



HILLINGDON
LONDON



CABINET

Date: THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2025

Time: 7.00 PM

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM 6 -
CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH
STREET, UXBRIDGE UB8
1UW

Meeting Details: The public and press are welcome to attend and observe the meeting.

For safety and accessibility, security measures will be conducted, including searches of individuals and their belongings. Attendees must also provide satisfactory proof of identity upon arrival. Refusal to comply with these requirements will result in non-admittance.

This meeting may be broadcast on the Council's YouTube channel. You can also view this agenda online at www.hillingdon.gov.uk

To all Members of the Cabinet:

Ian Edwards, Leader of the Council
(Chair)

Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader of the
Council & Cabinet Member for Corporate
Services & Property (Vice-Chair)

Martin Goddard, Cabinet Member for
Finance & Transformation

Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for
Children, Families & Education

Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health
& Social Care

Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for
Community & Environment

Steve Tuckwell, Cabinet Member for
Planning, Housing & Growth

Published:

Wednesday, 18 June 2025

Contact:

Tel: 01895 250636

Email: democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk

Putting our residents first

Lloyd White
Head of Democratic Services
London Borough of Hillingdon,
Phase II, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

Useful information for residents and visitors

Watching & recording this meeting

You can watch the public part of this meeting on the Council's YouTube channel, live or archived after the meeting. Residents and the media are also welcome to attend in person, and if they wish, report on the public part of the meeting. Any individual or organisation may record or film proceedings as long as it does not disrupt proceedings.

Watch a **LIVE** broadcast of this meeting on the Council's YouTube Channel: *Hillingdon London*

Those attending should be aware that the Council will film and record proceedings for both official record and resident digital engagement in democracy.



It is recommended to give advance notice of filming to ensure any particular requirements can be met. The Council will provide seating areas for residents/public, high speed WiFi access to all attending and an area for the media to report. The officer shown on the front of this agenda should be contacted for further information and will be available to assist. When present in the room, silent mode should be enabled for all mobile devices.

Travel and parking

Bus routes 427, U1, U3, U4 and U7 all stop at the Civic Centre. Uxbridge underground station, with the Piccadilly and Metropolitan lines, is a short walk away. Limited parking is available at the Civic Centre. For details on availability and how to book a parking space, please contact Democratic Services.

Please enter via the Civic Centre Forecourt (Uxbridge Library area) and visit the security desk. You will then be directed to the Committee Room.



Accessibility

For accessibility options regarding this agenda please contact Democratic Services. For those hard of hearing an Induction Loop System is available for use.

Emergency procedures

If there is a FIRE, you will hear a continuous alarm. Please follow the signs to the nearest FIRE EXIT and assemble on the Civic Centre forecourt.

Lifts must not be used unless instructed by a Fire Marshal or Security Officer. In the event of a SECURITY INCIDENT, follow instructions issued via the tannoy, a Fire Marshal or a Security Officer. Those unable to evacuate using the stairs, should make their way to the signed refuge locations.

Notice

Notice of meeting and any private business

The London Borough of Hillingdon is a modern, transparent Council and through effective Cabinet governance, it seeks to ensure the decisions it takes are done so in public as far as possible. Much of the business on the agenda for this Cabinet meeting will be open to residents, the wider public and media to attend. However, there will be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information. Such business is shown in Part 2 of the agenda and is considered in private. Further information on why this is the case can be sought from Democratic Services.

This is formal notice under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 to confirm that the Cabinet meeting to be held on:

26 June 2025 at 7pm in Committee Room 6, Civic Centre, Uxbridge

will be held partly in private and that 28 clear days public notice of this meeting has been given. The reason for this is because the private (Part 2) reports listed on the agenda for the meeting will contain exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. An online and a hard copy notice at the Civic Centre in Uxbridge indicates a number associated with each report with the reason why a particular decision will be taken in private under the categories set out below:

- (1) information relating to any individual
- (2) information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
- (3) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
- (4) information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
- (5) Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
- (6) Information which reveals that the authority proposes (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
- (7) Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Notice of any urgent business

To ensure greater transparency in decision-making, 28 clear days public notice of the decisions to be made both in public and private has been given for these agenda items. Any exceptions to this rule are the urgent business items on the agenda marked *. For such items it was impracticable to give sufficient notice for a variety of business and service reasons. The Chairman of the relevant Select Committee has been notified in writing about such urgent business.

Notice of any representations received

No representations from the public have been received regarding this meeting.

Date notice issued and of agenda publication

18 June 2025
London Borough of Hillingdon

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Declarations of Interest in matters before this meeting
- 3 To approve the minutes of the last Cabinet meeting 1 - 12
- 4 To confirm that the items of business marked Part 1 will be considered in public and that the items of business marked Part 2 in private

Cabinet Reports - Part 1 (Public)

- 5 Closure of Retail Operations and Review of Support Services from the Rural Activities Garden Centre (Cllr Eddie Lavery) 13 - 34
- 6 Report from Resident Services' Select Committee - Homeless Prevention and the customer journey (Cllr Steve Tuckwell) 35 - 64
- 7 Temporary Accommodation Action Plan Monitoring (Cllr Steve Tuckwell) 65 - 82
- 8 Capital Funding Allocation for Education & SEND * (Cllr Susan O'Brien / Cllr Martin Goddard) 83 - 94
- 9 UK Shared Prosperity Fund - 2025/26 allocation (Cllr Steve Tuckwell) 95 - 104
- 10 Public Preview of Confidential Reports (All Cabinet Members) 105 - 108

Cabinet Reports - Part 2 (Private and Not for Publication)

- | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 11 | Fleet Replacement Programme - Purchase of Street Sweepers (Cllr Martin Goddard) | 109 - 120 |
| 12 | School Conditions Building Programme 2025/26 - Fire Safety works at Schools (Cllr Jonathan Bianco) | 121 - 128 |
| 13 | Contract for Revenues, Benefits & Housing System & Other Corporate Solutions (Cllr Martin Goddard) | 129 - 174 |
| 14 | Irrecoverable Corporate Debt (Cllr Goddard) | 175 - 180 |

The reports in Part 2 of this agenda are not for publication because they involve the disclosure of information in accordance with Section 100(A) and Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), in that they contain exempt information and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

- 15** Any other items the Chairman agrees are relevant or urgent

This page is intentionally left blank

Minutes & Decisions

CABINET

Thursday, 22 May 2025 at 7pm

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



Decisions published on: 23 May 2025

Decisions come into effect: from 5pm, 2 June 2025

Cabinet Members Present:

Ian Edwards (Chair)
Jonathan Bianco (Vice-Chair)
Martin Goddard
Susan O'Brien
Jane Palmer
Eddie Lavery

Members also Present:

Sital Punja

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Steve Tuckwell, Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing & Growth.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS BEFORE THIS MEETING

No interests were declared by Members present.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST CABINET MEETING

The minutes and decisions of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 April 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

4. TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 2 IN PRIVATE

It was confirmed that items of business marked Part 1 would be considered in public and those marked Part 2 in private.

5. BECK THEATRE, HAYES - CAR PARK CHARGES AND ARRANGEMENTS

RESOLVED:

That:

- 1) statutory consultation on the introduction of proposed charges for parking at the Beck Theatre, Hayes, as set out in the report, be approved.**
- 2) authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Community and Environment, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Place, to consider the outcome of the statutory consultation and agree the charges and all further necessary decisions in regard to their implementation.**
- 3) Subsequent charges be reviewed annually as part of the wider corporate review of fees and charges presented to Cabinet.**

Reasons for decision

Cabinet considered a report proposing the introduction of charging for the Beck Theatre Car Park, Hayes which would be subject to statutory consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Community & Environment explained that in the proposal the car park, which was previously free, would begin charging £2 for every four hours of parking. This fee would apply at all times, except on Christmas Day and bank holidays, when parking would remain free, consistent with other council-operated car parks. It was noted that the proposal included a 10% discount on the standard rate for the Hillingdon First residents' card. Additionally, provisions were proposed to be made for free parking for theatre staff, production companies, and adult social care staff working at the nearby Grassy Meadow Day Centre.

It was further noted that the charges would be reviewed annually as part of the broader corporate review of fees and charges. Considering the matter, Cabinet therefore agreed the recommendations in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Cabinet could have decided not to propose charges or alternative charges, which was discounted due to agreement with Parkwood Theatres.

Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions on this matter can be called in by a majority of the select committee by 5pm, Monday 2 June 2025. If not called-in, Cabinet's decisions can then be implemented.
Officer(s) to action	Richard Webb
Directorate	Homes & Communities
Classification	Public - <i>The report and any background papers relating to this decision by the Cabinet are available to view on</i>

the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.

6. PUBLIC PREVIEW OF CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet note the reports to be considered later in private and Part 2 of the Cabinet agenda and comment on them as appropriate for public information purposes.

Reasons for decision

The Leader of the Council introduced the report which provided a public summary of the matters to be discussed in the private part of the Cabinet meeting later, increasing the Council's transparency.

The Cabinet Member for Community & Environment highlighted a private report to be considered later, concerning the proposed use of mobile vehicle ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) camera technology for parking enforcement, particularly around school sites. This initiative was described as a significant advancement in the Council's parking enforcement strategy.

The proposal would involve leasing a vehicle equipped with ANPR technology to enforce parking restrictions where legally permitted, with a focus on school "keep clear" markings to enhance road safety. Additionally, the vehicles would support enforcement in large permit parking zones, although tickets in those areas would still need to be issued manually.

A further benefit highlighted was the potential use in enforcing the new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) around Heathrow Airport, particularly targeting private hire vehicles. Whilst compliance had been good so far, the long-term goal was to influence driver behaviour positively.

In response to a question from the Leader of the Council, it was confirmed that enforcement vehicles would be overt and clearly marked, ensuring transparency to the public.

Alternative options considered and rejected

As set out in the public Cabinet report and also within the private report.

Relevant Select Committee

Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	This matter is not for call-in, as noting only.
Officer(s) to action	Mark Braddock
Directorate	Corporate Services

Classification

Public - *The report and any background papers relating to this decision by the Cabinet are available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.*

7. ANPR CAMERA ENFORCEMENT LEASING VEHICLE PROPOSAL

RESOLVED:

That:

- 1) the lease of ANPR-equipped camera enforcement vehicle(s) for use in enforcing parking and moving traffic restrictions in the Borough, be approved.
- 2) delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Homes and Communities to determine the number of ANPR camera equipped vehicles to lease, and duration of the lease, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Environment, be approved.
- 3) the decommissioning of all School Keep Clear enforcement cameras, be approved, except for the 10 with the highest levels of detected non-compliance.
- 4) the deployment of mobile ANPR camera vehicles to monitor School Keep Clear areas going forward, be approved.
- 5) the operational and financial efficiencies created by the ANPR vehicles and their role in supporting the enforcement of the Public Spaces Protection Order near Heathrow Airport, be noted.

Reasons for decision

Cabinet received a report, and agreed its recommendations, for the commercial lease of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) equipped camera enforcement vehicles to modernise parking enforcement operations, generate efficiencies and improve road safety, particularly around schools.

The Cabinet Member for Community & Environment stated that the vehicles would focus on areas of non-compliance, which was supported by the Leader of the Council.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Cabinet considered alternative options, such as keeping the existing camera infrastructure or simpler cameras without ANPR, but discounted these due to either cost, effectiveness or operational limitations.

Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions on this matter can be called in by a majority of the select committee by 5pm, Monday 2 June 2025. If not called-in, Cabinet's decisions can then be implemented.

Officer(s) to action
Directorate
Classification

Richard Webb / Adam Bunce

Homes & Communities

Private - *Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).*

8. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION LEASING INITIATIVE IN UXBRIDGE

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agree:

1) A lease of a minimum of 10-years be entered into with Old Capital Management Ltd for the use of eighty-seven self-contained homes for temporary accommodation for homeless households, as set out in the report.

2) It be noted that the Council will be responsible for the housing management, repairs and remedial works for wear and tear and full insurance of the properties. Within the leases, the Council will be liable for the costs of exceptional damages and the full rental costs for the period that any unit is void.

3) It be noted that the proposal to enter leases for the homes of temporary accommodation with Old Capital Management Ltd will be subject to an annual RPI increase, for the full lease period. Further, that the annual rent for each property has been negotiated to be at net lower cost to the General Fund when compared to current spot-purchased nightly charged temporary accommodation.

4) that authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Property, to make all necessary property and operational decisions to implement this lease and any ancillary decisions required, with Old Capital Management Ltd.

5) Transformation Capitalisation funding of £639,250 for the fire related remedial works and furniture and fittings.

Reasons for decision

Cabinet received a report, and agreed its recommendations, to enter into a lease agreement with Oak Capital Management Ltd, to secure a significant number of

family-sized units of self-contained accommodation for use as temporary housing for homeless households in Uxbridge.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Property noted this was a significant addition of housing in the Borough to support the Council’s temporary accommodation strategy.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Cabinet’s options were limited due to the Borough experiencing a sharp increase in levels of homelessness.

Relevant Select Committee	Residents’ Services
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet’s decisions on this matter can be called in by a majority of the select committee by 5pm, Monday 2 June 2025. If not called-in, Cabinet’s decisions can then be implemented.
Officer(s) to action	Roy Dunbar / Craig Spence
Directorate	Homes & Communities / Place
Classification	Private - <i>Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</i>

9. INCREASE CAPACITY IN CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. **Agrees for the Council to obtain the leases of the three properties as set out in the report, to be added to the Council portfolio to be used for the provision of residential care to support Looked After Children and Care Leavers for a seven-year period.**
2. **Agrees to the rephasing of £727k from the approved 2024/25 General Contingency capital budget to increase the 2025/26 capital programme budget for the ‘Investment in Children’s Care Home Capacity’.**
3. **Agrees the capital release request of £727k from the ‘Investment in Children’s Care Home Capacity’ programme budget for the acquisition and set up of the three properties and to fund the set-up costs for the**

Charville Lane development and the properties set out in this report, to ensure they are fit for service delivery under OFSTED regulations.

