayor Caroline Woodley</p> <p>Cllr Kam Adams, Cllr Grace Adebayo, Cllr Soraya Adejare, Cllr Frank Baffour, Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock, Deputy Mayor Anntoinette Bramble, Cllr Robert Chapman, Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Sophie Conway, Cllr Michael Desmond, Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas, Cllr Zoë Garbett, Cllr Eluzer Goldberg, Cllr Margaret Gordon, Cllr Ben Hayhurst (late), Cllr Clare Joseph, Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cllr Shaul Krautwirt, Cllr Lee Laudat-Scott, Cllr Michael Levy, Cllr Hershy Lisser, Cllr Anna Lynch, Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Deputy Mayor Nicholson, Cllr Jon Narcross, Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Benzion Papier, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Sam Pallis, Cllr Clare Potter (late), Cllr Fliss Premru (late), Cllr Steve Race, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Ali Sadek, Cllr Gilbert Smyth, Cllr Simche Steinberger, Cllr Sheila Suso-Runge, Cllr Lynne Troughton, Cllr Claudia Turbet-Delof, Cllr Joe Walker, Cllr Jessica Webb, Cllr Carol Williams, Cllr Penny Wrout and Cllr Sarah Young</p>
<p>Apologies for Absence:</p>	<p>Cllr Polly Billington, Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr Richard Lufkin, Cllr Sem Moema, Cllr Yvonne Maxwell, Cllr Deniz Oguzkanli, Cllr Midnight Ross.</p> <p>Cllr Ifraax Samatar (dispensation), Cllr Caroline Selman (dispensation).</p>
<p>Apologies for Lateness:</p>	<p>Cllr Fliss Premru,</p>
<p>Officer Contact:</p>	<p>Natalie Kokayi, Governance Officer governance@hackney.gov.uk</p>

Councillor Sizer [Speaker] in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Billington, Etti, Garasia, Lufkin, Maxwell, Moema, Oguzkanli, Ross, Samatar, Selman.
- 1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Premru.

2. Speaker's Announcements

- 2.1 Noting the difficult period the community had experienced and the rise in Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia there was a minute's silence that remembered the victims of the devastating events in Israel and Palestine. Citing the importance of public standards, expectations and hope, the Speaker challenged all present to consider how they contributed to kinder and more compassionate politics.
- 2.2 The Speaker informed Full Council of recent and upcoming civic events which included:

- Marking Adoption Week, National Fertility Week and an event with the local Women's Institute.
- George Orwell's play, 1984, fundraising for the Speaker's charities.
- We See You, a neurodiverse art event by local schools and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) community.
- Democracy Week event that saw over 100 children involved in debates and panel discussions about political engagement.
- Citizenship Ceremonies.
- Numerous School visits.

Forthcoming events included:

- Carol Singing.
- Menorah lighting.
- The pantomime trip.
- Christmas Quiz.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 Cllr Binnie-Lubbock declared that he was a member of Adblock Hackney, in relation to agenda item 13b.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 4.1 Cllr Steinberger noted under item 8.7 he had not referred to the Planning Sub-Committee regarding a planning application. Cllr Steinberger had made a general point that the application had been badly handled and the inspector's comments had been damaging.
- 4.2 Cllr Steinberger indicated that at item 8.8 he had given thanks to Jackie Moylan, Interim Group Director Finance.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of Council held on 27 September 2023 be agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to the amendments noted at 4.1 and 4.2 above.

5. Mayor for Hackney By-Election Results: November 2023

- 5.1 The Speaker outlined the results of the election that were set out at Appendix 1 and extended congratulations to Mayor Caroline Woodley. Congratulations were extended to Mayor Woodley from Cllr Steinberger and Deputy Mayor Bramble. The Speaker acknowledged the other candidates and reiterated comments made by Cllr Steinberger thanking candidates and officers for a well run election.

RESOLVED:

To note the election results as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

6. Questions from Members of the Public

The Speaker prioritised members of the public present in the Chamber followed by those who had requested their response to be read out in their absence.

- 6.1 To the Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Delivery, Inclusive Economy and Regeneration from Antoinette Fernandez

Why are new developments not prioritising social and affordable housing? Developments of 58 flats like the Laundry building on Mare Street should not be exempt.

Response from the Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Delivery, Inclusive Economy and Regeneration

Cllr Nicholson noted the Council had committed to delivering affordable homes to residents for years. The Council had to balance this with other important priorities to achieve sustainable development across the borough. The Laundry building was located in a Priority Office Area (POA), an area of employment floorspace. 6% of land in the borough was in this category where workspace had been prioritised as part of planning policy over residential development. 5000 square metres of workspace had been delivered in the last 2 years.

This had not stopped developers bringing forward housing proposals, however, workspace was the priority. There were 58 residential units at the Laundry building in addition to over 4000 square metres of employment space on the same site.

- 6.2 To the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport from Louisa Hillwood, representing Plant-based Council Campaign

In October 2022 I asked whether Hackney Council would switch to fully plant-based catering at internal meetings and events to address food related emissions. Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on this? If Councillors still have concerns I would like to meet with them to discuss further.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Cllr Coban noted the Council had committed to move towards plant-based options and reduce meat consumption. The Council recognised the diverse communities across the borough and committed to work with them on the transition to net zero by 2030. This included supporting communities on the journey through the implementation of the Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP set out 5 themes, one of which was food consumption. It was noted that at the Council's 2023 Annual Meeting plant-based catering alongside meat and fish options had been provided which reduced carbon emissions at the event by over 50%.

The Climate and Sustainability Team led on a London-wide campaign, Eat Like a Londoner, a collaboration with other London boroughs designed to reduce waste and use more plant-based food. Cllr Coban noted the climate emergency had been caused by fossil fuel industries.

Supplementary Question:

Will the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport meet the questioner for further discussions.

Cllr Coban welcomed the input from Louise Hillwood and the Plant-based Council Campaign and indicated further opportunities to engage with council forums and for their voice to be heard. The input into the CAP from the campaign had been welcomed. Cllr Coban and Cllr Kennedy had been in correspondence with the campaign to consider what the Council had already done in relation to emissions, transport, consumption and adaptation. The Council approach considered ways to take people on the journey of transition whilst acknowledging the challenges. Cllr Coban noted that he was happy to meet to continue the engagement.

The Speaker noted that questions submitted at 6.3 had requested a written response. Those who had submitted questions at 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 and 6.8 had requested the response be read in their absence, time permitting.

6.7 To the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture from Laura Pascal

What is the Tree of Life project and why has it won an award?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture

Cllr Kennedy explained that Tree of Life was a talking therapy approach developed in Zimbabwe that had responded to the context of existing therapies that had not resonated with individuals or communities. The Tree of Life approach allowed cultures to be reframed as a strength and had been recognised globally as a therapeutic approach.

The project had been delivered as part of the new structures of the Integrated Commissioning Service (ICS) for North East London. The initiative was delivered in partnership with Hackney Community Voluntary Service (HCVS), NHS Mental Health Support Teams in local secondary schools, and was led by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Alliance in City and Hackney. The aim of the programme had been to give young people from Afro-Caribbean and mixed heritage backgrounds space to gain confidence in their own abilities, acknowledge their dreams and talk about difficult experiences in a safe environment. The project received the Health Service Journal's Innovation and Improvement in Reducing Healthcare Inequalities Award.

Supplementary Question:

How will the new Integrated Commissioning Service partnership arrangements support further improvements in the delivery of the service.

Cllr Kennedy noted that the system had moved from competition to a system of collaboration between local authorities and the NHS. Rather than bidding against each other they worked to identify which organisation was best placed to deliver services. It was noted the Integrated Commissioning Service (ICS) had reduced back office administration costs as over 300 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) had been incorporated into approximately 40 ICS across the country. Cllr Kennedy had delivered a presentation to Health in Hackney about the new structures which can be found [here](#) from [Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 15 November 2023](#)

6.9 To the Mayor from Ifhat Smith

Will the Mayor call on the government to call a ceasefire in Israel/Palestine and for more support to promote community cohesion locally?

Response from Mayor Woodley

Mayor Woodley highlighted the Council was dedicated to local people and understood that local people had been deeply impacted by events on and following 7 October. The Mayor acknowledged the difficulties and recognised the trauma had been distressing for many communities and individuals. It was important that emphasis be placed into building community cohesion and asked political leaders to honour the truce and to find ways to a permanent ceasefire.

In terms of community cohesion statements had been made by the Speaker and Deputy Mayor Bramble, in her role acting as Mayor. Visits to faith partners, and individuals who had lost family, friends, and colleagues in Israel and Palestine had taken place. As a former Councillor in Cazenove Ward the Mayor noted the pride taken in the area by people from all faiths and people with none.

The Mayor indicated that the Council always supported peaceful protest, however, other people had become victims of those passions and it was important to find ways to de-escalate those situations and find ways of healing. The interfaith groups had to find ways that worked to be more inclusive to bring people back together.

Supplementary Question:

Can the Mayor write to the central government to request they call for a ceasefire?

Mayor Woodley indicated that she would write to central government to outline the statement she had made this evening.

The Speaker returned to the following question from the agenda.

6.4 To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation from Derek Miller

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing provide an update on the Council's response times for dealing with leaks in its Council homes since its launch of a new faster service in February 2023?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation

Cllr McKenzie noted that leaks caused damp and mould and were distressing to residents. Tackling them early helped prevent the issue spreading or cause potential issues in neighbouring homes. The Council had increased investment and had committed to residents to increase efforts to address this issue. The service had set new targets to inspect all reports of leaks, damp and mould within 5 working days and provided a dedicated hotline in the repairs call centre. The Council had made significant changes in the way it had managed repairs and had completed 8% more repair jobs than a year ago, completing on average 243 jobs per day. Also in February 2023, the Council committed to responding to leaks by the end of the following day, and employed additional operatives to achieve this target. In the first 6 months of 2023 87% of leaks were reported as an emergency repair. Overall average time to attend a reported leak was 1.48 days. Overall satisfaction in the repairs service was up by 5%. It was recognised that this was the start of a journey and the service had to learn from what had gone wrong to ensure the Council delivered a good and improving repair service.

Written responses to questions 6.3, 6.5, 6.6 and 6.8 are attached at APPENDIX A.

7. Questions from Members of the Council

7.1 From Cllr Binnie-Lubbock to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

In light of the news we heard in the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Committee this month that the Council is likely to fail to meet its 2040 retrofit target and that it could take over 4 decades to retrofit the whole stock, how does the Council

plan on offsetting this carbon cost to meet the Climate Action Plan's 2030 target?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Cllr Coban highlighted the lack of ambition from central government on the retrofit programme. Councils and cities were leading the way towards climate transition in respect of retrofit. Over 50% of Hackney's housing is social housing and the Climate Action Plan (CAP) set out the strategy of how the Council was working to achieve net zero. The Council targets were to reduce its own emissions by 45% by 2030 and borough wide by 2040. It was difficult due to the lack of central government funding and the regulatory framework required to deliver the retrofit programme. Cllr Coban noted GB Energy's investment to local councils to support the transition.

Last year the Council rejoined the UK 100 network of local leaders who had pledged to lead a rapid transition to Net Zero. The Council had also engaged, through London Councils, with other London boroughs in the development of their climate action plans and with forums that progressed net zero ambitions. Today the Council launched the second round of the Community Energy Fund to help reduce emissions from Council buildings. It was acknowledged that the Council had to be more creative in supporting residents on the journey to net zero.

The Speaker briefly adjourned the meeting between 7.50pm and 7.52pm to assist a Councillor who had become unwell.

The Council Climate Action Plan had set out an implementation plan for initiatives over the next 3 years that reduced emissions from council buildings. The approach required the council to be smart and deploy resources from other budgets to benefit, for example, from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The Council considered corporate buildings and businesses to reduce energy and grow green jobs.

Supplementary Question:

Would the Cabinet Member outline how the Council were going to offset the 2040 retrofit target?

Technologies had changed rapidly and new funding opportunities emerged. The Council had to set out what it was doing to meet the emissions targets; and to be prepared for technologies when they were unlocked which provided benefits to residents.

7.2 From Cllr Gilbert Smyth to Mayor Woodley

Would the newly elected Mayor publicly declare her commitment to Hackney being a Fairtrade Borough?

Response from Mayor Woodley

Mayor Woodley reconfirmed Hackney was a fair trade borough. Social justice was key for fair and equitable trade which recognised climate change impacted everyone on the planet. It was noted that not everyone suffered to the same degree and climate change further exacerbated the inequalities in society. Fair and equitable trade was key to climate justice and the systems and processes supported farmers and producers to ensure they received fair prices for their products. This commitment also enabled the Mayor to meet the manifesto commitment to remain committed to being a fair trade borough.

The Mayor outlined her support to Hackney's growing community which had taken produce out to local community park spaces and used local skills and fair trade suppliers. As a Council fair trade was considered a business model that prioritised people and the planet and brought businesses under one banner to promote fair trade.

The Mayor thanked Cllr Smyth for his work as Fair Trade Champion and acknowledged his commitment to ensuring Hackney was reconfirmed as a fair trade borough. The proposed activities were a tribute in celebration of the 30th anniversary of Fairtrade.

7.3 From Cllr Garbett to the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation

There are 111 neighbourhoods in Hackney requiring urgent adaptation to heat waves, the fourth highest level in the UK according to University of Manchester research. How is the Council prioritising this adaptation for these neighbours - with a focus on protecting the most vulnerable residents?

The Speaker noted the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport was answering the question.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Cllr Coban highlighted the record temperatures seen across London and the wild fires experienced last year. It was important to keep flagging the implementation of the Climate Action Plan and how the Council was supporting transition and adaptation. Mayor Woodley, in her previous Cabinet role, had led on the Green Infrastructure Strategy to make streets more resilient. The Council had planted 5000 street trees since 2018 and actions in the implementation plan will support the most vulnerable residents. An important initiative was to increase the street tree canopy from 20-30% as trees matured. Trees played an important role in helping to cool our streets and made a positive contribution to new build developments as a result of meeting urban green factor standards.

When temperature warming was an issue the Council worked with its partners to support vulnerable individuals and communities during heat waves with measures that included providing advice on staying cool, checking on homeless people, providing water, and advising on existing cool spaces in public areas.

In addition, the Council collaborated with climate resilience groups to strengthen the response to the Climate Action Plan. Research by the University of Manchester indicated the need for government commitment to adequately

fund adaptation measures. The cost of adaptation measures around energy systems had been expensive, however, as part of the £61m Climate Action Plan and Green New Deal Hackney saw record levels of investment to help in adaptation and support vulnerable residents.

Supplementary Question:

How are residents included in the Climate Action Plan implementation and does the council consider this a public health priority?

Cllr Coban indicated the Council had committed to continued conversations with residents as part of the 3 year implementation plan and to have conversations with residents in many formats including ward forums and scrutiny commissions, to strengthen proposals as they moved forward.

7.4 From Cllr Turbet-Delof to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service

As we enter the winter months, the cost of living crisis continues to leave many in poverty, having a profound impact on residents' mental health. What support is the Council making available for the winter months ahead to both support residents' financial circumstances and their mental health?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service

Cllr Chapman noted continued concern from the impact of the cost of living crisis on many residents. Last week the Mayor and Cllr Chapman had written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to demand adequate funding for Council services. Since 2010 the Council had seen a £150m reduction in external funding. After years of campaigning local housing allowances had finally been unfrozen, however the Customer Support Fund, which had provided £5.6m last year, had not been mentioned in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and this fund remained uncertain going forward with the services provided to residents at risk.

The Council faced tougher choices ahead due to the lack of sustainable funding for resident services. Hackney Council continued to support residents through the Money Hub which had helped residents to claim benefits they had been entitled to claim. The Council had planned to meet its manifesto commitment by increasing council tax discounts for those residents least able to pay. As winter approached the Council had organised events such as the Winter Warmer event and promoted warm spaces and hot meals to support residents. The council approach supported residents through the cost of living crisis by more connected and preventative measures in line with the poverty reduction framework. Building connections with and between voluntary and community organisations was important to strengthen support to residents. The Here to Help team had produced an updated cost of living support guide that provided information for example on bills, money and debts. Funds from the Housing Support Fund had been used this year to provide food and fuel vouchers to support residents. The Council had supported Hackney Fuel Network's Just Giving Campaign to provide extra funds to community organisations to help residents through the winter. These organisations provided places for

connection and community. Even with support, significant hardship was experienced through the winter months which impacted mental health.

Supplementary Question:

It was estimated that £28m goes unclaimed in benefits in the borough. What else can the Council do to ensure residents receive their entitlements?

Cllr Chapman advised that it was a problem the Council was aware of and the Money Hub and other voluntary organisations had been successful in identifying and had supported residents to claim benefits. Members helped by referring residents they meet to the Money Hub and other organisations.

7.5 From Cllr Binnie-Lubbock to the Mayor

In the last 5 years, what is the net-loss of mature trees in Hackney?

Response from the Mayor

Mayor Woodley indicated that the council had an ambitious plan to add to the street trees across the borough following the declaration of the climate emergency. The Council had added 5000 street trees over the last 2 years and now had 15,000 street trees and 60,000 trees in parks and open spaces. The Mayor championed the borough tree map, which had been regularly updated, and which helped educate people to learn the benefits that trees brought which included air purification, promotion of species diversity, and health and well-being benefits. A small proportion of mature trees, approximately 38, had been removed due to disease, subsidence, or adjacent development. The Council had sought to replace trees in a suitable location nearby and plant multiple young trees in recognition of the number of trees required to replace the benefits of a mature tree. Mayor Woodley acknowledged support from partners that helped maintain the tree canopy in Hackney.

Supplementary Question:

Can the Mayor confirm 38 trees had been lost in the last 5 years? How long will the new trees take to produce the equivalent carbon capture store to the trees that had been lost?

The Council was confident that the number of trees lost was correct. It was noted that it does take a number of years for young trees to replace mature trees that had been lost, however, replacement demonstrated the council commitment to retain the benefits that mature trees offered.

7.6 From Cllr Walker to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Balls Pond Road has been disproportionately impacted by traffic congestion. Can the Cabinet Member confirm that Balls Pond Road will remain under review, ensuring an ongoing dialogue with residents and other stakeholders to investigate long-term solutions to traffic flow and calming, air quality and noise pollution?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Cllr Coban outlined the work undertaken with Cllr Walker on Balls Pond Road regarding traffic that reduced congestion and improved air quality. It was noted that interventions had to be cross-borough, in conjunction with London Borough of Islington. The Council was committed to strengthen monitoring through traffic counting and other measures to better understand the data. Air quality monitoring had also been used as it was a concern identified by residents. Cllr Coban had met with his London Borough of Islington counterpart and had committed to bring partners together to address the issues. The Council recognised this as a priority and wanted to identify measures to get the right response.

Supplementary Question:

Can Cllr Coban commit to ensuring plans to address congestion and air pollution included engagement with residents and Transport for London?

A Main Road Strategy had been developed to complement the Transport Plan. This had proposals that worked to reduce traffic by 15% by 2026. The Council recognised the importance of the Main Road Strategy and a Bus Strategy and noted the 6% reduction in traffic in Hackney compared to pre-pandemic. It was recognised that not all schemes had been right; some roads had been disproportionately impacted by schemes and the Council had made changes as a result. The council was committed to remaining open and listening to ensure it delivered the changes for residents.

The Speaker noted that the meeting had come to the end of the 30 minutes allocated timeframe and those questions that had not been answered (7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, 7.11, 7.12, 7.13) would receive a written response included at APPENDIX B

8. Elected Mayor's Statement

- 8.1 Mayor Woodley expressed gratitude to be elected as Mayor of Hackney and acknowledged the other candidates. Mayor Woodley thanked Deputy Mayor Bramble, the Interim Chief Executive, Cabinet colleagues and Councillors for their dedicated work. The Chamber showed their appreciation to all Hackney officers, staff, partners and communities who support and challenge the Council.
- 8.2 The Mayor noted that many residents had connections to the Middle East and sent her condolences to residents who lost loved ones in the conflict. The rise in antisemitism, Islamophobia and hate crimes were acknowledged. The Council had committed to keeping people safe and Hackney was a borough where people of all faiths and none lived side by side. November was Islamophobia Awareness month and the Council had offered staff training and reached out to residents to become Hate Crime Prevention Champions or to join the Hate Crime Prevention Forum. The adoption of the renewed Hate Crime Strategy at Cabinet this week was welcomed and the Mayor thanked Cllr Fajana-Thomas and officers for the work they had done in Community Safety.

- 8.3 The Mayor highlighted the work that had been ongoing in the borough and thanked young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for the We See You event she attended which provided an opportunity to celebrate their achievements. The Mayor indicated that she had written to the Secretary of State for Education about concerns for SEND funding provision in Hackney. The Mayor had also sent a letter to the government, through the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care with Cllr Turbet-Delof about the need for further support to vulnerable residents.
- 8.4 The Mayor outlined various Council and community partner events attended. These included: black history season, Diwali, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Mental Health Week, various interfaith events and Clapton Common vigil. The Mayor remained conscious of the challenges communities faced and had, as part of the Mayoral campaign, pledged to drive forward better renting, housing, and economic justice to support a more inclusive and anti-racist borough. The Mayor had joined the rough-sleeping count alongside officers and outreach workers and acknowledged the fantastic work that supported vulnerable rough sleepers. The Mayor attended the Council's Anti-Racist Partnerships Day and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to being inclusive, welcoming and kind. She thanked Cllr Williams for sharing the Equalities Plan with community partners. This plan reflected the lived experience of many who had experienced racism and recognised anti-Black racism and maintained a focus on all forms of racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, or bias against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and communities.
- 8.5 The Mayor spoke about housing developments over the next 12 months with 585 new homes anticipated. This included completion of Buckland and Wimbourne schemes where over 50% of the 113 new homes were for social rent. Residents were encouraged to attend the Winter Warmer Event on 7 December and the Poverty Reduction Team and Money Hub continued to help residents to get community and financial support. The housing repairs service had a 24 hour turnaround time for broken heating in council homes. It was noted that fairness and justice had to be prioritised as the Climate Action Plan was implemented. The government had not responded to the call for sustainable funding for local authorities; Hackney faced a £57m budget shortfall by 2027 which meant the Council had to make difficult choices. The Mayor noted the Council had brought together campaigners at an event to raise awareness of violence against women and girls (VAWG) where the Council had taken action which included lighting, CCTV and the pioneering in-house domestic abuse service which had helped over 1300 people. Members of the Youth Parliament attended Cabinet and had set out their requests; the Mayor looked forward to participating in their events. The Mayor highlighted the seasonal celebrations ahead and noted the Menorah candles reminded us of the values of solidarity and hope. The Mayor hoped people found fun and joy through the seasonal celebrations.

Conservative Group Response

- 8.6 Cllr Levy congratulated Mayor Woodley on her election to office and congratulated Cllr Steinberger on what had been a credible campaign reflected in the 42% increase in the Conservative vote compared to the last Mayoral by-election in 2016. Cllr Levy indicated that the Conservative Group continued

to challenge schemes that they considered were not in the interests of residents such as School Streets and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs).

- 8.7 Gratitude and thanks were expressed to the former Mayor Glanville for the leadership he had shown regarding anti-semitism; he had campaigned to drive out all forms of racism from the borough. It was noted that Mayor Woodley continued to fight to keep Hackney a safe place.

Green Group Response

- 8.8 Cllr Garbett acknowledged the violence in the Middle East that represented the failure of politics in the region and internationally to find lasting peace that enabled people to live in safety and dignity. Hackney had seen some of the largest protests in solidarity with Palestinians and Cllr Garbett had joined young people at the school strike for Palestine protest last week. Last night, Cllr Garbett and Cllr Binnie-Lubbock joined Hackney Palestine Solidarity campaigners who had a deputation to the Pensions Committee that asked the Council to divest investments in occupied Palestinian territory. The Pensions Committee meeting had moved venue after residents in the gallery had sought to have their voices heard. Spaces were needed that allowed these voices to be heard. Cllr Garbett had prepared a motion later on the agenda to call for a ceasefire.
- 8.9 Cllr Garbett noted the Green Party had increased their vote in the Mayoral election by 7.5% totalling 24.5% of the vote and thanked residents who had voted for the party and the vision of the Green Party which they had encouraged the Mayor to deliver. Having the Green Group in the Chamber demonstrated what had been achieved which included progress on net zero 2030, advertising policy, transgender rights, and support for workers rights.
- 8.10 Cllr Garbett congratulated Mayor Woodley and supported her ambitions to make Hackney fairer and greener. The Green Group ran a hopeful campaign rooted in social justice and considered consultation had to go beyond traditional methods and included initiatives that recognised residents as experts in their own lives. Cllr Garbett wanted to understand how the Mayor intended to develop resident question and answer formats, such as transparent social media forums. Areas the Green Group wanted the Mayor to prioritise, in her first 100 days, were exploring housing buy-back opportunities and building council homes, rent controls and end to right to buy (RtB), the road strategy, and work with young people that reduced youth violence .
- 8.12 Cllr Garbett noted that the 28th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28) started tomorrow. The Council had to call for the total phasing out of fossil fuels and had to do that both locally and on the international stage. This included divesting fossil fuels from the pension fund, phased withdrawal from burning waste at the Edmonton Incinerator and commitment to withdrawal from fossil-based fertilisers from estates, parks and roads. The main road strategy Cllr Garbett was sad to hear was not explicit about the World Health Organisation's (WHO) air quality guidance. Cllr Garbett welcomed earlier mentions of the Climate Action Plan and acknowledged that we were deep into a critical decade in determining our future on this planet.

- 8.13 In conclusion, Cllr Garbett acknowledged Young Hackney who, with Deputy Mayor Bramble and herself, had marched from Forest Road Hub to Hackney Town Hall and added their voices to end violence against women and girls. World Aids Day was noted for Friday 1 December.

The Mayor's Reply

- 8.14 Exercising the right of reply, Mayor Woodley stated the following:

- The Mayor thanked Cllr Levy for his kind words and noted that everyone across the chamber wanted the best for residents.
- The Mayor, together with the interim Chief Executive, had committed to do walkabouts in every ward and to meet local organisations that made a difference and to see the challenges they faced.
- The Council had a variety of ways of interacting with the community including Ward Forums, Scrutiny Commissions, community meetings, parents and young peoples voices, and the work supported by councillors through surgeries and casework.
- The importance of standing together against antisemitism and driving out racism was noted.
- The Mayor was open to ideas that improved cohesion across the borough and brought people together to protect one another.
- The Mayor wanted to meet with people, not necessarily on social media, in ways that responded to and connected people.
- Young people's voices were valued as they provided insight into what they considered important.

9. Composition of Cabinet Committees; Appointment of Deputy Cabinet Members and Member Champions; Elected Mayor's Scheme of Delegation

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

10. Standards Committee Annual Report

- 10.1 Deputy Mayor Bramble introduced the report which provided an overview of the work of the Committee in 2022-2023. The Committee's remit ensured that Councillors maintained high ethical standards in their duties and considered concerns or complaints received about Councillor conduct. The role of Councillor had to be held with integrity, diligence, and compassion with care for residents. Members of the Committee were thanked for their work. The Committee had received 13 complaints, none of which met the threshold for further investigation.
- 10.2 Cllr Suso-Runge thanked Deputy Mayor Bramble for the report and indicated that local authorities are required to establish a Standards Committee, to have a Constitution, and a Code of Conduct. Rules and structures had to be underpinned by an organisational culture that valued high standards and a shared understanding. This required constant vigilance and the report reminded the Chamber of this framework and outlined the importance of good governance, personal responsibility and respect for each other.

- 10.3 Cllr Rathbone noted that standards in public life and in democracy had been key to democracy. However, self-righteousness had sometimes taken over to advance a cause and moved into name-calling, shaming, and violence. Social media had been used and hatred blinded people to how far they had gone to achieve their cause. The Pensions Committee on Tuesday evening was disrupted and caused the meeting to be moved elsewhere which had undermined democratic values of discussion and debate.
- 10.4 Cllr Rathbone believed that it was the responsibility of Councillors to set an example to the public as custodians of democracy. Councillors had been democratically elected by residents to run local services that improved the lives of people in the area.
- 10.5 Councillor Binnie-Lubbock noted the Chair's Foreword to the report indicated the opposition group had not taken up its place on the Standards Committee in 2022-2023 and he requested this was amended to indicate that it referred to the majority opposition group as the Green Group was keen to participate in the scrutiny process as much as possible. In addition, it was noted that one of the 13 complaints listed related to transphobia and he considered that this had not been covered adequately in the Equalities Plan.
- 10.6 Deputy Mayor Bramble noted the report had made clear there had been a Conservative Group vacancy on the committee and encouraged the majority opposition group to take up this position. Reassurance was given that the transphobia complaint had not met the evidential threshold for further action. Deputy Mayor Bramble noted that councillors represented the whole community and had to hold that integrity at the heart of the work of the Council.

RESOLVED:

To note the Standards Committee Annual Report 2022-2023 as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

11. Statutory Chief Officer Extension

- 11.1 The Speaker noted the Interim Chief Executive, Dawn Carter-McDonald, and the Acting Director of Legal Services and Governance, Louise Humphreys declared an interest in the item.

RESOLVED:

To note the Appointment Sub-Committee's decision that the roles of Dawn Carter-McDonald, Interim Chief Executive and Louise Humphreys, Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services and Monitoring Officer are extended for a further 6 month period from 1 February to 31 July 2024.

12. Appointments to Committees and Commissions

RESOLVED:

To agree the appointments and membership changes to Committees and the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission as set out at paragraph 1.3 of the report.

13. Motions

Cllr Binnie-Lubbock raised a procedural motion in accordance with Part 4 Rule 15 paragraph 15.1 (c) of the Council's Constitution. He moved to vary the order of business set out in the agenda to bring forward agenda item 13e - The Crisis in Israel and Palestine: Call For a Ceasefire, Release Of All Hostages and more Support for Local Community Cohesion. He believed it was the most pressing matter on the agenda and how important it was to residents.

This was seconded by Cllr Garbett.

Cllr Adams spoke against the motion

Following a vote, the Speaker declared the motion **NOT CARRIED**

Cllr Binnie Lubbock raised a procedural motion in accordance with Part 4 Rule 15 paragraph 15.1 (g) for the Green Group to withdraw motions 13a, 13b, 13c, 13d.

The Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services and Monitoring Officer advised Council that the Constitution allowed a proposer of a motion to propose that it be withdrawn. However, only the proposer of a motion could do so, therefore an en-masse proposal to withdraw a number of motions was not allowed and Cllr Garbett would need to put forward a similar proposal for those motions where Cllr Garbett was listed as the proposer Cllr Garbett confirmed that she similarly requested that those motions she had proposed be withdrawn.

The seconder for each motion acknowledged their consent to the withdrawal of the motions.

The Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services and Monitoring Officer responded to Cllr Rathbone's point of order and advised that the Constitution required that Full Council must decide whether to agree to the motion being withdrawn following a request from the proposer of that motion. If the meeting indicated, when a vote was called, that they did not consent then the motions would be debated in the usual manner.

Following a vote on Motion 13(a) the Speaker declared the proposal to withdraw the motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

Following a vote on motion 13(b) the Speaker declared that the proposal to withdraw the motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

Following a vote on motion 13(c) the Speaker declared that the proposal to withdraw the motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

Following a vote on motion 13(d) the Speaker declared that the proposal to withdraw the motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

13a Green Motion - Call for an independent Investigation Following the Resignation of the Mayor of Hackney

Cllr Garbett introduced the motion. The ongoing distress to residents was noted and she considered transparency and truth helped towards closure and restored faith. The Green Group had called for an independent review when details had become public. An independent inquiry had been required to establish what the Mayor, Councillors, and Hackney Labour knew about the circumstances surrounding the resignation of Mr Dewey. The Green Group continued to press for transparency and had been informed about the independent review commissioned by the Council. This motion reflected the gap in the independent review for Hackney Labour Party to hold an independent investigation into who had known what, when, and the actions taken.

Following Cllr Garbett's introduction of this motion and prior to Cllr Binnie-Lubbock's seconder speech, Cllr Adams proposed a motion without notice in accordance with Part 4, Rule 15, paragraph 15.1(d) of the Constitution, for the matter to be referred to the Monitoring Officer on the grounds that an independent review had started and several members had spoken to the investigator. The Monitoring Officer should therefore consider whether the motion be the subject of debate once the outcome of the independent review was known. Cllr Rathbone seconded the motion.

Following a vote of the procedural motion without notice proposed by Cllr Adams and seconded by Cllr Rathbone, the Speaker declared the motion **CARRIED**

Proposed by: Cllr Zoë Garbett
Seconded by Cllr Alastair Binnie Lubbock

13b Green Group Motion: Include a Ban on High-Carbon Advertising in the Council's Advertising and Sponsorship Policy

Amendments to the motion had been received from the Labour Group and contained in the supplementary papers circulated. None of the amendments had been accepted by the Green Group.

Cllr Binnie Lubbock introduced the motion and noted that the Green Party's national conference had proposed introduction of legislation to ban high carbon product advertising. The Council had to discourage these products and promote sustainable products on its advertising sites. Cllr Binnie-Lubbock suggested Councillors considered applications on the Council's planning portal where high carbon product advertising applications had sought approvals.

Cllr Zoë Garbett, as seconder to the motion, reserved her right to speak until later in the debate.

Cllr Kennedy proposed amendments to the motion. He outlined that the Council already had an advertising policy which supported principles of control over advertising which countered Council policy and principles. The amendments to the motion was seconded by Cllr Potter.

Following a vote, the Speaker declared the amendments to the motion **CARRIED**

The Speaker proceeded to the substantive motion which was not debated. Cllr Garbett had reserved her right to speak and highlighted the need for leadership and commitment. She believed that sustainable measures represented a very small percentage of their overall work, however, sustainable measures were over represented in their advertising spend.

Following a vote, the Speaker declared the motion as amended **CARRIED**

RESOLVED:

This Council notes:

- That the Council's Corporate Advertising and Sponsorship Policy was adopted as Appendix 4 of the External Advertising Contract by the Cabinet Procurement and Insourcing Committee on 16/01/2023.
- The policy outlines a number of products and services which will not be accepted on council-owned media, including the promotion of products high in fats, sugars and salts (HFSS), alcohol, knives or weapons and gambling services. These proscribed products and services would undermine the Mayor's priorities as set out in the strategic plan for a fairer, safer, healthier Hackney working together for every child.

This Council further notes:

- That it has adopted a Climate Action Plan which acknowledges that consumption emissions - the things we buy, use and sell - currently represent 73% of the borough's emissions
- That one of the five themes of the climate action plan is a reduction in consumption of goods and services that contribute to those emissions
- Such goods and services include "high carbon" items, such as fossil fuels, internal combustion engines and aviation, which must be reduced or phased out to help reach our carbon reduction targets

This Council believes that:

- Advertising can be used to induce demand for "high carbon" products and services where there may be no actual need, and where the products and services run counter to the council's stated policies, aims and objectives.

The Council resolves to:

- Include in the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy 2022 at paragraph 2.3, an additional subsection ix. reading [Advertising will not be accepted if, in Hackney Council's opinion, it is reasonably objectionable on the grounds that it:.....] could promote goods or services that contradict the council's Climate Action Plan, for example by encouraging the use of fossil fuels.
- Encourage event partners to consider their advertising and sponsorship policies in light of the borough's carbon reduction goals, and where possible, stipulate

that a policy on high-carbon advertising and sponsorship is a requirement in negotiations about the council's support.

Proposed by: Alastair Binnie-Lubbock

Seconded by: Cllr Zoë Garbett

The Speaker noted that it was for members to decide, as the 30 minutes allocated for debating motions had almost expired, if they wished to extend the meeting. Members did not wish to extend the meeting.

The Speaker advised that the remaining three motions which had not been debated would stand referred, without discussion, to the next ordinary meeting of Full Council. The motions would be listed in the order in which they had been received.

Close of meeting.

Duration of Meeting: 7:00 - 9:27pm

Chair of the meeting

Cllr Anya Sizer

Speaker of the London Borough of Hackney 2023/24

Attachments

Appendix A - Questions from Members of the public not responded to at the meeting.

Appendix B - Questions from Councillors not responded to at the meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank

Questions from Members of the public that were not responded to at the meeting.

6.3 To the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport from Dr Noah Birksted-Breen

Will Hackney Council find an appropriate way of marking Earth Overshoot Day annually, the day when humanity uses up more resources than the earth can regenerate in a year, to help educate Hackney residents about the need to focus on reducing and reusing as higher priorities than recycling?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

It was a shame you could not join us last night at our Full Council meeting, however I thank you for your question concerning Earth Overshoot Day and its relationship to educating Hackney residents about the need to focus on reducing and reusing.

As an initial point, we have a new ambitious Climate Action Plan which places significant emphasis on consumption-based emissions, advocating a transition towards a sustainable, circular economy. The plan promotes low carbon choices and actions that reduce consumption emissions by encouraging the repair and reuse of goods.

This aligns with circular economy principles such as durability, reuse, remanufacturing, and recycling, aiming to reduce borough-wide emissions from Council operations and related contracts. At the same time, Hackney is currently developing a Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan, a key manifesto commitment. This plan focuses on short to medium-term initiatives aimed at reducing emissions and incorporating social value.

Hackney's commitment to circularity spans nearly two decades. Since 2005, the Climate, Sustainability and Environment Team has been advancing circular economy schemes, delivering over 20 services and initiatives in partnership with over 15 local organisations. The ZeroWasteHackney 'Go Beyond Recycling' campaign, targets vulnerable and low-income households and successfully engages with over 5,000 residents a year, keeping nearly 2 million household items in circulation from clothes, electrical goods and more.

The borough's Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP), endorsed by the Mayor of London, includes plans for waste reduction and increased recycling. It features initiatives such as the Library of Things and a Circular Economy Strategy, with actions to reduce waste, maximise recycling, and mitigate environmental impacts.

The Sustainability Day 2023 event, taking place during London Climate Action Week every year, focused on sustainable practices and environmental awareness, attracting approximately 800 attendees with over 30 partners on

the day. It offered insights into sustainable living, waste prevention, and the circular economy, alongside interactive workshops and family-friendly activities.

Looking ahead, Hackney Council recognises the importance of marking Earth Overshoot Day, scheduled for 25 July next year. The Council plans to use Sustainability Day 2024, during London Climate Action Week at the end of June, to highlight the day's significance. This event will provide opportunities to engage with residents and offer practical ways to reduce collective consumption-based emissions.

Understanding that not everyone may be motivated solely by environmental messages, the Council's approach includes offering economical alternatives and accessible services, such as the Library of Things or clothes swap events. This inclusive strategy aims to make sustainability achievable for all residents, contributing to Hackney's broader mission of creating a greener sustainable and circular economy that benefits both the environment and the community.

6.5 To the Mayor from Ms Sarah Thompson

In light of the circumstances surrounding the resignation of the previous Mayor (Philip Glanville) will you as Hackney's newly elected Mayor lead by example and hold yourself and your Cabinet Members to account in a way that is open and transparent and puts the residents of Hackney first?

Response from Mayor Woodley

I am writing to thank you for your question directed to me in advance of Full Council and I regret that you weren't able to attend the meeting, which is why I am responding in writing.

Firstly, I recognise the responsibility that every elected councillor must take very seriously and as Mayor I'm certainly committed to continuing the Council's strong tradition of conducting itself openly and with transparency. I will honour the trust residents have placed in me to serve our borough and will be guided by the Nolan Principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Councillors sign up to a code of conduct and must abide by these in accordance with the public trust placed in the role, so elected members commit on all occasions to:

- act with integrity and honesty;
- act lawfully;
- treat all persons fairly and with respect;
- and lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Councillor.

APPENDIX A

Council, 29 November 2023

In undertaking the role day to day, councillors commit to:

impartially exercise responsibilities in the interests of the local community;
to not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any Person;
to avoid conflicts of interest;
to exercise reasonable care and diligence;
and to ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with the local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

It's worth highlighting that we have a track record in Hackney of seeking out, listening to and responding to the views and concerns of residents and this is certainly going to continue in this administration.

For example, Hackney Council has a well established system of scrutiny, allowing residents and councillors alike to review the work of the administration and if necessary hold us to account. To share with you just a few areas of review and challenge - our Children and Young People scrutiny commission has closely examined the issue of school exclusions in Hackney. Our Health in Hackney scrutiny commission is looking at the use of digital services in GP practices and how it might affect the most vulnerable. Our Living in Hackney scrutiny commission has recently looked at issues of flooding and the role and work of Thames Water. And our Skills, Economy and Growth scrutiny commission is looking at the skills needed within our local labour market.

I will continue to be open, honest and transparent with the residents of Hackney of the challenges we face with our budget, and the ever increasing need to do more with less. And I expect my cabinet and councillor colleagues to continue our practice of engaging with residents in a meaningful way, not only through formal processes of statutory consultations, but through attending walkabouts with officers, holding surgeries, engaging with community groups and very soon taking myself and the Interim Chief Executive on short tours introducing the highlights and challenges of their wards directly to us.

I hope I have assured you of how seriously I take these responsibilities and commitments having been elected as your new Mayor, and I look forward to leading by example in the conduct of this administration.

6.6 To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation from Laura Summerfield

Can the Cabinet Member for housing please advise of its work over the last year to better support the housing needs of Hackney's Gypsy and Traveller community?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation

APPENDIX A

Council, 29 November 2023

Thank you for your question concerning work to support the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population in Hackney over the last year. I regret that you were not able to attend the meeting in person and am therefore happy to follow up in writing.

Hackney Council has long supported the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. Here in Hackney we are proud to have a community of over 800 Gypsies, Roma and travellers.

Some Irish Travelling communities migrated to Britain as long ago as the 13th century, and Roma Gypsies in the 15th. In this time, traveller communities have played a significant role in Britain's history in the development of national institutions, and the construction of our national identity.

Unfortunately Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people are often forgotten. And if they are not forgotten, then they are often being marginalised and maligned. For us in Hackney, that is unacceptable. We are a borough of sanctuary and it is important that we reiterate our total commitment and support for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community.

We are determined to demonstrate that support in practice, and will be reviewing and looking at our whole strategic housing approach for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people as part of developing a new Housing Strategy for Hackney in the next year.

Hackney currently has 27 pitches across five Traveller sites in the borough, which are managed and maintained by the Hackney Traveller Service. The service also provides a holistic support service to families living both on sites and in brick and mortar accommodation, working closely with Health, Education and independent Agencies.

In terms of new sites, although Bartrip Street had been earmarked for a new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller site, our investigations revealed this site would not be right or suitable to use.

Hackney Council has therefore found an alternative potential site that we can use. We have secured funding from the GLA to undertake some initial site investigations. We are currently procuring surveyors and engineers to undertake this work with the aim that they report back early next year.

We have to undertake the site investigations first - to test for things like pollution and noise - before we are able to say that the site is suitable for building pitches. Funding will also need to be identified for any new development.

Assuming a positive response from site investigations then we will be able to move into identifying and naming the site and begin formal consultation with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

APPENDIX A
Council, 29 November 2023

It is difficult at this point to provide precise timescales but, on average, it takes between one and two years, from beginning to end, to build a new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller site of around 8 or 9 pitches in size. We will keep everyone informed of progress made and the Council will give public notice of the formal consultation if the current site under investigation proves suitable.

I would be happy to provide written updates about this work in future, and on our wider work to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in the borough.

6.8 To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation from Ifeoma Mkpuru

Hackney Council dissolved Hackney Homes in March 2016. Please can the Cabinet Member explain why seven years on there are still Council run estates with old Hackney Homes branding?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation

Thank you for your question regarding the Hackney Homes-branded signs on some of the Council's managed estates. I regret that you were not able to attend the meeting in person and am therefore happy to follow up in writing.

In 2016, the Council made the determination to close its Arms Length Management Company (ALMO) - Hackney Homes, and to bring management of our Council homes back under the council's direct management in order to better serve our residents and provide a higher quality more efficient service.

We acknowledge that the old Hackney Homes branding still exists on some of our signs but we are confident that this does not detract from our ability to deliver a quality housing service. At the time, it was decided that the existing signs were in good condition and provided the necessary information, and therefore only to replace them as and when needed.

This is in line with our commitment to providing value for money for our residents, and the expenditure saved has been used to support the essential functions of our housing services.

We take pride in the appearance and maintenance of our estates and will replace signs as and when they become degraded. What really matters to our residents is good housing, an efficient repairs system, and ultimately a warm, safe, comfortable home; and I would be glad to advise further on all the work we are doing to keep making this a reality.

This page is intentionally left blank

Questions from Members of the public that were not responded to at the meeting.

7.7 From Cllr Garbett to the Deputy Cabinet Member for Private Rented Sector and Affordability

What is the average time and the longest time it has taken for applications for landlord licensing to be processed, and how many are waiting to be Processed?

Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Private Rented Sector and Affordability (Deputy Mayor Nicholson responding)

Thank you for tabling your question at November's Full Council concerning landlord licensing in Hackney. It was unfortunate that the time allocated for answering Member's Questions expired before we reached your question. I was asked to answer your question on behalf of my colleague Cllr Moema, hence the written response to your question coming from myself.

As you and other Councillors are aware Hackney Council has long campaigned for better housing standards in the Private Rented Sector and has supported Hackney's private renters realise their right to an affordable and good quality home.

The number of households in Hackney privately renting continues to rise and has doubled over the course of the last decade. The most recent housing led survey identified that 30% of households in Hackney now live in the private rented sector, which equates to approximately 34,000 homes.

In October 2018, Hackney Council implemented a pilot Selective Private Landlord Licensing scheme covering three wards in the borough. The scheme fell below the threshold requiring permission from the Secretary of State. The scheme was intended to enable good landlords to be recognised by private renters and, where housing related issues may be prevalent, for a system by which a clear line of accountability could be identified so problems could be resolved – the ultimate objective being to bring about an improvement in housing conditions for private renters through improved property management.

To date the Council has issued 5145 landlord licences as part of the pilot Selective Private Landlord Licensing Scheme. The number of licence applications that have been received and are yet to be issued is currently 1815. The Council is working to have all outstanding licences issued by the end of March 2024.

Hackney Council remains committed to the implementation of an extended Selective Licensing Scheme and is currently finalising the assessment and evidence base relating from the implementation of the existing pilot Selective Licensing Scheme. Once the assessment is complete a new application will

be developed and because it is intended to cover the whole borough it will be required to be submitted for consideration to the Secretary of State later in 2024. I hope this response has answered your question.

7.8 From Cllr Anna Lynch to Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services

In light of the ongoing catastrophe in Israel and Gaza and the trauma and distress this has caused many in the communities that we represent, can the Cabinet Member for Community Safety advise on what support the Council has provided for those communities living in our borough?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services

We have all been deeply affected by the tragic events in Israel and Gaza since 7 October. The suffering and loss of life is truly terrible. We know many Hackney residents are of Israeli or Palestinian heritage, or have connections to the region, and will be deeply anxious for loved ones and their wider communities.

In Hackney, we have felt the reverberations in a shocking rise in hate crime in our borough, across London and the UK. I know that anyone with links to the region, as well as our Muslim and Jewish residents in particular are concerned. It is more important than ever that we strengthen our ties as a diverse Hackney community of all faiths and none. We also know we need to engage with the full diversity of Hackney's faith communities.

Though the Council and our partners in the police and community safety groups have taken steps to stamp out hate and abuse, we know there is more to do.

In Hackney, we have a clear commitment to make Hackney No Place for Hate with our objective contained within our recently published Hackney Hate Crime Strategy 2023 to 2026.

In addition, our Muslim and Jewish communities have an established track record of working closely together to enhance community cohesion through close communication and working relationships.

Though there has been a rise in hate crime across London and in Hackney, it is a credit to our Muslim and Jewish communities that they have kept working together despite the difficult circumstances.

The Council's Community Safety Team is in regular contact with our Mosques in Hackney and has provided them with a named community safety contact to ensure we can quickly consider their concerns.

We have also been providing more frequent Enforcement Officer patrols in

and around Hackney Mosques and Synagogues in a low key way.

The Muslim Communities' representatives did not want increased high visibility patrols, but wanted a named contact together with a method of reporting Hate Crimes and Incidents via a third party.

We have been responding expeditiously to reports of offensive graffiti and fly posting through our online waste services process [Hackney.Gov.UK/reportaproblem](https://hackney.gov.uk/reportaproblem). Our waste team has been exemplary in removing the offending graffiti or fly posting within 24hrs.

In addition, we meet weekly with a number of our community leaders from our Jewish Communities. During these meetings representatives expressed a need for high visibility uniform patrols in and around Schools and Synagogues and consequently our Enforcement Officers have provided 175 patrol hours in the community since the beginning of the conflict.

To further support community cohesion the Community Safety Team has been included in a Jewish Community Leaders WhatsApp group and through this communication have been able to provide accurate information to dispel rumours whilst providing support to reassure communities.

Our partnership response is coordinated weekly via our Community Safety Partnership Tasking meeting which is attended by the Police and a number of internal stakeholders.

There is also a weekly Police led briefing for the community which details the ongoing Police response to the conflict which Officers from Community Safety and I attend.

The Council has also influenced the Borough Command Unit in setting up a dedicated Team dealing with Hate Crime reports as a result of the conflict and Officers in the Team will be updating a weekly community meeting on the number of Hate Crime reports received in the previous week including if anyone has been charged following any investigations undertaken from reports received and on cases which will result in prosecution.

I know from recent discussions with faith partners that not all hate crimes are reported. I urge anyone who witnesses or is the victim of a hate crime to report it to the police, to our community enforcement teams, or by a third party such as "True Vision" or Tell Mama. Only then can we tackle this problem and show that Hackney is no place for hate.

7.9 [From Cllr Narcross to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport](#)

Following the tragic death of a cyclist on Whiston Road, many residents are concerned that the road remains far too dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. What action is the Council taking to reduce traffic speed and

vehicle number to ensure it remains a safe route for those who use it?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Thank you for your question regarding Whiston Road and the terrible collision that occurred which has resulted in the death of a cyclist. I really do appreciate your continued advocacy for this issue.

I share your concerns for the safety of cyclists and pedestrians on Whiston Road. We have not yet received the police incident report, which I am sure will be nothing short of forensic, given the loss of life. The report is likely to detail how/ why the collision happened and highlighted any other causation factors. The report may also make a series of recommendations which we, as the council, will earnestly review and consider.

Whilst I would not want to pre-suppose any actions the council may take once the contents of the report have been digested, we are aware that there is a frustratingly long standing issue with Whiston Road relating to both speed (85th percentile) and volume. Our original solution to this needed a partnership approach but unfortunately, this was not forthcoming from the other involved party.

We are currently going through the process of commissioning traffic surveys on both Whiston Road and the surrounding roads to give us a better understanding of the current traffic patterns. The next step is to determine a solution on what can be done to reduce speeds and enable our residents to feel safer whilst they use this road.

The Council is working on identifying funds to implement measures at Whiston Road. Whilst we await the full report from the Police and possible recommendations we have asked the MET's cycle safety to complete close pass enforcement and we will also encourage residents participation in aiding the Community Road watch which is relevant to speeding concerns.

I do understand the cause of concern. A loss of life on our roads is keenly felt by all those in Streetscene and the community. We will work tirelessly, both internally and with our external partners, to make our roads as safe as possible.

7.10 From Cllr Young to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

The New River Path is a much-loved place to stroll along and enjoy nature. What is the Council doing to improve access for all, explore options for safe cycle routes away from the peaceful pedestrian path and enhance biodiversity?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment

and Transport

I am writing to thank you for your question directed to me in advance of Full Council. Unfortunately we ran out of time to take the question that evening, which is why I am responding in writing.

Your concern for the New River Path is appreciated - thank you for your advocacy of this issue. In line with your question, the Council has developed a number of initiatives to increase accessibility, explore more safe cycle routes and enhance biodiversity.

Accessibility of New River Path

The New River Path has been shared for many years by pedestrians, runners, dog walkers and cyclists. In recent years the path has regularly become very muddy with numerous puddles proving difficult for those with buggies or wheelchairs to use.

As part of the West Reservoir Improvement Project, we have recently resurfaced the path to make it more accessible, and have plans to replace the existing stepped bridge with a level accessible bridge. Roundels have been painted on the path, along with the words 'pedestrian priority'. Further signage emphasising 'pedestrian priority' will be erected, consistent with signage in some other public spaces in the borough.

The Council is open to exploring suggestions for the provision of an alternative cycle route. However, some of the roads in the immediate vicinity are part of the Woodberry Down development and have not yet been adopted by the Council. As per this adoption process, the Council will enter into discussions with the developer and we will consider what work would be required to provide an additional route. **We would warmly welcome your input as this progresses.**

As part of the wider programme, we know how important it is to provide safe conditions for cycling. Hackney is one of the most cycle friendly boroughs in London with one of the highest rates of cycling and the Council has an ambitious plan to improve conditions for cycling in the borough, which were detailed in the Local Implementation Plan published in January 2023. The plans included increasing coverage of low traffic measures in the borough, as well as several cycling schemes, including Cycleway 23 that runs across the borough from Lea Bridge to Dalston, which is due for completion this year.

Closer to the area in question, in recent years the Council introduced a separated cycle lane along Green Lanes and is currently working with Transport for London to investigate options for improving parts of Seven Sisters Road for walking and cycling.

I hope this sets a firm foundation for managing cycle infrastructure that allows us to direct cyclists to safe routes and prioritise pedestrians on dedicated

pathways. We want the borough to become safer, friendlier and more inclusive for all.

Enhancing biodiversity

The Council is working on a number of initiatives to enhance biodiversity and this is a core component of our environmental strategy. With regards to this, we have recently adopted the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Plan. We know that conserving wildlife in urban areas is both a challenge and a necessity, especially as there are multiple competing land-uses in urban areas.

This is only exacerbated by high population density and intense recreational demand on existing parks and green spaces. It's a Council priority because of the moral responsibility to provide space for wildlife amongst us, but also because we know that making space for nature has associated benefits for our residents.

The Local Nature Recovery Plan specifically mentions that we need to improve the riverine corridor created by the New River. As such, we have now sown approximately 800m² of wildflower seed along this route, which has very high floristic diversity including excellent pollinator species. The policy case for planting wildflowers is strong - it will vastly increase the diversity of native and water's edge-appropriate flora along this route.

As part of the wider West Reservoir Improvement Project, biodiversity around the reservoir will be enhanced, with bug hotels, new trees, hedges and an extensive new area of reedbeds being planted. The proposed new cafe will have a green roof and Sustainable Drainage areas will be incorporated into the design. This will vastly improve the biodiversity of this important site, and ensure that it can continue to be enjoyed by all.

I thank you again for your question and look forward to working with you closely on New River Path.

7.11 From Cllr Gordon to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service

We know Councils have undergone significant cuts in Government funding Since 2010 - in Hackney we've had a real terms cut of 41%. Can the Cabinet Member reassure us that services for our most vulnerable residents will be protected in the coming financial year?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service

You are correct to point out that the Council has incurred real terms cuts in external funding of 41% since 2010. This also means we have had to raise more from Council Tax than ever before placing more pressure on our

residents.

That is why in our manifesto we committed to support our most vulnerable residents by giving low-income households a bigger discount on their Council Tax bill, despite no support from the Government for this. The first stage of that commitment was to provide low-income households with a 90% discount on their Council Tax bill by 2026. We've recently consulted on delivering that commitment 2 years early in April 2024

I must also thank you for your role in chairing the Scrutiny Panel in its wide-ranging review of the council tax reduction scheme which provided a range of evidence which fed into our proposal and our consultation process.

We cannot, though, ignore the fact that the Council is facing unprecedented financial challenges, as the increased demand on our services and the recent high levels of inflation alongside funding cuts place pressures on our finances. For the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 we have an estimated funding gap of some £57m.

A primary driver of this is the additional funding we need to set aside to meet the increasing demand for vital social care services for children, young people and adults in a system which is increasingly underfunded. We are also facing unprecedented demand in our homelessness services as more and more of our residents are unable to keep pace with rising rents in the borough.

All of this means that we will have tough decisions to make in setting a balanced budget for next year. As ever, we will do this in a carefully planned and considered way. We continue to make sure our budget proposals are fully worked up with the impacts on our residents fully considered and that they are subject to our now well established budget scrutiny process.

I also must mention last week's Autumn Statement by the Chancellor which announced very little for Local Government. There was no response to the social care pressures with funding no more than had already been announced last year. There was some new money for homelessness prevention - but at £120m nationally this is wholly insufficient to meet the problems faced. While we welcome some support for businesses and increases in pensions and benefits including an uplift in the local housing allowance there was no mention of a continuation of the Household Support Fund - which at £5.6m locally as provided a vital lifeline for some of the most in need in our communities.

7.12 From Cllr Rathbone to the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture

The Clapton Portico building was meant to have opened this autumn as the new home of the Lower Clapton GP surgery but has still not done so. Please could the Cabinet Member for Health update Members on the progress of

building work here?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture

Thank you for your question in advance of Full Council about the reopening of the Portico as the Lower Clapton GP surgery, which I am now following up in writing.

Practical Completion on this project was due for the last day of November this year. It is important to clarify that “Practical Completion” is the completion of the programme of works and means that the building is ready to be handed over to the Council. The opening of the surgery will subsequently occur when the GP Practice has completed its own preparations.

As you are aware, the Portico is of a certain age, is Grade 2 listed and of a very particular design. As work has progressed, this old landmark has revealed some hidden challenges which the contractor must deal with sympathetically to ensure the quality of the building is kept intact. To date that has led to a delay in Practical Completion. Recent re-calculation of the programme to create the space to accommodate this careful work has led to a projected “Practical Completion” of no sooner than the end of January next year, and that would allow the Practice to commence its own preparation of the new facilities.

A glance into the site will give passers-by a sense that completion is close at hand, and the Council’s Project Management team is monitoring the final works closely to ensure that nothing is missed in the process, and before it is accepted and passed over to the incoming Practice.

I hope this has clarified the current position and would be happy to link you with Chris Pritchard in Strategic Property if you wish to discuss this further.

7.13 From Cllr Joseph to the Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing Needs and Homelessness

The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission has focussed on the stressful and isolating impacts of life in temporary accommodation. Can the Cabinet Member tell us what is being done to mitigate the potentially isolating effects of temporary accommodation, to monitor children’s welfare and to improve families quality of life?

Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing Needs and Homelessness

Thank you for our question directed to me in advance of Full Council on

support for residents in temporary accommodation. As the meeting did not get to the question on the night I am following up in writing.

I recognise that living in TA can have significant negative impacts on a household's health and wellbeing. Living in temporary accommodation is disruptive and unsettling to residents and their families, and while we work with them to help find accommodation, we also look to provide additional support to mitigate the challenges they face.

Isolation can be a particular concern and we encourage all our residents to speak regularly with officers not just about their housing options but also other support they might need. We will signpost or actively engage with other services and organisations that we work with and could help. One example of this is Engage Hackney, and we have also been working closely with NHS partners on how we can improve access to NHS services through outreach and in practice work, and also by developing community hubs.

We look to offer additional support for households with children, where living in temporary accommodation presents unique challenges. For example, we work with CARIS Families, a grassroots charity that runs support services for homeless children and their parents living in hostels in the London Boroughs of Camden and Hackney. They run an after-school club at Royal Park Hostel, offering play and arts and crafts activities to resident children, and run a Homework Club offering one-to-one academic help and mentoring to school-age residents.

We also support the Hackney Playbus, which is a small charity dedicated to bringing play opportunities and support to families who need it the most. They visit our hostels to deliver play sessions that provide a variety of resources and activities that support children's early learning and development in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

City and Hackney's Enhanced Health Visiting team is a universal nurse-led service for all residents with children aged up to five. Specialist public health nurses visit families in their homes and community spaces and use strength-based approaches to support behaviour change, promote health and keep children safe. Their new service was launched in September 2023 called the 'Enhanced Health Visiting Service', which includes eleven senior nursing roles for areas of health that are considered to have the most impact on health and well-being outcomes and are reflective of the needs of families residing in Hackney. This includes a lead role for a senior nurse to support 'homeless or vulnerably housed' families.

Families on this caseload receive targeted levels of care tailored to their specific needs which could include more frequent visits by the health visitor to provide an opportunity to establish trust and develop an understanding of the family's needs. The nurse undertakes an initial holistic assessment and organises support for families to access other services, such as the support available within City and Hackney's early years settings and children's centres

or mental health services. The health visitor will help address families' broader health and well-being concerns, such as reducing isolation or providing opportunities for young children to access safe spaces to explore their surroundings and develop their gross motor skills.

Children's Centres in Hackney also conduct extensive outreach across hostels, working with hostel managers to identify support needs. For example, The Sebright Children Centre recently reported successful work with a hotel in Hoxton earlier this year, where 24 families living in a hotel were provided targeted family support. Some examples of support include helping families to access food vouchers through the Alexander Rose Charity. This charitable scheme, partially funded by public health, provides eligible families with vouchers that can be spent in markets to buy fruit and vegetables. Other support included assisting children with speech and language needs to access services and stay-and-play facilities to support child development. This work is not unique and occurs across all the centres, working with health colleagues to provide holistic support for families. Midwives and health visitors refer families living in temporary accommodation to the Multi-Agency Team for early years services that provide a gateway to all available services to families in the borough.

Despite our best efforts to provide good quality temporary accommodation that meets the needs of residents, temporary accommodation is not a substitute for a settled home. The best way to improve family life is to help them into a home. We provide ongoing support and advice to residents so they are able to make informed decisions about longer term housing and can provide financial assistance in meeting rent in advance, deposit and moving costs to facilitate this.

I hope this has clarified the programmes available and our commitment to ensuring temporary accommodation residents are supported as much as possible.



Title of Report	Changing the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
Key Decision No	FCR S254
For Consideration By	Cabinet 22 January 2024 Council 24 January 2024
Cabinet Member	Cllr Robert Chapman, Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service
Classification	Open
Ward(s) Affected	All
Group Director	Jackie Moylan, Interim Group Director, Finance

1. Cabinet Member's introduction

- 1.1. In April 2013 Hackney Council put in place a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) to provide financial assistance to those Council Taxpayers on a low income who have difficulty with paying their Council Tax. This scheme replaced Council Tax Benefit which was a national scheme administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 1.2. However, while funding for the local scheme was initially provided by way of a grant by the then Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the level of funding was considerably below the actual and projected costs of providing a scheme that replicated the national scheme.
- 1.3. After considerable deliberation and following a full consultation, the Council agreed at that time that the fairest way to deal with the Government's reduction was by spreading it across the claims of Hackney's working-age claimants. It should be noted that the Council were legally proscribed from adjusting Council Tax Support for pension age applicants within the provision of the new scheme.
- 1.4. Pension age applicants continue to receive the same level of support that they did under the old Council Tax benefit system and any support award is calculated on 100% of their Council Tax liability; where their income is below the applicable amounts set by the Department of Works and Pensions, they will be entitled to maximum 100% Council Tax reduction.
- 1.5. It should be noted that since 2013/14, the Council has lost £104m core funding from the Government in real terms (over 25%). Against this background of declining central resources, we have had to increase council tax to maintain service levels and to respond positively to the requirements

of the Covid pandemic, the cost of living crisis and the sustained increase in the demand for many of our services.

- 1.6. The Council's current scheme requires all Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimants who are of working age to pay at least 15% of their weekly Council Tax charge. Recognising the increasing economic pressures on Hackney residents and the effect of government cuts to council funding passing an increasing burden onto Council Tax payers, the Mayor and the administration's election manifesto for 2022 made the commitment that every time we are forced to increase Council Tax, we will also give low-income households a bigger discount on their Council Tax bill, despite receiving no support from the Government for this. We committed to provide low-income households with a 90% discount on their Council Tax bill by 2026 and a full 100% discount by 2030.
- 1.7. This report proposes that the Council take forward the first stage of this commitment (a 90% discount), to be implemented for April 2024.
- 1.8. The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission established a Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) Task and Finish Group to investigate the impact of CTRS on households in Hackney. In their report they recognised that Hackney's scheme is designed with regard to the needs of larger families. The task group was pleased to note that despite the Government having the 2 child limit policy on benefits, Hackney has maintained the deductions for 3 or more children in the household. Therefore not penalising families with more than 2 children.
- 1.9. The Task and Finish Group also noted that along with pensioners Hackney Council also protects care leavers (up to age 25) as part of its corporate parenting commitment, and the Council awards a 100% Council Tax exemption to foster carers paying Hackney Council Tax (who are residents in Hackney).
- 1.10. Whilst the move to a 100% maximum award is the political aim of the administration, given the Council's current and future uncertain financial position this is not something we could contemplate immediately.
- 1.11. Moving to a scheme that with a maximum 90% discount will increase the total scheme costs by an estimated £1.25m in comparison to costs if the current scheme were to be retained into 2024/25.
- 1.12. A consultation exercise with Hackney residents and other stakeholders and partners was undertaken on this proposed change to the scheme. In the consultation we asked if the Council should "decrease the minimum contribution which all working age CTRS recipients have to pay from 15% to 10% of their Council Tax liability, regardless of income and circumstance". The majority of the respondents were very supportive of the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (73% in favour).
- 1.13. I recommend this report to Cabinet and Council.

2. **Interim Group Director's introduction**

- 2.1. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 required local authorities in England to design and implement their own localised Council Tax Support Schemes from April 2013. These local schemes replaced Council Tax Benefit, a national social security benefit administered for the DWP by local councils.
- 2.2. The Council has recognised the continued impact of the cost of living crisis and welfare reform on some of our poorest communities. Some households with the least financial resources have been hardest hit by government cuts, changes to benefits, and increases in everyday living costs such as food, rent, and utilities. As a result some of our poorest residents are facing financial hardship and have found it difficult to pay contributions towards their Council Tax.
- 2.3. Local authorities were nominally given the freedom to design their own schemes, however there were a number of conditions placed on councils including the requirement to ensure that the level of Council Tax Support for pension age applicants was not to be reduced as a result of the introduction of the new scheme
- 2.4. When introduced in 2013/14, our scheme required that all current Council Tax Benefit claimants of working age paid at least 15% of their weekly Council Tax charge to offset, at least in part, the shortfall in funding provided by central Government.
- 2.5. The Council has expressed the ambition to move to a fully funded scheme by 2030 to provide additional financial support to our poorest residents, but funding cuts means the options available at this time are limited. The Council therefore needs to strike a balance between the need to provide extra support to residents who we think need it, while maintaining a scheme that is financially sustainable for the Council's wider budget and limits the impact on our ability to deliver essential front line services that our residents depend on.
- 2.6. In line with the administration's manifesto commitment, the Council is seeking to reduce the minimum contribution to 10% for 2024/25 and to move to a fully funded scheme by 2030.

3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1. **That Cabinet and Full Council note the contents of the report and the financial implications outlined within the report.**
- 3.2. **That Cabinet recommend to Full Council that Members, recognising both the ongoing cost of living crisis in Hackney and the financial constraints placed on the Council, agree to revise the Council's current Council Tax Reduction Scheme by reducing the minimum contribution**

which all working age CTRS claimants have to pay from 15% to 10% of their Council Tax liability from the 1 April 2024 .

4. Reason(s) for decision

- 4.1. When the Council last agreed to amend the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2020, it also committed officers to undertake a review of the revised scheme and further reduce the maximum contribution to 10% by 2025/26 and move to a fully funded scheme by 2030.
- 4.2. Whilst seeking to provide additional financial support to low income households the scope for amending the scheme is constrained by the need to manage ongoing reductions in Central Government funding. Over the period 2010-11 to 2023-24, the Council has suffered a £150m real terms reduction in its Spending Power which is equivalent to 33%. The Council therefore needs to strike a balance between the need to provide extra support to residents who we think need it, while maintaining a scheme that is financially sustainable for the Council's wider budget and limits the impact on our ability to deliver essential front line services that residents depend on.
- 4.3. The option of decreasing minimum contributions from 15% to 10% balances both the increasing financial pressures that our low income households face, against the ongoing cuts in government funding. The change will affect working age households only as the Council is legally prevented from making any changes to the scheme that will reduce the level of support payable to a pensioner household.