- 4. Authorises the Corporate Director of Children’s Services to award the contracts and incur expenditure for furniture and finishings as set out in the Tender Appendix and delegate any further decisions regarding to the project’s implementation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education.**

Reasons for decision

Cabinet received a report, and agreed recommendations, to lease several properties to increase the capacity and quality of children's homes in the Borough to provide better care for looked after children and care leavers. Cabinet also agreed the necessary funding strategy and associated refurbishing costs.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education welcomed how this would support transformational changes to children’s lives, whilst also highlighting the cost benefit of Council accommodation compared to private placements.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Cabinet’s options were limited due to the increasing cost of care in the wider market.

Relevant Select Committee	Children, Families & Education
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet’s decisions on this matter can be called in by a majority of the select committee by 5pm, Monday 2 June 2025. If not called-in, Cabinet’s decisions can then be implemented.
Officer(s) to action	Alex Coman / Dunya Alnawab
Directorate	Children’s Services
Classification	Private - <i>Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</i>

10. ELECTRICAL TESTING, REPAIRS & SERVICE CONTRACTS

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

- 1) Agree to extend the current contract with PFL Electrical Services Ltd for the provision LOT 1 – Area 1 Electrical Repairs & Upgrades Contract to the London Borough of Hillingdon for a period of 2 years from 26 June 2025 to 25 June 2027 at an estimated value of £540k per annum (a total estimated value over 2 years of £1,080k).
- 2) Accept the tender from Regen (M&E Services) Ltd for the provision of the LOT 2 - Area 2 Electrical Repairs & Upgrades Contract to the London Borough of Hillingdon for a period of 2 years from 26 June 2025 to 25 June 2027 at an estimated value of £472k per annum (a total estimated value over the 2 years of £944k).

Reasons for decision

Cabinet received a report, and agreed its recommendations, to extend and award contracts for Electrical Testing, Repairs & Upgrade Services, with each contractor operating across a different area of the Borough. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property explained the background to the contract proposals and pricing.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Cabinet could have chosen to re-tender both contracts but discounted this for the reasons set out in the report.

Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions on this matter can be called in by a majority of the select committee by 5pm, Monday 2 June 2025. If not called-in, Cabinet's decisions can then be implemented.
Officer(s) to action	Glen Martin / John Philips
Directorate	Place
Classification	Private - <i>Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</i>

11. MINOR PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS - VOLUNTARY SECTOR LEASE

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet agrees the terms for the renewal of a licence negotiated by officers as detailed in this report and authorises Legal Services to complete the new licence on these terms.

Reasons for recommendation.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Property presented a report, which Cabinet agreed, for the renewal of a business licence for a property at Fassnidge Park, Rockingham Parade, Uxbridge operating as Recycle-a-Bike Uxbridge Ltd, where the organisation would benefit from the Council's Voluntary Sector Leasing Policy discount.

Alternative options considered.

Alternative options were set out in the confidential report.

Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions on this matter can be called in by a majority of the select committee by 5pm, Monday 2 June 2025. If not called-in, Cabinet's decisions can then be implemented.
Officer(s) to action	Andrew Low / Pamela Airewele
Directorate	Place
Classification	Private - <i>Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</i>

12. CONSULTANCY CONTRACT AWARD FOR SCHOOL CONDITION PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That:

1. the appointment of Concertus Design and Property Consultants Ltd under the Council's Consultancy Framework under Lot 1 Multi-Disciplinary Consultancy to progress School Condition Programme Year 1 2025/26 at a cost of £248k up to RIBA Stage 6, be approved.
2. the contract variation of an existing contract with TRAC Associates to include asbestos surveys at schools under the School Conditions Programme Year 1 2025/26 at a cost of £90k, be approved.
3. the capital release request of £576k from the School Conditions Programme Budget 2025/26 for the funding of design works to RIBA Stage 4 and associated project costs for School Condition Programme Year 1 2025/26 (Appendix A), be agreed.

Reasons for decision

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Property introduced a report, which Cabinet agreed, to appoint Design and Property Consultants to progress the School Condition Programme, following the outcome of the School Condition surveys as part of year 1 of a 5 year programme.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Cabinet's options were limited, since not undertaking such consultancy works now could have led to more urgent works required later.

Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions on this matter can be called in by a majority of the select committee by 5pm, Monday 2 June 2025. If not called-in, Cabinet's decisions can then be implemented.
Officer(s) to action	Michael Naughton / Dharmen Panchal
Directorate	Place
Classification	Private - <i>Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</i>

13. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN AGREES ARE RELEVANT OR URGENT

There were no further items. The meeting closed at 7.13pm

Internal Use only	Implementation of decisions & scrutiny call-in
<p>When can these decisions be implemented by officers?</p>	<p>Officers can implement Cabinet’s decisions in these minutes only from the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period, unless otherwise stated in the minutes above, which is:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5pm, Monday 2 June 2025</p> <p>However, this is subject to the decision not being called in by Councillors on the relevant Select Committee. Upon receipt of a valid call-in request, Democratic Services will immediately advise the relevant officer(s) and the Cabinet decision must then be put on hold.</p>
<p>Councillor scrutiny call-in of these decisions</p>	<p>Councillors on the relevant Select Committee shown in these minutes for the relevant decision made may request to call-in that decision. The call-in request must be before the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period above.</p> <p>Councillors should use the Scrutiny Call-in App (link below) on their devices to initiate any call-in request. Further advice can be sought from Democratic Services if required: Scrutiny Call-In - Power Apps (secure)</p>
<p>Notice</p>	<p>These decisions have been taken under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>This Cabinet meeting was also broadcast live on the Council’s YouTube channel here for wider resident engagement.</p> <p>Please note that these minutes and decisions are the definitive record of proceedings by the Council of this meeting.</p> <p>If you would like further information about the decisions of the Cabinet, please contact the Council below: democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk Democratic Services: 01895 250636 Media enquiries: 01895 250403</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

CLOSURE OF RETAIL OPERATIONS AND REVIEW OF SUPPORT SERVICES FROM THE RURAL ACTIVITIES GARDEN CENTRE

Cabinet Member & Portfolio	Councillor Eddie Lavery – Cabinet Member for Community & Environment
Responsible Officers	Karrie Whelan – Corporate Director of Place Sandra Taylor – Corporate Director of Adult Social Care & Health
Report Author & Directorate	Karrie Whelan – Corporate Director of Place
Papers with report	Petition Hearing Appendix Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

HEADLINES

Executive Summary

This report recommends closing the retail operations at the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) in West Drayton by 31 July 2025, due to ongoing financial losses. Alongside this, the Council proposes to consult on the future of support services currently delivered at the site for those in receipt of assessed social care services, with a proposal to meet assessed needs by relocating them to a new, enhanced garden facility at the Civic Centre campus in Uxbridge. The Council will consult with other attendees at the site, who attend on a voluntary basis. Even though the Council has no duty to the volunteers, it feels consultation is appropriate, recognising that a small number have done so for some time.

While the retail element is proposed to be closed, the future of the wider RAGC site remains under consideration, pending feedback from the consultations presented above.

The RAGC has long provided horticultural therapy and community retail services. However, the retail side is no longer viable—requiring a £137k subsidy in 2024/25, with sales income down 42% year-on-year. The site also faces significant capital investment to remain compliant with health and safety standards. With a small number of statutory care users, the current model is unsustainable.

The proposal, to be consulted further on, seeks to ensure:

- Continued tailored support for statutory care users, such as relocating at the Civic Centre campus, with access to enhanced services, including Adult Learning and Library Services.
- Full compliance with the Council's Care Act 2014 duties in meeting the needs of those with assessed social care needs

- Support for non-statutory volunteers through further engagement and help transitioning to alternative placements or employment, including with local partners such as Heathrow and biodiversity organisations.

Initial engagement with volunteers has taken place, staff consultation is also underway and a petition hearing was held on 11 June 2025 in response to two petitions received by the Council. Further consultation is planned before any final decision.

The proposed changes would remove the need for ongoing Council subsidies and avoid future capital costs. While closing the retail operation reflects prudent financial management of taxpayer funds, the Council remains fully committed to supporting those with care needs and ensuring volunteers are guided through any transition with care and clarity.

<p>Putting our Residents First</p> <p>Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026</p>	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: Safe and Strong Communities</p>
<p>Financial Cost</p>	<p>Subject to consultation and any final decision, the relocation of support services to the Civic Centre campus, and the closure of the Rural Activities Garden Centre site would remove the current subsidy to operate the centre, which totalled £137k in 24/25 and is projected to increase in future years.</p>
<p>Select Committees</p>	<p>Residents' Services Select Committee Health and Social Care Select Committee</p>
<p>Ward</p>	<p>Colham and Cowley</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 1) **Agree to cease retail-side operations based at the Rural Activities Garden Centre in West Drayton on or before 31 July 2025, noting its continued loss-making commercial position and the public subsidy required.**
- 2) **Agree further consultation on the future of the services at the RAGC site for those in receipt of assessed social care services with a commitment to ensure identified needs continue to be met, along with further consultation with those who attend the RAGC as volunteers and on proposals to:**
 - a) **Relocate those with assessed care needs to the Civic Centre Campus in Uxbridge to provide enhanced horticultural services and development opportunities.**
 - b) **Support voluntary service users to move to partner organisations within the local area offering a more diverse range of activities including horticulture and biodiversity, and opportunities for paid employment positions should they desire to do so. The Council would provide training and assistance where required.**
 - c) **Consider no change in the location of voluntary and support services for those with assessed social care needs.**
- 3) **Note the initial engagement that has taken place with those with assessed social care needs and volunteers, with regard to the proposal and duly considers the petitions and views received during the petition hearing held on 11 June 2025, as set out in the report.**
- 4) **Note that staff consultation has commenced as part of the proposal in relation to the closure of the retail-side of the Centre.**
- 5) **Note that there will be further consultation and engagement with regard to the proposals using independent advocacy, where appropriate.**
- 6) **Subject to the conclusion of the above and taking into account consultations and the Equalities Impact Assessment, delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Community & Environment, to make a decision on the future of the RAGC site and relocation of service provision accordingly.**

Reasons for recommendations

The recommendations propose ceasing retail-side operations at the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) by 31 July 2025. This is due to the retail element becoming financially unsustainable—requiring a £137k subsidy in 2024/25, with sales income falling by 42% year-on-year. Continuing the retail operation would not only demand further public subsidy but also significant capital investment to meet health and safety standards. In the context of limited usage

and wider financial pressures, this is no longer a sustainable use of Council and taxpayer resources.

The recommendations also propose further consultation on the broader services at the RAGC site. For the individuals with assessed care needs, the Council will continue to meet its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014. The proposed relocation of support services to enhanced garden facilities at the Civic Centre in Uxbridge, is designed not just to maintain, but to enhance the support available. The Civic Centre campus also offers improved integration with Adult Learning and Library Services, proximity to other support networks, and opportunities for more diverse and meaningful engagement.

For volunteers who do not receive statutory assessed social care needs, the Council recognises the value of their contribution and the importance of continuity. The proposal includes consultation with them on tailored support to help them transition to alternative placements with local voluntary sector partners or into employment opportunities. This includes potential partnerships with organisations such as Heathrow and biodiversity-focused groups, offering training, skills development, and broader community involvement.

The recommendations also acknowledge the public interest in the future of the site. Initial engagement with volunteers and those with assessed social care needs has already taken place, and a petition hearing was held on 11 June 2025 in response to two petitions. These views will be carefully considered and will help shape any final decisions.

Staff consultation has commenced to ensure that any changes are managed fairly and transparently, with a focus on minimising redundancies and supporting redeployment wherever possible.

Recognising the practical importance of the RAGC to its volunteer community, the Council is committed to further consultation and engagement. This will include the use of independent advocacy where appropriate, to ensure that all voices are heard and that any transitions are handled with care and dignity.

Finally, subject to the outcome of these consultations and considering the Equalities Impact Assessment, it is proposed that authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Community & Environment to make final decisions on the future of the RAGC site and any relocation of services.