5. Details of alternative options considered and rejected

- 5.1. As part of the review process, the Benefits & Housing Needs Service commissioned external consultants, Policy in Practice, to carry out the analytical assessment of the revised scheme and to model the financial impact on the Council and on residents.
- 5.2. **Do nothing** - Policy in Practice modelling indicates that if we retain the current CTRS scheme into 2024/25 there will still be a cost increase in delivering the scheme as a consequence of increased Council Tax charges and the uprating of applicable amounts. For modelling purposes only a maximum 4.99% increase in Council Tax liability has been assumed along with a benefit uprating of 5.4% (based on projected CPI inflation figures), recognising the Council has yet to make a decision on the actual Council Tax increase for 2024/25. If we make no changes to the scheme costs of the scheme are estimated to rise from £29.32m to £31.01m, an increase of £1.69m or 5.78%.
- 5.3. Although the Council's previous commitment was to bring forward a reduction in the maximum contribution to 10% by 2025/26, it was considered

appropriate to implement this change earlier, given the depth of the cost of living crisis and the impact on low income residents.

- 5.4. Policy in Practice were also asked to model the impact of additional changes to the scheme administration intended to make the scheme more straightforward and reduce the administrative burden on the Council, through simplification of the application process and simplifying the rules related to both earnings disregards (i.e. the amount of earned income taken into account) and non-dependant deductions (i.e. the assumed contribution of other adults living in the household). These changes would increase the total scheme costs by an additional £1.00m in comparison to estimated costs set out in para 1.11.
- 5.5. As these additional changes would potentially have significant additional cost increases to the scheme as well as the potential for unintended adverse impacts on groups of residents (e.g. reducing support for larger families), we propose to carry out further modelling and consultation and consider these as part of future changes for implementation at a later date.

6. **Background**

Policy Context

- 6.1. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 required local authorities in England to design and implement their own localised Council Tax Support Schemes from April 2013. These local schemes replaced Council Tax Benefit, a national social security benefit administered for the DWP by local councils.
- 6.2. The Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) that was launched largely mirrored the previous national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme it replaced, except that all claimants of working age were required to pay a minimum payment equal to 15% of their tax liability.
- 6.3. In 2017, the scheme was amended to increase the minimum contribution from 15% to 17%, due to the scheme becoming too costly to administer as a consequence of reduced Central Government funding and increased costs. In 2020 the scheme reverted back to a 15% as a response to changes in external circumstances; the continued impact of welfare reform on some of our poorest communities meant that households with the least financial resources have been hardest hit by government cuts, changes to benefits, and increases in everyday living costs such as food, rent, and utilities.
- 6.4. The CTRS scheme is a means tested benefit: any award of financial support is calculated by comparing the needs of the household with the actual income received. Where there is a shortfall between the income and the established needs, additional support is provided; a discount is made in respect of the household Council Tax charge. To establish the needs of a household a number of factors related to living costs are identified to

establish how much money the household reasonably requires to live on and whether they have the means to pay their Council Tax liability. Within the CTRS scheme, these parameters are normally referred to as applicable amounts.

- 6.5. The applicable amounts used in the calculation initially mirrored those used when calculating Council Tax Benefit. The applicable amount was the figure set by the Department for Work and Pensions to reflect the basic living needs of the claimant and their family, but from 2017, following the introduction and rollout of Universal Credit, the parameters of the scheme were changed to ensure that the applicable amount rates tracked and matched those used in the Universal Credit calculation.
- 6.6. When the government handed responsibility for administering CTRS to local government, it did so with a significant funding shortfall, on top of a huge reduction in overall funding for councils. And since 2013, the effective level of funding the Council has received to support those entitled to support has reduced significantly. The CTRS is not funded on actual expenditure, instead the Council receives a fixed grant as part of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG).
- 6.7. In order to mitigate the impact of restrictions to Council Tax Reduction on our most vulnerable households, the Council has in place a Discretionary Hardship Scheme to help those residents who have difficulty paying their Council Tax due to the impact of minimum contributions. Under Hackney's Council Tax Reduction Discretionary Hardship Scheme each case is considered on its individual merits, with additional awards focused on households that are vulnerable or under particular financial stress. The payment can cover up to full any loss caused by minimum contributions.
- 6.8. Since the launch of the Hackney Council's Money Hub Team, access to additional support, including information on the additional Discretionary Council Tax Hardship fund and how to apply, has been a part of this service. This allows for a more holistic approach and negates the need for residents to make separate approaches to council departments and partner organisations.
- 6.9. In addition, where residents are eligible our revenues collection staff make sure vulnerable bill payers are aware of and know how to access the hardship scheme before proceeding with summons and recovery.

Impact on residents

- 6.10. Delivering the current scheme in Hackney is forecast to cost £29.32m for 2023/24, and without any changes to the scheme these costs will rise to £31.01m, an increase of £1.69m or 5.78%. The 2024/25 scheme was modelled with a 4.99% increase in council tax liability in 2023/24 and 2024/25. It should be noted that the Council has yet to make a decision on the actual Council Tax increase for 2024/25. The increase in costs is driven

by this CT increase and benefit uprating of 5.4% for 2024/25 (based on projected CPI inflation figures).

6.11. Reducing the minimum contribution to 10% increases the estimated total scheme costs by a further £1.25m in comparison to costs if the current scheme were to be retained into 2024/25.

6.12. For working age residents in Hackney, without changing the current scheme the average amount awarded will be £21.23 pw. Changing to a 10% minimum contribution increases the average award to £22.60 pw; in effect working age households in receipt of Council Tax Support will be on average £1.36 per week better off. The table below shows a more detailed breakdown:

2024/25 Comparison of council tax support (£/week)		
	Current scheme	Min Contribution of 10%
All working age	£21.23	£22.60
Legacy benefits	£22.45	£23.87
Universal Credit	£20.06	£21.38
CT Band		
A	£15.66	£16.60
B	£18.16	£19.29
C	£21.05	£22.41
D	£24.43	£26.02
Tenure type		
Council tenant	£20.12	£21.39
Private tenant	£22.29	£23.78
No HB	£21.86	£23.24
Supported housing	£20.09	£21.35
HA tenant	£22.21	£23.63
Temporary accommodation	£17.59	£18.67
Household type		
Single	£19.77	£20.99
Lone Parent	£20.07	£21.37
Couple no children	£25.02	£26.67
Couple with children	£25.97	£27.75
Economic status		
Employed	£20.80	£22.42

Out-of-work benefits	£21.33	£22.62
Self-employed	£21.79	£23.20
Barriers to work		
DLA or Similar	£21.30	£22.56
ESA or similar	£21.65	£22.95
LP child under 5	£18.57	£19.75
Carer	£23.93	£25.45

Equality impact assessment

- 6.13. As of 1 October 2023, there were 26,243 households in Hackney receiving some level of support through the current CTRS, this fluctuates through the year and we have experienced a reduction in caseload over recent months. Equalities data on CTRS recipients is extremely limited; we are able to derive the age, and, to a certain extent, disability of those getting assistance from the application process, but no record is made of marital/civil partnership status, sexual orientation, religion, gender reassignment or pregnancy. Some data is available on household gender but this is fragmented. There is an option for applicants to record their ethnicity, but so few complete the field, the data recorded is considered unreliable..
- 6.14. A full EIA has been undertaken using the available data and has been attached at appendix 1.

Sustainability and climate change

- 6.15. There is no impact on the physical and social environment as a consequence of this proposal.

Consultations

- 6.16. The Council is required by legislation to consult with the GLA (as a precepting authority) on any proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. We contacted the GLA formally in August 2023.
- 6.17. The GLA response was received 18 August and confirmed “The GLA notes that the Council is intending to implement a revised scheme from 1 April 2024. It is proposing to consult on decreasing the minimum contribution which all working age council tax support recipients have to pay from 15 percent to 10 percent of their Council Tax liability, regardless of income and circumstance. This is intended to recognise the severe financial pressures which the borough’s low income households are currently facing... At this stage the GLA has no specific comments on or objections to the proposals and is content for the planned public consultation to proceed.”
- 6.18. The Council is also required to consult with residents. The public consultation was created on Citizen Space and ran from 14th August 2023

until 24th September 2023. Paper surveys were printed for those who did not want to or could not take part online. A postal letter was sent to 25,783 residents receiving Council Tax reductions, explaining the reduction scheme and the link to the online survey. The consultation was promoted via Love Hackney, Hackney Matters website, Hackney.gov website and social media platforms. An SMS message was sent to residents as well who signed up for alerts.

- 6.19. The public consultation received 568 responses in total via the online and paper completion surveys. 568 responses provide an overall data accuracy of +/-4.1%. This means that if 50% of respondents answer 'yes' to a yes/no question, then we know that if we run the same survey again, between 45.9% and 54.1% of all residents would give the same response including those who did not submit a completed survey.
- 6.20. The majority of respondents, 73%, agreed with the Council's preferred option of updating the current scheme and decreasing the minimum contribution required from working age recipients from 15% to 10%.
- 6.21. A more comprehensive consultation report has been attached as appendix 2. We have also attached a copy of the consultation form for information as appendix 3.

Risk assessment

- 6.22. Increasing the maximum award of council tax liability used to calculate the level of support 85% to 90% will potentially bring into entitlement households on the margins of entitlement to support (due to their income being above the current threshold). It is not possible to model this as we do not hold the granular data on household income in Hackney. However, the additional support for these households will be relatively low and is estimated to not present a significant additional cost.

7. Comments of the Interim Group Director, Finance

- 7.1 Interim Group Director, Finance comments are included throughout the report and it is confirmed that the financial impact of the proposed revision to the CTRS scheme has been built into the medium term financial plan.

8. Comments of the Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services

- 8.1. The requirement to make a Council Tax Reduction Scheme was introduced by Local Government Finance Act 2012 ("LGFA"2012") sections 9 to 16 which made amendments to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ("LGFA 1992").

- 8.2. Each billing authority in England must make a scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to amounts of council tax payable, in respect of dwellings situated in its area, by;
 - 8.2.1. persons whom the authority considers to be in financial need, or
 - 8.2.2. persons in classes consisting of persons whom the authority considers to be, in general, in financial need (LGFA 1992 s13A(2)).
- 8.3. The Council made such a scheme with effect from the financial year 2013/2014.
- 8.4. LGFA 1992 schedule 1A regulation 5(1) provides that, for each financial year, each billing authority must consider whether to revise its scheme or to replace it with another scheme.
- 8.5. The Council must make any revision to its scheme, or any replacement scheme, no later than 11 March in the financial year preceding that for which the revision or replacement scheme is to have effect (LGFA 92 schedule 1A regulation 5(2) as amended with effect from 12 January 2018).
- 8.6. If any revision to a scheme, or any replacement scheme, has the effect of reducing or removing a reduction to which any class of persons is entitled, the revision or replacement must include such transitional provision relating to that reduction or removal as the authority thinks fit.
- 8.7. LGFA 1992 schedule 1A and regulations made thereunder (as subsequently amended) set out particular matters that must be included in a scheme.
- 8.8. When revising a scheme the Council must (in the following order);
 - 8.8.1. consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it,
 - 8.8.2. publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and
 - 8.8.3. consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.
- 8.9. The function of revising the Council Tax Reduction Scheme can only be carried out by full Council (LGFA 1992 s67(2)(aa)).

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 - Consultation Report

Appendix 3 - Consultation Document

Exempt

N/A

Background documents

None

Report Author	Ian Jones Legislation, Strategy and Projects Officer ian.jones@hackney.gov.uk
Comments for the Interim Group Director, Finance prepared by	Russell Harvey Senior Financial Control Officer russell.harvey@hackney.gov.uk
Comments for the Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services prepared by	Georgia Lazari Team Leader (Places) georgia.lazari@hackney.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

**London Borough of Hackney
Equality Impact Assessment Form**

Title of this Equality Impact Assessment:

The Hackney Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024

Purpose of this Equality Impact Assessment:

To identify and report the potential equality impact of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme as revised from April 2024

Officer Responsible: (to be completed by the report author)

Name: Andrew Croucher	Ext: 1544
Directorate: Finance and Corporate Resources	Department/Division: Benefits and Housing Needs

Director: Rob Miller

Date: 20 October 2023

Comment : The proposed amendment to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme provides an opportunity to provide additional support to low income households in Hackney. The proposal has been evaluated with specific consideration of potential impacts on protected groups to ensure changes to the scheme do not have an adverse effect.

STEP 1: DEFINING THE ISSUE

1. Why are we amending the Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

- 1.1. The initial Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) was adopted in April 2013 following the passage of The Local Government Finance Act 2012, which required local authorities in England to design and implement their own localised Council Tax Support Schemes. Provision was made to protect Pension Age residents from changes to their entitlement. Council Tax Reduction for this group continues to be assessed in accordance with national regulations which broadly mirror housing Benefit rules and prescribe no minimum payment towards the Council Tax due.
- 1.2. The scheme remained unchanged, except for technical amendments required by changes in law, until April 2018. At that time the minimum payment was increased from 15% to 17.5%, and other changes were made to bring CTRS in line with Universal Credit and changes to other welfare benefits and to restore the value of applicable amounts which had been frozen at 2013 levels. In recognition of the increasing financial burden on low income households this change was subsequently reversed from April 2020 and the minimum payment returned to 15%.
- 1.3. Since 2013, the effective level of funding the Council has received to support claimants has reduced significantly. CTRS is not funded on actual expenditure, instead the funding that the Council receives for CTRS is part of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). Over the period 2010-11 to 2023-24, it is estimated that the Council has suffered a £150m real terms reduction in its Spending Power (the Government's measure of our resources) which is equivalent to 33%. The predicted cost of CTRS for 2023/24 is £29.3m.
- 1.4. When the CTRS scheme was changed in 2018 the Council made a commitment to review the impact of the changes and in particular the increase in minimum payment. The purpose of the review was to allow the Council the opportunity to evaluate the impact of the CTRS changes following the roll out of Universal Credit in the borough and in the context of ongoing austerity and welfare reform. The Council continues its commitment to review the effectiveness of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in light of the Cost of Living Crisis and economic challenges.
- 1.5. The administration's 2022 local election manifesto committed that:
"every time we are forced to increase Council Tax, we will also give low-income households a bigger discount on their Council Tax bill, despite no support from the Government for this. We will provide low-income households with a 90% discount on their Council Tax bill by 2026 and a full 100% discount by 2030."
- 1.6. Modelling of the proposed change to reduce the minimum contribution to 10% indicates an additional cost to the Council of £1.2m for 2024/25. Whilst this is a direct cost to the Council the financial benefit to residents receiving CTR is significant and will put money into the pockets of the most disadvantaged.

2. What changes are being proposed?

- 2.1. Council officers have regularly undertaken internal reviews of the CTRS and commissioned Policy in Practice to model Council Tax changes for 2024/25.

- 2.2. The modelling made some basic assumptions:
- An estimated Council Tax increase of 4.99% in 2024/25
 - An estimated level of migration of claimants from legacy benefits to Universal Credit of 20%
 - Known changes to welfare support rates, national minimum wage, tax allowances and proposed regulatory change. Estimated 5.4% benefit uprating.
 - The modelling does not take into account economic or policy changes which might result if there was to be a change in government in future.
- 2.3. The modelling was shaped by the understanding that ongoing reductions in Local Authority finances require Members to consider carefully the wider implication of any options that increase expenditure on the scheme. However, Members' considerations would be made in the context of ongoing austerity, welfare reform and roll out of Universal Credit in Hackney.
- 2.4. Based upon this premise, Policy in Practice identified some headline issues.
- Costs for CTRS will increase by £1.7m in 2024/25 even if the scheme is not changed.
 - Change to 10% increases total scheme costs by an additional £1.25m in comparison to costs if the current scheme were to be retained into 2024/25.
 - Average Council Tax Support for working age households under the proposed scheme increases by 6.41% compared to the current scheme maintained into 2024/25
- 2.5. Having considered the alternative options the Council proposes that the following change to the scheme be made:
- A decrease in the minimum contribution which all working age CTRS claimants have to pay from 15% to **10%** of their Council Tax liability, regardless of income and circumstance.

3. Who are the main people that will be affected?

- 3.1. There are currently around 27,000 households in Hackney receiving some level of support through the current CTRS.
- 3.2. Equalities data on CTRS recipients is extremely limited; we are able to derive the age, and, to a certain extent, disability of those getting assistance from the application process, but no record is made of marital/civil partnership status, sexual orientation, religion, gender reassignment or pregnancy. Some data is available on household gender but this is fragmented. This information is not required in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction and provision is voluntary. There is an option for applicants to record their ethnicity, but relatively few claimants complete the field so the data recorded is considered unreliable as it is not representative of the total number of applicants.
- 3.3. Therefore a more reliable indicator will be found within the Office for National Statistics (ONS) census 2021 data or the Council's own shared evidence base.

3.4. Ethnicity

Hackney Ethnicity 2021 Census	Percentage of population
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	2.53
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	1.33
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	3.41
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	0.95
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	2.15
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	11.38
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	6.91
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	2.80
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	1.42
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	1.06
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	1.83
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	2.44
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	33.93
White: Irish	2.15
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.10
White: Roma	0.33
White: Other White	16.63
Other ethnic group: Arab	0.90
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	7.75

3.5. Religion

Hackney Religion 2021 census	
Religion	Percentage of population
<i>No religion</i>	36.32
<i>Christian</i>	30.68
<i>Buddhist</i>	0.90
<i>Hindu</i>	0.77
<i>Jewish</i>	6.72
<i>Muslim</i>	13.34
<i>Sikh</i>	0.72
<i>Other religion</i>	1.88
<i>Not answered</i>	8.66

3.6. Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation Census 2021	Percentage of population
Straight or Heterosexual	79.58
Gay or Lesbian	4.11
Bisexual	2.83
Pansexual	0.54
Asexual	0.05
Queer	0.24
All other sexual orientations	0.07
Not answered	12.6

3.7. The 2021 Census indicated that, in Hackney numbers of people who identify as LGBTQI+ was comparatively higher than the national average, 12% of respondents preferred not to answer this question.

3.8. Gender Identity

Data on gender identity was recorded in the Census 2021. 0.75% of the population in Hackney stated that their gender identity was different from that registered at birth. 0.21% identified as non-binary and 9.65% provided no answer.

These are higher than the national average.

Declared Gender Identity - Census 2021	Percentage of population
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	89.28
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	0.44
Trans woman	0.17
Trans man	0.14
Non-binary	0.21
All other gender identities	0.11
Not answered	9.65

STEP 2: ANALYSING THE ISSUES

4. Equality Impacts

4.1. **What positive impact could there be overall, on different equality groups, and on cohesion and good relations?**

- 4.2. One of the central drivers for amending the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme has been to address the impact of welfare reform and austerity on the poorest households in Hackney.
- 4.3. The CTRS is at its heart a means tested benefit: any award of financial support is calculated by comparing the financial needs of the household with the actual income received. Where there is a shortfall between the income and the established needs additional support is provided in the form of a discount to the household's Council Tax charge.
- 4.4. The proposed change does not alter the means test element and retains the principle that as income rises the support received from CTRS reduces proportionately. Hackney has a significant number of larger families and the scheme retains protections for households with more than 2 children that other councils have discarded. As a result for larger families and those with greatest need the starting point of the means test is higher ensuring these households retain a higher level of income before the reduction in support applies.
- (Percentage change in support over current scheme: +6.12% for single households, +6.36% for lone parent household, +6.61% for couple with children)
- 4.5. The proposed reduction in the Minimum Contribution to 10% applies to all working age households. The monetary benefit to applicants varies according to Council Tax Banding of the property occupied. Occupants of larger, higher banded properties benefiting marginally more than those in smaller, lower banded property. This will be a positive outcome for Hackney's larger families.
- (Percentage change in support over current scheme: +6.63% for bands E-H, +6.10% for Band A)
- 4.6. As female applicants form a large proportion of the CTRS caseload, the proposed changes to the scheme will benefit more women than men, particularly lone parents. This is however proportional to the distribution in the caseload.
- 4.7. As the starting point for means testing is higher there is a positive impact for working households as they will retain entitlement for longer as their income increases. This change provides increased support as applicants transition from benefits to employment.
- 4.8. As this is a positive change across the whole scheme there is no indication that equality groups are impacted differently.
- 4.9. **What negative impact could there be overall, on different equality groups, and on cohesion and good relations?**
- 4.10. As the proposed change is more advantageous there is no indication that the change would have a negative impact. The proposed change applies across equality groups.

Summary

- 4.11. We have identified three groups that will be positively impacted by the proposed scheme and zero negative impacts of the proposed scheme; an overall positive impact for low income and larger households especially those in larger properties and more support for more women than men as they form a larger proportion of

CTS applicants and are more likely to form single parent households. There are no negative impacts for specified equality groups under this proposal.

- 5. Other considerations** – Council Tax data for some equality groups is limited, unreliable or not collected, it is therefore difficult to draw detailed conclusions about the impact of the proposed change. As the proposed change is positive across the caseload as a whole it is likely that equality groups will benefit similarly.
- 5.1. **Age:** The changes to the current CTRS scheme only apply to working age households. Pensioner households are protected by legislation and are assessed under the Council Tax Reduction default scheme.
 - 5.2. **Gender identity:** As no data is collected on gender identity for CTRS purposes the Council is unable to model how this group might be affected. Proposed changes apply to all applicants irrespective of gender identity.
 - 5.3. **Marriage/Civil partnerships:** No data regarding applicant's marriage/civil partnership data is recorded as it is not relevant to the CTRS assessment. There is no evidence to indicate that this group is disproportionately represented in the CTRS caseload. The Council believes that the proposed changes will not have a disproportionate impact based on a person's marital status or involvement in a civil partnership as this is not considered or part of any assessment process.
 - 5.4. **Sexual Orientation:** No data regarding applicant's sexual orientation data is recorded as it is not relevant to the CTRS assessment. The Council is therefore unable to model how this group might be affected. The Council believes that the proposed changes will not have a disproportionate impact based on a person's sexual orientation as this is not considered or part of any assessment process.
 - 5.5. **Race/Ethnicity:** Whilst no data exists for ethnicity distribution within the CTRS caseload ONS data indicates that Black and Global Majority Hackney residents are more likely to be economically inactive than white British residents. However it is considered that there can be no direct correlation of this data to the CTRS caseload as there is no further breakdown of household composition to enable a reliable comparison to be made. The Council believes that the proposed changes will not have a disproportionate impact based on a person's race or ethnicity as this is not considered or part of any assessment process. The Council has other policies which seek to address inequality of financial/economic opportunity for Black and Global Majority residents.
 - 5.6. **Religion:** There is no available data within Council systems or through the census to indicate particular religions are disproportionately represented in the CTRS caseload. The Council believes that the proposed changes will not have any disproportionate impact based on a person's religion as this is not considered or part of any assessment process.
 - 5.7. **Disability and carers:** Disabled households are disproportionally reflected within the CTRS caseload. However, modelling of the proposed changes indicates that recipients of DLA/PIP, ESA or Carers allowance benefit similarly to those on other out of work benefits. (Percentage change in support compared to current scheme between +5.94% and + 6.34%)

STEP 4 DELIVERY – MAXIMISING BENEFITS AND MANAGING RISKS

6. Equality and Cohesion Action Planning

The Corporate Equality and Cohesion Policy provides a framework to delivering the Council’s vision of Making Hackney a Better Place based in the priorities: Fairer, Safer & More Sustainable.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eQ7lvYTz6lktARRAY2VqzEPzzYZg_9hZW/view

The change to the council tax reduction scheme and the actions detailed below work to meet the fairer and more sustainable priorities by ensuring that low income households receive financial support and assistance to improve household income through employment assistance and benefit maximisation.

No	Objective	Actions	Outcomes highlighting how these will be monitored	Timescales / Milestones	Lead Service
1	Maximising resident income to support affected claimants	Promote take up of welfare benefits and Money Hub working with residents mto maximise income and CTRS take up	Ongoing reports of client outcomes	Annual report	Benefits and Housing needs
2	Promote the move into employment	Encourage the take-up of childcare vouchers. Refer households to Hackney Works team for practical assistance	Working in partnership with Hackney Works Team.	Ongoing	Hackney Works
3	Provide additional assistance for those unable to pay	Increase awareness of CTRS Discretionary Support. Coordinated delivery of discretionary	Expenditure to be monitored CTR Discretionary Awards actively considered for all DHP applications	Ongoing	Benefits and Housing needs

		support through the Money Hub			
4	Assist with other welfare reforms	Giving claimants advice and discussing their housing options Help tenants to find alternative, more affordable accommodation	Regular updates provided to Benefits and Housing needs management team.	Ongoing	Benefits and Housing needs
		Support residents through planned migration to Universal Credit. Partnership working with DWP	Changes to HB Caseload.	Ongoing	Benefits and Housing needs

This page is intentionally left blank

Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation

Report Date: October 2023

Report author:

David Besbrode
Research & Insight Manager

Co-author:

Patience Quarcoo
Consultation & Events Officer

Contact

Hackney Consultation Team
on 020 8356 3343 or
consultation@Hackney.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction, Background, Consultation & Engagement Approach, Response rate	2 - 3
Overview of results	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council's preferred option of updating the current scheme and decreasing the minimum contribution required from working age recipients from 15% to 10%?	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please provide additional comments to support your response	5 - 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sentiment Analysis of comments	7 - 8
About you	9 - 15

Introduction

The CTRS helps residents on a low income to pay their Council Tax. Under the current scheme, a Hackney resident liable for Council Tax could get up to 100% of the charge paid through the scheme if they are a pensioner, or up to 83% of the charge paid if they are of working age (i.e. the Council Tax Bill Payer is under pension credit age).

The amount of support a household can get through the scheme is determined through a “means test” – this means we look at your total income and any money that you and your partner (if you have one) have as savings. We then compare it against a minimum allowance that you need to live on, depending on your circumstances.

At the moment, the Council Tax Reduction Scheme helps around 27,000 Hackney residents on a low income to pay their Council Tax.

Background

The aim of the consultation was for Hackney Council to consult with local residents about changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The Council are proposing to increase the amount of support provided to those struggling to pay their Council Tax with a reduction of their contribution from 15% to 10%.

Consultation & Engagement Approach

The consultation was created on Citizen Space and ran from 14th August 2023 until 24th September 2023. Paper surveys were printed for those who did not want to or could not take part online.

A postal letter was sent to 25,783 residents receiving Council Tax reductions, explaining the reduction scheme and the link to the online survey.

The consultation was promoted via Love Hackney, Hackney Matters website, Hackney.gov website and social media platforms. An SMS message was sent to residents as well who signed up for alerts.

Response rate

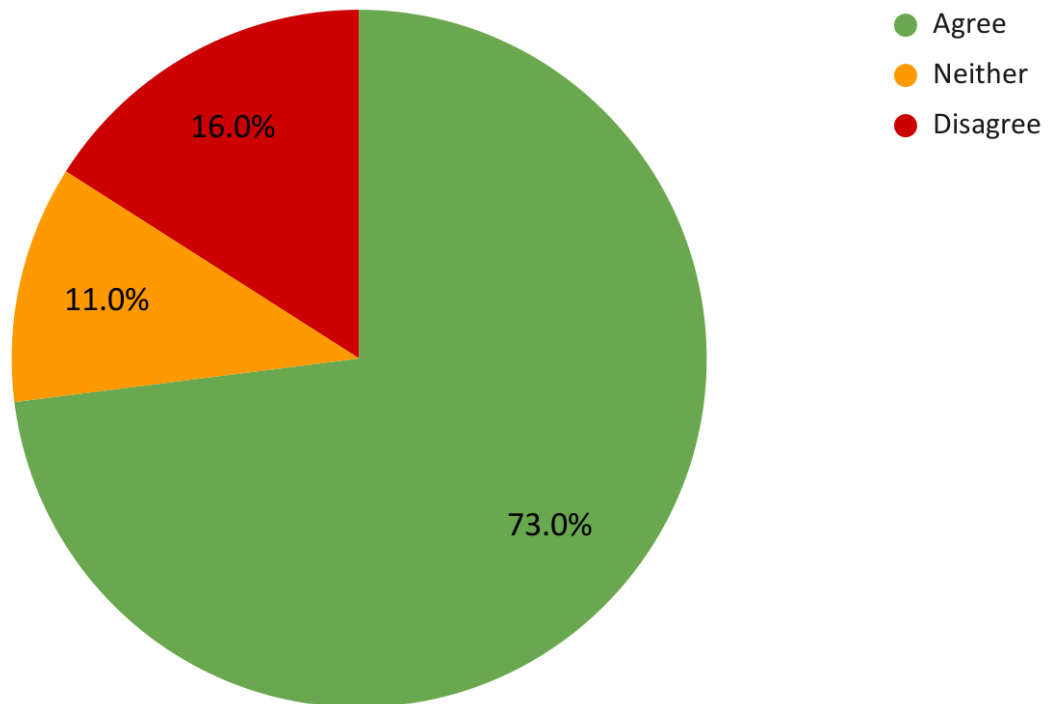
A total of 568 respondents took part in the consultation.

568 responses provide an overall data accuracy of **+/-4.1%**.

This means that if 50% of respondents answer 'yes' to a yes/no question, then we know that if we run the same survey again, between 45.9% and 54.1% of all residents would give the same response including those who did not submit a completed survey.

Overview of results

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council's preferred option of updating the current scheme and decreasing the minimum contribution required from working age recipients from 15% to 10%?
(Base 563)



The chart above represents whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with the Council updating the current scheme by decreasing the minimum contribution from 15% to 10%.

The majority of respondents, at almost three quarters, stated that they agreed with this proposal (411). 16% stated that they disagree (90), with 11% stating that they neither agree nor disagree (62).

Please provide additional comments to support your response (242 comments)

1. **Support for Reduction** (Quantity: 150+ comments)
 - a. Many residents express support for reducing council tax, emphasising the financial hardships they are facing.
 - b. Comments often mention that the cost of living has increased significantly, making it difficult for them to cover essential expenses.
 - *"I'm really struggling. Trying to buy the basics is getting harder and harder to do."*
 - *"It is a very difficult time for all low-paid people."*
 - *"The cost of living is very high with little income."*

2. **Concerns about Inequality** (Quantity: 60+ comments)
 - a. Residents express concerns about the perceived unfairness in the current system.
 - b. Some believe that wealthier pensioners receive more benefits and that working-age individuals are disproportionately burdened.
 - *"It's unfair for low-income families to pay for these services."*
 - *"Why should older rich people get free council tax?"*
 - *"Working-age individuals are disproportionately burdened."*

3. **Impact on Services** (Quantity: 40+ comments)
 - a. Residents worry about the potential consequences of reducing council tax revenue on essential services.
 - b. Some express concerns that cuts in funding might lead to a decline in services like road repairs and estate management.
 - *"Cuts in funding might lead to a decline in services like road repairs and estate management."*
 - *"We need to improve services, not cut taxes that fund them."*
 - *"I'd rather see my taxes go towards better services."*

4. **Support for Working Families** (Quantity: 30+ comments)
 - a. Comments highlight the struggles of working families who are finding it challenging to meet their financial obligations.
 - b. There's a call for additional assistance for this group, as they often face rising costs without significant benefits.
 - *"Working people pay the most where job seekers don't."*
 - *"Any reduction in bills will help working families who are badly off."*
 - *"I am working full-time and can't make ends meet."*

5. **Addressing Cost of Living Crisis** (Quantity: 40+ comments)
 - a. Residents stress the ongoing cost of living crisis, with rising food and utility costs impacting their budgets.
 - b. Many believe that a reduction in council tax would help alleviate the financial pressure they are facing.
 - *"The cost of living crisis is making it impossible to keep up with expenses."*
 - *"We are all here struggling to earn a living and keep our heads above water."*
 - *"Every little helps with the rising costs of living."*

6. **Maintenance Issues** (Quantity: 20+ comments)
 - a. Concerns are raised about the maintenance of public infrastructure, such as roads and estates.
 - b. Residents question how the council plans to address these issues and allocate resources effectively.
 - *"The council should focus on repairing roads and addressing maintenance issues."*
 - *"We have waited over a year for a roof repair."*
 - *"There are pot holes the size of a small country."*

7. **Pensioners and Contributions** (Quantity: 30+ comments)
 - a. There's a discussion about whether pensioners, who receive various benefits, should be asked to contribute more to council tax.
 - b. Some believe that adjustments should be made based on individual financial circumstances.
 - *"Pensioners shouldn't pay much because they don't have much."*
 - *"We've had to take extra work to cover the shortfall."*
 - *"Adjustments should be made based on individual financial circumstances."*

8. **Transparency and Services** (Quantity: 20+ comments)
 - a. Some residents express concerns about transparency in how council tax is used.
 - b. They suggest that the council should focus on improving services before considering increasing taxes.
 - *"The council is already heavily underfunded with unacceptable wait times of vital services."*
 - *"Transparency in activities is important."*

- *"We pay so much, stop increasing taxes without improving services."*

These detailed breakdowns provide a more comprehensive view of the various perspectives and concerns raised by residents in relation to the council tax reduction proposal. It's evident that residents have diverse opinions, with a focus on financial challenges, fairness, and the impact on services at the forefront of discussions.

Sentiment Analysis of comments

Positive Sentiment:

- Approximately 40-45% of the comments express positive sentiment. These comments often express support for reducing council tax and helping residents who are facing financial difficulties. They appreciate the proposal and the potential relief it could bring during a challenging time.
 - *"I support the proposal because it objectively leverages existing highly efficient action items available to the Borough, and it could dramatically help struggling individuals and families."*
 - *"If this helps people to cover their costs during these difficult times, then it's a good thing."*
 - *"I'm on universal credit, and any help given to me is much needed and appreciated."*
 - *"This is a great proposal as the cost of living is increasing. Every little bit of money saved will be beneficial."*

Negative Sentiment:

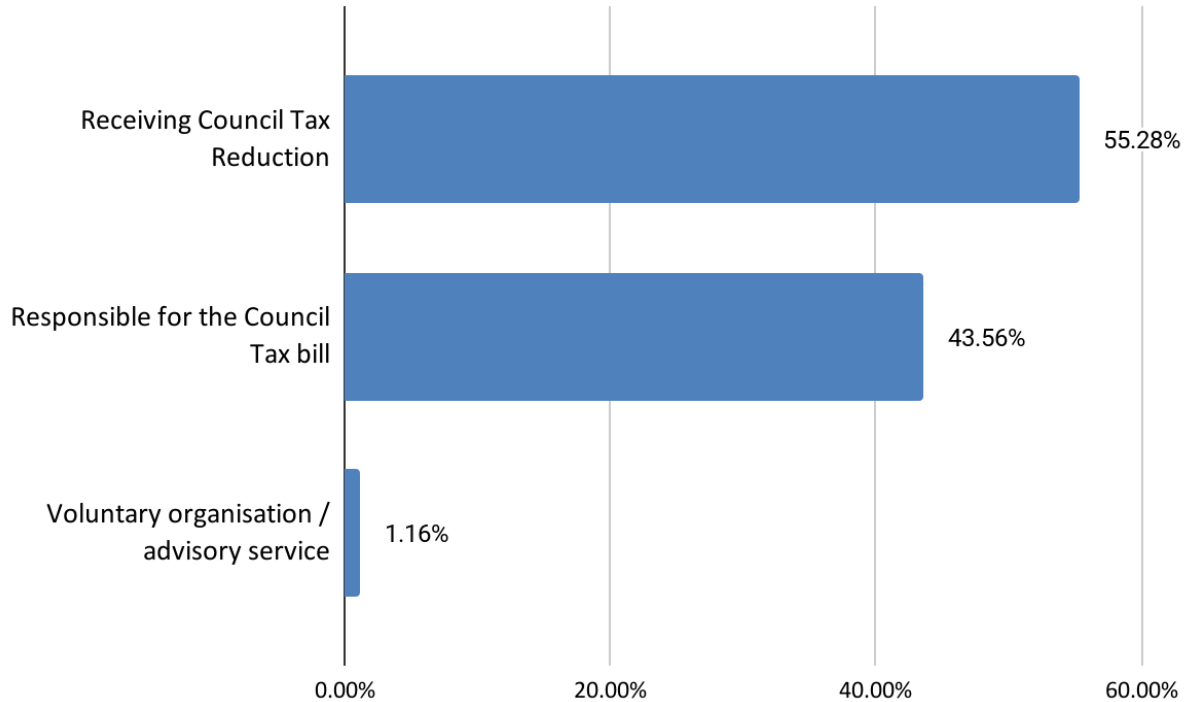
- Approximately 20-25% of the comments express negative sentiment. These comments often voice concerns about the impact of reducing council tax on essential services, potential inequality in the system, or the view that certain groups should contribute more. Some express frustration with the current cost of living crisis.
 - *"Increasing council tax is unfair, especially for those of us who work full time and get no benefits. We can't afford these constant increases."*
 - *"The council should focus on improving their services instead of increasing taxes on hard-working families."*
 - *"I don't think the council should charge those on benefits or low incomes any council tax. It's just adding to the financial burden."*
 - *"Reducing council tax may help some, but it will lead to cuts in essential services that we all rely on."*

Neutral Sentiment:

- Approximately 30-35% of the comments express a more neutral sentiment. These comments may provide additional information, ask questions, or make statements that do not strongly convey either positive or negative sentiment.
 - *"I'm unsure if this is a good or bad thing."*
 - *"The current cost of living crisis is affecting everyone, and we need to carefully consider the impact of any changes to council tax."*
 - *"I appreciate the sentiment, but I'm concerned about the potential consequences for other services."*
 - *"It's important for the council to strike a balance between helping residents and maintaining vital services."*

About you

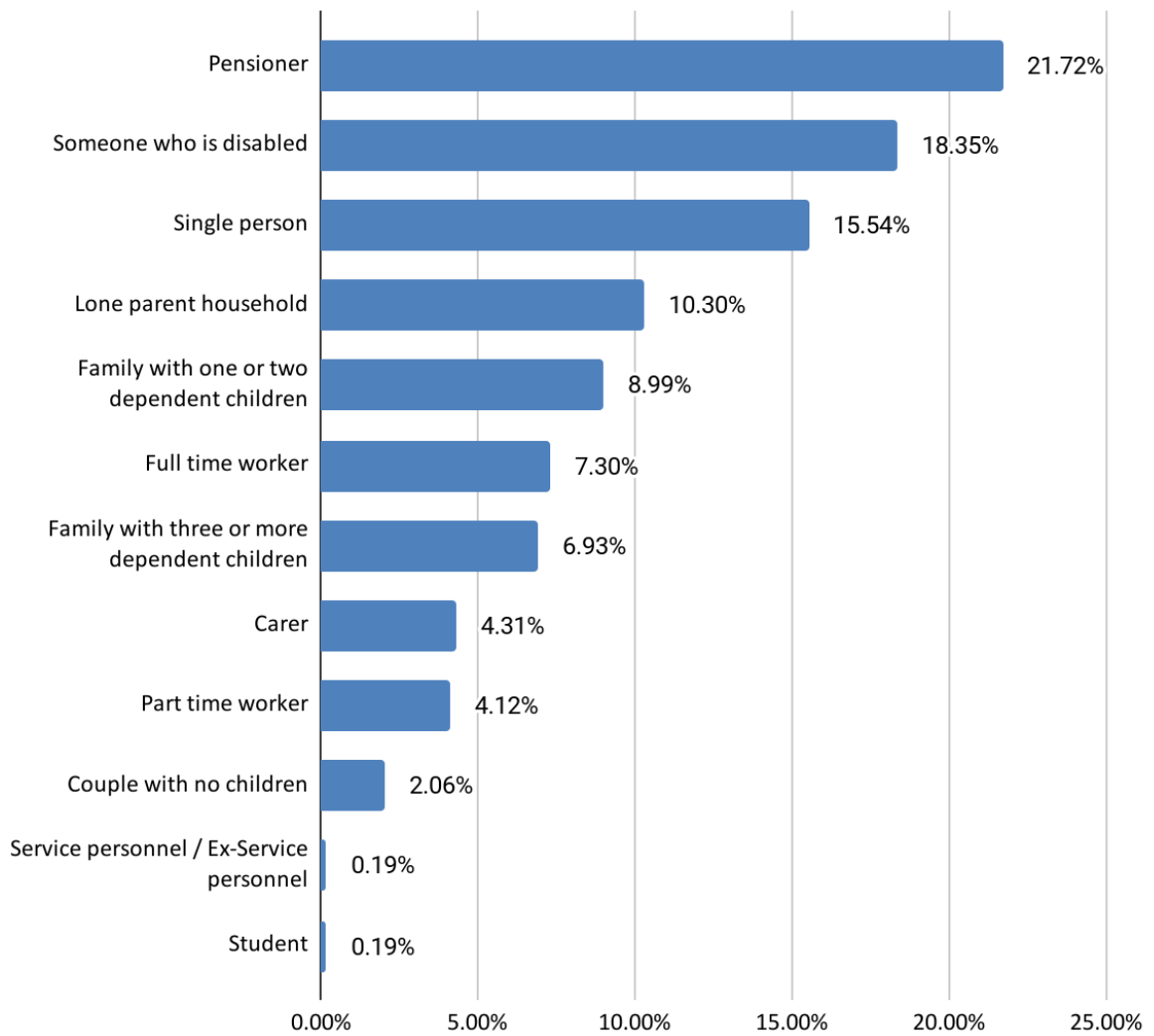
Which best represents you (pick more than one if applicable) (Base 691 responses)



Just over half of respondents stated that they are receiving Council Tax reduction (382), followed by 44% who stated they are responsible for the Council Tax bill (301).

21% (145) of respondents stated they are receiving the reduction and also responsible for the Council Tax bill.

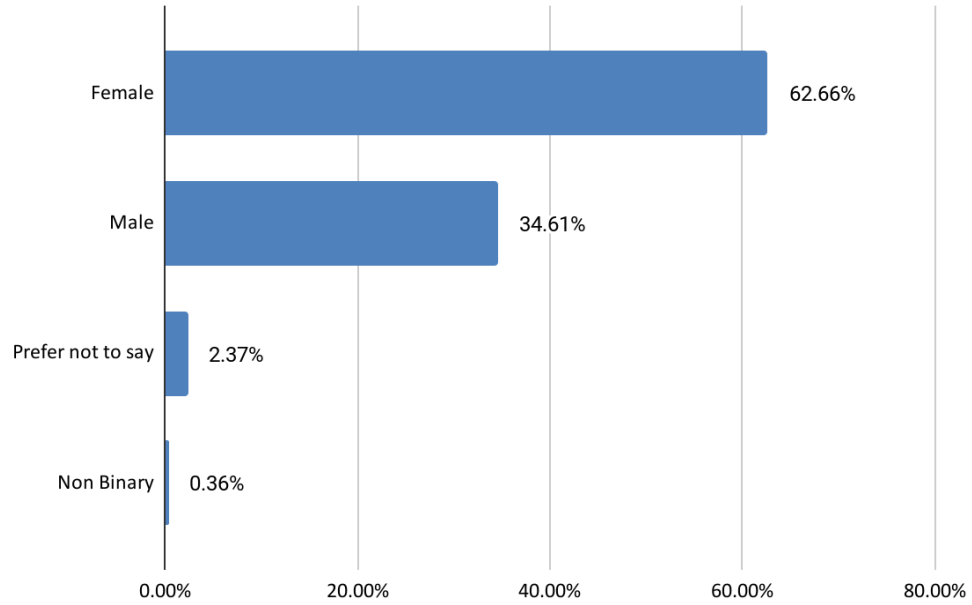
Are you a: (Base 534)



The chart above represents who the respondent is that is taking part in the consultation.

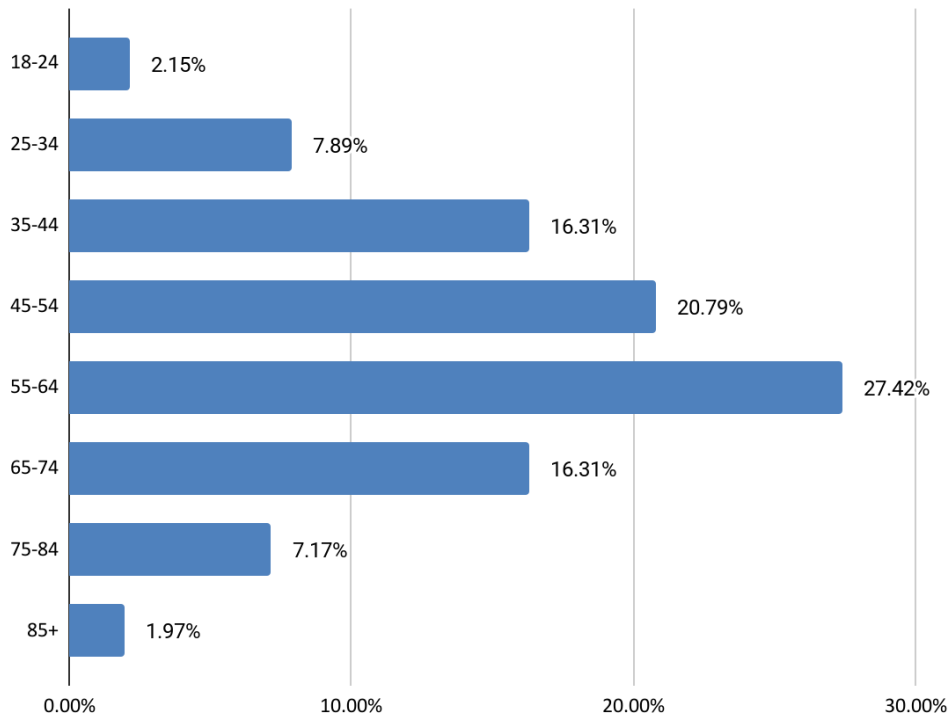
The top three highest responses are from those who stated they are a pensioner (116), those who are disabled (98), and a single person (83). These three account for 56% of all respondents.

Gender: Are you...(Base 549)



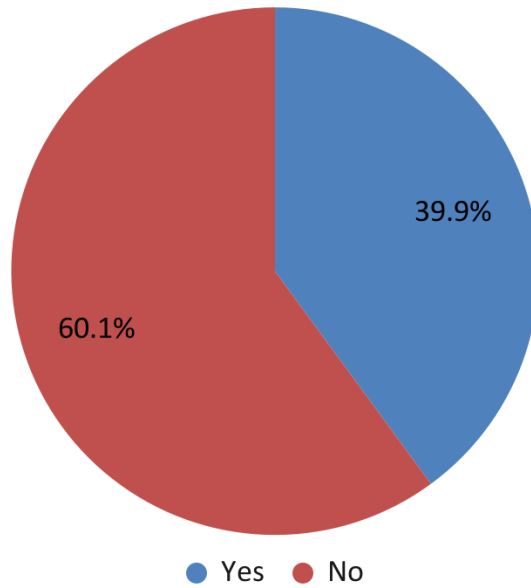
Almost two thirds of respondents stated that they were female (344), with just over a third stating that they are male (190). All others accounted for a much smaller percentage response.

What is your age group? (Base 558)



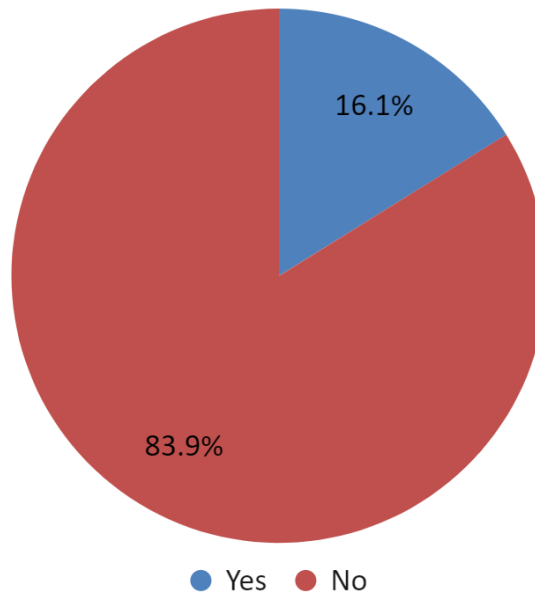
The highest percentage of respondents were in the 55-64 age group (153), followed by 45-54 (116), 65-74 and 35-44 (91 each), 25-34 (44), 75-84 (340), 18-24 (12) and 85+ (11).

Disability (Base 551)



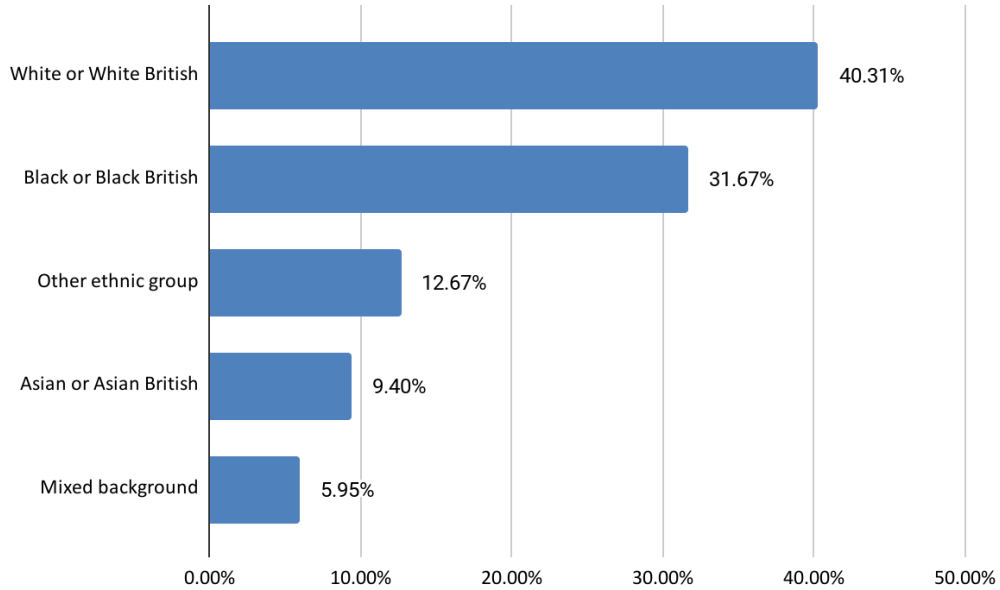
The majority of respondents, at almost two thirds, stated that they do not have a disability (331), with just over a third stating that they do (220).

Caring responsibilities (Base 547)



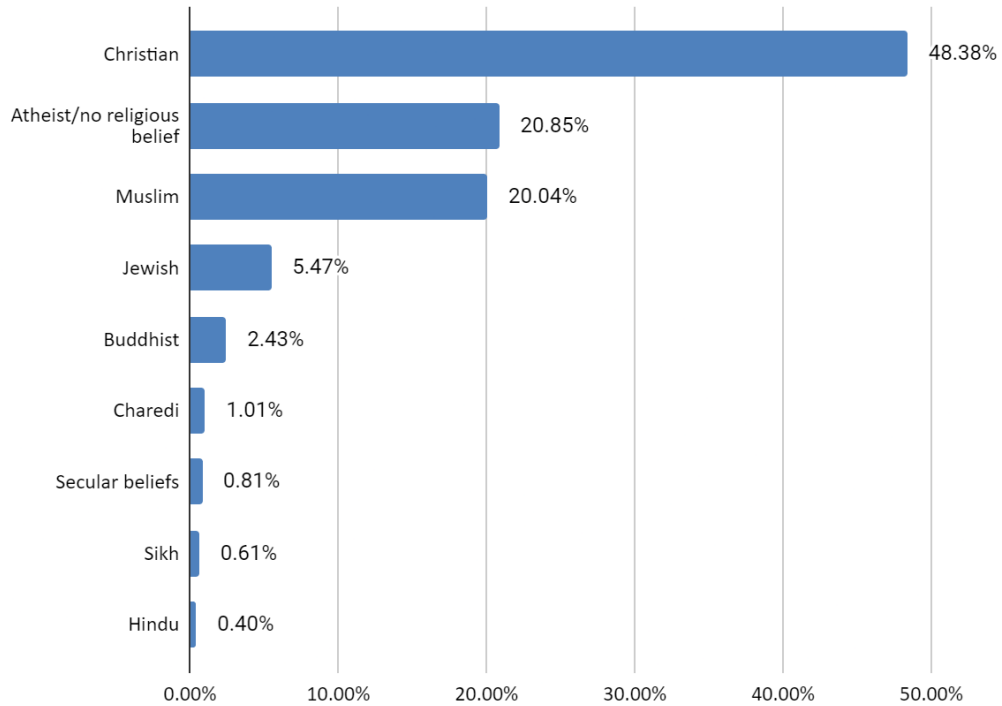
The majority of respondents stated that they do not have caring responsibilities (459), with 16% stating that they do (88).

Ethnicity (Base 521)



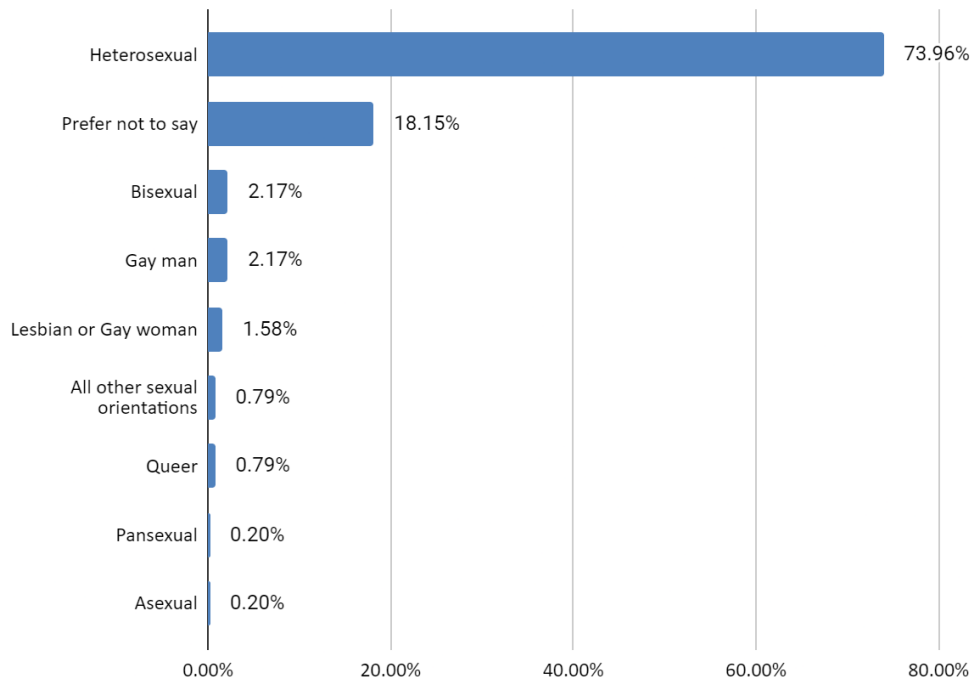
The highest percentage of respondents stated that they were “White or White British” (210). This is followed by “Black or Black British” (165), “Other ethnic group” (66), “Asian or Asian British” (49) and “Mixed background” (31).

Religion or belief (Base 496)



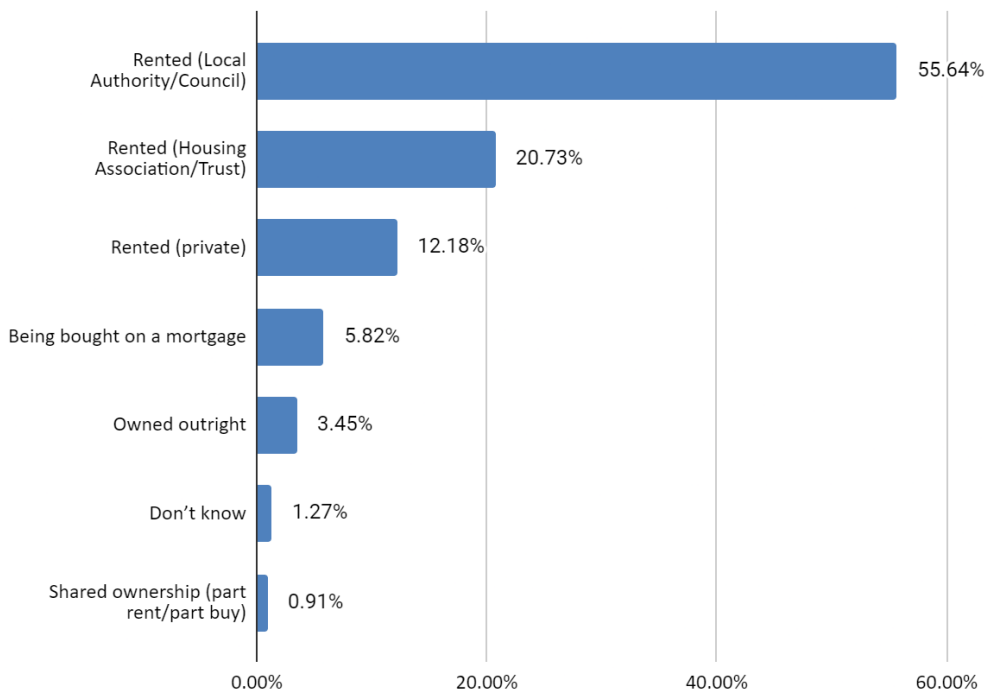
The highest percentage of respondents stated that they are “Christian” (240). This is followed by “Atheist/no religious belief” (104) and “Muslim” (99), with all others accounting for a much smaller percentage.

Sexual orientation (Base 509)



The majority of respondents stated that they are “Heterosexual” (376), followed by those who “prefer not to say” (93). All others accounted for a much smaller percentage.

Housing Tenure (Base 552)



The majority of respondents stated that they are Council Tenants (306), followed by rented from a Housing Association/Trust (116), private renter (67), having a mortgage (32), owning their own home (19), don't know (7) and shared ownership (5).

Council Tax Reduction Scheme consultation

How to have your say

You can take part in the consultation online at hackney.gov.uk/CTRS

Have your say on Hackney's proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Hackney Council is consulting residents on proposals to revise the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). Please read this consultation summary to find out more about the proposed changes, and what this could mean for you.

What is the Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

The CTRS helps residents on a low income to pay their Council Tax. Under the current scheme, a Hackney resident liable for Council Tax could get up to 100% of the charge paid through the scheme if they are a pensioner, or up to 85% of the charge paid if they are of working age (i.e. the Council Tax Bill Payer is under pension credit age).

The amount of support a household can get through the scheme is determined through a "means test" – this means we look at your total income and any money that you and your partner (if you have one) have as savings. We then compare it against a minimum allowance that you need to live on, depending on your circumstances.

At the moment, the Council Tax Reduction Scheme helps around 27,000 Hackney residents on a low income to pay their Council Tax.

Why are we reviewing the current Council Tax Reduction

Scheme? When Hackney's Council Tax Reduction Scheme was last changed in 2019 we promised to keep the scheme under review and in his manifesto the Mayor, Phillip Glanville, promised that the council would reduce the minimum contribution for the lowest income households.

Hackney Council is proposing to increase the amount of support it provides to those struggling to pay their Council Tax. The changes would mean that those who qualify for the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTRS) will get up to 90% paid if they are of working age - up from 85%. Pensioners and young people leaving care will continue to get up to 100% of their Council Tax paid. The Council has committed to regularly review its CTRS, to ensure the borough's poorest residents are not disproportionately affected by Council Tax increases.

Whilst Hackney Council wants to provide additional financial support to our poorest residents, due to the cut in money available to the Council, the options available are limited. Over the period 2010-11 to 2023-24, it is estimated that the Council suffered a £150m real terms reduction in its Spending Power (the Government's measure of our resources) which is equivalent to 33%. The Council therefore needs to strike a balance between the need to provide extra support to residents who we think need it, while maintaining a scheme that is financially sustainable for the Council's wider budget and limits the impact on our ability to deliver essential front line services that residents depend on. For these reasons the Council wishes to review the current arrangements to develop a scheme that is affordable and fair to both Council Tax Payers and to those who benefit from the support. It is intended that these changes will take effect from **1 April 2024**.

How do the proposed changes affect me?

If you are of working age and currently receive help through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme you are going to be directly affected. However, even if this is not the case, as a Council Tax payer you have an interest in ensuring the Council is spending the money it receives through both government funding and through Council Tax receipts appropriately. It is important that the Council gets the views of all Hackney residents regardless of whether they receive Council Tax Reduction or not.

The Council is legally required to consult with its residents when it makes changes to some of its services, and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme is one of those services.

What is the Council's preferred option for amending the Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

Our preferred option is to:

- Decrease the minimum contribution which all working age CTRS recipients have to pay from 15% to 10% of their Council Tax liability, regardless of income and circumstance.

Why is this the Council's preferred option?

While the amount of money the Council gets from the government to fund the Council Tax Reduction Scheme has been reduced year on year since the scheme began, the Council recognises that the impact of welfare reform has been greatest on our poorest residents and the council feel that we can no longer pass so much of this on to our poorest households.

The option of decreasing minimum contributions from 15% to 10% balances both the increasing financial pressures that our low income households face, against the ongoing cuts in government funding.

The Council's long term ambition is to reduce contributions to 0, returning it to a fully paid benefit as it was before Government reforms in 2012. We will be bringing forward proposals in future years that will take us towards this.

	Estimated expenditure for this year	Estimated expenditure for 2024/25
Current scheme	£29.32 million	£31.01 million
Proposed new scheme	Not applicable	£32.27 million

The proposed change increases total scheme costs by £1.25m in comparison to costs if the current scheme were to be retained into 2024/25. Average Council Tax Support for working age households under the proposed scheme increases by 6.41% compared to the current scheme maintained into 2024/25. Scheme costs for UC households increase by 6.54%, whilst costs for households on legacy benefits increase by 6.29%.

Why does the proposed change only affect Working Age households?

All pension age applicants who qualify, will continue to receive the same level of support. You are classed as a pensioner if you have reached the qualifying age for pension credit or if you are a couple and one of you has reached the qualifying age for pension credit.

Where will you find the money to fund the increased expenditure on the scheme?

The increased cost to the scheme under our preferred option could be funded through the Council's General Fund budget, while still allowing other front line services to manage the savings required due to ongoing reductions in our funding and increasing demand.

What alternative changes to the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme were considered?

The Council considered leaving the existing Council Tax Reduction unchanged, but recognised the severe financial pressures which the borough's low income households are currently facing.

What will I be asked to pay?

We have worked out what impact the proposed change would have based on an assumed increase of 4.99%, the actual change to Council Tax for 2024 may be different to this.

Council Tax Band	Estimated Council Tax Charge for 2024/5*	Minimum Weekly Contribution required in 2024 (15%)*	Minimum Weekly Contribution required in 2024 (10%)*
A	£1241.19	£3.57	2.38
B	£1448.04	£4.17	2.78
C	£1654.92	£4.76	3.17
D	£1861.78	£5.36	3.57
E	£2275.51	£6.55	4.36
F	£2689.23	£7.74	5.16
G	£3102.97	£8.93	5.95
H	£3723.55	£10.71	7.14

***Based on assumed Council Tax increase of 4.99%**

4

The following scenarios are examples of how residents of working age will be affected by the proposed scheme.

A single person over 35 with no dependants; not working receiving basic rate Universal Credit; living in a Band B property			
Assumed weekly household income 2024/25	Estimated weekly Council Tax Charge 2024/25 (includes 25% single person discount)	How much they would pay per week In 2024/25 existing CTR scheme	What they would pay per week in 2024/25 proposed scheme
£85.09	£20.83	£3.12	£2.08

A single person over 35 with no dependants; working 16 hours a week (minimum wage); living in a Band B property			
Assumed weekly household income 2024/25	Estimated weekly Council Tax Charge 2024/25 (includes 25% single person discount)	How much they would pay per week In 2024/25 existing CTR scheme	What they would pay per week in 2024/25 proposed scheme
£162.88	£20.83	£17.74	£16.70

Couple,partner disabled, with 4 children, one disabled; Wages £132 pw, Universal Credit £420.70 ; living in a Band D property			
Assumed weekly household income 2024/25	Estimated weekly Council Tax Charge 2024/25	How much they would pay per week In 2024/25 existing CTR scheme	What they would pay per week in 2024/25 proposed scheme
£552.70	£35.71	£31.76	£29.97

Unemployed couple with 1 non-dependant who works earning £250 per week, living in a Band C property			
Assumed weekly household income 2024/25	Estimated weekly Council Tax Charge 2024/25	How much they would pay per week in 2024/25 existing CTR scheme	What they would pay per week in 2024/25 proposed scheme
£133.57	£31.74	£14.16	£12.57

Couple with 2 children attending school; one working, wages £100pw, Universal Credit £268.48; living in a Band D property			
Estimated weekly household income 2024/25	Estimated weekly Council Tax Charge 2024/25	How much they would pay per week in 2024/25 existing CTR scheme	What they would pay per week in 2024/25 proposed scheme
£368.48	£35.71	£25.36	£23.57

5

Other help available to pay your Council Tax

There are other avenues of support to help you pay your Council Tax bill that are separate from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The Council has in place a discretionary hardship scheme for those who have difficulty paying their Council Tax and cannot get any assistance through the CTRS, or the assistance received still does not fully cover their bill. Additional help can be given to households that are vulnerable and/or under particular stress. Each application is considered on its individual merits and will be based on your Council Tax bill after any discounts, exemptions, reductions for disabilities or support have been deducted.

In addition, the Council provides extra help to Hackney's Care Leavers - young people aged 18 plus who have been looked after by Hackney Council for a certain amount of time.

Care leavers will continue to get 100% of their Council Tax paid, provided:

- They are under the age of 25
- They live in the London Borough of Hackney
- They have claimed all the Council Tax discounts and support to which they are entitled, such as a single person discount, student exemption or assistance from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

6

Taking part in the consultation

The consultation will run from **14th August 2023** to **24th September 2023**. The easiest way to let us have your views is by completing the online survey form at: <http://hackney.gov.uk/CTRS>

If you would like to speak to someone about the scheme or to request a paper copy, call **0208 356 5594** or email benefits-temporary@hackney.gov.uk.

After the consultation closes, all responses will be analysed and considered by the Council. The Council is required to approve any new scheme by **31 January 2024**. Any changes to the scheme would affect current and future claimants from **1 April 2024**.

Consultation questionnaire

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council's preferred option of updating the current scheme and increasing the minimum contribution required from working age recipients from 15% to 10%?

Strongly agree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Please provide additional comments to support your response

7

About you

This information will help us to understand our service users and residents, allowing us to establish if the response to the questionnaire is representative of the borough. All information is used under the strict controls of the 1998 Data Protection Act and the 2016 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

This information is **optional** and will not be used in a way that identifies you.

Which best represents you (pick more than one if applicable):

Responsible for the Council Tax bill

Receiving Council Tax Reduction

Voluntary organisation / advisory service (please specify in the box below)

Other (please tell us if you wish)

Are you a:

Pensioner Carer

Family with one or two dependent children Student

Family with three or more dependent children Lone parent

household Part time worker Full time worker Someone who is disabled Single person

Service personnel / Ex-Service personnel War widow / war widower

Couple with no children Other (please specify)

Gender - are you ...

Male

Female

Non Binary

Another term

Prefer not to say

If you prefer to use your own term please provide this here:

Age – what is your age group?

Under 16

16-17

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-84

85+

Disability - Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Yes

No

Caring responsibilities - A carer is someone who spends a significant proportion of their time providing unpaid support to a family member, partner or friend who is ill, frail disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems.

Do you regularly provide unpaid support caring for someone?

Yes

No

Ethnicity - are you ...