Alternative options considered / risk management

No change and to continue to operate as at present – this would not be a financially sustainable option for the reasons stated in the report.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. The Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) was first established in 1981 and was designed to provide educational and supported learning opportunities for residents with additional needs including learning difficulties, disabilities, and mental health conditions with an emphasis on horticultural therapy. The centre also operates as a community retail garden centre, selling a range of local produce and seasonal plants to the public, some of which are grown on site.
2. Over the last few years, the Council has also seen a reduction in the number of attendees with assessed social care needs who use their personal budgets to attend. These clients have support from the RAGC staff, and some have additional 1-1 support. Other volunteers at the site have enrolled in activities through self-referrals, or signposting from GP services and the Adult Learning service. However, there is no obligation for the Council to provide these services, and there is no charge made for this provision. All volunteers will be offered a social care assessment to see if they should be in receipt of assessed social care services.
3. The RAGC receives a substantial subsidy for services used by a relatively small number of residents. In addition to this, there is an ageing infrastructure at the site, and it is considered that substantial repairs will be needed to ensure that the site can continue to operate in compliance with health and safety regulations as a retail operating garden centre.
4. Subject to consultation, the Council is proposing that for those with assessed social care needs, that their support continues at the Civic Centre campus in Uxbridge, offering horticultural placements across the site's gardens and public realm areas, which now incorporate the new Uxbridge Library and planned new Register Office. This will provide opportunities to greatly enhance the gardens and public realm areas at the Civic Centre campus which will be used for weddings, library events and visitor recreation. It is proposed that those with assessed social care needs will be offered the opportunity to work alongside the Council's green spaces teams to develop and care for this well used outdoor space, whilst also benefitting from working in close proximity to other key support services such as the Adult Learning Centre and the Library Service. Any placements would be in line with the existing weekly plan which users currently follow in order to meet their assessed needs.
5. For the wider volunteer team, the Council does not have a statutory duty to provide services. Nevertheless, the Council has engaged with them as part of these proposals about new volunteer placements of a similar nature through collaborations with voluntary sector partners or by facilitating pathways to paid employment with commercial operators so they can further develop their professional skills. To this end, officers have been working in partnership with third sector organisations, including Heathrow Special Needs Farm and the London Wildlife Trust, to facilitate a much wider range of opportunities should that be required, including routes for employment for those that wish to explore it. Additionally, the Council will continue to offer skills training and other educational opportunities to assist with employment opportunities within the horticulture and biodiversity sphere of learning and skills development. Further engagement and consultation will take place with volunteers as proposed in the report before any final decisions on the RAGC site are made.

6. Whilst considering the proposed relocation of the voluntary and support services that are offered at the site, which is subject to further consultation, it is, however, proposed to cease trading to the public from the garden centre no later than 31 July 2025, as set out in recommendation 1.

Financial Implications

This report recommends closing the retail side of the Centre and consulting on the future of the Rural Activities Garden Centre site and the relocation of support services to the Civic Centre campus for residents with assessed social care needs and support for volunteers who also attend.

The operational cost of the RAGC over the last 2 years is shown in the table below:

	2023/24 Outturn £'000	2024/25 Outturn £'000	Proposed Operating Model
Staffing	281	294	109
Non-Staffing	42	52	31
Income	(71)	(69)	0
Public Health funding	(140)	(140)	(140)
General Fund Subsidy	112	137	0

Income generation at the site has failed to cover operating costs with General Fund subsidy required to maintain the service, £112k in 2023/24 and £137k in 2024/25.

The 2025/26 budget includes an income target of (£167k). If this income were to be achieved, the operation would still require General Fund subsidy of £49k to maintain current operations. However, income generation for prior years has been significantly below the budgeted level. If actual income achieved in 2025-26 is in line with the average of the prior two years at (£70k), this would increase the subsidy required this financial year to £146k.

The cost of the proposal to relocate those with assessed care needs to the Civic Centre Campus in Uxbridge to provide enhanced horticultural services and development opportunities is also shown in the table above. This removes General Fund subsidy and delivers a General Fund base budget saving of £49k per annum. The current level of Public Health funding is to be maintained. Individual Care and Support for the client group will continue to be funded by Adult Social Care.

Furthermore, the implementation costs for garden and public realm enhancements will be provided as part of the social value we receive for works being undertaken to the Civic Centre by our current contractors - at no additional cost to the council.

Maximum redundancy costs are estimated at £171k, however this would be reduced as much as possible through re-deployment options.

The proposed funding strategy for the redundancy costs is for the statutory element to be charged to Transformation Capitalisation, and for the discretionary element along with the pension fund strain costs to be funded from the central redundancy budget included within the 2025/26 MTFS.

The closure of the site also removes the need for capital investment to resolve outstanding condition and Health and Safety issues.

Projected capital costs if the site was to remain open are £1,251k, which would have a revenue impact of approximately £95k per annum to fund the borrowing requirement.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

The proposals in this report, including those subject to further consultation, aim to deliver a sustainable and integrated model of care for Hillingdon residents. While the retail closure addresses significant financial losses and avoids future capital investment, the Council remains committed to supporting individuals with assessed social care needs by enhancing access to services such as Adult Learning and Library Services at the Civic Centre campus. Volunteers, though not statutory service users, will be supported through tailored transition plans, including opportunities with local partners like Heathrow and biodiversity organisations.

The Equalities Impact Assessment underscores the Council's duty to ensure that any changes do not disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, and that all transitions are managed with dignity, fairness, and inclusive consultation, whilst giving the right support to enable residents to manage through change.

Consultation & Engagement carried out (or required)

On the proposals set out in this report, the Council commenced initial engagement with users on 30th May to advise that the retail side of the garden centre provision would be closing. Adult Social Care have engaged with those that have assessed social care needs to assist them with relocating to the new site. As set out in the report, on the broader services provided at the Centre, the Council plans further consultation and engagement with both volunteers and those with assessed social care needs before any final decisions are made.

Furthermore, two petitions opposing the proposed closure of the Rural Activities Garden Centre were received and considered at a petition hearing on 11 June 2025. The first petition, hosted on change.org, and the second, hosted on the Council's website. At the hearing, both lead petitioners presented their cases directly to the Cabinet Member. These are set out in full in the Appendix, however, key points raised included:

- The lack of early and transparent public consultation.
- The significant social and emotional impact the closure would have on vulnerable adults with learning disabilities and their families.
- The value of the RAGC as a long-standing, community-based social care resource.
- Objections to the portrayal of the RAGC as a commercial operation, with petitioners highlighting its social enterprise ethos.

- Requests for an 18-month grace period to develop an alternative business model and calls for an independent public consultation.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged the contributions of petitioners and confirmed that their views would be made available to Cabinet as part of the decision-making process. In response to the petitions and the concerns raised, the Cabinet Member has taken them into account in this report, including as follows:

- The recommendations reaffirm the Council's commitment to continuing statutory support for individuals with assessed care needs, ensuring that any relocation—such as to the Civic Centre campus—will enhance access to integrated services and opportunities.
- The recommendations include a clear commitment to further consultation and engagement with volunteers, including the use of independent advocacy where appropriate, to ensure all voices are heard before any final decision is made.
- The Cabinet Member has also ensured that the Equalities Impact Assessment and the outcomes of the petition hearing are integral to the final decision-making process.
- The recommendations reflect a balanced approach - acknowledging the financial and operational challenges of maintaining the RAGC retail arm in its current form, while prioritising the wellbeing, continuity of care, and future opportunities for both users with assessed social care needs and volunteers.

The Cabinet Member for Community and Environment has also received and considered 531 letters from residents asking for the centre to remain open.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting the recommendations to seek approval to close the retail operations at the RAGC before or by the 31 July 2025, due to the financial loss and the public subsidy required to operate, alongside this approval to undertake further consultation on the future of the care and volunteer services at the RAGC site, including options to relocate, supporting transitions to local partners or maintaining current arrangements.

Furthermore, it is noted that even if the RAGC 2025/26 approved Income target budget of £167k was achieved there would still be a need for a General Fund subsidy of £49k, however, based on prior year income achieved there is potential that the subsidy could increase to £146k.

It is also noted, if the proposed operating model is to be taken forward this option would eliminate the need for General Fund subsidy, which would equate to a general fund base budget saving of £49k. The potential maximum redundancy costs are estimated at £171k, with the view to mitigate this amount through redeployment options, with the remaining cost being proposed to be funded by capital receipts under the Transformation Capitalisation directive, in the event that capital receipts are insufficient, these costs will be funded from the approved 2025/26 budget for the RAGC.

Additionally, if the RAGC site were to remain open there would be a necessity for essential health and safety works to be completed, the projected costs for these works are £1,261k.

Legal

There are no legal impediments to the recommendations set out within this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

PETITION HEARING APPENDIX

Two petitions were received by the Council in relation to proposals regarding the future of the Rural Activities Garden Centre on West Drayton Road. They were both considered at a petition hearing held on 11 June 2025 in the Council Chamber, attended by each lead petitioner and other Members of the public with an interest in the matter.

Details of the two petitions received are set out below:

Petition 1 - Stop LBH closing Rural Activities Garden Centre - an irreplaceable social care resource. Petition hosted on change.org

At the time of finalising this Cabinet report, the online petition had over 5,932 signatories with the following preamble:

At a hastily arranged meeting on 30th May, young adults with learning disabilities and their families were shocked to be informed by Hillingdon Council that it had decided to close the award-winning Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) on West Drayton Road, without consultation with those impacted.

For over 40 years, vulnerable young adults with autism and/or learning disabilities from all over Hillingdon have attended this centre for social support and to benefit from confidence-building activities by working as volunteer gardeners, supervised by the brilliant staff at the centre. This work produces plants and other garden items for sale to the public, substantially subsidising the centre. At the time of writing, the council web site describes RAGC as its "hidden gem".

Over 50 people attended the meeting on 30th May and, sad to say, there were tears from some of those who attend the centre after they learnt of the planned closure. Their professional carers and a local GP at the meeting expressed alarm at the impact any closure would have on the lives of the vulnerable people they care for.

We have very little time to stop this closure as Cllr. Eddie Lavery (Ickenham and Harefield Ward) is planning to rubber stamp the closure decision at the Cabinet meeting at the Civic Centre on 26th June (from 7pm). This meeting can be attended by members of the public as observers. If this closure goes ahead, it will have a life-changing impact on some vulnerable young adults so surely there should be proper consultation. If you agree, it would be great if you could sign this petition to request that the closure decision is withdrawn so that the irreplaceable support provided by this unique centre can continue.

Petition 2 - Stop the London Borough of Hillingdon's Closure of the Rural Activities Garden Centre on West Drayton Road, Uxbridge UB8 3JZ. Petition hosted on the Council website.

At the time of finalising this Cabinet report, the online petition had over 1013 signatories with the following preamble:

We the undersigned petition Hillingdon Council to Stop the Closure of the Rural Activities Garden Centre on West Drayton Road, Uxbridge UB8 3JZ

For over 40 years, vulnerable young adults with autism and/or learning disabilities from all over Hillingdon have attended the award-winning Rural Activities Garden Centre (R.A.G.C.) on West Drayton Road, Uxbridge UB8 3JZ

These young adults have significantly benefited from confidence-building activities by working as volunteer gardeners, supervised by the brilliant staff at the centre. This work produces plants and other garden items for sale to the public, substantially subsidising the centre. At the time of writing, the London Borough of Hillingdon web site describes R.A.G.C. as its "hidden gem".

At a hastily arranged meeting on Friday, 30th May 2025, young adults with learning disabilities and their families were shocked to be informed by the London Borough of Hillingdon that it had decided to close the award-winning Rural Activities Garden Centre (R.A.G.C.).

Over 50 people attended the meeting and, sad to say, there were tears from some of those who attended the centre after they learnt of the planned closure. Their professional carers and a local GP at the meeting expressed alarm at the impact any closure would have on the lives of the vulnerable people they care for.

Councillor Eddie Lavery (Ickenham and Harefield Ward) is planning to make the closure decision at the Cabinet meeting at the Civic Centre on 26th June 2025 from 7.00 p.m. This meeting can be attended by members of the public as observers.

We the undersigned petition the London Borough of Hillingdon Council to stop the closure of the Rural Activities Garden Centre (R.A.G.C.) on West Drayton Road.

Key Objections Against the Proposed Closure.

The closure of the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) would result in:

- 1) a significant, negative and detrimental impact on the lives of the vulnerable young adults with autism and/or learning disabilities who use the centre.*
- 2) a significant, negative and detrimental life-changing impact on the lives of the families, staff and professionals who support and care for the young adults with learning disabilities*
- 3) the removal of vital and irreplaceable social support for vulnerable young adults with autism and/or learning disabilities*

In its proposed closure of the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC), the London Borough of Hillingdon has acted unfairly and undemocratically:

- 4) The families and young adults with learning disabilities were informed of the proposed closure at extremely short notice on Friday, 30th May 2025, less than a month before the Council Cabinet's decision is to be made on Thursday 26th June 2025.*
- 5) Limited time was afforded to those interested and concerned parties to express their opposition to the proposed closure i.e. families, staff, professionals and members*

of the medical profession who support and care for young adults with learning disabilities.

- 6) *The Council has failed to provide a wider local public consultation and engagement exercise and has failed to provide any transparency on its proposed closure of the centre.*
- 7) *Accordingly the Council has not consulted more broadly and widely with those both directly impacted by the proposed closure and local residents.*

At the petition hearing, each lead petitioner presented their petition and case to the Cabinet Member, in accordance with the Council's petition scheme. These are set out below in summary, in the minutes of the petition hearing:

Minutes from petition hearing on 11 June 2025

"The Cabinet Member considered two petitions in relation to the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC).

The Cabinet Member first considered the petition: *Stop the London Borough of Hillingdon's Closure of the Rural Activities Garden Centre on West Drayton Road, Uxbridge UB8 3JZ*, hosted on the Council website. The lead petitioner was in attendance and addressed the Cabinet Member. Concerns were raised regarding the closure of the RAGC, particularly given the lack of public consultation and the Council's failure to meet statutory and legal obligations. The RAGC's enriching environment, which included various facilities and opportunities for local schools and groups, was emphasised. It was submitted that the proposal to improve horticultural social care services at the Civic Centre was misleading as it would leave many people with additional needs without provision. The Council's portrayal of the RAGC as a commercial garden centre was challenged as it was noted the RAGC's remit was for it to be run as a social enterprise and not as commercial business. It was also noted there had been funding challenges since April 2010. Council withdrawal of funding from the RAGC's café and, at Council request, withdrawal of RAGC applied for grants was further highlighted. An 18-month grace period for the RAGC to create a social enterprise business plan was requested. The need for an independent public consultation was emphasised and an assessment of alternative options was urged.