Asian or Asian

British Black or Black British

Mixed background

White or White British

Other ethnic group (please specify)

Religion or belief

Atheist/no religious belief

Buddhist

Charedi

Christian

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

Secular beliefs

Sikh

Any other (please specify)

Sexual orientation - are you...

Heterosexual

Bisexual

Gay man

Lesbian or Gay woman

Pansexual

Asexual

Queer

All other sexual orientations

Prefer not to say

If you would like to find out what this document says please tick the appropriate box, put your name, address and phone number at the bottom of this page and return it to the address below.

Bengali

এই দলিলে কি লেখা আছে সে সম্পর্কে যদি আপনি জানতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে উপযুক্ত ব্যাল্কে টিক দিন, এই পাতার নীচে আপনার নাম, ঠিকানা ও ফোন নম্বর লিখুন এবং এটি নীচের ঠিকানায় ফেরত পাঠান।

Somali

Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd in aad ogaato waxa dokumeentigani sheegayo fadlan calaamadi godka ku haboon, ku qor magacaaga, cinwaanka iyo telefoon lambarkaaga boggan dhankiisa hoose ka dibna ku celi cinwaanka hoose.

French

Si vous désirez connaître le contenu de ce document, veuillez cocher la case appropriée et indiquer votre nom, adresse et numéro de téléphone au bas de cette page et la renvoyer à l'adresse indiquée ci-dessous.

Spanish

Si desea saber de lo que trata este documento, marque la casilla correspondiente, escriba su nombre, dirección y número de teléfono al final de esta página y envíela a la siguiente dirección.

Kurdish

Ger hun dixwazin bizanibin ku ev dokument çî dibêje, ji kerema xwe qutîka minasib îşaret bikin, nav, navnîşan û hejmara telefona xwe li jêrê rûpel binivîsin û wê ji navnîşana jêrîn re bişînin.

Turkish

Bu dökümanda ne anlatıldığını öğrenmek istiyorsanız, lütfen uygun kutuyu işaretleyerek, adınızı, adresinizi ve telefon numaranızı bu sayfanın alt kısmına yazıp, aşağıdaki adrese gönderin.

Polish

Jeśli chcesz dowiedzieć się, jaka jest treść tego dokumentu, zaznacz odpowiednie pole, wpisz swoje nazwisko, adres i nr telefonu w dolnej części niniejszej strony i przeslij na poniższy adres.

Vietnamese

Nếu bạn muốn biết tài liệu này nói gì hãy đánh dấu vào hộp thích hợp, điền tên, địa chỉ và số điện thoại của bạn vào cuối trang này và gửi lại theo địa chỉ dưới đây.

Urdu

اگر آپ یہ جاننا چاہتے ہیں کہ دستاویز میں کیا لکھا ہے تو ازراہ کرم مناسب باکس میں صحیح کا نشان لگائیے اور اپنا نام، پتہ اور فون نمبر اس صفحہ کے نیچے لکھیے اور اسے نیچے دیئے گئے پتہ پر واپس بھیج دیجئے۔

Chinese

如果你想知道這分文件的詳細內容，請在方框內打鉤，在本頁下面寫下你的名字、地址和電話號碼並寄到下面的地址。

If you would like this document in any of the following formats or in another language not listed above, please complete and send the form to the address below.

In large print
On Disk

In Braille
On audio tape

In another language, please state:

Name:
Address:
Tel:

Return to:

Please return this completed questionnaire to arrive no later than 24 September 2023 to **CTRS Consultation, Consultation Team, London Borough of Hackney, Mare Street, London E8 1EA.**

Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

CTRS Consultation, Consultation Team,
London Borough of Hackney, Mare Street, London E8 1EA.

This page is intentionally left blank



Title of Report	Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap 2023
Key Decision No	F S279
For Consideration By	Cabinet 22 January 2024 Full Council 24 January 2024
Cabinet Member	Cllr Carole Williams, Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills and Human Resources
Classification	Open
Ward(s) Affected	None
Group Director	Dawn Carter-McDonald, Interim Chief Executive

1. **Cabinet Member's introduction**

- 1.1. Promoting a diverse workforce has been a Council priority since 2018. This was reflected in the Single Equality Scheme adopted in November of that year. Considerable progress was made between 2018 and 2022 and this was reported in the Corporate Plan update in February 2022 which can be found here: <https://hackney.gov.uk/strategic-plan>
- 1.2. The Council's focus on workforce diversity has been further strengthened with the appointment of the Director of HR and OD. The draft Equality Plan includes a renewed objective on this: "Take action to develop the leadership and management culture and ensure workforce diversity at all levels".
- 1.3. Hackney Council has published information relating to the differences in pay between men and women as required by the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (published in April 2018). The Gender Pay Gap report is published annually on both the council's website and on a dedicated central government site. This is the seventh annual report for Hackney Council.
- 1.4. Reporting on and understanding the intersectional impact of pay gaps on gender as well as other protected characteristics is part of our Strategic Plan.

- 1.5. Therefore, while there is no statutory requirement to do so, Hackney also produces the ethnicity pay gap. The ethnicity pay gap is presented in this report.
- 1.6. We want to produce a disabled staff pay gap, however reporting rates are such that this data is not currently statistically significant (17% of staff choose “prefer not to say” when asked if they are disabled and only 5% identify as being disabled). To address this we will commit to improving reporting rates over the next two years.
- 1.7. In fact, less than half of our workforce profiles (46%) have every equality field completed (including fields such as ethnicity, disabled status, age, sexuality, etc.). This makes it difficult for us to currently draw meaningful insight from our data.
- 1.8. Once we are able I also want to apply an intersectional lens, for example, to look at the pay gap specifically for Black and Global Majority Ethnicity Women.
- 1.9. Many of our residents and employees have felt a state of ‘perma-crisis’ since 2020. With Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the cost of living crisis all having long-term effects on standards of living. Hackney is more committed than ever to understanding our pay gaps, identifying barriers to progression for some, and working strategically to ensure that everyone feels they belong here.
- 1.10. Over the past few years, there has been an increased investment in people and workforce planning, culminating in a redesign of the Council’s Human Resources and Organisational Development function including new roles specifically supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). While the effects of the service redesign itself won’t be seen in this data, I’m confident the increased investment will become apparent over time.

2. Interim Group Director's introduction

- 2.1. Paying men and women different wages for doing the same job has been illegal for some time. Yet in many organisations there is still a trend that men earn more. This has been seen as such a significant issue by the government, that in 2017 they legislated that all businesses with over 250 employees, are required to publish figures that measure this difference by comparing the average salaries of men to the average salaries of women and quantifying the difference.
- 2.2. Each year we are required to update this figure and publish it alongside supporting analysis on our public website.

- 2.3. At Hackney, encouraged by Councillor Williams, we also publish our ethnicity pay gap, which measures the difference in average salaries of white employees and those who are Black or of a Global Majority ethnicity.
- 2.4. We do this because it is an important measure against which we should be accountable, and because we want to be able to see the impact of our action as we commit to being anti-racist.
- 2.5. Unlike many London boroughs, Hackney Council’s gender pay gap is in favour of women, and actually more so this year than last. What this tells us is that there are either more men in the lower-paid bands or more women in the higher-paid bands and this difference (or a combination of both) has increased since last year.
- 2.6. In Hackney the difference is mainly caused by having more men earning wages that fall in the lowest quartile. This category covers roles such as recycling assistant, environmental operative, and grounds maintenance employees, which tend to attract mostly men, particularly those of Black or Global Majority ethnicities.
- 2.7. The data set for 2022/23 captures a transfer of staff who joined Hackney in April 2022 from Parking and Markets services. The demographic breakdown of these teams have slightly changed our results.
- 2.8. Here is a breakdown of the Parking and Markets staff who were transferred across in April 2022 and who still remain working at the Council:

	Women		Men		Total	
Quartile 1			1	1.1%	1	1.1%
Quartile 2	2	2.2%	8	8.8%	10	11%
Quartile 3			2	2.2%	2	2.2%
Quartile 4	15	16.5%	63	69.2%	78	85.7%
	17	18.7%	74	81.3%	91	100%

	Black and Global Majority		White		Total	
Quartile 1	1	1.2%			1	1.2%
Quartile 2	4	4.8%	6	7.1%	10	11.9%

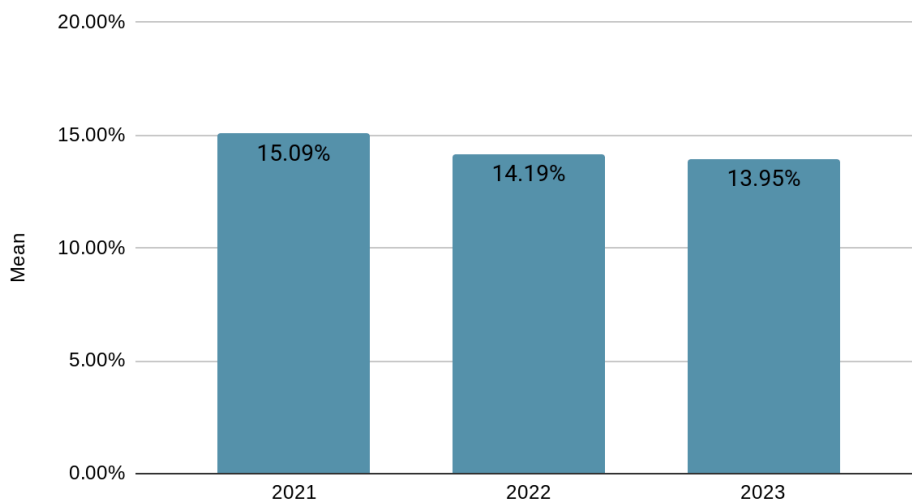
Quartile 3	2	2.4%			2	2.4%
Quartile 4	60	71.4%	11	13.1%	71	84.5%
	67	79.8%	17	20.2%	84	100%

2.9. This is one of the contributing factors that has led to our mean gender pay gap increasing from 1% in favour of women in 2022 to 3.9% in favour of women in 2023.

2.10. We have also seen a number of senior women either recently joining or being promoted to the Corporate Leadership Team. Only one of these moves happened before the data snapshot was taken for this report, meaning we won't see the effect of the other changes until next year's report.

2.11. In contrast to this however, Hackney Council's mean ethnicity pay gap has continued to decrease although only marginally. This is despite the significant increase in Black and Global Majority staff in the lowest quartile caused by the transfer of staff from Parking and Markets.

Mean Ethnicity Pay Gap (2021 to 2023)



2.12. We can be cautiously optimistic about this continued improvement, which should encourage us to continue in our efforts towards building an anti-racist Council.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1. **Cabinet and Council are invited to note the contents of this report.**

4. Review of Previous Action Plan

- 4.1. The 2022 Pay Gap report committed to achieving the following KPIs:

- 4.2. **Aim to close the 10% gap between staff who feel the Council is committed to Equality in policy and those who feel the Council is committed in practice**

The original measure was taken from the 2016 staff survey. In 2018, the gap had unfortunately grown to 13% (between 82% in principle and 69% in practice) and in 2021 it was slightly higher again at 14% (between 76% in principle and 62% in practice). A more recent measure isn't available since Hackney hasn't run a more recent staff survey.

- 4.3. **Aim for there to be a higher proportion of disabled staff working at the Council**

In 2022 5.71% of staff declared being disabled, compared to 5.38% in 2023. While this number has fallen slightly, there are also levels of uncertainty due to 17% of staff who have not made declarations in relation to disability. This means the data we hold currently is not statistically reliable. Hackney Council commits to improving the declaration rates of disabled staff over the next two years to ensure we can form more reliable insights about our disabled colleagues.

- 4.4. **Aim for senior management to be more reflective of Hackney's diversity (ethnic origin and disability)**

In terms of ethnicity, in 2022 28.51% of Senior Management staff (SM and CO grade) were Black and Global Majority compared with 31.51% in 2023 (an improvement of three percentage points). In terms of disabled status, as mentioned in point 3.3, the data we have is not robust enough to produce confident measures. That is why improving the declaration rates of disabled staff will be a key priority.

- 4.5. **Aim for managers to feel more confident and competent in promoting equality and addressing workforce diversity.**

A baseline for this measurement hasn't yet been established and therefore measuring our achievement of this aim needs to be considered.

- 4.6. **Aim for disabled staff to be more satisfied with the Council as an employer and for a higher proportion feel that the Council is committed to Equality in practice**

As mentioned in point 3.3 the data we have is not currently strong enough to produce confident measures.

4.7. **Aim to narrow the ethnicity pay gap**

While we have reduced the ethnicity pay gap for a third time in a row, from 14.19% to 13.95% (an overall improvement of 0.24%) we aim to improve it by a more significant margin in future.

5. **Reasons for Decision**

5.1. While our mean gender pay gap continues to grow in favour of women, we cannot become complacent as the difference could easily be reversed.

5.2. In May of this year (2023) Hackney increased its provision for supporting equality, diversity, and inclusion for the workforce by recruiting a designated Workforce Inclusion Officer, and further investment in recruiting a Head of Organisational Development, Strategic Workforce, and Inclusion.

5.3. These additional resources will lead all equality, diversity, and inclusion initiatives aimed at supporting the workforce.

5.4. We must also work hard to continue reducing the ethnicity pay gap.

5.5. As pledged by Councillor Williams, “[Hackney Council] will continue to develop an Anti-Racism Action Plan, maintaining our stance as an anti-racist council and borough.”

5.6. As an organisation, Hackney continues to be more actively anti-racist, by inviting conversations about racism and providing specialist support for staff who have experienced racialised trauma.

5.7. In late 2021, a 10-week pilot scheme provided peer support to workers in Hackney, listening to the voices of Black and Global Majority colleagues as they shared their day-to-day lived experiences of racism.

5.8. As a result of this pilot, we launched racialised trauma peer support sessions, utilising the peer support model, to help alleviate some of the symptoms of racialised trauma.

5.9. In 2023 we ran several peer support sessions specifically to support staff regarding the case of Child Q. We allocated 60 spaces, had 41 sign-ups, and 23 people attended. We also commissioned one-to-one counselling for 15 members of staff who requested support.

- 5.10. We are now undertaking an evaluation of the feedback from these provisions and will use this to inform future services and support in this area.
- 5.11. In October 2023, the Council held its second Anti-Racism Summit, which was open across the whole Council for the first time.
- 5.12. The Summit started with a live day-long event that welcomed 550 employees in person, with 2,700 employees joining live online and many more watching the recording. It was the most highly attended staff event in Council history, with a total equivalent to over half of our workforce in attendance either in person or online.
- 5.13. After the initial launch event, each Council directorate delivered events that were designed for their areas but were open to all staff. In total, there were around 30 directorate-specific events. Evaluation of the events resulted in an average satisfaction rating of 4.5 out of 5.
- 5.14. One of these specific events focused on the breakdown of Black and Global Majority staff across the different salary scale points, working in groups to identify problems and barriers, and collectively identifying ideas for action.
- 5.15. The Summit closed on 21 November and following feedback and an evaluation of the programme, there will be a targeted focus on actions that we will all take to further the work of the council and continue to be actively anti-racist as employees and as an organisation.
- 5.16. We understand the key role our line managers hold in building an inclusive culture, so in 2021, we launched an Inclusive Management Toolkit which is designed to support managers in considering all stages of an employee's journey, their own role as managers in supporting their staff, and how each of these roles can be made more inclusive.
- 5.17. To ensure wide coverage of these inclusive principles and uptake of the toolkit, we also built a network of Inclusion Champions whom we trained in the principles of inclusive leadership. These champions take on a range of citizenship-style roles for the Council including becoming trainers, providing support for inclusive projects, and working on cross-organisational policy development. Inclusion champions were involved in the recruitment of a number of senior directors and the Chief Executive.
- 5.18. As pledged by Councillor Williams, "[Hackney Council] will continue reporting on and understanding the intersectional impact of pay gaps on [gender as well as] other protected characteristics". But to do this, we need to improve declaration rates (percentage of staff who declare their demographic details as opposed to those who choose 'Prefer not to say').

- 5.19. Therefore, over the next two years, we will work to improve organisational trust, creating a culture where employees are happy sharing their true selves with the Council, with the ultimate aim of encouraging staff to complete equalities information on their HR records so that we will be able to publish statistically significant disabled and intersectional pay gap figures by 2024/25.
- 5.20. We would also like to work with the Pensions Team to explore publishing pensions specific gender and ethnicity pay gaps and build an action plan to address any inequality.

6. Background

6.1. Gender Pay Gap Reporting 2023

The gender pay gap is the **difference in the average hourly wage of all men and all women across the workforce**. If there are fewer women in the highest-paid jobs or more in the lowest-paid jobs, this would lead to a pay deficit for women.

- 6.2. The law (the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017) requires that the Council calculate and report the gender pay gap annually. This report gives statistics for the seventh gender pay gap report (2023/24 reporting year) with data as of 31 March 2023. The required statistics will be uploaded to the Government Equalities website in compliance with the legislation. The gender pay gap tables are also available on the Council's website for each year.
- 6.3. The way the gender pay gap is to be calculated is set down in statute and is very specific. The Council must calculate the statistics for both ordinary pay and bonus pay. In our context, bonus pay applies only to the Fair Pay scheme operating in Housing.
- 6.4. **The Gender Pay Gap** is calculated as the difference between women's pay and men's pay as a percentage of men's pay.
- 6.5. On the snapshot date of 31 March 2023, the gender pay gap in Hackney Council remains in favour of women.

Mean hourly rate	-3.87%
Median hourly rate	-5.55%

2023:

The mean hourly rate for women was £22.12, and the median was £20.74. The mean hourly rate for men was £21.29, and the median was £19.65.

Compared to 2022:

The mean hourly rate for women was £20.68, and the median was £19.49. The mean hourly rate for men was £20.48, and the median was £19.49.

6.6. The gender pay gap remains in favour of women employees. The measure more typically used is the median, as it takes a central point in the salary range. Outliers (salaries that are significantly higher or lower than typical salaries) can skew the average (mean). In March 2022 the mean rate was -0.98% in favour of women, and there was no gender pay gap when using the median.

6.7. 2023:

Women earn £1.06 for every £1 that men earn when comparing median hourly pay. Their median hourly pay is £19.65. Their median hourly pay is 5.6% higher than men's. When comparing mean (average) hourly pay, women's mean hourly pay is 3.9% higher than men's.

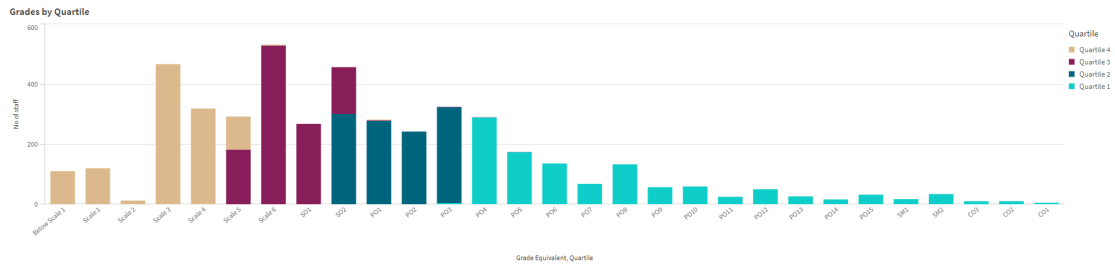
Compared to 2022:

Women earned the same for every £1 that men earned when comparing median hourly pay. Their median hourly pay was £19.49. When comparing mean (average) hourly pay, women's mean hourly pay was 0.98% higher than men's.

6.8. It is important to note that the pay gap does not indicate that women are paid more than men in any particular job. The Council operates a nationally recognised and equality-proofed pay and grading scheme and is confident that for the same job, men and women are paid equally.

6.9. Pay quartiles show the proportion of men and women in four pay bands. The hourly pay for both men and women is arranged from the lowest to the highest then divided as evenly as possible into four quartiles. The proportion of men and women is then calculated for each quartile.

6.10. **The split of pay grades by quartile:** The following chart shows where the boundaries are between quartiles in terms of pay scales.



[\(View full version of this chart \)](#)

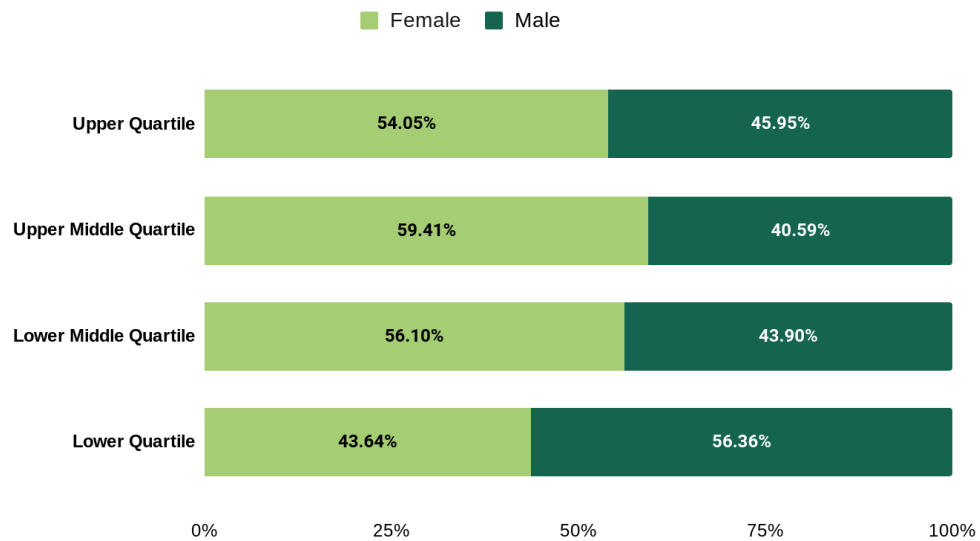
NB: Scale 1 SP3 (£25,359) was the lowest point paid 2022/23. There are 111 employees who fell below that minimum figure at the time this snapshot was taken. This was caused by the members of staff being transferred over to the council who were receiving a (protected) salary lower than SP3. There was a slight delay but these employees have now been aligned to our terms and conditions and are receiving SP3. These pay values will not appear until the next reporting period.

6.11. Overall the Council employs more women than men; and this is represented across all the pay quartiles with the exception of the lowest quartile that has 12.7% more men than women, an increase of 6.8% since 2022. Typical job titles in this band include - cleaner, environmental operative and grounds maintenance employees.

6.12.

	2023		2022	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total Workforce	53.3%	46.7%	54.8%	45.2%
Upper Quartile	54.05%	45.95%	53.42%	46.58%
Upper Middle Quartile	59.41%	40.59%	57.02%	42.98%
Lower Middle Quartile	56.10%	43.90%	58.25%	41.75%
Lower Quartile	43.64%	56.36%	50.44%	49.56%

Gender Profile by Pay Quartiles 2023



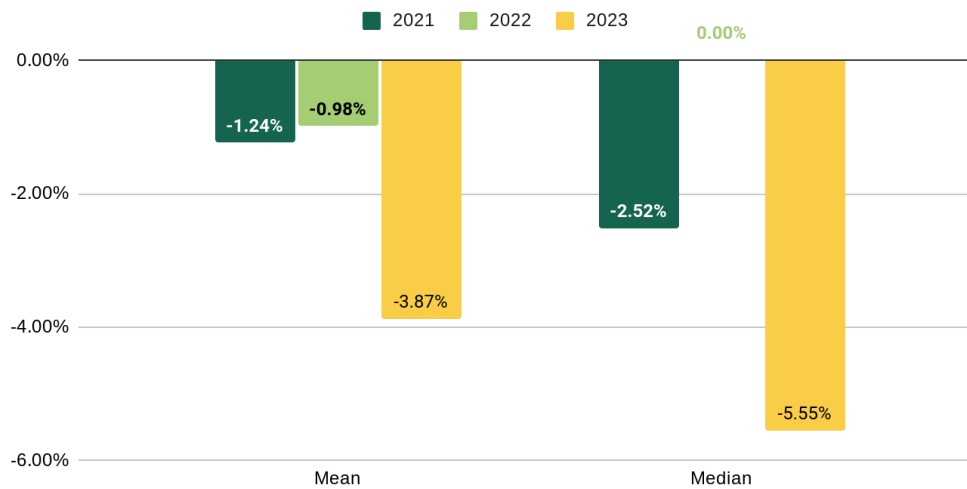
6.13. The upper quartile has almost the same representation when compared to the workforce as a whole. The upper middle quartile has the highest representation of women.

The gender composition for each quartile has changed little since last year with the most notable change being in the lower quartile where the representation of women decreased to 43.64% compared with 50.44% the previous year. This is likely to have been due to the transfer of staff from Parking and Markets.

6.14. In Hackney, the position for the past 3 years is as follows:

2021		2022		2023	
Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
-1.24%	-2.52%	-0.98%	0.00%	-3.87%	-5.55%

Gender Pay Gap 2021 to 2023



6.15. The gap in favour of men in terms of bonus pay remains. However, it is not possible to draw conclusions from this because so few women receive a bonus. Men overwhelmingly benefit from the Fair Pay scheme. This bonus is protected under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) regulations.

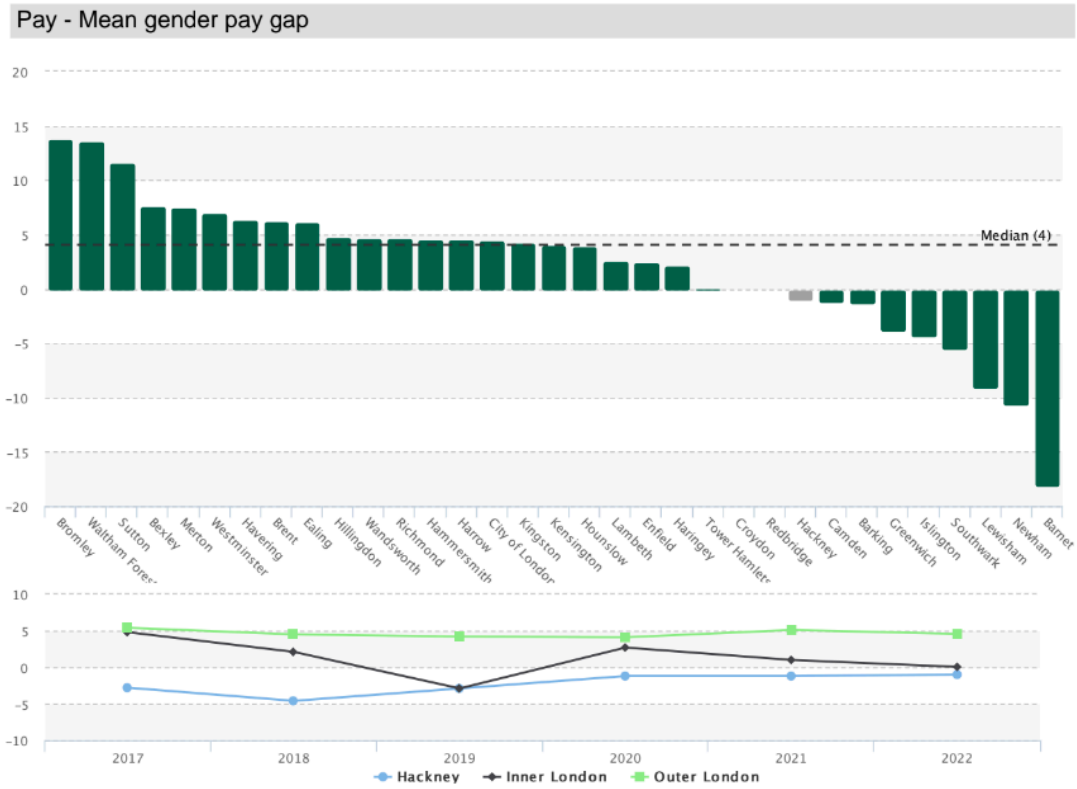
6.16. The Fair Pay scheme applies to operatives working in trades in the Housing department. In 2023 this involves approximately 178 employees, of which only a small number are women (8 Women and 170 Men). Job titles include, for example, carpenters and electricians. Productivity payments are based on evidence, actual performance measurements, and most importantly, the time taken to perform tasks.

6.17. **Benchmarking**

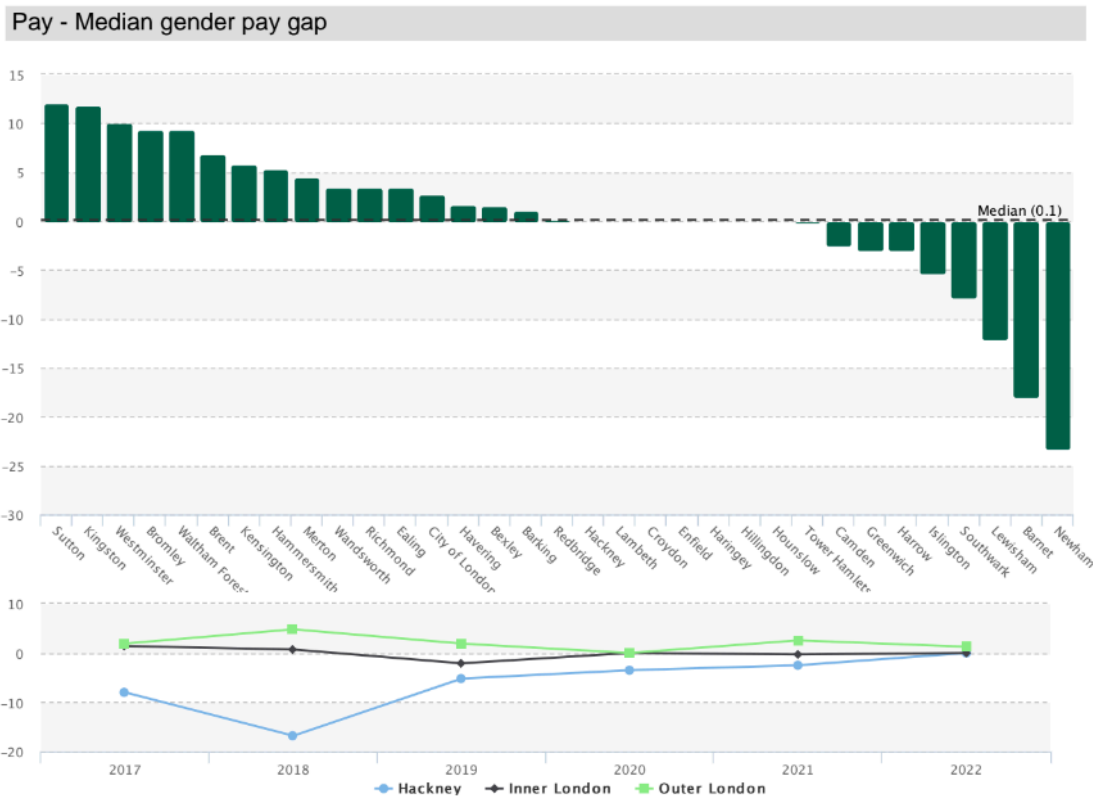
Comparative data on the Gender Pay Gap is presented but comes from different sources and is indicative.

6.18. Comparative data for is available from The HR Metrics Benchmarking Services (provided by London Councils). The comparative data for the 33 boroughs who have inputted data for the 2022/23 reporting year is provided below. The snapshot date is 31 March 2022.

6.19. Hackney's mean gender pay gap of -1% (2022) fell in the second quartile of all the London boroughs, and for inner London (just outside the top quartile). The average median for London boroughs is 4%.



6.20. Hackney's median gender pay gap of 0% (2022) fell in the second quartile of all the London boroughs, and the third quartile for inner London. The average median for London boroughs is 0.1%.



6.21. Data taken from various sources provides the following picture:



6.22. **Average Mean Gender Pay Gaps 2020 to 2022:** The average mean gender pay gap values of Local Government indicate women were paid 4.2% less

than men in 2022. This compares to 4.82% less in 2021. In other words for every £1 paid to male employees, only 96p was paid to women employees (95p in 2021).

- 6.23. **Average Median Pay Gap data 2020 to 2022:** The table below shows the average median pay gap figures for 2020 to 2022.

Sector	Average % Median Pay Gap		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
London Borough of Hackney	-3.53	-2.52	0
LGA (All Local Authorities UK)	3.15	3.02	2.69
London Boroughs	0.27	0.74	0.52
Inner London	-0.24	0.02	0.19
Outer London	0.61	1.2	0.73
UK*	14.9	15.1	14.9

* Data for UK Gender pay gap averages taken from ONS - Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

- 6.24. The average of the median values for Local Government indicates that in 2022 women were paid 2.69% less on average than men. In other words for every £1 that the median man was paid, the median woman was paid 97.3p. This compares to 3.02% (96.8p) in 2021.
- 6.25. The ONS website notes that interpreting average earnings data is difficult owing to the impact COVID-19 has had on the data over this period 2020 and 2021. This was affected both in terms of wages and hours worked and also disruption to the collection of data from businesses and as ONS states, this means that comparison with this period needs to be treated with caution.

6.26. **Ethnicity Pay Gap**

At the time of the first gender pay gap report, there was a commitment made by the Cabinet Member to produce an ethnicity pay gap on the same basis as the gender pay gap in future years. This has been done and is shown in Appendix 2.

6.27. The Council has also taken the decision to undertake an ethnicity pay gap analysis, despite the fact that a government announcement means it is unlikely to be required by law anytime soon. The Council will continue to do this because of its commitment to fairness and to enhancing the diversity of our workforce. The Council continues to back calls for mandatory reporting of annual ethnicity pay gaps.

6.28. The terminology used in this report reflects Hackney’s move away from the term ‘ethnic minorities’ in favour of the term ‘Black and Global Majority’, and this term is used throughout the report.

6.29. **The Ethnicity Pay Gap** is calculated as the difference between Black and Global Majority employees’ pay and white employees’ pay as a percentage of white employees’ pay.

6.30. On the snapshot date of 31 March 2023, the Ethnicity pay gap in Hackney Council was:

Mean hourly rate	13.95%
Median hourly rate	14.35%

6.31. The ethnicity pay gap shows that there is a pay gap in favour of white employees of 13.95% as measured by the mean and 14.35% as measured by the median. The measure more typically used is the median, as it takes a central point in the salary range. Outliers (salaries that are significantly higher or lower than typical salaries) can skew the average (mean).

6.32. The proportion of white employees as compared to Black and Global Majority employees, increases progressively in the 3 higher quartiles. There is a higher proportion of Black and Global Majority employees in the lower middle quartile (65.58% compared to 34.42%) and the lower quartile (68.01% compared to 31.99%). The full data set is shown in Appendix 2.

		2023		2022	
		Black and	White	Black and	White

	Global Majority		Global Majority	
Total Workforce	58.85%	41.95%	56.72%	43.28%
Upper Quartile	39.29%	60.71%	38.58%	61.42%
Upper Middle Quartile	59.35%	40.65%	56.32%	43.68%
Lower Middle Quartile	65.58%	34.42%	66.04%	33.96%
Lower Quartile	68.01%	31.99%	65.94%	34.06%

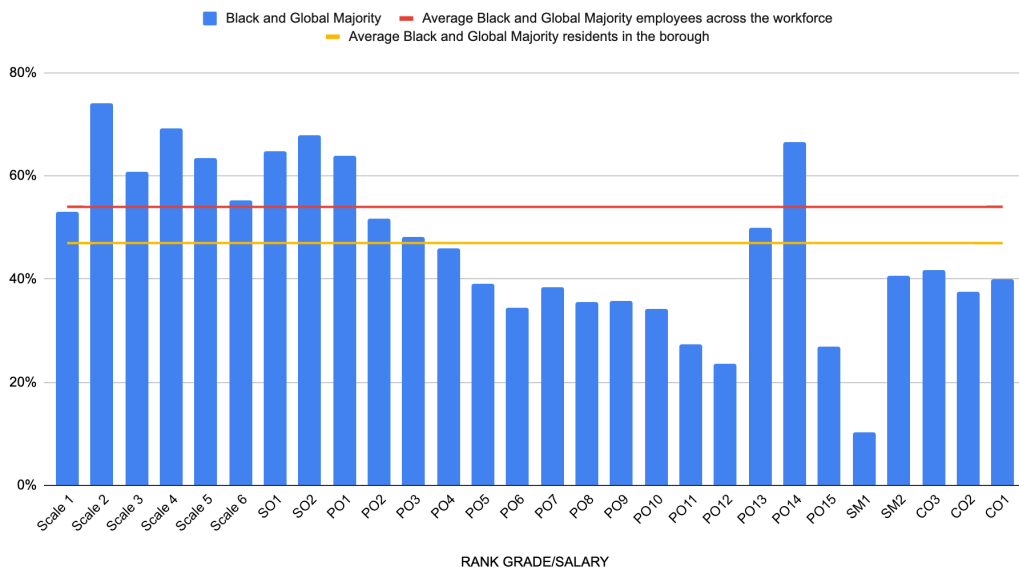
6.33. This compares the position with 2022, which showed a 14.19% mean and 15.15% median.

In Hackney, the position for the past 3 years is as follows:

2021		2022		2023	
Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
15.09%	12.94%	14.19%	15.15%	13.95%	14.35%

6.34. **Black and Global Majority employees on different pay scales:** This chart shows the spread of Black and Global Majority staff across the different pay scales.

Black and Global Majority and Average Black and Global Majority employees across the workforce



6.35. From the chart, it is clear that there are an above average number of Black and Global Majority staff in the lower half of the pay scale (where there are also significantly more people employed), and a below average number of Black and Global Majority staff in the top half of the payscale, with the exception at two spinal points.

6.36. Although ethnicity pay gap reporting is not currently mandatory, on 24 June 2020 the government responded to a parliamentary petition to introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting, stating that it is currently analysing detailed responses it received from its consultation on ethnicity pay reporting, which ran from October 2018 to January 2019.

6.37. The government has confirmed that it will not be legislating for mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting “at this stage”, however, they have committed to “supporting employers across the UK who want to publish ethnicity pay

gaps.” New guidance on voluntary ethnicity pay gap reporting was published earlier this year by the Department for Business and Trade.

6.38. **Disabled Staff Pay Gap**

The disabled staff pay gap compares average pay for disabled employees with that of non-disabled employees. There is no current legal requirement to publish this information. Roughly one-fifth of the workforce has not declared whether they consider themselves as being disabled or not, which means any findings we could draw from the current data would not be statistically relevant. We will need to undertake further work to encourage and support colleagues to make these declarations and enable the council to work more effectively to address the pay gap.

6.39. A workforce census is planned which will help improve the disclosure within this category.

7. Next steps and priorities

7.1. The following workstreams will be taken on by staff in Human Resources and Organisational Development as part of business as usual.

7.2. To understand the intersectional impact of pay gaps on gender in conjunction with other protected characteristics, we aim to reduce the number of incomplete records or people choosing “prefer not to say” when asked to provide their equality data by 20% over the next two years. Once we have worked to improve trust, we will run a staff census-style survey to encourage more staff to share this information with us.

7.3. To continue to reduce the ethnicity pay gap, specifically by improving the balance of Black and Global Majority staff in middle management positions, to improve the mean ethnicity pay gap by at least 1% over the next two years.

7.4. To work with the Pensions team to explore publishing our pensions pay gap in 2024/25.

7.5. To define a consistent measure to capture employees’ socio-economic backgrounds in order to be able to report on this effectively by 2025. We will then include this measure in the staff census to capture the information.

8. Equality impact assessment

8.1. As we address the gender pay gap, our commitment to intersectionality requires us to identify any other factors that might be masked by these

figures. We will be aiming to look at the pensions pay gap between women and men. Going forward, we also aim to do further work that provides data and more insight into how the data differentiates within the same group. For example, of the women within the group of statistics, how many women are within the group who have declared a disability? This will involve gathering additional data to further examine the data we hold and undertake very complex pieces of work.

- 8.2. Our aim is to examine the following:
 - 8.2.1. The pensions pay gap between women and men
 - 8.2.2. The socio-economic pay gap
 - 8.2.3. The pay gap for Black and Global Majority women working at Hackney.
 - 8.2.4. The pay gap for staff who have declared a disability
 - 8.2.5. Further opportunities for intersectional measures may arise as this work is developed.
- 8.3. Building a dashboard showing gender and ethnicity pay gaps across different directorates and departments to uncover hidden inequalities.
- 8.4. The impact of underreporting of personal characteristics is also an area of ambiguity. We will work with employees to understand if or why they don't feel comfortable sharing these details with Hackney Council, and we will work hard to raise awareness of the benefits of making a declaration and commit to addressing any areas of mistrust.
- 8.5. Explore and understand the reasons why some roles are more attractive to men versus women, or more Black and Global Majority more than white people, which will need us to look beyond what the data is telling us.

9. Comments of the Interim Group Director, Finance

9.1. Activities proposed in the Council’s action plans will be funded from the existing Service Revenue Budget and any subsequent proposals which have financial implications will be shared with Councillors.

10. Comments of the Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services

10.1. In line with Article 5.2 of the Council’s constitution, the Cabinet has the authority to carry out all of the Council’s functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council.

10.2. The Equality Act 2010 imposes an obligation on employers to publish information relating to the gender pay gap in their organisation. There are no other legal implications arising from the report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Gender Pay Gap 2023

Appendix 2 - Ethnicity Pay Gap 2023

Background documents

None

Report Author	Kate Faxen Head of HR and OD kate.faxen@hackney.gov.uk
Comments for the Interim Group Director, Finance	Jackie Moylan Interim Group Director, Finance jackie.moylan@hackney.gov.uk
Comments for the Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services prepared by	Juliet Babb Acting Head of Legal Governance juliet.babb@hackney.gov.uk

Appendix 1 - Gender Pay Gap Table

Gender Pay Gap Reporting 2023							
Statutory Part of the Template Data That Must be Provided Under the Equalities Act				Extra Data for Local Collection by London Councils For Local Benchmarking			
Pay Rates	Gender Pay Gap The difference between Female and Male pay as a percentage of Male pay <i>A minus % means Female employees have higher pay, a positive % means Male employees have higher pay</i>			Gender Pay Gap Female pay as a percentage of Male pay	Hourly Rate Female	Hourly Rate Male	Difference £
Mean Hourly Rate (Male Hourly Rate - Female Hourly Rate) / Male Hourly Rate x 100	-3.87%			103.87%	£ 22.12	£ 21.29	-£ 0.82
Median Hourly Rate As Above Calculation but for Median Hourly Rates	-5.55%			105.55%	£ 20.74	£ 19.65	-£ 1.09
Pay Quartile Information				Workforce Composition			
Pay Quartiles	Female	Male	Total	Female Headcount	Male Headcount	Total Headcount	
Proportion of Female and Male in the Upper Quartile Paid Above the 75th Percentile Point	54.05%	45.95%	100.00%	620	527	1,147	
Proportion of Female and Male in The Upper Middle Quartile Paid Above the Median and at or Below the 75th Percentile Point	59.41%	40.59%	100.00%	682	466	1,148	
Proportion of Female and Male in the Lower Middle Quartile Paid Above the 25th Percentile Point and at or Below the Median	56.10%	43.90%	100.00%	644	504	1,148	
Proportion of Female and Male in the Lower Quartile Paid Below the 25th Percentile Point	43.64%	56.36%	100.00%	501	647	1,148	
				2,447	2,144	4,591	
Bonus Pay	Bonus Gender Pay Gap The difference between Female bonus and Male bonus as a % of Male bonus			Bonus Gender Pay Gap Female bonus as a % of Male bonus	Bonus Pay Female	Bonus Pay Male	Difference £
Mean bonus	61.37%			38.63%	£ 2,759.72	£ 7,143.65	£ 4,383.93
Median bonus	72.86%			27.14%	£ 1,320.00	£ 4,862.96	£ 3,542.96
Bonuses Paid							
Female Paid Bonus as % of All Females	0.69%						
Male Paid Bonus as % of All Males	11.01%						

Appendix 2 - Ethnicity Pay Gap Table

Ethnicity Pay Gap Reporting 2023					
Pay Rates	Black & Global Majority Pay Gap The difference between Black & Global Majority employees pay and White employees pay as a percentage of White employees pay A minus % means Black & Global Majority employees have higher pay, a positive % means White employees have higher pay	Black & Global Majority Pay Gap Black & Global Majority employees pay as a percentage of White employees pay	Hourly Rate Black & Global Majority Employees	Hourly Rate White Employees	Difference £
Mean Hourly Rate (White Hourly Rate - Black & Global Majority Hourly Rate) / White Hourly Rate x 100	13.95%	86.05%	£ 20.53	£ 23.86	£ 3.33
Median Hourly Rate As Above Calculation but for Median Hourly Rates	14.35%	85.65%	£ 19.40	£ 22.65	£ 3.25

Pay Quartile Information			
Pay Quartiles	Black & Global Majority	White	Total
Proportion of Black & Global Majority and White Employees in the Upper Quartile Paid Above the 75th Percentile Point	39.29%	60.71%	100.00%
Proportion of Black & Global Majority and White Employees in The Upper Middle Quartile Paid Above the Median and at or Below the 75th Percentile Point	59.35%	40.65%	100.00%
Proportion of Black & Global Majority and White Employees in the Lower Middle Quartile Paid Above the 25th Percentile Point and at or Below the Median	65.58%	34.42%	100.00%
Proportion of Black & Global Majority and White Employees in the Lower Quartile Paid Below the 25th Percentile Point	68.01%	31.99%	100.00%

Workforce Composition		
Black & Global Majority Headcount	White Headcount	Total Headcount
420	649	1,069
635	435	1,070
701	368	1,069
727	342	1,069
2,483	1,794	4,277

Bonus Pay	Bonus Black & Global Majority Pay Gap The difference between Black & Global Majority employees bonus and White employees bonus as a % of White employees bonus	Bonus Black & Global Majority Pay Gap Black & Global Majority employees bonus as a % of White employees bonus	Bonus Pay Black & Global Majority Employees	Bonus Pay White Employees	Difference £
Mean Bonus	13.68%	86.32%	£ 9,253.82	£ 10,719.97	£ 1,466.16
Median Bonus	24.29%	75.71%	£ 10,443.22	£ 13,793.37	£ 3,350.15
Bonuses Paid					
Black & Global Majority Paid Bonus as % of All Black & Global Majority	2.74%				
White Paid Bonus as % of All White Staff	4.63%				

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (Black & Global Majority) includes employees ethnicity classifications in the following categories (taken from the 2001 Census): Asian/Asian British (inc Chinese), Black/Black British, Mixed/Multiple Heritage and Other Ethnic Group (ie: all other categories than that of White British and White Other). For calculation purposes employees whose ethnicity is Not Known or have indicated they Prefer Not To Say have been excluded.

This page is intentionally left blank



Title of Report	Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24
For Consideration By	Council
Meeting Date	24 January 2024
Classification	Open
Ward(s) Affected	All
Group Director	Dawn Carter-McDonald, Interim Chief Executive

1. **Summary**

- 1.1. Each year the Council is legally required to consider and agree a Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 1.2. The Scheme is based on recommendations of the Independent Panel of London Councils in their report; The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2022 and an independent report and recommendations for Hackney by Sir Rodney Brooke CBE DL, who is a member of the London Councils Independent Panel.
- 1.3. The current Scheme for 2023/24 was approved by Council in June 2023, but did not include any increases in allowances in line with the agreed national pay settlement for local government as negotiations were still in progress.
- 1.1. The national pay settlement (for April 2023) has now been agreed and for inner London Boroughs this is a flat rate award of £2,352.00 for full time employees up to Spinal Point 50 and 3.88% for those on Spinal Point 51 and above. The Council's Members' Allowances Scheme is normally uplifted by the national pay settlement percentage amount; which is 3.88% (some officers receiving higher than this if they received the fixed £2,352.00 amount).
- 1.4. The Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023/24 has been uplifted by 3.88% across the board in line with the pay award. Appendix 1 of this report details the revised Members Allowances Scheme for 2023/24 for approval.
- 1.1. There are no changes to the content of the scheme other than the amounts of the allowances.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1. **Full Council is recommended to agree the report and the Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24 (Updated January 2024) attached at Appendix 1.**

3. **Comments of the Interim Director of Finance**

- 3.1. The Members Allowance Scheme for 2023/24 is detailed in Appendix 1. This has been updated to reflect any national pay settlement for Local Government Officers for 2023/24 and the principles outlined in the summary.
- 3.2. The Members Allowance Scheme will be fully funded from the existing budget allocation of £1.63m for 2023/24.

4. **Comments of the Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services**

- 4.1. Section 18(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 enables the Secretary of State to make, by regulations, a scheme providing for the payment of a basic allowance, attendance allowance and special responsibility allowance to Members of a Local Authority. Section 18(2A) stipulates that regulations may also authorise or require a scheme made by a Local Authority to include provision for payment of allowances to Members of the Council in respect of expenses in arranging for the care of children or dependants as are necessarily incurred in carrying out their duties as Members.
- 4.2. In exercise of these powers the Secretary of State has issued the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Regulations require that the Council make a scheme before the beginning of each year for the payment of a basic allowance. The scheme must also make provision for the Council's approach to a special responsibility allowance, dependent's and carer's allowance, travelling and subsistence allowance and co-optees allowance.
- 4.3. In accordance with the Regulations, the Council is required to make arrangements for the publication of the scheme once it has been made. The form of publication must be in conformity with Regulation 16(1)(a) and Regulation 16(1)(b).
- 4.4. Pursuant to Part 2, Article 4 of the Council's Constitution, it is a function of Full Council to adopt the Members' Allowance Scheme.

- 4.5. In considering this scheme, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, in line with the public sector equality duty placed on all public bodies pursuant to Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24 (Updated January 2024)

Background documents

The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2022 - Report of the Independent Panel. Published by London Councils, January 2022.
<https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/39359>

Report Author	Bruce Devile Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections & Member Services bruce.devile@hackney.gov.uk
Comments for the Interim Director of Finance prepared by	John Holden Head of Finance Sustainability, Public Realm and Special Projects john.holden@hackney.gov.uk
Comments for the Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services prepared by	Louise Humphreys Acting Director of Legal, Democratic & Electoral Services louise.humphreys@hackney.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1

Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24

(Updated January 2024)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Scheme is based on the independent report and recommendations of Sir Rodney Brooke CBE DL, Chair of London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel. It also takes account of London Council's report; The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2022 published by its independent panel of which Sir Rodney Brooke CBE DL is a member.
- 1.2 This Scheme has been approved by Full Council of the London Borough of Hackney in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 1.3 This Scheme may be cited as the London Borough of Hackney Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023/24.
- 1.4 At the start of each municipal year, Full Council shall adopt a Scheme for the payment of Basic Allowances, as required by the Regulations.
- 1.5 In addition, provision for the following allowances shall be made in accordance with the Regulations for payments of:
- Special Responsibility Allowance;
 - Independent and Co-opted Members Allowance;
 - Independent Person Allowance;
 - Carers Allowance;
 - Parental Leave and Sickness Pay;
 - Travel and Subsistence Allowance;
- 1.6 The London Borough of Hackney has arrangements for its Scheme to be independently reviewed when required with reference to London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel.

2. BASIC ALLOWANCE

- 2.1 A Basic Allowance is paid to all Councillors in recognition of their -
- 2.2 commitment to attend formal meetings of the Council as well as meetings with officers and constituents. The Basic Allowance is intended to cover any incidental costs which may arise, such as the use of private telephones.
- 2.3 Each Councillor is entitled to claim a Basic Allowance of £12,480.14 per annum, which is payable monthly via the Council's payroll.

3. **SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE**

3.1 A Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) is payable in addition to the Basic Allowance to those Councillors that are given significant additional Council duties.

4. **THE ALLOWANCES**

4.1 The Basic Allowances and SRAs are as follows:-

BASIC ALLOWANCE

Basic Allowance All Councillors (except the Mayor)	£12,480.14
---	------------

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

Political Roles – Majority Group

Majority Group Chair	£2,915.91
Majority Group Secretary	£2,915.91
Majority Group Whip	£6,356.78

Political Roles – Opposition Group

(When the Council is formed with one opposition group)

Opposition Group Leader	£25,261.17
Opposition Group Whip	£2,915.91

Political Roles – Opposition Groups

(When the Council is formed of two opposition groups and where there is a majority and minority group)

First Opposition Group Leader	£15,874.93
First Opposition Group Whip	£2,915.91
Second Opposition Group Leader	£9,902.48

Panel Members

Adoption Panel Member	£2,915.91
Fostering Panel Member	£2,915.91

Committee Chairs

Chair of Audit Sub Committee	£9,007.66
Chair of Corporate Committee	£9,007.66

Chair of Licensing Committee	£20,003.57
Chair of Pensions Board	£2,915.91
Chair of Pensions Committee	£18,015.35
Chair of Planning Sub Committee	£20,003.57
Chair of Standards Committee	£2,915.91

Scrutiny

Scrutiny Commission Chairs	£16,317.71
Chair of Scrutiny Panel	£9,902.48
Vice Chair of Scrutiny Panel	£6,601.65

Speaker and Deputy Speaker

Speaker (see 4.3 below)	£21,966.15
Deputy Speaker (see 4.3 below)	£6,080.15

Deputy Cabinet Members

Deputy Cabinet Members	£18,015.35
------------------------	------------

Cabinet Members

Cabinet Members	£40,529.12
-----------------	------------

Deputy Mayor

Deputy Mayor	£47,747.85
--------------	------------

Directly Elected Mayor

Directly Elected Mayor (see 4.4 below)	£92,686.41
--	------------

- 4.2 Only one SRA may be claimed. It will be for individual Members who would otherwise qualify for more than one SRA to inform the Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections & Member Services which allowance they wish to claim, otherwise the highest allowance will be paid.
- 4.3 The roles of Speaker and Deputy Speaker do not attract a SRA but are covered by a separate legal regime. Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that a London Borough may pay the Chair of the Council (known as the Speaker in the London Borough of Hackney) such allowances and full Council thinks reasonable for the purpose of enabling the Chair to meet the expense of the office. There is a similar power in respect of the Vice Chair (Deputy Speaker).

- 4.4 The role of the directly elected Mayor does not attract a Basic Allowance or SRA. The Mayor receives one single allowance which covers all of the responsibilities included in the role.

5. **MEMBER ALLOWANCE UPLIFT**

- 5.1 The Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances are normally uplifted each year in line with the Local Government Pay Settlement Pay Rate when this becomes known, and will be reviewed and approved by Full Council at the start of each Municipal Year.

6. **PENSIONS**

- 6.1 In accordance with legislation, since the start of the 2014-18 electoral term, Members of the Council are not entitled to participate in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

7. **PARENTAL LEAVE AND SICKNESS PAY**

- 7.1 The Member Parental Leave Scheme is defined as Members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, adoption, surrogacy and shared parental leave.
- 7.2 All Members shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full in the case of parental and sickness leave.
- 7.3 Members entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in the case of parental and sickness leave in a similar way that Council officers do. A replacement to cover the period of absence can be appointed by Full Council, and the replacement will be entitled to claim a SRA. Where the SRA in question relates to the Cabinet, the appointment will be made by the Mayor.
- 7.4 Full details of the Member Parental Leave Scheme are attached at Appendix A

8. **DEPENDANT CARERS' ALLOWANCE**

- 8.1 The Council will make reasonable payments for the reimbursement of the care of dependant relatives living with the Elected Member. Full details of the Dependant Carers' Allowance Scheme are attached at Appendix B.

9. **TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE**

- 9.1 The Council will provide an allowance to Members for any travel or subsistence costs incurred as a result of attending a Council Approved Duty or event outside of the Borough. Independent Members, Co-opted Members and the Independent Person can claim for any travel or subsistence costs associated with their Council duty. Full details of the Travel and Subsistence Allowance are attached at Appendix C.

10. **APPROVED COUNCIL DUTIES**

- 10.1 The schedule of approved Council duties can be found at Appendix D of this Scheme. Members of the Council may claim a Travel and Subsistence Allowance and/or Carers' Allowances when attending these duties.

11. **COUNCIL CYCLE SCHEME**

- 11.1 Members are entitled to join the Council's employee Cycle Scheme whereby they can choose a bicycle and equipment from an approved supplier (up to £3,000 in value) and the Council purchases it and loans it to the Member. The Member will then repay the loan from their Basic Allowance in return for the loan of the VAT free bicycle across an agreed period. At the end of the loan period the Council may sell the bicycle to the Member at a fair market value.

12. **PART PAYMENTS**

- 12.1 In the case of Basic Allowances, Special Responsibility Allowances, Travel and Subsistence Allowance, or Dependent Carers' Allowances, payment will only be made for the period during which a person performs the duties for which these allowances are payable. Where a Member, Independent Member, Co-opted Member or Independent Person resigns or ceases to be a Member, the part of the allowance payable for the period for which they cease to be a Member, may be withheld by the Council.

13. **REPAYMENTS**

- 13.1 Where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which the Member, Independent Member, Co-opted or Independent Person concerned ceases to be a Member, or is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of that period, the Member, shall repay to the Council on demand such part of the allowance as relates to any such period.

14. **OPTING TO FORGO AN ALLOWANCE**

- 14.1 Basic Allowance and SRAs will be paid automatically unless notice is received in writing from the Member concerned forgoing the entitlement in whole or in part. All such notices should be sent to the Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections & Member Services.

15. **CLAIMS AND PAYMENT**

- 15.1 Payments in relation to Basic Allowances, SRAs, Independent Member, Co-opted Member and Independent Person allowances shall be paid in monthly instalments in accordance with this Scheme.
- 15.2 Basic, SRA, Independent Member, Co-opted Member and Independent Person allowance payments are made net of income tax and National Insurance through the PAYE system used for salaried employees. Bank details are therefore required for each Member. If a Member changes their bank details, the revised details should be provided to Member Services.
- 15.3 Claims for Travel and Subsistence allowances, and Dependent Carers' allowance should be submitted no later than three months from the date that expenses are incurred. Claims must be made on the agreed claim form available from Member Services.
- 15.4 Claims will be checked on receipt by Member Services. Claims received before the 20th day of the month will be paid on or before the 15th day of the following month.

16. **ALLOWANCES FOR INDEPENDENT MEMBERS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

- 16.1 The standard rate for Independent Members and Co-opted Members allowances is £134.84 per meeting. This is translated into an annual allowance by multiplying this by the anticipated number of meetings. This amount is payable to Co-opted Members on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission, Pensions Board, Pensions Committee and Standards Committee.

17. **THE INDEPENDENT PERSON**

- 17.1 The Council's Independent Person for ethical governance matters shall be entitled to an allowance of £543.46 per annum.

18. **CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

- 18.1 The Chair of the Design Review Panel shall be entitled to an allowance of £450.00 per meeting.
- 18.2 Members of the Design Review Panel shall be entitled to an allowance of £50.00 per hour, capped at £200.00 per meeting.

19. **PUBLICATION**

- 19.1 The Council is required to publish details of the Members' Allowances Scheme and the total amount received by each Member. The records must also be available for inspection by any local government elector for

the authority, or by any local government elector of any principal Council in whose area the authority operates.

20. **REVIEW OF THE SCHEME**

20.1 The Council has arrangements for its Scheme to be independently reviewed with reference to London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel.

20.2 Minor revisions are the responsibility of the Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections & Member Services in consultation with the Chair of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel where needed.

21. **QUERIES**

21.1 Any specific queries regarding the entitlement to the Scheme should, in the first instance, be addressed to the Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections & Member Services (members.services@hackney.gov.uk). Queries regarding the processing of claims and payments should be addressed to the Member Services team (020 8356 3373).

Member Parental Leave Scheme

The Member Parental Leave Scheme (and the term Parental Leave) is defined as Members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, adoption, surrogacy, and shared parental leave.

The objective of the scheme is to ensure that insofar as possible Members are able to take appropriate leave at the time of birth, adoption or surrogacy; that both parents are able to take leave and that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for portfolio-holders and others in receipt of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) during any period of leave taken.

1. Introduction

In accordance with the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme, Members shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full during Parental Leave.

Members entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance will also continue to receive this allowance during Parental Leave up to the same benefit levels as officers in their equivalent policies.

Six-month rule

Any Member who takes Parental Leave retains their legal duty under the Local Government Act 1972 to attend a meeting of the Council within a six month consecutive period unless the Council Meeting agrees to an extended leave of absence prior to the expiration of that six month consecutive period.

Resigning from Office

If the Member decides to not return to office following their Parental Leave, Member Services must be notified. The Payroll Team must then be informed within two working days of receiving notification. Member allowance(s) will cease from the effective resignation date, however any outstanding Maternity Pay entitlement will continue to be paid by the Council.

Elections

If an election is held during the Parental Leave and Members are not re-elected, or decide not to stand for re-election, their basic allowance and SRA if appropriate will cease from the Monday after the election date.

Cover arrangements and returning to post

If a Member holds a position attracting a SRA, a temporary replacement would normally be appointed for periods of extended Parental Leave. The temporary appointment would also be entitled to receive a SRA.

Unless the Member taking Parental Leave is removed from their post at an Annual General Meeting of the Council whilst on Parental Leave, or unless the

Party to which they belong loses control of the Council during their Parental Leave period, they will return at the end of their Parental Leave period to the same post which they held before the Parental Leave began.

The Mayor however can change their Cabinet members and portfolios at any time, though this would normally be in exceptional circumstances. In such circumstances, it is expected that any Cabinet member on Parental Leave would normally return from their Parental Leave to a similar portfolio size.

If there is a Mayoral election during a period of Parental Leave, any new Mayor can form a new Cabinet and if this does not include the Member on Parental leave, then their SRA will cease from the date the new Cabinet is formed.

2. Maternity Leave

Entitlement

All pregnant Members are entitled to Maternity Leave totalling 52 weeks, regardless of their length of term in office (unless their term of office ends earlier than this).

Compulsory Maternity Leave

Members must take a minimum of two weeks Maternity Leave from the date the baby is born.

Maternity Leave Start Date

Maternity Leave will start:

- ***On a date chosen by the Member***, which can be at any time after the beginning of the 11th week before the Member's expected week of childbirth and up to the date the baby is born

Maternity Leave may be triggered before the chosen date where:

- ***The baby is born early***. Maternity leave commences the day after the Member gives birth; or
- ***The Member has sickness absence for a pregnancy-related reason in the four weeks before the expected week of childbirth***. Maternity Leave commences the date after the sickness absence

In summary, Maternity Leave is triggered by the date notified by the pregnant person, the actual birth of the baby, or pregnancy related sickness immediately prior to the due date - whichever occurs first.

Notification of Maternity Leave

The Member must notify Member Services in writing no later than the end of the 15th week, or as soon as reasonably practicable, before the expected week of childbirth.

Information must include:

- Confirmation of the expected date of childbirth.

- A copy of the MATB1 (a certificate available from a doctor or midwife). The original must be provided if the Member wishes to claim Maternity Pay (MP) from the Council.
- The Parental Leave Confirmation Form, which will confirm the date Maternity Leave will start. It should be noted that Maternity Leave can start any day of the week.

On receipt of the information, within two weeks, Member Services will acknowledge that the period of absence has been noted and forward the information to the Council's Payroll Team.

The Council's Payroll Team will write to the Member to confirm the Maternity Leave period, including the end date, i.e. a maximum of 52 weeks and entitlement to allowance(s).

Member Maternity Allowance Entitlement

Basic Allowance

A Member on Maternity Leave will continue to receive this allowance throughout the Maternity Leave period. If, however, an election is held during the Member's Maternity Leave and they are not re-elected, or they decide not to stand for re-election, the basic allowance will cease from the Monday after the election date, when their office officially ends.

Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)

If a Member receives a SRA during their Maternity Leave it will be paid as follows:

For Members not claiming Maternity Pay (MP) through the Council:

First six weeks	90% of SRA plus basic allowance
7 to 24 weeks	50% of SRA plus basic allowance
25 to 52 week	Basic allowance only

For Members claiming MP:

First six weeks	90% of SRA, including MP plus basic allowance
7 to 24 weeks	50% of SRA plus MP and basic allowance
25 to 39 weeks	MP and basic allowance
40 to 52 weeks	Basic allowance only

Special Circumstances

Premature Baby Leave

Parents of babies born before 37 weeks will be entitled to receive one extra day of Premature Baby Leave receiving full SRA for every day their premature baby spends in hospital before 37 weeks. This leave entitlement will be added to the end of the Members Maternity Leave period after this leave entitlement has been exhausted.

Illness due to pregnancy

If a Member has not started Maternity Leave, and cannot discharge their duties as a Councillor due to a pregnancy related illness at anytime after the beginning of the fourth week before the expected week of childbirth, Maternity Leave will have to start the day after the first day of their illness.

The Member is responsible for informing Member Services if this situation occurs.

Members Services will ensure that the Council's Payroll Team is informed within two working days of receipt of the details.

The Council's Payroll Team will provide confirmation of Maternity Leave and allowance entitlement to the Member, with a copy to Members Services, within ten working days.

Early Delivery

If the baby is born earlier than expected and the Member has not yet started their maternity leave, the Maternity Leave will automatically start the day after the baby is born.

As soon as is practically possible, the Member must inform Member Services with a MATB1 form produced to confirm the baby's date of birth and the original expected date of delivery.

Members Services will ensure that the Council's Payroll Team is informed within two working days of receipt of the details.

The Council's Payroll Team will provide confirmation of Maternity Leave and pay entitlement to the Member, with a copy to Members Services, within ten working days.

Maternity Pay (MP)

For Members in receipt of a SRA who want to claim a Statutory Maternity Pay equivalent (members are not entitled to SMP), an original copy of their MATB1 form must be provided.

Multiple Births

Maternity Leave arrangements are unaffected by the number of babies born from a single pregnancy.

Returning from Maternity Leave early

If a Member wishes to return from Maternity Leave earlier than originally planned they should inform Member Services in writing.

Member Services will ensure that the Council's Payroll Team is informed within two working days of receipt of the details.

The Council's Payroll Team will provide confirmation that the information has been received and relevant reinstatement or adjustment of the SRA has been actioned, with a copy to Member Services, within ten working days.

Still Birth

If a baby is delivered after 24 weeks of pregnancy the Member is entitled to Maternity Leave and allowance(s).

3. Paternity Leave

Entitlement

Members are entitled to a maximum of two weeks Paternity Leave (Six working days at full allowance and four at the statutory rate).

Qualifying Criteria

Birth

To qualify the Member must

- Be the biological father and have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing
- OR:
- Be the spouse (husband or wife), civil partner or partner of the person giving birth and have or expect to have the main responsibility for the child's upbringing, along with the person who gave birth

Adoption

The Member must

- Be the spouse (husband or wife), civil partner or partner of the adopter and have or expect to have the main responsibility for the child's upbringing, along with the other parent

Surrogacy

To qualify the Member must (with their partner) meet the criteria for 'Adoption Leave'.

The Member must

- Be the intended parent and be responsible for the child (with their partner)
- Be in a couple
- Not be the parent who will take 'Adoption Leave'

Note: Partners, couples and spouses can be of the same or a different sex.

Member Paternity Allowance Entitlement

Basic Allowance + Special Responsibility Allowance

A Member on Paternity Leave will continue to receive their basic allowance and SRA throughout the Paternity Leave period.

Starting and ending Paternity Leave

Birth

A Member can choose to start their leave:

- From the date of the child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected)
- From a chosen number of days after the date of the child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected) e.g. ten days after the child is born
- From a chosen date after the baby is expected to be born
- From the date of the child's birth if the baby is 'stillborn' at 24 weeks

Normally Paternity Leave must be taken within eight weeks of the birth of the child. However, if the baby is premature, then the eight weeks starts from the expected date of childbirth. If the baby is born late, the eight weeks starts from the actual birth of the baby.

If a Member chooses to start their Paternity Leave from the date the baby is born and they are at work on that date, then the Paternity Leave will begin the next day.

Adoption

Where the child is adopted within the UK, a Member can choose to start their leave:

- On the date the child is placed; or
- from a chosen number of days after the date the child is placed (e.g. ten days after the child is placed); or
- from a chosen date after the child is expected to be placed

Paternity Leave must be taken after the child is placed.