The lead petitioner for the change.org petition: *Stop LBH closing Rural Activities Garden Centre - an irreplaceable social care resource* addressed the Cabinet Member, emphasising the RAGC's irreplaceable value as a social care resource. The RAGC's positive impact, particularly for users with learning disabilities and mental health issues was highlighted. The long-term commitment of volunteers and the community atmosphere at the RAGC was noted and its support work and collaboration with other organisations was emphasised. The Council's lack of consultation with impacted families was questioned. Petitioners called for the withdrawal of the closure plan without a proper public consultation.

The Cabinet Member thanked the petitioners for carefully stating their views and noted that this information would be made available at the Cabinet meeting."



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

STEP A) Description of what is to be assessed and its relevance to equality

What is being assessed? Please tick ✓

Review of a service ✓ Staff restructure Decommissioning a service

Changing a policy Tendering for a new service A strategy or plan

It is proposed to review the service provision of the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) and to consider relocating the support services that are provided to its volunteers, resulting in the possible closure of the existing site and the commercial garden centre.

Who is accountable? E.g. Head of Service or Corporate Director

Karrie Whelan – Corporate Director of Place
Steve Brown – Director of Environment

Date assessment completed and approved by accountable person

17/06/2025

Names and job titles of people carrying out the assessment

Steve Brown, Director of Environment

A.1) What are the main aims and intended benefits of what you are assessing?

The RAGC offers learning experiences for people with additional needs, growing their skills and confidence to support opportunity for learning.

The council regularly reviews its assets to ensure they are delivering best value for residents, and the running costs of the commercial garden centre on West Drayton Road, Hillingdon, have been found to be no longer sustainable.

As part of its required care provision for those volunteers at the site with social care needs, the council is proposing to continue their support at the Civic Centre campus in Uxbridge, offering horticultural placements across the site's gardens and public realm areas.

Recognising the unique potential of each volunteer, they will be offered enriched learning and developmental opportunities with the dedicated guidance of RAGC staff who know them well. A wider range of activities than they currently experience at the garden centre will provide them with broader skills and experience.

For the wider volunteer team, in recognition of their commitment and dedication, the council is proposing to work closely with them to help them secure new volunteer placements of a similar nature through collaborations with its voluntary sector partners, with a number of these placements already identified, or by facilitating pathways to paid employment with commercial operators so they can further develop their professional skills.

A.2) Who are the service users or staff affected by what you are assessing? What is their equality profile?

Users of the existing RAGC service can be considered in four group profiles.

- 1) Volunteers with additional needs
- 2) Volunteers with additional needs and assessed social care needs
- 3) Independent volunteers
- 4) Customers / members of the public

The site also offers support services to several schools, colleges, and education facilities across the borough whereby students with additional needs gain horticultural skills and experience.

Many of the volunteers with additional needs attend the centre with a carer or additional support.

The data held for the volunteers is presented below:

Age

Age data is held for 23 of the 29 volunteers with additional needs.

7 volunteers are under the age of 40.

8 users are aged between 40 and 59.

8 users are over the age of 60.

Disability

All of the volunteers, apart from the 6 independent volunteers, are disabled.

Sex

18 Volunteers with additional needs regularly attend the current site. 15 are male, and 3 are female

11 Volunteers with additional needs and assessed social care needs regularly attend the site. 10 are male, and 1 is female.

6 Independent volunteers regularly attend the site. All are female.

No other data is held.

No equality data is held for customers or the public that use the garden centre.

Equality data is not held for users attending through an educational facility however the students accessing this service are disabled and have Special Educational Needs.

No data is held for carers that attend the site.

More comprehensive data will be gathered as part of ongoing monitoring of the impact of the proposals, should they be agreed, and form part of any further assessment.

A.3) Who are the stakeholders in this assessment and what is their interest in it?

Stakeholders	Interest
Volunteers with additional needs	To ensure that they have access to continued provision of support services including meaningful activities and social interaction in a safe and welcoming environment.
Carers / family members	To ensure that they have access to respite / support in their role as carers.
Independent volunteers	To ensure that they have access to meaningful volunteering opportunities and social interaction in a safe and welcoming environment.
Educational facilities	To ensure that they have access to skills-based learning in a safe and welcoming environment.
Members of the public / customers	To ensure that they have access to green space and garden centre services.

Director of Environment	To ensure value for money in service delivery and to provide improved services to residents.
Corporate Director of Place	To ensure value for money in service delivery and to provide improved services to residents.
Cabinet Member for Community and Environment, Leader of the Council and Council Cabinet	To ensure value for money in service delivery and to provide improved services to residents.

A.4) Which protected characteristics or community issues are relevant to the assessment? ✓ in the box.

Age	✓	Sex	✓
Disability	✓	Sexual Orientation	
Gender reassignment		Socio-economic status	
Marriage or civil partnership		Carers	✓
Pregnancy or maternity		Community Cohesion	
Race/Ethnicity		Community Safety	
Religion or belief		Human Rights	

STEP B) Consideration of information; data, research, consultation, engagement

B.1) Consideration of information and data - what have you got and what is it telling you?

The profile of the volunteers with additional needs shows that:

100% of the volunteers are disabled, of which there are proportionately more men than women; 86% to 14% respectively.

100% of the independent volunteers are female.

30% of the volunteers are under 40 and 70% are over 40 years of age.

100% of those who visit from an educational setting have a disability.

Data is unknown for the other characteristics, and for Carers and the general public.

Consultation

B.2) Did you carry out any consultation or engagement as part of this assessment?

Please tick ✓ NO YES ✓

No formal consultation has been taken as part of this assessment; however officers have met with Volunteers and their carers at the meeting on 30 May 2025 to discuss the proposals it would be asking cabinet to consider on 26 June 2025, namely to cease the retail -side of the operations at the RAGC by 31 July 2025, due to the retail element becoming financially unsustainable.

The meeting included representatives from the Adult Social Care team and Green Spaces team and discussed other organisations we may wish to work with in the future who could provide similar volunteering services for adults using the centre.

It explained that if the proposed changes set out in the Cabinet Report are agreed, volunteers and service users will be informed of any decision and officers will further consult with all users on the decision.

For the individuals with assessed care needs, the Council will continue to meet its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014. The proposed relocation of support services to enhanced garden facilities at the Civic Centre in Uxbridge, is designed not just to maintain, but to enhance the support available. The Civic Centre campus also offers improved integration with Adult Learning and Library Services, proximity to other support networks, and opportunities for more diverse and meaningful engagement.

For volunteers who do not receive statutory assessed social care needs, the Council recognises the value of their contribution and the importance of continuity. The proposal includes consultation with them on tailored support to help them transition to alternative placements with local voluntary sector partners or into employment opportunities. This includes potential partnerships with organisations such as Heathrow and biodiversity-focused groups, offering training, skills development, and broader community involvement.

Engagement and consultation will be ongoing to ensure the impact of the proposals, if approved, is monitored.

B.3) Provide any other information to consider as part of the assessment

Legal context

The council has a public duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations (Equality Act 2010)

Financial context

Since 2010, the council has driven a transformation programme across all services

aimed at reducing costs and improving efficiency to ensure that in an environment of increased expenditure from population growth and inflationary uplifts we continue to deliver high quality services that put residents first.

The council continues to prioritise the delivery of its rigorous savings programme maintaining high standards of resident services, however the latest projections indicate that further savings of £34m will be required during 2025-26 to bridge the budget gap as a result of reducing government funding and the increasing cost of service delivery.

The current service is part funded by a Public Health grant which supports the services that are offered to Social Care clients. However, this funding does not cover all of the cost to provide the current service, with income from sales at the garden centre going only part way to cover the remaining costs.

In 2024/25, the council contributed £137k towards the running of this service, and more funding will be needed in the future to ensure that the site remains safe and welcoming.

To sustain service provision in the longer term there is a need to move to a more cost effective and sustainable site. This means operations can continue in a more structured and managed way, whilst in close proximity to other activities that our clients using the facility can continue to enjoy.

Operating this service from a different location reduces the financial burden on the general fund because the new proposals can be achieved within the envelope of grant funding provided to the council for maintaining this facility without the need for further general fund subsidy and is in line with our corporate objective which is seeking to reduce the reliance of services on subsidy financed through the general fund where possible.

ASC have and will continue to provide on going support to those affected by the changes if agreed. ASC service users who currently attend do so with their personal budget, most attend with their own staff for individual sessions and attendance at the RAGC forms part of their day time activities across the week, this will continue to be supported to ensure that their needs are met in a holistic way which is enriching and inclusive albeit potentially in an alternative location.

ASC will support those volunteers without assessed social care needs or a current care package to understand the implications, to express their views through consultation and engagement and ensure that each person in receipt of universal preventative services is supported.

C) Assessment

What did you find in B1? Who is affected? Is there, or likely to be, an impact on certain groups?

C.1) Describe any **NEGATIVE** impacts (actual or potential):

Equality Group	Impact on this group and actions you need to take
<p>Disabled men aged over 40</p>	<p>The data shows that this group who share characteristics may be disproportionately negatively affected by the proposals.</p> <p>Changes to the location of the service may impact this cohort as their daily routine and travel plans will be disrupted. A new environment may also have a potentially negative impact on them. This may influence their general mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>To mitigate against this, all volunteers will be supported to find meaningful volunteering opportunities at alternative locations including at the new Civic Centre campus.</p> <p>Regular engagement activities will be carried out to ensure everyone is fully informed of the changes and supported in the transition to alternative provision.</p> <p>Alternative provision and transition support will be sought and tailored to individual need including the consideration of travel training.</p> <p>The impact of the changes will be monitored regularly and any further mitigation actions put in place.</p>
<p>Disabled people</p>	<p>The proposals will affect disabled people as they are more likely to volunteer and use the centre.</p> <p>Disabled people may therefore be more likely to be negatively affected by the proposals. This may influence their general mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>To mitigate against this, all volunteers will be supported to find meaningful volunteering opportunities at alternative locations including the Civic Centre campus.</p> <p>Regular engagement activities will be carried out to ensure everyone is fully informed of the changes and supported in the transition to alternative provision.</p>

	<p>Alternative provision and transition support will be sought and tailored to individual need, including the consideration of travel training.</p> <p>The impact of the changes will be monitored regularly and any further mitigation actions put in place.</p>
Carers	<p>Changes in location or volunteering patterns may have a potentially negative effect on those that provide care, support, or assist with transport to the current site.</p> <p>All volunteers will be supported to find meaningful volunteering opportunities at alternative locations, including at the Civic Centre campus, thus continuing to provide respite and support to carers and family members.</p> <p>Every effort will be made to engage with carers and family members through the transition period to ensure that there is minimal impact.</p> <p>The impact of the changes will be monitored regularly and any further mitigation actions put in place.</p>

D) Conclusions

The proposals to close the RAGC and relocate the service to the Civic Centre campus may have an impact on the volunteers and their carers as outlined above.

The new facility at the Civic Centre campus will provide more manageable facilities where volunteers can continue to access the same services as currently provided at the RAGC.

For those volunteers who have been using the RAGC facilities more informally, there is an opportunity to signpost additional and alternative support services via collaboration with established organisations that provide similar volunteering and support opportunities.

The impact of the proposals, should they be approved, will be monitored and further mitigation actions will be put in place if required.

Signed and dated:.....  18/06/2025

Name and position:..... Steve Brown, Director of Environment

This page is intentionally left blank

REVIEW BY THE RESIDENTS' SERVICE SELECT COMMITTEE:

Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey

Cabinet Member	Councillor Steve Tuckwell
Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing & Growth
Officer Contact	Liz Penny, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Final review report

HEADLINES

Summary	To receive the final report detailing the major review conducted by the Residents' Services Select Committee which considered Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey. The review makes recommendations for Cabinet to consider.
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Digital-Enabled, Modern, Well-Run Council
Financial Cost	The committee's review will support the services' savings target by enabling more efficient demand management through process improvements, performance monitoring, and staff development, all aimed at reducing costs without compromising the customer experience.
Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services Select Committee.
Relevant Wards	All.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Select Committee's report, which focuses on enhancing the resident experience, ensuring process efficiency, staff support and training, and building on existing partnerships and collaboration in relation to homelessness prevention and the customer journey, be welcomed, and authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing & Growth to implement the Committee's recommendations, as set out below:

SELECT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhancing Resident Experience

- I. All staff to refer to those applicants who approach the service for help as ‘residents’ rather than ‘customers’ or ‘clients’.
- II. Create a clearer Residents’ Charter: a more accessible guide explaining each stage of the homelessness support process for new applicants, from intake to case closure. This guide will set expectations, reduce confusion, and address common questions. Consider new technologies for instant translation requirements.
- III. Reconfigure the Housing Reception Centre to provide a more welcoming and empathetic environment within existing budget plans.
- IV. Continue unannounced random checks/management oversight of calls and correspondence ensure a high-quality, professional, empathetic, and resident-focused service.
- V. Continue to gather feedback from residents regarding homelessness services using a simple anonymous feedback form.
- VI. Actively promote the current suggestion box system to encourage staff to submit suggestions for improving service efficiency and resident interactions.