Where the child is adopted from overseas, a Member can choose to start their leave:

- The date the child enters Great Britain; or
- From a chosen date after the child enters Great Britain

Surrogacy

Paternity Leave can commence the day the child is born or the day after if the Member is working that day. Normally Paternity Leave must be taken within eight weeks of the birth of the child. However, if the baby is premature, then the eight weeks starts from the expected date of childbirth. If the baby is born late, the eight weeks starts from the actual birth of the baby.

Notification of Paternity Leave

The Member must notify Member Services in writing no later than the end of the 15th week before the baby is expected, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

Information must include:

- The week the child is due (included in the Parental Leave Confirmation Form)
- When they want to start their leave (included in the Parental Leave Confirmation Form)
- SC3 form for Birth Parents ([Link to Gov.uk website](#))
- SC4 form for an Adopting or Parental order parent ([Link to Gov.uk website](#))
- SC5 form for a parent adopting from overseas ([Link to Gov.uk website](#))

The Member must notify Member Services when their child was actually born or adopted as soon as is reasonably practicable after the birth or placement.

Where the baby is adopted within the UK, the Member must notify Member Services no later than seven days after the date they are notified of being matched with a child.

Where the child is adopted from abroad, the Member must notify Member Services no later than 28 days after receipt of the official notification.

The Member must give at least 28 days notice of the date they want the Paternity Leave to begin.

Special Circumstances

Multiple Births

Only one period of Paternity Leave is available, even if more than one child is born as the result of the same pregnancy or if more than one child is placed with the individual or couple for adoption under the same arrangement.

Premature Baby Leave

Parents of babies born before 37 weeks will be entitled to receive one extra day of Premature Baby Leave on full SRA allowance for every day their premature baby spends in hospital before 37 weeks. This leave entitlement will be added to the end of the Members Parental Leave period after this leave entitlement has been exhausted.

4. Adoption and Surrogacy Leave (referred to as Adoption Leave)

Entitlement

Members are entitled to Adoption Leave totalling 52 weeks (unless their office officially ends before this).

Qualifying Criteria

For Adoption and 'Fostering to Adopt' - The Member must be newly matched with the child by an adoption agency, which must be recognised in the UK.

For Surrogacy – The Member must have applied, or be intending to apply for a Parental Order in relation to the child.

Exclusions

Private adoptions do not qualify e.g. a foster parent adopting a foster child, or a step-parent adopting their partner's child.

Notification of Adoption Leave

Adoption and 'Foster to Adopt'

Members must notify Member Services in writing of their intention to take adoption leave within seven days of being notified of the match by the adoption agency; advising:

- The date the child is being placed with them
- The date the leave will start
- Whether or not they intend to return to work following the Adoption Leave.

The notification must be accompanied by the following evidence:

- Name and address of the adoption agency
- The date the employee was notified they would be matched with the child
- The date the agency expects to place the child
- Matching certificate completed by the adoption agency.

Surrogacy

Members must notify Member Services in writing of their intention to take leave advising:

- The date that the leave is expected to start (which is the date the baby is expected to be born)
- The period of time they intend to take.

This notification must be made either during or before the 15th week before the date the child is expected to be born.

If requested, the Member must provide (within 14 days of receiving the request) a declaration confirming that:

- The leave is being requested for the intended purpose
- That they meet the qualifying conditions
- That they will be applying for a parental order, with an appropriate other person, who may be another person of the same sex.

Member Adoption Leave Allowance Entitlement

Basic Allowance

A Member on Adoption Leave will continue to receive this allowance throughout the leave period.

Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)

If a Member receives a SRA during their Adoption Leave it will be paid as follows:

First six weeks	90% of SRA plus basic allowance
7 to 24 weeks	50% of SRA plus basic allowance
25 to 52 weeks	Basic allowance only

Commencement of Adoption Leave

The Adoption Leave period may begin:

For **Adoption and 'Foster to Adopt'**:

- From the date of the child's placement – whether earlier or later than expected; or
- From a pre-determined date which can be up to 14 days before the expected date of placement

Or, where adopting a child from overseas:

- The date the child enters Great Britain
- A pre-determined date which is no later than 28 days after this date.

For **surrogacy** the leave period begins from the date the baby is born. If the baby is born while the Member is at work, then the leave can start from the next day.

Special Circumstances

Premature Baby Leave

Parents of babies born before 37 weeks will be entitled to receive 1 extra day of Premature Baby Leave on full SRA allowance for every day their premature baby spends in hospital before 37 weeks. This leave entitlement will be added to the end of the Members Adoption Leave period after this leave entitlement has been exhausted.

For Adoption and 'Fostering to Adopt' eligibility will depend on the circumstances. However, normally where a premature baby is placed with the adopting parents before 37 weeks, premature baby leave will apply.

For surrogacy these provisions will normally apply from the birth of the premature baby i.e. the date the new parents receive the baby.

Adopting more than one child

Adoption leave entitlements are the same regardless of the number of children adopted at any one time.

This also applies to surrogacy in the event of a multiple birth.

5. Shared Parental Leave

Shared Parental Leave enables eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child during the first year of birth or adoption. Its purpose is to give parents more flexibility in considering how best to care for, and bond with, their child.

A Member who has made Shared Parental Leave arrangements through their employment is requested to advise Member Services of these at the earliest possible opportunity. Every effort will be made to replicate such arrangements in terms of leave from Council.

Requests will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

DEPENDANT CARERS' ALLOWANCE

1. LEGALITY

1.1 The Scheme is established by the Council under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Dependent Carers' Allowance is payable in respect of the approved duties set out in Appendix D. The Scheme requires Members claiming the allowance to demonstrate and certify that carer expenses are actually and necessarily incurred in the conduct of their official duties.

2. ENTITLEMENT

2.1 The Scheme provides for payments to be made to Members in respect of care for "dependent relatives" living with the Member. For the purposes of the scheme, "dependent relatives" are defined as:

- I. children aged 15 or under;
- II. relatives requiring full time care as a result of disability or infirmity.

2.2 Under no circumstances will the allowance be payable to an immediate relative of the Member.

2.3 For meetings or duties within the Council's boundaries, the allowance will be paid for the duration of the meeting or approved duty plus an allowance for up to one hour's travelling time before and after the meeting. For duties outside the Council's boundaries, the allowance will be paid for the duration of the duty plus the actual travelling time to and from the venue. In all instances, total time claimed should be rounded to the nearest half-hour.

3. RATES OF ALLOWANCE

3.1 The Dependent Carers' Allowance is set at the same level as the London Living Wage and is paid at this rate irrespective of the number of dependants.

3.2 Where a dependent relative requires specialist professional care, the full cost of care will be allowed, with the prior written approval of the Director of Legal Services.

4. CLAIMS PROCEDURES

4.1 Members wishing to apply for Dependant Carers' Allowance must submit an application form to the Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections & Member Services, declaring that:

- (i) claims made shall only be made in respect of a named dependent relative (or relatives) as defined in the Scheme;

- (ii) claims shall only be made in respect of the entitlements set out in paragraph 2 above;
- (iii) receipts shall be provided in support of all claims; and
- (iv) where a specialist professional carer is to be engaged, that this is a necessary expense for which full reimbursement will be claimed.

4.2 Members are required to notify Member Services in the event of their entitlement to Dependant Carers' Allowance ending.

4.3 All claims will be processed through the Council's Payroll system.

5. **AUDIT**

5.1 Internal Audit will review the systems for payment of Members' Allowances on a routine basis and include sample testing of Members' Allowances transactions in annual probity programmes.

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE

1. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 1.1 Elected Members may claim expenses for journeys associated with an approved duty or event (see Appendix D) outside of the Borough. The Council will not provide an allowance for any travel within the Borough.
- 1.2 Independent Members and Co-opted Members of the Council and the Independent Person may claim for travel both inside and outside the Borough for journeys associated with an approved duty.
- 1.3 The rate must not exceed the ordinary standard class fare or any available saver fare.
- 1.4 Booking arrangements for travel outside of London must be made by Member Services to seek the most cost-effective deal within current parameters.
- 1.5 A receipt must be produced for any claim.
- 1.6 For travel within London, Members may claim for travel on an Oyster Card. To claim for travel paid for on an Oyster Card, Members must provide Member Services with a printed record of the journey travelled, which can be obtained from the TfL website.

2. PRIVATE VEHICLE

- 2.1 Elected Members, Independent Members, Co-opted Members and the Independent Person may claim expenses for journeys by private vehicle associated with an approved duty outside of the Borough. The Council will not provide an allowance for any travel within the Borough.
- 2.2 An allowance of 24p per mile can be claimed for travel by motorcycle.
- 2.3 An allowance of 46.9p per mile can be claimed for travel by motor vehicle up to the first 8,500 miles annually. After the first 8,500 miles, an allowance of 13.7p per mile.
- 2.4 Members, if using a private motor vehicle, should note that the Council does not provide any insurance cover. Members should have Business Use cover as part of their policy.

3. TAXI

- 3.1 Members can claim an allowance for the amount of a taxi fare, and any reasonable gratuity, to enable them to attend an approved duty if the following exceptional circumstances and criteria apply:

- in cases of a genuine emergency;
- when no public transport is reasonably available to travel to the approved duty;
- for safety reasons;
- or if there is insufficient time to travel from one approved duty to another by public transport.

3.2 The cost of travel by taxi must have been incurred wholly and exclusively for a Member's attendance at an approved Council duty. Taxi fares can only be claimed by Members once approved by the Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections & Member Services.

3.3 A receipt must be produced for any claim.

4. **HIRED VEHICLE**

4.1 Other than for a taxi, Members will only be able to claim an allowance per mile as per the rates detailed in paragraph 2 above. As such, Members will be reimbursed as if they had owned the vehicle, and will not be reimbursed for the cost of hiring the vehicle.

4.2 A receipt must be produced for any claim by the Member who hired the vehicle.

5. **AEROPLANE**

5.1 Subject to prior approval by the Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections & Member Services, the cost of travel at the ordinary fare or any available cheap fare by regular air service or where no such service is available or in case of urgency the actual fare paid by the Member where the saving in time against other available means of transport is so substantial as to justify payment of the fare by that means.

5.2 A receipt must be produced for any claim.

6. **BICYCLE**

6.1 Members may claim an allowance in respect of travel by bicycle or by any other non motorised form of transport undertaken, of 20p per mile, in connection with or relating to an approved Council duty outside of the Borough.

6.2 Independent Members, Co-opted Members and the Independent Person may claim a cycling allowance for journeys inside and outside of the Borough.

7. **SUBSISTENCE**

- 7.1 The payment of subsistence allowance will only be payable to Members for approved Council duties and conferences subject to the approval of the Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections & Member Services.
- 7.2 When more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence, the repayment of subsistence allowances will be made to cover the actual cost incurred up to the following rates –
- (i) Breakfast - £5.50
 - (ii) Lunch - £7.50
 - (iii) Evening Meal - £10.50
 - (iv) Out of pocket expenses (per night) - £4.50
- 7.3 Members are also entitled to overnight accommodation, if required, when attending an approved duty outside of London, subject to the approval of the Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections & Member Services. Member Services shall be responsible for making any bookings and will pay for the accommodation directly.
- 7.4 Receipts must be produced for any claim in order to be valid.

APPROVED COUNCIL DUTIES

For the purposes of the payment of Travel, Subsistence and Carers' Allowances, Approved Council duties are defined as the following official meetings set out below. For information, some outside bodies may pay an allowance to Members for their role and work on that specific outside body.

1. Appointments Committee or Sub Committees
2. Cabinet or Cabinet Sub Committees
3. Corporate Committee or Sub Committees
4. Corporate Parenting Board
5. Council
6. Council Joint Committee
7. Health and Wellbeing Board
8. Joint Committee of the Four Growth Boroughs
9. Licensing Committee or Sub Committees
10. Overview and Scrutiny Commissions
11. Pensions Board
12. Pensions Committee
13. Planning Committee or Sub Committees
14. Standards Committee or Sub Committees
15. Ward Forums
16. Duties for the office of Speaker or Deputy Speaker
17. Education related meetings such as:
 - the Schools Admissions Forum
 - School Governing Bodies
18. Independent Statutory Panels
 - Adoption Panel
 - Fostering Panel
19. A meeting of outside bodies:
 - Abney Park Cemetery Trust
 - Agudas Israel Housing Association
 - Bangla Housing Association
 - Chats Palace Arts Centre
 - Clapton Park TMO
 - CREATE London Ltd
 - East London NHS Foundation Trust
 - Finsbury Park Trust
 - Groundwork London
 - Hackney CAB
 - Hackney Community Law Centre
 - Hackney Empire Ltd Board
 - Hackney Parish Almshouse Charity
 - Hackney Parochial Charity
 - Homerton NHS Foundation Trust
 - Hornsey Parochial Charity
 - Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
 - LGA General Assembly
 - Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)

- London Councils Executive
- London Councils Grants Committee
- London Councils Greater London Employment Forum (GLEF)
- London Councils Leaders' Committee
- London Councils Transport and Environment Committee (TEC)
- London Housing Consortium
- London Pensions Collective Investment Vehicle (CIV)
- London Legacy Development Corporation Planning Decisions Committee (LLDC)
- London Road Safety Council
- London Youth Games Foundation
- Manor House Trust
- Newable Ltd
- North London Waste Authority
- Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (GL RFCA)
- Shoreditch Town Hall Trust
- Shoreditch Trust
- South Hackney Parochial Charity
- Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
- Sun Babies Trust
- West Hackney Parochial Charity

20. Attendance at Conference meetings:

- London Councils
- Local Government Association

21. Attendance at any meeting which is an induction training session, seminar, presentation, or briefing arranged by Chief Officers of the Council for all Members of a Committee, Sub Committee or Panel to discuss matters relevant to the discharge of the Council's functions and to which Members of more than one party Group have been invited.

22. Attendance at visits and inspection of sites and premises arranged by officers (e.g. opening of new facilities).

23. Attendance by Members who have the relevant special responsibility on matters concerning the discharge of the Council's functions.

24. Attendance before parliamentary Committees, official bodies and inquiries to give evidence or make representations on the Council's behalf.

25. Attendance at events by Members where they are invited to showcase or represent the work of Hackney.



Title of Report	Licensing Service Annual Report 2022/23
For Consideration By	Licensing Committee 10 January 2024 Council 24 January 2024
Classification	Open
Ward(s) Affected	All wards
Group Director	Rickardo Hyatt, Group Director Climate Homes and Economy

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Licensing Committee of the activities and performance of the Service during the year 2022/23 and to show aims and targets for the forthcoming 2023/24 year. This report provides an update on the main operational functions of the Licensing Service in terms of applications, policy and enforcement.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Licensing Committee notes the report.

3. Comments of the Interim Group Director of Finance

- 3.1 This report requests the Licensing Committee to note the activities and performance of the Service during 2022/23 and the aims and targets for 2023/24.
- 3.2 The Licensing Service generated an annual income total of £1,366,714 in 2022/23 of which £640,310 is attributable to the late night levy.
- 3.3 The Licensing Service will manage its costs within the financial constraints determined by income from externally regulated and locally set fees.
- 3.4 Licensing income continues to be affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. This will continue to be monitored by regular liaison between the Licensing Service and Finance.

4. Comments of the Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services

4.1 This report is solely for noting as such there are no legal matters arising from the report that require comment at this stage.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Annual Report

Exempt

Not applicable.

Background Papers

Not applicable.

Report Author	David Tuitt Business Regulation Team Leader Licensing and Technical Support david.tuitt@hackney.gov.uk Tel: 020 8356 4942
Comments for Interim Group Director of Finance	Avril Smith Service Accountant avril.smith@hackney.gov.uk Tel: 020 8356 3947
Comments for the Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services prepared by	Amanda Nauth Licensing and Corporate Lawyer amanda.nauth@hackney.gov.uk Tel: 020 8356 6345

Licensing Service

2022/23 Annual Report

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Licensing Act 2003
3. Gambling Act 2005
4. Massage and Special Treatments (MST) Licences
5. Look back / Projects
6. Planned Activity for 2023/24

APPENDIX – SUMMARY TABLES

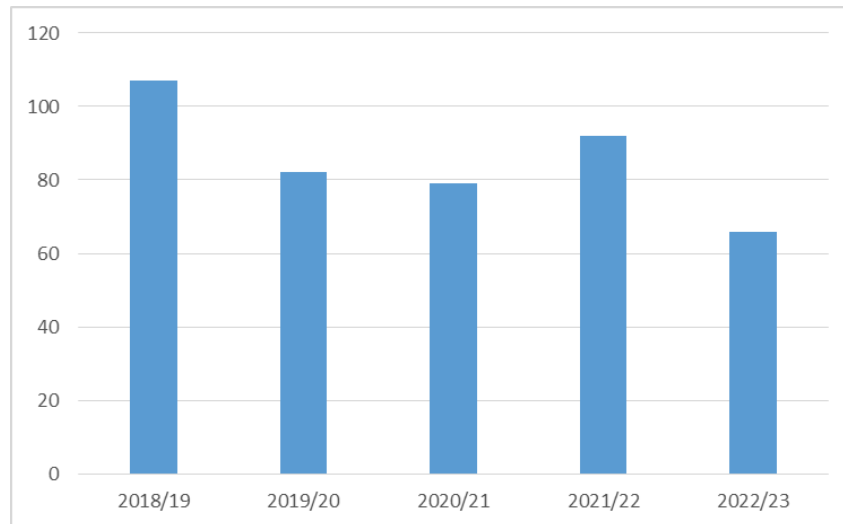
1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to report on the activities and performance of the Service during the year 2022/23 and to show aims and targets for the forthcoming year.
- 1.2 Responsibility for discharging many of the Council's licensing functions lies with the Licensing Service. The Service is also responsible for the development and review of alcohol and entertainment licensing, gambling and sex establishment policies as well as providing guidance and assistance on the various licensing, registration and permitting processes. The enforcement of licensing legislation is shared with other regulatory partners.
- 1.3 Officers occasionally conduct inspections to premises to ensure compliance with authorisations and advise businesses of their responsibilities. The enforcement/compliance functions also involve investigations into complaints of alleged unauthorised activity. Formal enforcement actions are taken when merited and in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy the Regulators Code.
- 1.4 Officers also fulfil the responsible authority role on behalf of the Licensing Authority as defined under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005. This entails reviewing new and variation applications and considering making representations having regard to the Council's Licensing Policy and Gambling Statement of Principles.

2. Licensing Act 2003

Premises licences granted

- 2.1 A premises licence authorises a premises to be used for the sale or supply of alcohol, the provision of regulated entertainment, or the provision of late night refreshment, under the Licensing Act 2003.

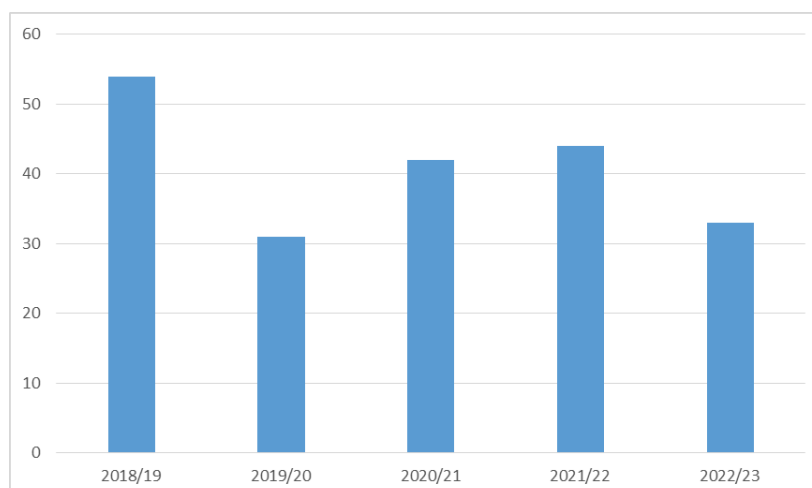


1. Premises licences granted

- 2.2 Fig. 1 highlights the numbers of new licences granted. The number of new licences granted has been falling fairly consistently over the past 5 years.

Minor variations

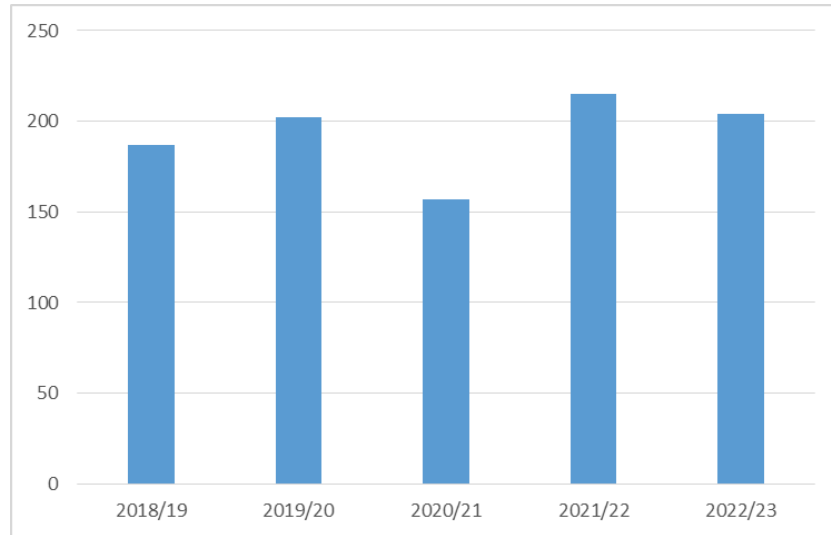
- 2.3 On receipt of an application for a minor variation, the licensing authority will consider whether the variation could impact adversely on the licensing objectives. In the case of minor variations, there is no right to a hearing (as there would be for a full variation or new application), but licensing authorities take any representations into account in arriving at a decision.



3. Application for minor variation

2.4 There was a fall in the number of minor variation applications received however the figure was consistent with the trend over recent years.

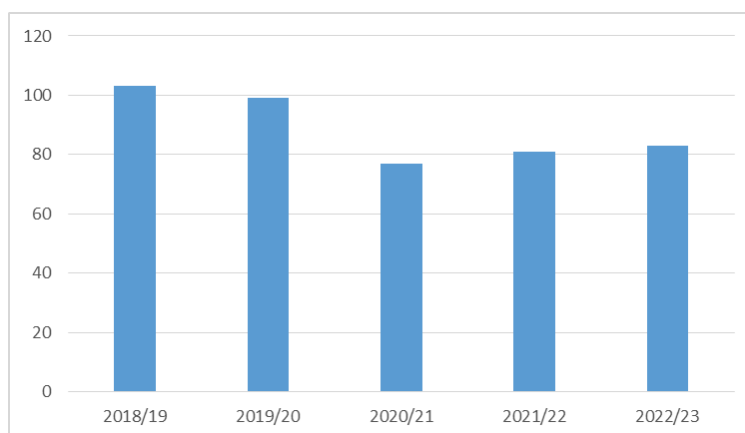
Variations to specify an individual as DPS



4. Applications to vary licence to specify DPS

2.5 Where a premises licence authorises the supply of alcohol, there is a requirement for a personal licence holder to be nominated as the designated premises supervisor. The number received in 2022/23 continues to show a consistent trend which is to be expected due to the transient nature of the industry.

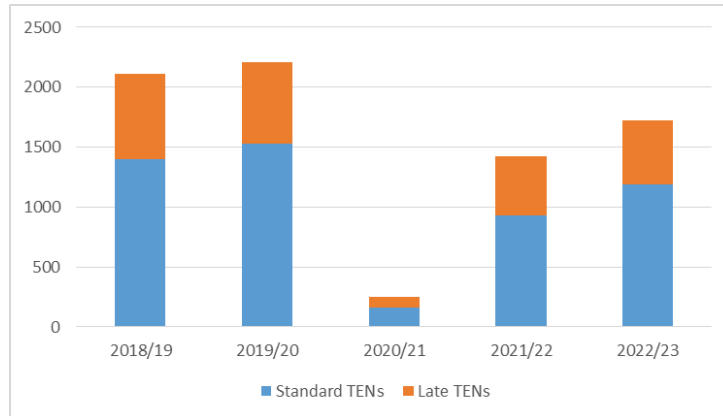
Transfer of premises licences



5. Transfers of premises licences

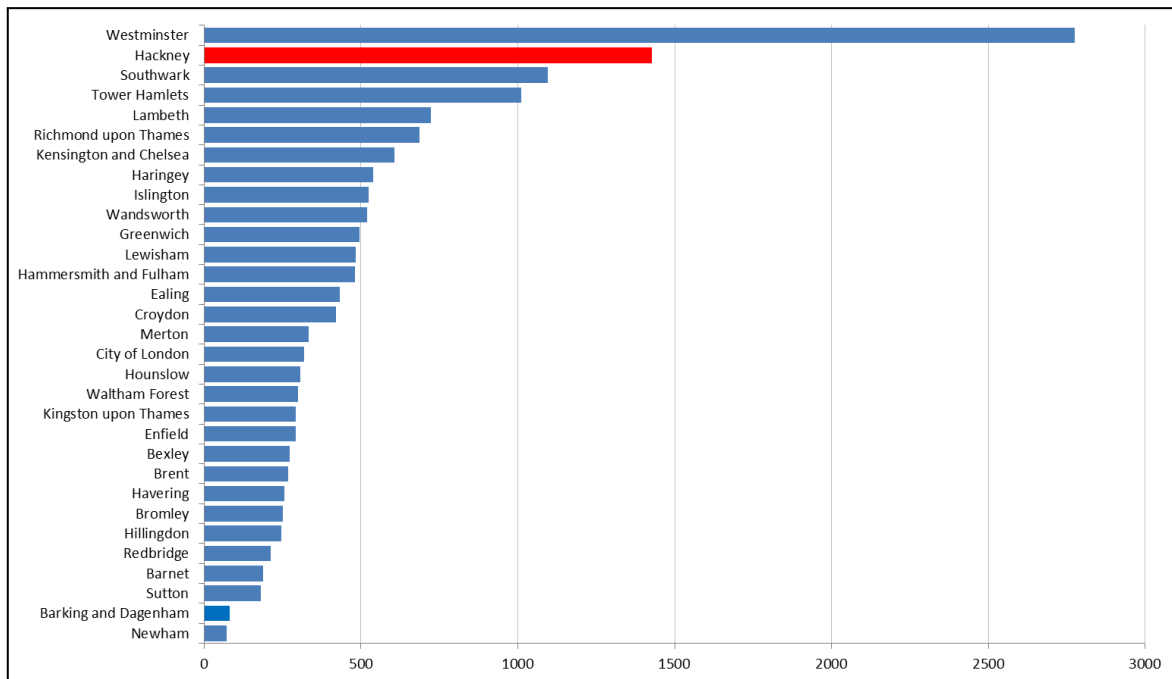
2.6 The number of licences being transferred between operators remains stable after showing a slight decrease in the number received between 2018 and 2020.

Temporary Event Notices (TENs)



6. Temporary Event Notices

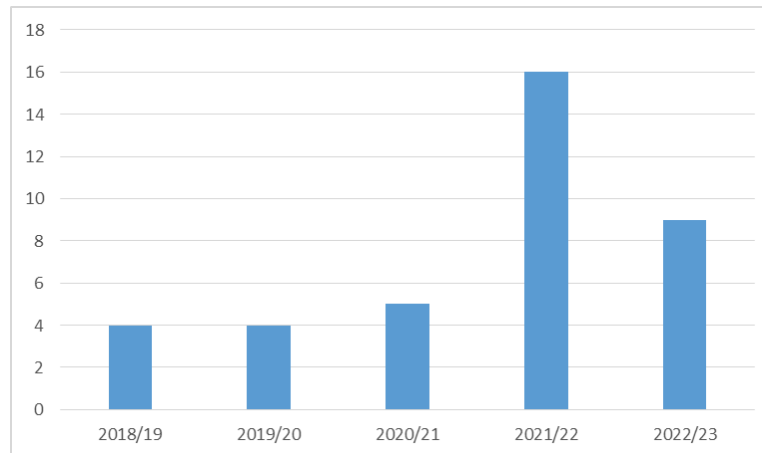
2.7 As expected, the overall number of standard and late TENs received continues to increase year-over-year as the nation emerges from the impact of the pandemic and the subsequent increase in activity. However, the Service expects that any return to pre-pandemic levels may take some years.



Source: Home Office

2.8 Data shows that the demand for TENs in Hackney remains disproportionately high, with the borough receiving the second highest number of TENs in London after Westminster according to figures released by the Home Office. Although it should be noted that LB Camden did not supply any figures.

Reviews of premises licence/club premises certificates

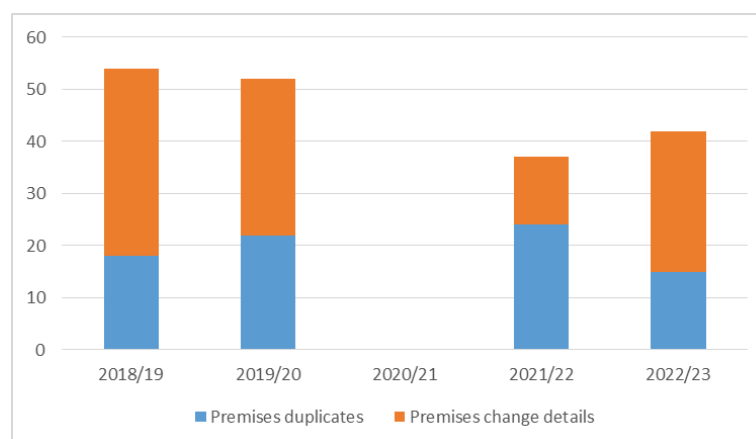


7. Review applications

- 2.8 The Service received 9 review applications in the year; less than the 16 received in the previous year however, still higher than any year in the previous 5. 4 of these were expedited review applications by the Metropolitan Police, where there were 9 of this type of review in the previous year.

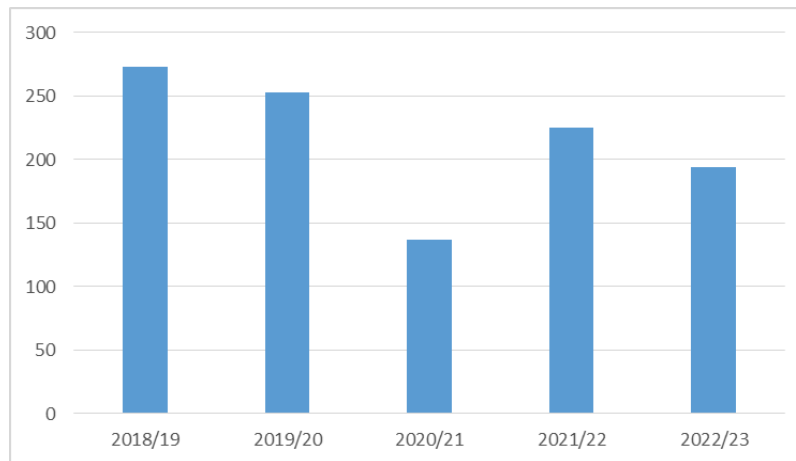
Premises Licences – Requests for Duplicates and Change of Details

- 2.9 The Service has experienced increased demand due to requests for duplicate documents. This is primarily a desktop administrative process involving the reprint of the two-part licence. Around half of the requests are for lost licences with changes to details, which include the licensee changing a registered address, accounting for the rest of the demand. It should be noted that the numbers of these received during 2020/21 could not be determined.



8. Change of details & duplicate premises licences

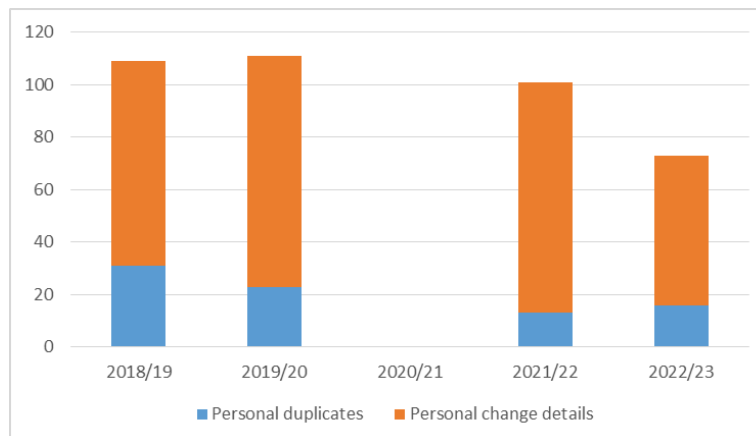
Personal licences



9. Personal licences issued

- 2.10 Grants of personal licences remained on trend continuing to decrease over time. Overall the Council has granted over 5000 personal licences since the commencement of the Licensing Act 2003.

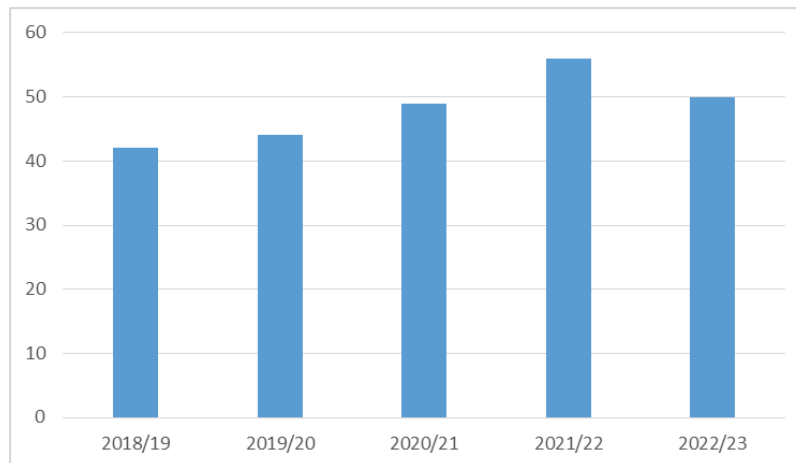
Personal licences – Requests for Duplicates and Change of Details



10. Personal licence duplicates and change of details

- 2.11 Similar to premises licences, the Service receives requests for personal licences to be reprinted following address or name changes or the documents being lost. This is a desktop administrative process with the number received falling when compared to the previous year.