2. Managing Expectations and Process Efficiency

- I. Consider incorporating ways to help applicants check their eligibility online for assistance before applying formally. Preventative avoidance can stop unnecessary applications from those who are not entitled, saving time and resources for both the applicants and the Council.
- II. For applicants in the process, to avoid processing delays, to explore the possibility of using automated text reminders for appointments and deadlines.
- III. Explore the feasibility of introducing a self-check-in system for applicants at reception linked to service transformation.
- IV. Continue to review and update current documentation, guides and resident facing processes in relation to eligibility, case preparation and action planning.

3. Staff Support & Training

- I. Ensure all Housing staff receive regular casework supervision and promote current Staff Welfare policies.
- II. Consider implementing a comprehensive peer support and training programme in collaboration with a partner organisation. This programme should include access to peer mentors with lived experience of homelessness and offer refresher training to staff. The training should also incorporate 'walk-in-my-shoes' sessions to build understanding and connection with residents.
- III. Create a learning set of resources for staff to encourage the sharing of good practice.

4. Partnerships and Collaboration

- I. Build on existing partnerships and further develop these with local organisations to create a wider support network for residents to access.
- II. Assign named officers to be liaisons for relevant partner agencies for accountability and, to aid effective communications going forward, introduce a generic email as the primary contact and communication tool between them and the Council.

Reasons for the recommendations

The recommendations arising from this major review aim to support the Cabinet and Council in improving residents' satisfaction with the way in which they access advice and support to prevent homelessness.

Alternative options considered/ risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject some, or all, of the Committee's recommendations or pursue alternative routes by which to progress the outcomes of the review.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Context

This comprehensive review, conducted by the Residents' Services Select Committee, was initiated to understand and improve the Council's Housing Advice and Homelessness Service, focusing on the residents' journey through the system and their experience with customer service.

As the Cabinet will be aware, the demand for affordable housing has risen sharply across England, placing significant pressure on local authorities. By June 2023, nearly 139,000 families with children were living in temporary accommodation. Reports indicated a 27% increase in rough sleeping across England, with significant rises in street homelessness among women. Turbulence in the capital's private rented sector has also been a critical factor behind the growing numbers of homeless Londoners. Research published in July 2023 revealed a 41% drop in private rental listings in the capital since 2020, while listed rental prices rose by 20%.

The London Borough of Hillingdon has experienced a significant increase in homelessness presentations in recent years, driven by factors such as evictions from private rental accommodations, the 'Heathrow' factor, and a reduction in affordable housing, despite the Council's substantial efforts to increase the supply of accommodation.

At the time of the review, the Council was receiving an average of 100 new approaches each week for housing advice and support. The main reason for homelessness remained the ending of private rented tenancies, while households leaving friends or family accommodation represented 24% of all approaches, and those requiring a move due to domestic abuse constituted just under 8%. This increase in presentations, coupled with the lack of affordable private rented accommodation, has resulted in considerable service pressure and significant cost pressures for Council budgets.

The Review

Notwithstanding whom, why and from where people present themselves as homeless, through the review's terms of reference, the Committee's primary aims were to identify ways to improve their experience, better manage their expectations, enhance satisfaction, streamline processes and ultimately provide improved support to prevent homelessness.

In undertaking the review, the Committee held several formal in-depth witness sessions, which included representatives from voluntary sector organisations, and experts in homelessness and domestic abuse support, along with relevant Council officers. These are set out fuller in the attached review report.

Additionally, a range of other activity was undertaken by Members in relation to the review. This included unannounced visits to the Council's Housing Reception, which provided valuable insights into the resident experience and revealed areas for improvement, particularly in staff training and the Housing Reception environment. Councillors also visited the contact centre to listen to live housing-related calls, finding the dedication and professionalism of the staff impressive, though noting challenges and improvements that could be made. In collaboration with the Council's Counter Fraud Team, Members conducted unannounced visits to two B&Bs used for temporary housing, which they found extremely useful and informative.

Discussing its findings from the review, the Committee was mindful of the need to find cost-effective, workable solutions to improve performance going forward. Importantly, the finalisation of the Committee's review benefited from close collaboration between the Chair and Opposition Lead, along with Council officers, in formulating the recommendations presented in this report to ensure they could be consistent with and add value to the direction of travel of the service area.

Findings and recommendations

Key findings included:

- The importance of prevention and early intervention in addressing homelessness.
- The need for improved communication and empathy from housing officers.
- The necessity for better systems and technology for case handovers.
- The challenges faced by victims of domestic abuse in accessing housing support.

The Committee has, therefore, recommended several measures to improve the experience of residents when accessing homelessness services at the Council.

Members recommended several initiatives aimed at enhancing the resident experience, including referring to applicants as 'residents', creating a clearer Residents' Charter, reconfiguring the housing contact arrangements, conducting random checks, gathering feedback, and promoting a suggestion box system.

In respect of managing expectations and process efficiency, the Committee has suggested incorporating online eligibility checks to prevent unnecessary applications and save time and resources for both applicants and the Council. It also recommended exploring automated text reminders for appointments, a self-check-in system at reception, and continuous updates to documentation and processes related to eligibility and case preparation.

With regard to staff support and training, the Committee has recommended regular casework supervision, peer support and training programmes, and the creation of learning resources to enhance staff support and training.

Finally, the Committee recommends that existing partnerships with local organisations be built on to create a wider support network for residents, assigning named officers as liaisons for partner agencies, and introducing a generic communication method between the Council and partners.

Officer comments on the implementation of recommendations

In tandem with the Committee's review and since these recommendations were developed, several proactive actions have been undertaken by officers to improve the resident experience along the housing pathway. The following provides an update on progress and accordingly it is proposed the Cabinet Member, under delegated authority (recommendation 2), determines how to implement the Select Committee's recommendations further or in suitable alternate ways:

Enhancing Resident Experience

- I. **All staff to refer to those applicants who approach the service for help as 'residents' rather than 'customers' or 'clients'.**

Teams have been reminded to use a consistent approach to engaging with our residents and to use the term 'residents'. This will be raised in one-to-one meetings with staff and managers as well as in team meetings as a reminder, to all staff.

- II. **Create a clearer Residents' Charter: a more accessible guide explaining each stage of the homelessness support process for new applicants, from intake to case closure. This guide will set expectations, reduce confusion, and address common questions. Consider new technologies for instant translation requirements.**

The Charter will be available in the Autumn 2025. A revised Residents' Charter for Housing Advice and Homelessness is being prepared with residents, which will set out what residents can expect from the Council when they ask for housing advice and / or ask for assistance with their housing situation.

- III. **Reconfigure the Housing Reception Centre to provide a more welcoming and empathetic environment within existing budget plans.**

Improvements to the first contact arrangements for the housing service are underway, including options to improve community-based access to housing advice and discussions with housing case workers and other council teams. The resident experience is being put at the heart of the information and support offer to residents.

- IV. **Continue unannounced random checks/management oversight of calls and correspondence to ensure a high-quality, professional, empathetic, and resident-focused service.**

To ensure that a consistent resident-focused approach is being taken to the provision of housing advice and support to residents, a performance and quality framework has been implemented across the service. This includes: the implementation of casework management sessions with all officers to complement individual supervision and staff welfare sessions with line managers; to use resident feedback to drive service improvement, such as learning from complaints; team leaders reviewing cases as part of casework oversight, including using performance data and case progress along the homelessness pathway – this includes reviewing correspondence, case file notes, and case progress; listening to calls with residents and supporting staff in face to face meetings with residents to coach and develop case workers.

V. **Continue to gather feedback from residents regarding homelessness services using a simple anonymous feedback form.**

A structured feedback form is in the process of being developed and is on track to be implemented by September 2025.

VI. **Actively promote the current suggestion box system to encourage staff to submit suggestions for improving service efficiency and resident interactions.**

Officers in the housing service are encouraged to provide ideas and feedback, with a number of officers having submitted suggestions to the senior management team. Updates will be shared with staff.

Managing Expectations and Process Efficiency:

I. **Consider incorporating ways to help applicants check their eligibility online for assistance before applying formally. Preventative avoidance can stop unnecessary applications from those who are not entitled, saving time and resources for both the applicants and the Council.**

An online tool to check eligibility for assistance is being considered to ensure that residents can be best informed about the options available to them for housing assistance.

II. **For applicants in the process, to avoid processing delays, to explore the possibility of using automated text reminders for appointments and deadlines.**

Options are being explored for automated text reminders for appointments and deadlines.

III. **Explore the feasibility of introducing a self-check-in system for applicants at reception linked to service transformation.**

Improvements to the first contact arrangements for the housing service are underway, which will include options for improving the resident experience when there is a need to meet with a case officer face to face.

IV. **Continue to review and update current documentation, guides and resident facing processes in relation to eligibility, case preparation and action planning.**

To date, the Social Housing Allocation Policy has been reviewed and updated, and the changes implemented, following a consultation process and approval at Cabinet. The changes agreed by Cabinet to the policy continue to ensure that resident need is prioritised for social housing and to bring transparency and simplicity to the priority banding for those registered for rehousing. A programme to review and continue to improve published information on the Council website is underway. The housing advice and homelessness pathway has been reviewed and options to improve the resident experience are being considered.

Staff Support & Training

I. Ensure all Housing staff receive regular casework supervision and promote current Staff Welfare policies.

A supervision policy is in place for all housing managers and their teams, drawing on tried and tested practice from social care services. This model includes case work supervision and professional / welfare supervision to ensure that case workers are supported to identify and manage risk and promote their welfare and duty of care. Housing staff have been reminded that if they have concerns they can speak to their manager, a colleague, or seek support via the Employee Assistance Programme.

II. Consider implementing a comprehensive peer support and training programme in collaboration with a partner organisation. This programme should include access to peer mentors with lived experience of homelessness and offer refresher training to staff. The training should also incorporate 'walk-in-my-shoes' sessions to build understanding and connection with residents.

Discussions are being progressed with partner organisations about how this could work in practice, including access to mentors who can draw on lived experience of homelessness. A range of training has been arranged for staff, including trauma-informed training, conflict resolution and digital and data skills development.

III. Create a learning set of resources for staff to encourage the sharing of good practice.

Officers who deliver great services to residents and effective case work practice and recording are praised and their work highlighted / shared with the wider staff group, through service wide and manager level sessions. Further work is underway to establish a 'learning set model' across the service and setting up workshops for casework discussion between officers, to engage in peer learning etc.

Partnerships and Collaboration

I. Build on existing partnerships and further develop these with local organisations to create a wider support network for residents to access.

A single homeless and rough sleeping partnership meeting is held quarterly. The membership is kept under review to ensure that key council staff and other public and voluntary sector partners involved in the single homelessness pathway are represented. Partners are asked to provide updates regarding their services and challenges and to share key data with partners. Work is ongoing to further build relationship with a wider range of partners to inform future strategy and service development. The group includes representation from:

- Crisis UK
- London Borough of Hillingdon
- NHS
- CNWL
- P3

- Salvation Army
- Thames Reach
- Trinity
- YMCA
- ARCH
- Heathrow Travel Care

II. Assign named officers to be liaisons for relevant partner agencies for accountability and, to aid effective communications going forward, introduce a generic email as the primary contact and communication tool between them and the Council.

To date a number of dedicated lead officers have been established across the service, to develop robust partnership working. These include:

- A dedicated Senior Housing Options and Homeless Prevention Officer is the housing hospital discharge contact
 - A named Housing Options and Homeless Prevention Officer and a named Housing Advice and Homeless Prevention Officer have been identified as lead contacts for the probation service and other partners concerned with offenders
 - A named Housing Options and Homeless Prevention Officer and a named Housing Advice and Homeless Prevention Officer have been identified as key housing contacts for matters concerning domestic abuse
 - The Housing Allocations Lettings and Register Team Leader is the key contact for Housing Associations operating in Hillingdon. Developing housing associations also have contacts with the New Business Officer and Head of Housing Strategy and Policy.
 - Landlords and Agents deal with the Head of Private Rented Sector and Temporary Accommodation Supply.
 - A dedicated officer is in place for partner agencies working with rough sleepers.
 - A named manager is in place for Home Office partnership working.
- homelessprevention@hillington.gov.uk is the generic email address for contacts concerning homelessness and serves as the email for the Duty to Refer.
 - homefinders@hillington.gov.uk provides a more specific email address for landlords and lettings agents
 - lettings@hillington.gov.uk provides a more specific address for housing associations concerning nominations to properties.

Officers will be extending this approach further with named officer(s) for housing voluntary sector partners before the end of June 2025.

Financial Implications

This report relates to a total Homeless Prevention budget of £8.230m which includes a substantial savings target of £3.631m for 2025/26. This review will assist the service to achieve those savings as part of the strategic plan for the reducing the cost of Homeless Prevention through better management of demand. This review will help in demand management by enabling process mapping, aid process control, identify bottlenecks, enabling the undertaking of rationalisation without impacting on the customer experience. This review will help in allowing a critical view of

demand and allow robust monitoring and performance management to be implemented at the various stages of the customer journey. This coupled with staff training and case management systems will help in achieving these savings as it will improve the service leading to better staff output and service outcomes.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

The recommendations, if agreed, will improve the experience of residents when they approach the Council for help in relation to homelessness.

Consultation carried out or required

The Committee sought a significant range of internal and external witness testimony and direct experiences of those presenting as homeless, as set out in the report.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and note the Financial Implications set out above, noting the recommendations arising from the review in improving residents' satisfaction with the way in which they access advice and support to prevent homelessness, along with assisting in the delivery of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan to reduce the cost of homelessness. An update on the Council's Temporary Accommodation Action Plan is included on the same Cabinet Agenda as this report and includes further details on the progress against this plan.

Legal

There are no specific legal implications directly arising from endorsing the Select Committee's recommendations set out in this report, which apply to the delivery of the Council's homelessness functions. The Council has various duties under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 towards applicants who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness. Under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, the Council is further required to intervene and prevent homelessness. In carrying out these homelessness functions, the Council, pursuant to section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998, must not act in a way that is contrary to any rights protected by the European Convention of Human Rights. The Council must also ensure it is acting in a manner compliant with the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Alongside these recommendations, pursuant to sections 1-3 of the Homelessness Act 2002, the Council must also ensure that it publishes a new homelessness strategy every 5 years after a formal review. The Council's [current homelessness strategy](#) covers the period 2019 to 2024, thus a new strategy is due in 2025.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

This page is intentionally left blank

Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey



A Review by the Residents' Services Select Committee

Councillors on the Committee: Councillors Wayne Bridges, Colleen Sullivan (Member until May 2024), Scott Farley, Janet Gardner, Ekta Gohil, Sital Punja (Member until May 2024), Peter Smallwood, Darran Davies (Member from May 2024) and Kamal Kaur (Member from May 2024)

2023/2024

Contents

	Page
Chairman's Foreword	3
Summary of recommendations to Cabinet	4
Background to the Review	6
Evidence and witness testimony	10
The Committee's Findings	15
About the Review – witnesses and activity	18
References	19

Chairman's Foreword



On behalf of the Residents' Services Select Committee, I am pleased to present this report further to the Committee's Review of Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey.

The Review was undertaken with a clear focus on understanding the challenges faced by residents and identifying practical, cost-effective solutions to enhance their experience. Homelessness is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a coordinated and compassionate approach.

Throughout the Review, Members were acutely aware of the increasing demand for homelessness services, driven by factors such as evictions from private rental accommodations and the reduction in affordable housing. The testimonies and evidence gathered during witness sessions provided invaluable insights into the current state of homelessness in Hillingdon and the effectiveness of existing services.

The Review highlighted the importance of prevention and early intervention in addressing homelessness. Members noted the positive impact of partnerships with voluntary sector organisations like Trinity and Thames Reach, which provide essential support for rough sleepers and those with complex needs. These partnerships are crucial in ensuring that residents receive the help they need at the earliest possible stage.

The Committee identified the need for improved communication and empathy from housing officers, noting that training in trauma-informed issues and the use of appropriate language is essential to ensure that residents feel understood and supported throughout their journey. The reconfiguration of the Housing Reception Centre to create a more welcoming environment is a key recommendation that Members believe will significantly enhance the resident experience.

Furthermore, the Committee's Review underscored the importance of better systems and technology for case handovers, in addition to the need for continuous feedback from residents to drive service improvements.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank officers and partner organisations who have given up their time to help the Committee in reviewing this topic and commend them for their continued hard work to support residents in the Borough. Their insights and dedication have been instrumental in shaping the Committee's recommendations.

In conclusion, the recommendations set out in this report are designed to enhance the resident experience, manage expectations, improve staff support and training, and foster stronger partnerships and collaboration. It is anticipated that these actions will lead to a more effective and compassionate homelessness service in Hillingdon, ultimately improving the lives of residents.

Councillor Wayne Bridges

Chairman of the Residents' Services Select Committee

Summary of recommendations to Cabinet

Through the witness sessions and evidence received during the detailed Review by the Committee, Members have agreed the following recommendations to Cabinet:

1

Enhancing Resident Experience

1. All staff to refer to those applicants who approach the service for help as 'residents' rather than 'customers' or 'clients'.
2. Create a clearer Residents' Charter: a more accessible guide explaining each stage of the homelessness support process for new applicants, from intake to case closure. This guide will set expectations, reduce confusion, and address common questions. Consider new technologies for instant translation requirements.
3. Reconfigure the Housing Reception Centre to provide a more welcoming and empathetic environment within existing budget plans.
4. Continue unannounced random checks/management oversight of calls and correspondence to ensure a high-quality, professional, empathetic, and resident-focused service.
5. Continue to gather feedback from residents regarding homelessness services using a simple anonymous feedback form.
6. Actively promote the current suggestion box system to encourage staff to submit suggestions for improving service efficiency and resident interactions.

2

2. Managing Expectations and Process Efficiency:

1. Consider incorporating ways to help applicants check their eligibility on-line for assistance before applying formally. Preventative avoidance can stop unnecessary applications from those who are not entitled, saving time and resources for both the applicants and the Council.
2. For applicants in the process, to avoid processing delays, to explore the possibility of using automated text reminders for appointments and deadlines.
3. Explore the feasibility of introducing a self-check-in system for applicants at reception linked to service transformation.
4. Continue to review and update current documentation, guides and resident facing processes in relation to eligibility, case preparation and action planning.

3

Staff Support & Training

1. Ensure all Housing staff receive regular casework supervision and promote current Staff Welfare policies.
2. Consider implementing a comprehensive peer support and training programme in collaboration with a partner organisation. This programme

should include access to peer mentors with lived experience of homelessness and offer refresher training to staff. The training should also incorporate 'walk-in-my-shoes' sessions to build understanding and connection with residents.

3. Create a learning set of resources for staff to encourage the sharing of good practice.

4

Partnerships and Collaboration

1. Build on existing partnerships and further develop these with local organisations to create a wider support network for residents to access.
2. Assign named officers to be liaisons for relevant partner agencies for accountability and, to aid effective communications going forward, introduce a generic email as the primary contact and communication tool between them and the Council.

Background to the Review

Aim of the Review

At its meeting on 16 January 2024, the Residents' Services Select Committee agreed to undertake a major review of the Council's Housing Advice and Homelessness Service, with a particular focus on the residents' journey through the system and experience of customer service.

The Review aimed to consider ways in which the customer journey could potentially be improved to better support residents during this process and improve residents' satisfaction with the way in which they accessed advice and support to prevent homelessness.

Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference were agreed for the Review:

- To gain a thorough understanding of the Council's Homeless Prevention Service and the resident's journey through this process.
- To scrutinise the service delivery and review its effectiveness.
- To review service users' feedback to explore the challenges faced by residents accessing the service.
- To look at other local authorities that may have different models of service delivery for best practice, including research and findings from charities, housing bodies, regional bodies and organisations, e.g. GLA.
- Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose practical and deliverable actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

Context and Key Information

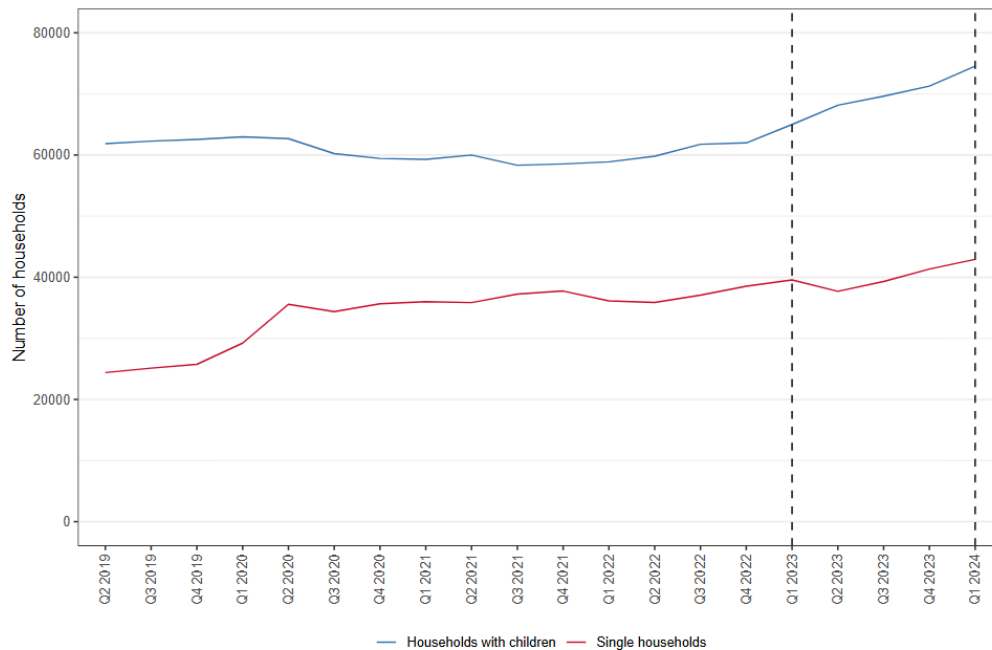
National Context

The quarterly data published by the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) shows that, across England, demand for affordable housing has risen sharply in recent years, with homelessness presentations to local authorities a particular pressure. At the end of June 2023, nearly 139,000 families with children were living in temporary accommodation across the country – 7,430 more than at the end of March of the same year.

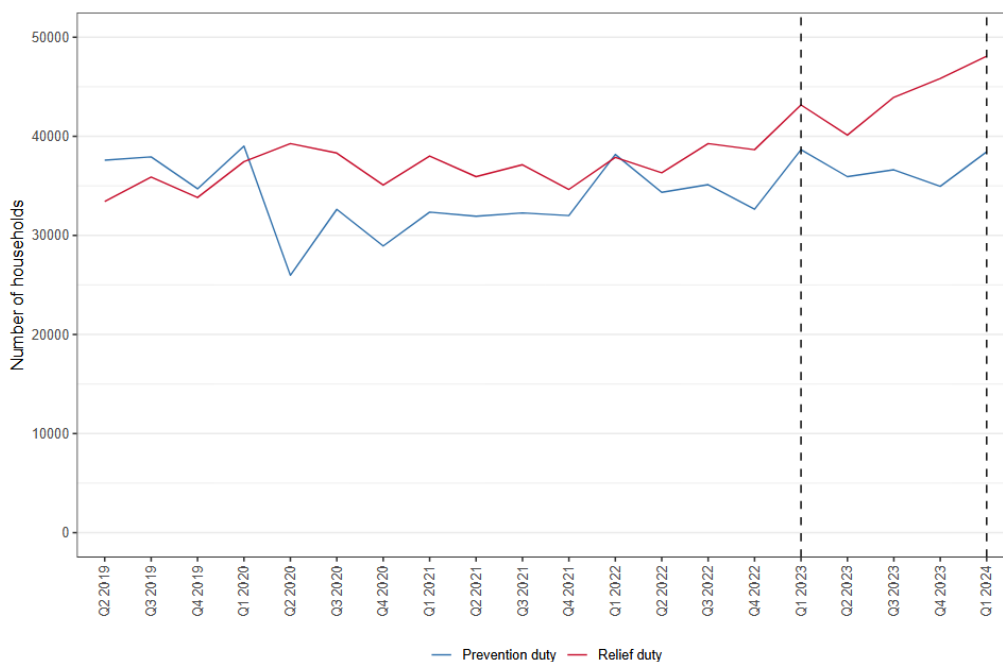
Moreover, a report by Crisis dated 29 February 2024, titled [“Rough sleeping rises by 27% as the homelessness crisis deepens across England”](#) states that there has been an exponential increase in the number of people sleeping rough across the country. As highlighted in said report, on a given night in Autumn 2023 it was found that:

- 3,898 people were sleeping rough across England, an increase of 27% on the previous year.
- The number of people sleeping rough was 61% higher than it had been ten years previously and 120% higher than when data collection began in 2010.
- Street homelessness was rising among women with 568 seen to be rough sleeping that autumn; up from 464 – a rise of 22%.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government’s quarterly statistics release [“Statutory Homelessness in England: January to March 2024”](#), emphasises the dramatic increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation from Q2 2019 to Q1 2024:



Additionally, the aforementioned report highlights the time series for the number of households owed a prevention or relief duty since Q2 2019. Once again, a significant increase is apparent as set out in the chart below:



With regard to London figures, in August 2023 170,000 Londoners were found to be homeless and living in temporary accommodation arranged by their local authority. Turbulence in the private rented sector is a critical factor behind the growing numbers of homeless Londoners. A Shelter

article titled [“At least 354,000 people homeless in England today”](#), emphasises the problem both nationally and regionally and considers the areas across England where homelessness is most acute. In this analysis, “London comes out worst, with one in 47 people homeless in the capital. The total number of people homeless in the city has risen 12% in a year, to a total of 187,000 people.”

The table below highlights the extent of the challenge in the capital:

Estimated number of people who are homeless as at a given night in 2024, by type of homelessness, by region of England	Est. no. of people homeless and living in TA arranged by them or homeless at home as at 30th June 2024	No. of people sleeping on the streets on a given night	Est. total no. homeless children	Est. total no. homeless people (adults and children)	Rate of homelessness (1 in X people)
North East	2200	19	89	810	2308
North West	20440	1017	369	10050	21826
Yorkshire and the Humber	7560	767	270	3350	8597
East Midlands	10090	452	287	4930	10829
West Midlands	26420	1562	256	14790	28238
East of England	23030	567	337	11490	23934
London	184080	1681	1132	91050	186893
South East	36460	392	670	17230	37522
South West	12610	548	488	5750	13646

Local Context

The London Borough of Hillingdon reflects the national picture having also experienced a significant increase in Homeless presentations in recent years. This issue is highlighted in an article by Hillingdon Vision News published on 7 March 2024 titled “[Rising Tide of Homelessness: Hillingdon Faces Soaring Numbers Despite Government Pledges, Advocacy Groups Urge Urgent Action.](#)” The London Borough of Hillingdon’s [Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2019 to 2024](#) reports that “accessing affordable housing in both the private rented sector and the social housing sector is a key underlying issue in relation to homelessness, exacerbated by the competition our residents face in accessing these scarce resources.” The Council has also seen an increase in households leaving asylum accommodation following receipt of their status.