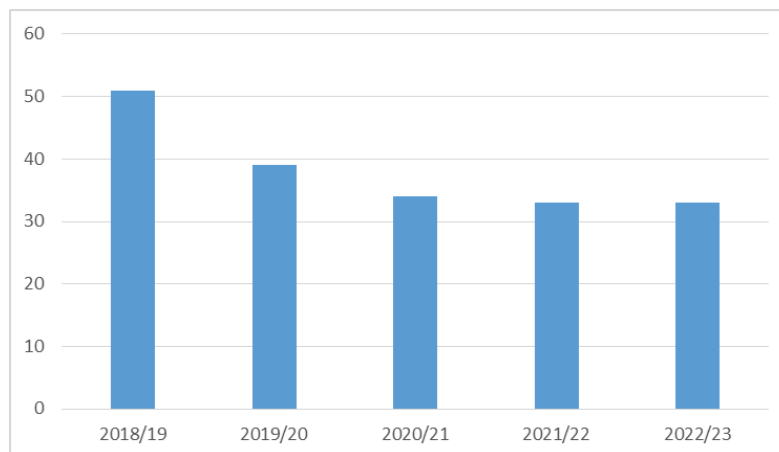
Licensing Sub-Committee hearings



11. Licensing Sub-Committee

- 2.12 The number of Licensing Sub-Committees were down slightly compared to the previous year and appears to be returning to sub-50 hearings per year. However, the number of hearings exceeded 50 for the first time since 2017/18 which reversed the trend that had been decreasing over the previous four years. The number of the additional hearings in 2021/22 that were attributable to expedited review applications and objections to temporary event notices were not required in 2022/23.

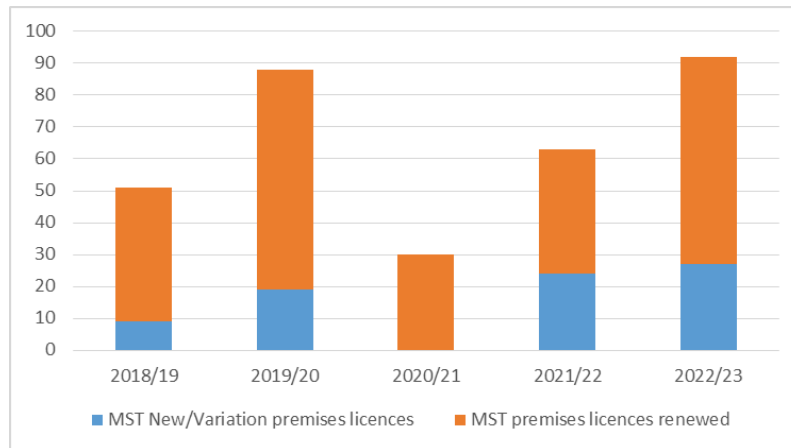
3. Gambling Act 2005



12. Betting (other than track) licences renewed.

- 3.1 The number of betting licences remained at 33 locations. This may suggest that the market has settled following the reduction of the maximum stake for B2 gaming machines and subsequent surrender of many premises licences.

4. Massage and Special Treatments (MST) Licences



16. Massage and Special Treatment licences

- 4.1 New and renewed MST premises licences appears to show a return to levels consistent with those pre-pandemic. The Service will continue to focus efforts on ensuring businesses carrying on this type of activity are appropriately licensed.

5. Look back / Projects

The table below sets out the projects planned by the Service last year.

Objectives	What we will do	Status
Cumulative Impact Assessment and review of the Statement of Licensing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the impact of the Statement of Licensing Policy since it came into effect on 1 August 2018 Sample decisions and levels of applications compared to previous period Collate data on impact of the licensed economy on the promotion of the licensing objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised Statement of Licensing Policy published and effective from 1 August 2023 Cumulative Impact Assessment underway
Inspection regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-introduce risk-based routine inspections of licensed/unlicensed premises which was put on hold following the Cross-Cutting restructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be carried forward to 2023/24
Salesforce Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement Salesforce database working with implementation partner Arcus Global Automate many processes such as temporary event notices, food business registration, annual reminder letters while greatly reducing the manual administration and data entry carried out by officers. Greater use of mapping, integration with payment systems, text messaging, handheld devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressing towards “go live” during Q4 of 2023
Fees Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review fee levels of those activities where the fee can be set locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be carried forward to 2023/24

6. Planned Activity for 2023/24

Objectives	What we will do	Purpose
Hackney Nights Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input into the development of a Hackney Nights Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide clarity to residents and businesses on our approach including supporting growth while tackling antisocial behaviour and crime in partnership with the police.
Salesforce Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement Salesforce database working with implementation partner Arcus Global Automate many processes such as temporary event notices, food business registration, annual reminder letters while greatly reducing the manual administration and data entry carried out by officers. Greater use of mapping, integration with payment systems, text messaging, handheld devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a step change in how the service carries out its operations To make significant efficiency savings To promote customer channel shift, moving from paper based to digital To enable more cloud based working, automation To further support intelligence led decision making
Inspection regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-introduce risk-based routine inspections of licensed/unlicensed premises which was put on hold following the Cross-Cutting restructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure appropriate promotion of all licensing aims and objectives across all forms of legislation. To enable the Service to promote a more proactive rather than reactive approach to licensing.
Fees Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review fee levels of those activities where the fee can be set locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To align with good practice and as recommended by the Local Government Association Ensure fees reflect macroeconomic and inflationary pressures

Much of progress on the above work is likely to be affected by the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic along with the challenges with ICT systems.

APPENDIX

Licensing Service – Summary table

Activity	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Number of valid premises licences under Licensing Act 2003 as of 31 March	1165	1149	N/A	1531	1533
New premises licences granted	107	82	79	92	66
Variation of existing premises licence granted	35	41	31	N/A	27
Minor variation premises licences issued	54	31	42	44	33
Transfers of premises licences processed	103	99	77	81	83
Variations of licence to specify individual as DPS processed	187	202	157	215	204
Standard TENs	1398	1530	158	928	1188
Late TENs	709	675	95	499	533
Reviews of premises licences received	4	4	5	16	9
Premises licences – Duplicates following theft/loss	18	22	N/A	16	15
Premises licences – Changes of details	36	30	N/A	24	27
New personal licences issued	273	253	137	225	194
Personal licence – duplicates following theft/loss	31	22	N/A	13	16
Personal licence – change of details	78	30	N/A	88	57
Premises licences revoked	2	1	1	9	1
Premises licences surrendered	26	17	N/A	9	24
Licensing Sub-committee hearings	42	44	49	56	50
Appeals completed	6	3	0	6	7
Sex Establishment premises licences renewed	4	4	3	2	2

Activity	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Betting shop premises licences renewed	51	39	34	33	33
Bingo premises licences	0	0	2	2	2
Adult Gaming Centres	2	2	3	3	3
Gambling premises licences issued	0	1	2	0	0
Lotteries registered	5	18	14	8	8
Notification of gaming permits issued	8	1	14	2	1
MST New/variation premises licences	9	19	N/A	24	27
MST Premises licences renewed	42	69	N/A	39	65
Transfer of MST premises licences	1	2	2	2	0
MST Practitioner registration	87	200	53	155	190
MST Exempt Practitioner registration	N/A	17	N/A	27	11
Explosives registration	8	8	N/A	9	8

Review applications

2022/23	Postcode	Applicant	Type	Determined	Outcome
1	EC1V	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	29/09/2022	Conditions modified
2	N1	Other Person	Review	24/01/2023	Conditions modified
3	EC2A	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	12/01/2023	Conditions modified
4	EC2A	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	12/01/2023	Conditions modified
5	N16	Trading Standards	Review	N/A	Withdrawn
6	EC2A	Metropolitan Police	Review	13/07/2023	Licence revoked
7	EC2A	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	18/04/2023	Conditions modified
8	E9	Licensing Authority	Review	08/06/2023	Conditions modified
9	EC2A	Environmental Protection	Review	03/07/2023	N/A

2021/22	Postcode	Applicant	Type	Determined	Outcome
1	E8 2NS	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	08/06/2021	Licence revoked
2	E8 4PH	Licensing Authority	Review	22/03/2022	Licence revoked
3	E2 8ET	Licensing Authority	Review	09/12/2021	Licence revoked
4	E8 4AH	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	11/11/2021	Conditions modified
5	E8 3RH	Metropolitan Police	Review	11/11/2021	Licence revoked
6	E8 3RH	Metropolitan Police	Review	11/11/2021	Licence revoked
7	E8 3RH	Metropolitan Police	Review	11/11/2021	Licence revoked
8	E8 3RH	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	11/11/2021	Licence revoked
9	E8 3RH	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	11/11/2021	Licence revoked
10	E8 3RH	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	11/11/2021	Licence revoked
11	N16 7XJ	Metropolitan Police	Review	16/12/2021	Licence revoked
12	EC2A 3AY	Metropolitan Police	Review	14/12/2021	Licence revoked
13	N16 8BH	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	16/12/2021	Conditions modified
14	E5 8PA	Environmental Protection	Review	01/03/2022	Conditions modified, exemption removed
15	E8 4AA	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	18/01/2022	Conditions modified
16	EC1V 9LE	Metropolitan Police	Review	03/03/2022	Licence revoked
17	EC1V 9LE	Metropolitan Police	Review	N/A	Licence surrendered
18	EC2A 2BS	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	N/A	Licence surrendered
19	E2 7NX	Metropolitan Police	Expedited Review	12/04/2021 2	No action taken

2020/21	Postcode	Applicant	Type	Determined	Outcome
1	E8	Environmental Protection	Review	04/04/2019	Licence revoked
2	EC1V	Metropolitan Police	Review	27/06/2019	Conditions modified
3	N1	Licensing Authority	Review	03/09/2019	Conditions modified

4	E2	Metropolitan Police	Review	05/02/2020	Conditions modified
---	----	---------------------	--------	------------	---------------------

2019/20	Postcode	Applicant	Type	Determined	Outcome
1	E8	Environmental Protection	Review	04/04/2019	Licence revoked
2	EC1V	Metropolitan Police	Review	27/06/2019	Conditions modified
3	N1	Licensing Authority	Review	03/09/2019	Conditions modified
4	E2	Metropolitan Police	Review	05/02/2020	Conditions modified

2018/19	Postcode	Applicant	Type	Determined	Outcome
1	E8	Trading Standards	Review	07/08/2018	Licence suspended, conditions modified
2	N1	Licensing Authority	Review	13/09/2018	Licence revoked
3	E8	Metropolitan Police	Review	30/01/2019	Licence revoked
4	E2	Metropolitan Police	Review	05/02/2019	Licence suspended



Title of Report	Annual Report of the Pensions Committee 2022-23
For Consideration By	Pensions Committee 28 November 2023 Council 24 January 2024
Classification	Public
<u>Ward(s) Affected</u>	All
<u>Group Director</u>	Jackie Moylan, Interim Director of Finance

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to detail the role of the Pensions Committee and summarise the key activities and achievements in 2022/23 that demonstrate how the Committee has fulfilled its role as the Scheme Manager for the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund. This report will be presented to full Council at its January 2024 meeting as a summary of the Committee's activities

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1. **Council is recommended to note the report.**

3. **Related Decisions**

- Pensions Committee - 30th March 2023 – Business Plan

4. **Comments of the Interim Director of Finance**

- 4.1. The Pensions Committee acts as Scheme Manager for the London Borough of Hackney Pension Fund and is responsible for the management of approximately £1.87 billion worth of assets and for ensuring the effective and efficient running of the Pension Fund.
- 4.2. The decisions taken by the Committee impact directly on the financial standing of the Fund and can therefore affect its funding level and its ability to meet its liabilities. These decisions could therefore also impact on the contribution rates payable by employers participating in the Fund, including the Council itself.
- 4.3. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report

5. **Comments of the Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services**

- 5.1. The Council's Constitution gives the Pensions Committee responsibility for a wide range of functions relating to management of the Council's Pension fund. In carrying out those functions the Committee must have regard to the various legislative obligations imposed on the Council as the Fund's Administering Authority, particularly by the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations 2013.
- 5.2. The annual report of the Pensions Committee's activities demonstrates how it has undertaken and fulfilled its statutory and constitutional responsibilities during 2022/2023.
- 5.3. There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

6. **Background to the Report**

- 6.1. Delegated powers under the Council Constitution have been given to the Pensions Committee to oversee the management of the Pension Fund as the Scheme Manager and are set out in the Terms of Reference for the Committee.
- 6.2. The Pensions Committee is a committee of the Council and reports annually on the work undertaken at Committee. The attached report covers the 2022/23 Financial Year, during which the Committee has met 5 times to cover a broad spectrum of pension related business. The full programme of work and training undertaken by the Committee is set out in the Appendix to this report.
- 6.3. Members continued with an extensive training programme during the year which reflected the key requirements laid down in the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework.
- 6.4. The Annual Report of the Committee evidences the work that the Committee has undertaken and demonstrates that it has discharged its responsibilities effectively both in terms of its legal responsibilities under the LGPS Regulations and the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- 6.5. The coming year will continue to provide the Committee with an extensive work programme which includes work on the Fund's climate targets and Responsible Investment more widely, as well as a full review of the Fund's investment strategy following the 2022 valuation. A number of policy reviews will also be undertaken to update current arrangements. Ongoing training for the Committee in relation to both the Knowledge and Skills Framework and pertinent investment and governance issues will continue to be a regular feature, as will monitoring of funding levels and administration and investment performance

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Annual Report of the Pensions Committee 2022-23

Background documents

None

Report Author	Rachel Cowburn Head of Pensions rachel.cowburn@hackney.gov.uk
Comments for the Interim Director of Finance prepared by	Deirdre Worrell Director, Financial Management deirdre.worrell@hackney.gov.uk
Comments for the Acting Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services prepared by	Georgia Lazari Team Leader (Places) georgia.lazari@hackney.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX 1

Annual Report of the Pensions Committee 2022-2023

I

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PENSIONS COMMITTEE 2022/23

1. CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION – COUNCILLOR KAM ADAMS

- 1.1. The Pensions Committee is responsible for the management of the Pension Fund and acts on behalf of the London Borough of Hackney as the administering authority. We have responsibility for all aspects of managing the Pension Fund, including the Fund's investments, maintaining member records and ensuring that governance arrangements are appropriate. This is a considerable responsibility; the Pension Fund was valued at £1.87bn at 31 March 2023 and has over 26,000 members.
- 1.2. 2022/23 has been a busy year for the Hackney Pension Fund, with a focus on completion of the 2022 triennial valuation and development of a revised investment strategy. The Fund has also renewed its third party administration services contract through its existing provider, Equiniti, and made significant improvements to the quality of its membership data.
- 1.3. Looking at investment matters, 2022/23 was an extremely challenging year in investment markets. Inflation surged across the world, driven primarily by food and energy price inflation. Central banks responded by tightening rapidly, hiking interest rates to try to control the inflation surge and both equity and bond assets generally performed poorly. Early 2023 saw a stronger start for both equities and bonds, although the new environment of high inflation, higher interest rates and slowing growth continues to present investors with significant challenges.
- 1.4. We did not consider any significant allocation changes during the year, largely as a result of the full investment strategy review which is now taking place following the 2022 valuation. We are continuing to fund commitments to illiquid mandates made at previous strategy reviews, including commitments to private debt mandates and an allocation to renewable infrastructure.
- 1.5. We signed off the Fund's 2022 triennial valuation at our meeting on 30 March 2023. The valuation showed a funding position of 106%, which represents a significant improvement from the 92% position calculated at the 2019 valuation. A number of factors drove this rise in the funding position, including higher than expected investment returns and changes in actuarial assumptions. The relatively strong funding position has allowed the Council to significantly reduce its contribution rate in recent years; the rate agreed for the Council for 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2026 is 27%, down from 30% in 2022/23.

- 1.6. 2022/23 has also been another busy year for our administration team. The team has continued to manage the contract with Equiniti, our third party administrator, during the year, delivering ongoing improvements to the Fund's administration service, as well as helping to deliver the Fund's McCloud Programme.
- 1.7. In recent years, the Committee has closely monitored the Fund's progress in developing new processes for data provision. We are therefore very pleased to note that a new automated interface process went live early in 2022/23, representing the culmination of several years' work. The quality of data held by the Fund has since increased significantly, and this is reflected in the early submission of good quality valuation data to the Fund Actuary. Annual Benefit Statements for 2021/22 were also sent out promptly during summer 2022.
- 1.8. The Committee agrees to a training programme each year to ensure that it is able to evidence it has met the requirements of the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills programme and is able to fulfil the governance role with which it is charged. The Committee takes this aspect extremely seriously and training forms a key part of the agenda for each meeting, along with Committee Members and officers attending additional external training on a regular basis.
- 1.9. Details on the work and training undertaken by the Committee during the municipal year 2022/23 are set out in section 3 of this report. Section 4 provides an outline of the anticipated work during 2023/24 financial year..
- 1.10. I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my personal appreciation for the hard work and commitment to the Hackney Pension Fund that the rest of my Committee Members have put in, given the considerable challenges that we face in managing a £1.87 billion pension fund during a period of considerable challenges for both the LGPS and the wider economy.
- 1.11. Particular thanks are due to Ian Williams, Group Director, Finance and Corporate resources, who left Hackney in July 2023 after 16 years. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank Ian for his leadership and dedication and for his support of our work over the last 16 years. I would also like to thank our specialist advisors and the pensions team staff for their hard work over the past year.

Cllr Kam Adams
Chair- Pensions Committee

2. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

2.1. The following Councillors were members of the Committee during the 2022/23 municipal year –

Cllr Kam Adams (Chair)
 Cllr Rob Chapman (Vice-Chair)
 Cllr Grace Adebayo
 Cllr Margaret Gordon
 Cllr Ben Hayhurst
 Cllr M Can Oszen
 Cllr Ian Rathbone
 Cllr Lynne Troughton
 Cllr Joe Walker (from September 2022)
 Jonathan Malins-Smith (Co-opted Scheme Member Representative)
 Henry Colthurst (Co-opted Employer Representative)

2.2. The table below outlines Members' attendance at Pensions Committee meetings during the 2022/23 municipal year and the training sessions at which members were in attendance. It is noted that Members have a large number of commitments, including other public meetings and ward commitments, and are therefore not always available to attend meetings of the Committee.

Member	Jun 2022	Sept 2022	Nov 2022	Jan 2023	Mar 2023
Cllr Robert Chapman	P	P	A	P	O
Cllr Kam Adams	P	P	P	P	P
Cllr Ben Hayhurst	A	A	O	O	A
Cllr Margaret Gordon	O	O	A	P	O
Cllr Lynne Troughton	P	P	P	O	A
Cllr Grace Adebayo	A	P	O	O	P
Cllr M Can Ozsen	P	A	P	O	O
Cllr Ian Rathbone	A	O	A	P	P
Cllr Joe Walker	N/A	P	A	P	A
Jonathan Malins Smith	P	A	O	O	O
Henry Colthurst	A	O	O	O	O
P = Present (in person)					
A = Absent					
O = Present (online)					

3. WORK UNDERTAKEN DURING 2022/23

3.1. The Pensions Committee has responsibility for the strategic management of the Pension Fund, which by the end of the financial year held £1.87bn worth of assets with 26,385 scheme members. We are responsible for deciding the broad asset allocation of the Pension Fund along with its strategic direction and for ensuring the long term solvency of the Fund, i.e. the ability to pay the pensions of all past, present and future scheme members. During the year, we have considered a wide range of issues and taken a number of key decisions affecting the Pension Fund. The work of the Committee has broadly fallen under the following categories during the year:

3.2. **Governance and Administration**

3.2.1. In recent years, the Fund has experienced significant issues with the quality of membership data supplied by its employers and particularly that supplied by the Council, the Fund's largest employer. The Council has experienced difficulties with data provision since the introduction of the new Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in 2014. The Fund was required to make a number of reports to the Pensions Regulator in respect of late issuance of Annual Benefit Statements as a result.

3.2.2. Over the last 3 years, the Committee has closely monitored officers' progress in working with both the Council and Equiniti, the Fund administrator, to develop new processes for data provision. We are therefore very pleased to note that a new automated interface process went live early in 2022/23, representing the culmination of several years' work.

3.2.3. The quality of data held by the Fund has since increased significantly, and this is reflected in the early submission of good quality valuation data to the Fund Actuary. Annual Benefit Statements for 2021/22 were also sent out promptly during summer 2022.

3.2.4. The administration team continued to manage the contract with Equiniti, our third party administrator, during the year, delivering ongoing improvements to the Fund's administration service. Performance under the pension administration contract when compared to the service level agreement (SLA), was 96.3% for 2021/22 as a whole, which increased to 97.4% for the year 2022/23.

3.2.5. In late 2022, we agreed to renew our contract with Equiniti for third party administration services until December 2025. The renewed contract includes

provision for an upgrade of the Fund's version of Compendia, Equiniti's proprietary administration software, to the new Compendia Touch in early 2024. The upgrade should help reduce the requirement for manual calculations as well helping the Fund to manage the regulatory changes required for the McCloud programme.

- 3.2.6. The Committee receives regular updates on progress on the McCloud Programme, which ensures the Fund is able to manage the regulatory changes following the McCloud judgement on age discrimination. We receive quarterly risk updates through the Fund risk register, as well as more detailed briefings when required. Work on data collection and validation is well underway and is largely progressing as planned, although we continue to closely monitor key risks, including those relating to the pending administration system upgrade to Compendia Touch.
- 3.2.7. In recent years the risk of cybercrime has become much more evident, with the serious cyber attack on Hackney Council in October 2020 being a good example. Cyber-attacks on pension schemes are a significant risk and LGPS administering authorities are arguably at higher risk than other schemes due to the volume of data transfers between the administering authority and employers in the funds, as well as the high levels of assets of the funds. This is therefore an area of considerable interest to the Pensions Regulator.
- 3.2.8. The Committee and Officers have been working with the Fund's governance consultant, Aon, to develop a Cyber Security Strategy for the Fund, which was approved by the Committee in March 2022. A key element of delivering this strategy will be working in partnership with Hackney Council as the Host Authority for the Fund, whilst still ensuring that the Pensions Committee and Fund officers have appropriate ownership of the risk and understands where Fund specific action and internal controls are required. Officers are now working with Aon to implement the strategy; initial security assessments have already been completed for the Council and Equiniti, with reviews now due for the custodian, actuary and asset pool.
- 3.2.9. At the start of the municipal year, we reviewed the business plan for the year, setting out a timetable for both activities required to meet the Fund's objectives for the year and for the regular review of policy documents. The Business Plan also sets out draft Committee agendas for review to ensure that key items of business are dealt with at appropriate intervals.

3.3. **Funding & Investment**

- 3.3.1. The Committee signed off the Fund's 2022 triennial valuation at its meeting on 30 March 2023. The valuation showed a funding position of 106%, which represents a significant improvement from the 92% position calculated at the 2019 valuation. A number of factors drove this rise in the funding position, including higher than expected investment returns and changes in actuarial assumptions.
- 3.3.2. The most significant contributor to the increase in funding level was higher than expected investment returns. This has had a material positive impact on the funding position and employers' secondary contribution rates. Expectations about the future, which inform the assumptions used to value the liabilities, also changed since the previous valuation. The most significant changes were:
- Future inflation: this is expected to be on average higher than at the 2019 valuation due to the current level of high inflation.
 - Investment returns: due to changes in financial markets, future investment returns are now expected to be slightly higher than at the last valuation.
- 3.3.3. The 2022 valuation set employers' contribution rates for from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2026. Broadly speaking, the trend at this valuation has been for primary rates to have increased since 2019 due to rising inflation, whilst secondary rates have generally reduced due to strong investment performance since the previous valuation. Fund officers held an employer forum in February 2023 to allow employers the opportunity to hear about the valuation process from the actuary and discuss their proposed employer rates.
- 3.3.4. The relatively strong funding position has allowed the Council to significantly reduce its contribution rate in recent years; the rate agreed for the Council for 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2026 is 27%, down from 30% in 2022/23.
- 3.3.5. Looking at investment matters, 2022 was an extremely challenging year in investment markets. Inflation surged across the world, driven primarily by food and energy price inflation. Central banks responded by tightening rapidly, hiking interest rates to try to control the inflation surge. Government bond yields rose rapidly, and credit assets in general performed very poorly. Equity markets also struggled, with very few sectors performing well - only the energy sector, to which the Fund has relatively low exposure, delivered a strong performance.
- 3.3.6. Early 2023 saw a stronger start for both equities and bonds, which was marred by concerns over bank failures after the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and eventual rescue of Credit Suisse. The new environment of high inflation, higher

interest rates and slowing growth continues to present investors with significant challenges as we move into 2023/24.

- 3.3.7. Over the year to 31st March 2023, the Fund returned -5.0%, below the LGPS Universe average of -1.6%. One key driver of this underperformance was the Fund's asset allocation, with a low exposure to alternatives and relatively high exposure to bonds. The other key driver was poor equity performance from the Fund's active managers, which is being closely monitored by the Pensions Committee.
- 3.3.8. The Committee did not consider any significant allocation changes during the year, largely as a result of the full investment strategy review which is now taking place following the 2022 valuation. We are continuing to fund commitments to illiquid mandates made at previous strategy reviews, including commitments to private debt mandates and an allocation to renewable infrastructure. Both allocations reflect the ongoing shift in the Fund's investment strategy towards income generating investments, which are becoming increasingly necessary as the Fund matures and benefit payments increase.
- 3.3.9. The Fund changed its investment consultant during the year, appointing Redington Ltd in October 2022 following a competitive tender process. As a Committee we are developing a strong working relationship with Redington, who have so far assisted us in updating our climate targets and reviewing the investment strategy following the 2022 valuation.

3.4. **LGPS Structural Reform and the London CIV**

- 3.4.1. Asset pooling is now firmly underway across the LGPS, with all 8 asset pools in England and Wales now operational. Decisions around manager selection are now moving to asset pools where suitable strategies are available; however, investment strategy decisions remain firmly with individual funds. Asset allocation and investment strategy decisions for the Hackney Pension Fund are therefore still made by the Pensions Committee as the body responsible for the management of the Fund.
- 3.4.2. The Fund's current Investment Strategy Statement sets out its medium term plans for moving its assets to the London CIV. The Fund carried out its second significant pooling transition exercise in 2021/22, following its first investments via the London CIV in 2018/19. The transition exercise saw a number of new allocations to London CIV mandates, including active global equity, private debt, multi asset and renewable infrastructure. Further allocations to the London CIV are expected as part of the Fund's 2023 strategy review.

3.4.3. Cllr Robert Chapman, Vice Chair of the Hackney Pensions Committee, and Ian Williams, S151 officer for Hackney until July 2023, both continued to sit on the Shareholder Committee of the LCIV during the year, further underlining the Fund's commitment to the pooling arrangements.

3.4.4. The move to mandatory asset pooling has created a number of challenges for both LGPS funds and asset pools themselves. We have been generally supportive of the move to asset pooling; we have looked to maintain and improve a positive relationship with the London CIV whilst challenging where appropriate to ensure that the CIV acts in the interests of its client funds and helps us to deliver our strategic investment requirements.

3.5. **Responsible Investment**

3.5.1. As a Committee, we take very seriously the Fund's responsibilities as a shareholder in the companies that it holds, and considerable time and discussion has taken place on ways to improve the Fund's responsible investment and stewardship arrangements.

3.5.2. One issue particularly recognised is that of fossil fuels and their impact on climate change. We recognise that these issues present systemic risks to the planet, but could also have a material impact on the financial position of the Pension Fund. We therefore have a long running work plan in place to ensure that this issue is addressed within the Fund's investment strategy.

3.5.3. In 2016, the Pensions Committee set a target for the Fund to reduce exposure to fossil fuel reserves by at least 50% over the 6 years to 2022; the Fund was ultimately able to reduce its exposure to carbon reserves by 96.9%, demonstrating significant outperformance of the original target. We are proud to have responded to this issue early and to have been one of the first LGPS funds to set and transparently monitor performance against a carbon reduction target.

3.5.4. The target ultimately helped highlight the areas of greatest risk within the Fund's investment strategy and helped the Fund integrate carbon risk into the strategy setting process. We are, however, determined to remain at the forefront of Local Authority pension funds in tackling the risks of climate change to our investments.

3.5.5. In January 2023, we therefore set ourselves a new set of carbon targets. The Committee's ambition is for the Fund to achieve net zero emissions by 2040; we have therefore set ourselves 3 shorter term targets to help monitor

progress. The targets incentivise both portfolio and real world decarbonisation and are in line with emerging best practice in this field, ensuring that the Fund remains a leader amongst its Local Government peers and other institutional investors.

3.5.6. The targets are:

- to reduce the fund's carbon footprint by 50% by 2030. This will cover carbon emissions across all sectors of the economy, unlike the fund's previous carbon reserves target which focused on energy companies.
- to align the fund's portfolio to a 2C warming scenario by 2030 with a 1.5C goal for 2040. This is a forward-looking target to help the fund focus on driving change in the real economy by investing in assets that make a positive contribution to the transition to net zero.
- to allocate 10% of assets to climate solutions over the next five years. This could include assets that help avoid carbon emissions, such as renewable energy or nature-based solutions such as sustainable forestry which can help remove carbon from the atmosphere.

3.5.7. In November 2022, the Fund responded to Central Government's consultation on TCFD (Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosure)-aligned disclosures. TCFD is a framework for reporting how climate-related risks and opportunities are measured, monitored and managed by companies, asset managers and asset owners. The framework aims to:

- improve climate related data quality.
- increase focus on climate change.
- enable more informed decisions.
- provide a consistent framework for comparison.

3.5.8. In November 2020, the government announced that TCFD-aligned disclosures would be mandatory in the UK across the economy by 2025. LGPS funds were originally due to begin reporting from 2023/24, with reports due by December 2024. A consultation for the LGPS was released by Central Government in September 2022 and the Committee agreed a response at its November 2022 meeting. We agreed in principle with many of the proposals but made a number of comments relating to the practical implementation of the Government's plans.

3.5.9. The implementation of TCFD reporting for the LGPS has been delayed until the 2024/25 reporting year, with the first reports due by December 2025. Like many funds, we are considering producing a voluntary report for 2023/24 to ensure that we are familiar with the process before reporting becomes mandatory.

3.5.10. The Fund remains a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF), which is a collection of Local Authority funds who by acting collectively are able to apply pressure to management of companies to improve their governance standards. Cllr Rob Chapman, the Vice Chair of the Pensions Committee, now sits as part of the LAPFF executive.

3.6. Financial Monitoring including Annual Report and Accounts

3.6.1. At the Pensions Committee meeting on 22nd November 2022 the Committee were presented with the 2021/22 Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts for approval, pending completion of the audit.

3.6.2. At the time of writing, the audit of the Pensions Fund’s 2021/22 financial statements was not yet complete; it is hoped that this work will be completed over the coming weeks.

3.6.3. The 2020/21 Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts remains in draft form, as we await completion of the audit work.

3.7. Training

3.7.1. To enable Committee Members to meet their fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities, the Committee were provided with a training session prior to each meeting. The CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework sets out in considerable detail the level of knowledge and skills that are expected of Committee Members who hold responsibility for the management of LGPS Funds; it is therefore vital to ensure that appropriate levels of training are available to the Committee.

3.7.2. The topics covered in the training programme for Members were provided in line with the Knowledge and Skills Framework to help ensure that the Committee are able to achieve the level of specialist knowledge required of them.

3.7.3. The topics covered during the year in line with the Knowledge and Skills Framework are outlined in the table below:

Dedicated Training - Committee	Date
Carbon Risk (Investment performance and risk management; financial markets and products knowledge)	15/06/2022

Procurement (pensions services procurement and relationship management)	29/09/2022
TCFD (Investment performance and risk management; financial markets and products knowledge)	22/11/2022
Investment Strategy & Carbon Targets (Investment performance and risk management; financial markets and products knowledge)	19/01/2023
Investment Strategy (Investment performance and risk management; financial markets and products knowledge)	30/03/2023

5 Members also attended dedicated training sessions run by the Fund's benefits and governance consultant, Aon, which were specifically aimed at new Pensions COmmittee and Board members. The training, which took place over 2 days in June and July 2023, covered a range of topics including:

- Pensions Legislation and LGPS Governance,
- Investment,
- LGPS Administration and Communications and Contract Management
- LGPS Funding, Actuarial, Accounting and Audit

Attendance at training sessions is shown in the table below:

Member	June 2022	September 2022	November 2022	January 2023	March 2023	New member training July 2022	Day 1 Aon training	Day 2 Aon training
Cllr Robert Chapman	P	P	A	P	P	A	A	A
Cllr Kam Adams	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Cllr Ben Hayhurst	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A
Cllr Margaret Gordon	P	P	A	P	A	P	A	A
Cllr Lynne Troughton	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	A
Cllr Grace Adebayo	A	P	P	A	P	A	P	A
Cllr M Can Ozsen	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	A
Cllr Ian Rathbone	A	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
Cllr Joe Walker	N/A	P	A	P	A	P	P	P

Jonathan Malins Smith	P	A	P	P	P	A	A	A
Henry Colthurst	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A
P = Present								
A = Absent								

4. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

4.1 During the 2023/24 municipal year, the following reports are expected to be submitted to the Committee for consideration –

- Report and Accounts 2022/23
- 2023/24 Budget
- Business Plan 2023/26
- Updated Climate Targets
- Investment Strategy review, including a focus on responsible investment
- Actuarial Services and Benefits & Governance Consultancy Procurement
- Cyber Strategy development
- Quarterly monitoring – covering Funding, Investment, Governance, Administration
- Response to LGPS Pooling Consultation
- Review of new TPR Single Code
- McCloud Programme Updates
- Regulatory changes and consultations
- Pension Fund Risk Register
- Training Programme
- Policy reviews

This page is intentionally left blank