Legislative Context

Homeless decisions must be made in line with the [Homeless Reduction Act 2017](#) and the [Housing Act 1996 Part VII](#) amended in 2002. To be entitled to a full homeless duty, residents must meet five criteria: homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, eligible, priority need, not intentionally homeless, and have a local connection.

Continuous Service Improvement

The Council has a homeless service improvement programme (Project Neptune) in place, implementing change across twelve workstreams. The Council has improved the customer journey through the reinstatement of the triage function. At the time of the Committee’s Review, work was also ongoing to review the website and ICT systems to reduce the administrative burden on staff. Additionally, a fresh training offer for staff was being developed.

Evidence & Witness Testimony

The Select Committee held a number of witness sessions at which Members had the opportunity to receive testimony from Hillingdon Council officers and from a wide range of external witnesses and experts.

Overview of Witness Sessions

The witness sessions conducted as part of the Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey Review provided valuable insights into both the challenges faced in Hillingdon's homelessness services and potential improvements thereto. The sessions featured testimonies from key stakeholders, including Council officers, representatives from voluntary sector organisations, and experts in homelessness and domestic abuse support.

1. The first session on 13 March 2024 focused on the increasing demand for homelessness services and the Council's strategy for prevention and housing supply. The importance of empathy and improved staff training were emphasised.
2. The second session on 16 April 2024 highlighted the challenges of unaffordable private rental accommodation and the need for better communication and support for residents. At this session the importance of a welcoming environment at the Civic Centre was also discussed.
3. The third session on 13 June 2024 featured representatives from Thames Reach and P3, who shared their experiences in supporting rough sleepers and young people. The need for effective communication and collaboration among services was underscored.
4. The final session on 18 July 2024 focused on the support for victims of domestic abuse. Additionally, the challenges of accessing housing support and the importance of consistent communication and empathy were highlighted.

For ease of reading, the detailed minutes and accounts of these witness sessions are available as background papers. They are briefly summarised below to provide a comprehensive understanding of the discussions and findings.

Witness Session 1 - 13 March 2024

The first witness session focused on the challenging situation regarding homelessness in Hillingdon. The Corporate Director of Central Services acknowledged a 27% increase in demand, driven primarily by evictions from private rental accommodation. It was noted that the Council's strategy emphasised homelessness prevention and boosting housing supply, including the purchase of 500 new homes. The Head of Housing Needs provided an overview of the customer pathway, detailing the stages from initial contact to case closure. Partnerships with voluntary sector organisations including Trinity and Thames Reach, which provided support for rough sleepers, were also discussed. Finally, the session addressed the need for improved staff training, particularly in trauma-informed issues, and underlined the vital importance of empathy when dealing with

residents. In summary, the following key issues were raised during this first witness session:

- Homelessness Increase: There had been a 27% increase in homelessness, with 100 people presenting as homeless each week, primarily due to evictions from private rental accommodations.
- Affordable Housing Supply: Over the last five years, there had been a 41% reduction in affordable privately rented accommodation supply.
- Customer Pathway: The process for customers seeking assistance involved multiple stages, including an initial online form, triage team assessment, and assignment to a case officer.
- Temporary Accommodation Challenges: Temporary accommodation for larger families was difficult to source and very expensive, leading to families sometimes being encouraged to remain in situ until a bailiff warrant was secured.
- Partnerships and Support: The Council had established partnerships with the voluntary sector, including Trinity and Thames Reach, to assist rough sleepers and provide support services.
- Staff Training and Wellbeing: There were concerns about staff training and wellbeing, with reports of officers being overloaded with work and the introduction of new training programmes to address trauma-informed issues and domestic abuse.

The full account of this session can be found in the meeting minutes [here](#)

Witness Session 2 - 16 April 2024

During the second session, the Corporate Director of Central Services discussed the reduction in private rental accommodation and the increasing unaffordability. Carys Hedley from Trinity detailed the organisation's support for families and individuals, highlighting challenges such as stagnant service due to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. The session emphasised the need for better communication and empathy from housing officers, in addition to improvements in the Civic Centre environment. The importance of correct referrals and comprehensive support to prevent a cycle of homelessness were also discussed. The session concluded with recommendations for better systems and technology for case handovers and the need for a more welcoming environment at the Civic Centre.

In summary, the following key issues were raised during this witness session:

- Homelessness Challenges: The Corporate Director of Central Services highlighted the reduction in private rental accommodation and increasing unaffordability, making it difficult for non-priority individuals to access affordable housing.
- Support from Trinity: Carys Hedley from Trinity discussed the provision of supported spaces and long-term unsupported accommodation, emphasising the challenges faced due to Local Housing Allowance rates and the reluctance of people to move away from their support network.
- Specialist Housing Needs: Trinity planned to create a new service offering a specialist housing programme with full-time live-in support for individuals with complex needs, including drug, alcohol, and mental health issues.

- **Empathy and Communication:** The session highlighted the need for better empathy and communication from housing officers, suggesting retraining on language used with clients and creating a more welcoming environment at the Civic Centre.
- **Staff Wellbeing:** Concerns were raised about the mental health of housing staff, recommending well-being measures such as regular team meetings, flexible working hours, and enforced rest periods.
- **Prevention Strategy:** The Corporate Director emphasised the need for a strong prevention strategy and a healthy supply of affordable housing, acknowledging the challenges faced in achieving this.

The full account of this session can be found in the meeting minutes [here](#)

Witness Session 3 - 13 June 2024

The third session featured representatives from Thames Reach and P3, who shared their experiences and perspectives on homelessness. Sophie Murray from Thames Reach outlined the team's work with rough sleepers and collaboration with various agencies. P3 representatives, including Zara Street, Laura Lawson, and Nicola Tallon, discussed their support for young people and families, highlighting challenges in moving young people to appropriate accommodation. The session emphasised the importance of communication and the need for a platform for all services to communicate effectively. The challenges faced by housing officers due to high demand and the need for better support for tenants to sustain tenancies were also highlighted.

In summary, the following key issues were raised during this witness session:

- **Homelessness and Accommodation:** The session highlighted the challenges faced by Thames Reach and P3 in supporting rough sleepers and young people. The lack of options for accommodation and high support needs of many rough sleepers were significant issues.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** There was an emphasis on the importance of communication between the Council and partner organisations. The need for a platform where everyone could communicate effectively was highlighted, as well as the challenges faced due to changes in case work without the knowledge of partnership workers.
- **Support Services:** P3 discussed their supported accommodation services and the challenges of moving young people on to appropriate accommodation due to the limited supply of affordable housing. They also highlighted their work with various partners within the Borough.
- **Staff Wellbeing:** Concerns were raised about the mental health of housing staff, recommending well-being measures such as regular team meetings, flexible working hours, and enforced rest periods.
- **Prevention Strategy:** The Corporate Director emphasised the need for a strong prevention strategy and a healthy supply of affordable housing, acknowledging the challenges faced in achieving this.
- **Service Improvement:** The Corporate Director of Central Services acknowledged the need for continuous improvement in the service, including the implementation of an improvement plan and a workforce plan.

The full account of this session can be found in the meeting minutes [here](#)

Witness Session 4 - 18 July 2024

The final session included testimony from Sonia Stewart and Sultana Ahmed, who provided an overview of the Hillingdon Domestic Advocacy Service. They highlighted the evolution of the service to support victims across all levels of risk. Concerns were raised about the approach to housing for victims of domestic abuse, particularly the requirement for documentation and the impact of relocating victims far from their support systems. The need for consistent communication and updates for clients, better training for housing officers, and the importance of empathy and understanding in dealing with victims of domestic abuse were emphasised. The session concluded with recommendations for improvements in communication, support services, and streamlined processes to better serve residents.

In summary, the following key issues were raised during this witness session:

- **Housing for Domestic Abuse Victims:** Concerns were raised about the approach to housing for victims of domestic abuse, including the requirement for police involvement and documentation, which could be challenging for victims fleeing emergency situations.
- **Relocation Challenges:** Victims fleeing domestic abuse were often offered accommodation far from their support systems, exacerbating their vulnerability and impacting their jobs, families, communities, and children's schools.
- **Inconsistencies in Housing Services:** There were inconsistencies reported by clients when approaching housing services for assistance, particularly regarding the advice given about remaining within the Borough.
- **Sanctuary Scheme:** The scheme assesses properties to implement additional security measures for victims of domestic abuse who wished to remain in their homes. There was a lack of clarity around time frames for referrals and responses.
- **Staff Turnover and Communication:** High turnover of staff within the housing team lead to missed communications and unresolved issues. Consistent communication and updates for clients were essential.
- **Housing Reception Environment:** The environment at the Housing Reception was not welcoming, with victims spending the whole day there without amenities for them and their children.

The full account of this session can be found in the meeting minutes [here](#)

These sessions provided valuable insights into the challenges and potential improvements in respect of Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey in Hillingdon. The recommendations focused on enhancing resident experience, managing expectations, improving staff support and training, and fostering partnerships and collaboration.

Site Visits

During May 2024, and as part of the ongoing Review, Members of the Committee conducted unannounced visits to the Council's Housing Reception. These visits presented an invaluable insight into the experience of the resident and enabled Members to witness firsthand how individual customers and situations were handled by housing staff. Further to these visits, a number of areas for improvement were recommended; particularly in relation to staff training, and the Housing Reception environment.

Additionally, as part of the Review, Councillors undertook visits to the contact centre where they had an opportunity to listen in to live housing-related calls. Members reported that it was enlightening to witness first-hand the challenging work of the contact centre staff. They were particularly impressed with their dedication, professionalism, how they handled complex situations, and their ability to engage effectively with residents. It was noted that the call handlers were found to be excellent, but contacting back-office staff was challenging at times. An improved handover plan when housing officers were on leave or had left the Council was suggested.

Moreover, in collaboration with the Council's Counter Fraud Team, Members attended unannounced visits to two of the B&Bs in the Borough which are used to temporarily house residents. The Committee Members reported that these visits were both extremely useful and informative.

The Committee's Findings

General conclusions

Having heard from a variety of interested parties and having given due consideration to the entirety of the evidence presented to them, Councillors reached the following key conclusions:

1. **Increased Demand and Challenges:** The Review highlighted a significant increase in demand for homelessness services, driven primarily by evictions from private rental accommodation. It was noted that the reduction in affordable private rental housing had exacerbated the situation, making it challenging for the Council to meet the needs of residents.
2. **Importance of Prevention and Collaboration:** The Council's strategy focused on homelessness prevention and increasing housing supply. Collaboration with voluntary sector organisations such as Trinity and Thames Reach was crucial in providing support for rough sleepers and those with complex needs.
3. **Communication and Empathy:** The Review emphasised the importance of better communication and empathy from housing officers. Training in trauma-informed issues and the use of appropriate language were identified as essential to improve interactions with residents.
4. **System and Process Improvements:** The need for better systems and technology for case handovers, in addition to a more welcoming environment at the Civic Centre, were highlighted. Suggestions included the use of automated text reminders, self-check-in systems, and continuous feedback from residents.
5. **Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse:** The Review underscored the challenges faced by victims of domestic abuse in accessing housing support. The need for consistent communication, better training for housing officers, and a more empathetic approach were emphasised.

The Committee's recommendations to Cabinet

Further to the Committee's Review, the Chair and Opposition Lead met with officers to develop and shape the final recommendations from the review detailed below.

Firstly, the Review highlighted the importance of referring to applicants as "residents" rather than "customers" or "clients" to foster a sense of community and belonging. The need for a clearer Residents' Charter was emphasised to guide residents through the homelessness support process, reducing confusion and addressing frequently asked questions. Witnesses from Trinity and Thames Reach stressed the importance of empathy and understanding in interactions with residents, particularly those with complex needs. The reconfiguration of the Housing Reception Centre to create a more welcoming environment was recommended based on feedback about the intimidating atmosphere of the Civic Centre. Unannounced random checks and management oversight of calls and correspondence were suggested to ensure a high-quality, professional, and empathetic service. Continuous feedback from residents through anonymous forms and promoting the suggestion box system were also recommended to improve service efficiency and resident

interactions. On that basis, it is recommended:

1	<p>Enhancing Resident Experience</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All staff to refer to those applicants who approach the service for help as ‘residents’ rather than ‘customers’ or ‘clients’. 2. Create a clearer Residents’ Charter: a more accessible guide explaining each stage of the homelessness support process for new applicants, from intake to case closure. This guide will set expectations, reduce confusion, and address common questions. Consider new technologies for instant translation requirements. 3. Reconfigure the Housing Reception Centre to provide a more welcoming and empathetic environment within existing budget plans. 4. Continue unannounced random checks/management oversight of calls and correspondence to ensure a high-quality, professional, empathetic, and resident-focused service. 5. Continue to gather feedback from residents regarding homelessness services using a simple anonymous feedback form. 6. Actively promote the current suggestion box system to encourage staff to submit suggestions for improving service efficiency and resident interactions.
----------	---

The Review identified the need for applicants to check their eligibility online before applying formally to prevent unnecessary applications and save time and resources. Automated text reminders for appointments and deadlines were recommended to avoid processing delays. The feasibility of introducing a self-check-in system at reception was explored to streamline the process and enhance service transformation. Witnesses emphasised the importance of clear and updated documentation, guides, and resident-facing processes related to eligibility, case preparation, and action planning. The Review also highlighted the need for better communication and empathy from housing officers to manage residents' expectations effectively. On that basis, it is recommended:

2	<p>Managing Expectations and Process Efficiency:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider incorporating ways to help applicants check their eligibility on-line for assistance before applying formally. Preventative avoidance can stop unnecessary applications from those who are not entitled, saving time and resources for both the applicants and the Council. 2. For applicants in the process, to avoid processing delays, to explore the possibility of using automated text reminders for appointments and deadlines. 3. Explore the feasibility of introducing a self-check-in system for applicants at reception linked to service transformation. 4. Continue to review and update current documentation, guides and resident facing processes in relation to eligibility, case preparation and action planning.
----------	---

The Review underscored the importance of regular casework supervision and promoting current staff welfare policies to support housing staff. Witnesses from Trinity and Thames Reach highlighted the challenges faced by housing officers due to high demand and the need for better support. A comprehensive peer support and training program in collaboration with partner organisations was recommended, including access to peer mentors with lived experience of homelessness. Refresher training and "walk-in-my-shoes" sessions were suggested to build understanding and connection with residents. Creating a learning set of resources for staff to share good practices was also recommended to enhance staff support and training. On that basis, it is recommended:

3	<p>Staff Support & Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure all Housing staff receive regular casework supervision and promote current Staff Welfare policies. 2. Consider implementing a comprehensive peer support and training programme in collaboration with a partner organisation. This programme should include access to peer mentors with lived experience of homelessness and offer refresher training to staff. The training should also incorporate 'walk-in-my-shoes' sessions to build understanding and connection with residents. 3. Create a learning set of resources for staff to encourage the sharing of good practice.
----------	--

The Review emphasised the importance of building on existing partnerships and developing new ones with local organisations to create a wider support network for residents. Witnesses from Trinity, Thames Reach, and P3 highlighted the value of collaboration in providing comprehensive support for residents. Assigning named officers as liaisons for relevant partner agencies was recommended to ensure accountability and effective communication. Introducing a generic email as the primary contact and communication tool between partner agencies and the Council was also suggested to streamline communication and improve collaboration. These recommendations were formed based on the insights and evidence gathered during the witness sessions, aiming to enhance the overall experience and support for residents, improve process efficiency, provide better staff support, and foster stronger partnerships and collaboration. On that basis, it is recommended:

4	<p>Partnerships and Collaboration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build on existing partnerships and further develop these with local organisations to create a wider support network for residents to access. 2. Assign named officers to be liaisons for relevant partner agencies for accountability and, to aid effective communications going forward, introduce a generic email as the primary contact and communication tool between them and the Council.
----------	--

About the review - witnesses and activity

The following Terms of Reference were agreed by the Committee from the outset of the Review:

1. To gain a thorough understanding of the Council's Homeless Prevention Service and the resident's journey through this process.
2. To scrutinise the service delivery and review its effectiveness.
3. To review service users' feedback to explore the challenges faced by residents accessing the service.
4. To look at other local authorities that may have different models of service delivery for best practice, including research and findings from charities, housing bodies, regional bodies and organisations, e.g. GLA.
5. Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose practical and deliverable actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

Witnesses

1. Dan Kennedy (Corporate Director of Central Services) – LBH
2. Melissa Blower (Housing Improvement Programme Manager) - LBH
3. Debby Weller (Head of Housing Strategy and Policy) - LBH
4. Maggie Nelson (Head of Housing Needs) - LBH
5. Carys Hedley (Director of Services) - Trinity
6. Sophie Murray (Lead Manager of the Hillingdon Outreach Team) - Thames Reach
7. Zara Street - P3
8. Laura Lawson - P3
9. Nicola Tallon – P3
10. Sonia Stewart (Independent Domestic Violence Manager) - LBH
11. Sultana Ahmed (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) - LBH
12. Rachel Bulley (Social Prescribing Link Worker) - Colne Union PCN, NHS

References

[“Rough sleeping rises by 27% as the homelessness crisis deepens across England”](#); article published by Crisis dated 29 February 2024.

[“Statutory Homelessness in England: January to March 2024”](#); Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government’s quarterly statistics release; published on 8 August 2024.

[“At least 354,000 people homeless in England today”](#); article published by Shelter on 11 December 2024.

[“Rising Tide of Homelessness: Hillingdon Faces Soaring Numbers Despite Government Pledges, Advocacy Groups Urge Urgent Action.”](#); Hillingdon Vision News published on 7 March 2024.

[Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2019 to 2024](#); London Borough of Hillingdon

[Homeless Reduction Act 2017](#)

[Housing Act 1996 Part VII](#) amended in 2002

This page is intentionally left blank

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION ACTION PLAN MONITORING

Cabinet Member & Portfolio	Cllr Steve Tuckwell – Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Growth
Responsible Officer	Dan Kennedy, Corporate Director of Homes and Communities
Report Author & Directorate	Debby Weller, Homes and Communities
Papers with report	Appendix 1: Temporary Accommodation Action Plan Update

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>The report provides the first quarterly update on progress on the delivery of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan presented to Cabinet in February 2025.</p> <p>Overall, good progress is being made to increase the supply of new housing to either prevent or resolve homelessness, in line with the strategy. This includes delivering an ambitious programme to acquire and build new social rented housing as well as gain access to more private rented properties, working in partnership with landlords. Price negotiations to reduce the cost of temporary accommodation are underway at pace and delivering positive results, in line with agreed targets. Demand from homeless families remains high, with further work underway to increase rates of homeless prevention, working with a range of front-line teams in the Council. This remains a priority over the next quarter.</p>
<p>Putting our Residents First</p> <p>Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026</p>	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Live in good quality, affordable homes in connected communities</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: Safe and Strong Communities</p> <p>This report supports the Hillingdon Housing Strategy</p>
Financial Cost	The Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan aligns with and supports the delivery of the MTFS.
Select Committee	Residents' Services Select Committee
Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATION

That the contents of the quarterly update report be noted.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The Temporary Accommodation (TA) Strategy and Action Plan was approved by Cabinet in February 2025 and it was agreed that quarterly updates would be provided to Cabinet, or less frequent as required, and that these would include impact on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Alternative options considered / risk management

No other options were considered as the report is required by Cabinet. Risks associated with the delivery of the TA Strategy and Action Plan are covered in the body of the report.

Democratic compliance / previous authority

In February 2025, Cabinet noted the homelessness pressures in Hillingdon and the increasing cost and use of temporary accommodation: noted the TA Strategy and Action Plan; and resolved to receive quarterly updates regarding delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

1. In February 2025 Cabinet noted the Temporary Accommodation (TA) Strategy and agreed to receive quarterly updates. This is the first of those updates. The TA Strategy contains the following four objectives:
 - Manage homelessness demand and increase rates of successful homelessness prevention;
 - Increase rates of move-on from temporary to settled accommodation;
 - Reduce total expenditure on temporary accommodation;
 - Increase the supply of additional social rented housing and temporary accommodation through acquisition and new build programmes.
2. The update on progress against the actions identified under these objectives is included at Appendix 1.

Key elements of Progress

3. In March 2025, a MTFS action plan was put in place to operationalise the TA strategy and aims to eliminate the use of the highest cost, nightly paid accommodation. The MTFS

action plan has four workstreams to take forward the objectives in the strategy, each with an identified lead officer:

Workstream 1: Increase prevention and reduce new temporary accommodation placements

Workstream 2: Increase access to alternative housing options

Workstream 3: Reduce the cost of temporary accommodation

Workstream 4: Increase move-on into social housing

4. Governance arrangements for the MTFS action plan take place on a monthly basis with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Growth and the Corporate Director, Homes and Communities and the four workstream leads. At an officer level weekly meetings are held to track progress and keep delivery on target. Key indicator dashboards have been established for the MTFS action plan and further development of the dashboards is ongoing to improve the richness and integrity of the data.

Workstream 1: Increase prevention and reduce new temporary accommodation placements

5. The key target for workstream 1 is for less than 11 new placements a week into temporary accommodation (no more than 50 per month). The target is not yet being met with an average of 13 placements per week during the first 9 weeks of 2025/26. This is lower than the rate of new placements into temporary accommodation during 2024/25, but above the target set in the strategy. There has been success in reducing temporary accommodation placements following evictions by family and friends in the period, but there continues to be a sustained level of evictions by private sector landlords. Further targeted work is underway with landlords and the Courts to increase prevention rates.
6. The high and sustained levels of homelessness demand represent a risk to achieving the prevention targets for this workstream. This is being managed through weekly performance management reviews and targeted interventions. The percentage of households with homelessness prevented in May was on target, but demand remains high.

Workstream 2: Increase access to alternative housing options

7. The key target under workstream 2 of the strategy is to secure access to more than 7 new private rented sector properties a week (30 per month), to either prevent homelessness or support the discharge of a homeless duty. Good progress is being made to achieve this target. Performance during the first 9 weeks of 2025/26 was on average 6 placements per week into private rented sector accommodation.
8. The delivery of the action plan in April and May has included strengthening partnership working with landlords, listening to their business needs and revising our offer to encourage more landlords to offer more private rented properties to the council, to prevent homelessness. A new landlord forum will launch during July to promote the partnership working with the Council. There is strong performance management of service delivery, with weekly reviews of progress. It is anticipated this target will be met by March 2026.

Workstream 3: Reduce cost of temporary accommodation

9. There are two key areas of work that have been advanced under this workstream during April and May. The first is the setting of rate caps for different bed sizes of temporary accommodation and negotiations with landlords to step down payments to be within the cap. This element has had considerable success, being delivered at pace, with the number of tenancies above the cap reducing to 153 at the end of May from 323 at the beginning of April 2025. It is anticipated that the target to reduce to zero the number of temporary accommodation placements above the rate cap will be delivered earlier than March 2026.
10. In addition, this workstream included a target to secure an additional 100 leased properties for use as temporary accommodation by March 2026. This target will be close to being met by a 10-year deal where contracts are being finalised for 87 units at Streamside House and Waterwood House at Frayswater Place in Uxbridge, following Cabinet approval. The target for this workstream has been revised upwards to 210. Negotiations are ongoing regarding 400 additional units in Hillingdon and in other boroughs in and around London. Subject to due diligence and approval through Democratic processes, the properties being considered can fully deliver the leasing target for this workstream by March 2026.

Workstream 4: Increase move-on into social housing

11. The key indicator for this workstream is for a minimum of 11 social housing lettings to be made to homeless households per week (overall 50 per month). To date (April and May 2025) the number of social housing lettings made on average to households living in temporary accommodation is just under 4 per week. Overall, there is confidence that this target will be fully delivered by March 2026, given that there is a programme by the Council to acquire a minimum of 200 properties in 2025/26, secure nominations to c150 registered provider social rented homes and re-let c450 Council-owned homes.
12. The contract with a partner to purchase 200 properties is proceeding well and it is estimated that all 200 will be bought by the Autumn, this year. A successful bid for grant funding to support the purchases (subject to the individual properties meeting their criteria) has been approved by the Greater London Authority. Of the 200 acquisitions in the pipeline, 3 have already been let, 13 are scheduled to be let in June and then the programme will deliver circa 20 properties per month until March 2026. Further acquisitions will be made by the in-house team and there is a new build pipeline for low cost rented properties for 2025/26 of 269 by the council and registered providers.
13. Work has included implementing changes to the Social Housing Allocation Policy agreed by Cabinet last November. A draft Annual Lettings Plan is in place, subject to approval processes.
14. In relation to private sector empty homes, we have established a cross departmental working group to lead action in this area and maintain focus on delivery and co-ordination. Landlords and private owners with empty homes are being contacted to explore options on bringing their properties back into use. This is being actively progressed.

Priorities over the next quarter

15. Priorities for officers over the next quarter include; continued pro-active engagement with private sector landlords to prevent evictions; going live with a 'Power BI' homelessness case work dashboard to strengthen performance management and support for housing case workers; accelerating the option to lease good quality homes at a lower cost, for temporary accommodation; delivery of the private sector landlord forum to continue to build partnership working; bringing empty private sector homes back into use; and accelerated delivery of the step down in the rates for temporary accommodation, to be within the agreed price limit.

Measures of success

16. The table below provides an update on the measures of success identified in the Temporary Accommodation Strategy. This shows April and May data compared to a 2024/25 baseline. Overall, the measures indicate positive progress, including increasing rates of homeless prevention, avoiding the use of shared accommodation for homeless families with children and positive progress in reducing the overall expenditure on temporary accommodation. As a result of the actions taken to date it is estimated that the council spent c£77k less in May (gross) on temporary accommodation compared to March 2025. This scales to a full year effect of £924k reduction in expenditure.

Measure	Target	Baseline	April 25	May 25
1. A higher proportion of households whose homelessness is prevented	London Average 54% (based on Oct-Dec 2024)	32%*	14%	40%
2. No. families with children/pregnant women in non-self-contained B&B for more than 6 weeks	0	0**	0	0
3. Fewer households becoming homeless and needing temporary accommodation	50 (per month)	62***	76	41
4. Fewer households in nightly charged (high cost) temporary accommodation	Zero by 31/03/2026	780**	741	726
5. Lower overall cost of temporary accommodation (Gross)	Balanced budget by year end	£2,077,960**	£2,072,573	£2,000,886
6. Lower cost per temporary accommodation unit (Gross monthly and per night)	Zero over caps set by bedsize	£70,303**** £81.28****	£72,472 £81.34	£68,906 £78.84
7. Implementation of acquisition and new build development programme (LBH)	300 (acquisit'n) 100 (new build)	19*** 15***	3 0	0 4

*Average 2024/25

** @ 31/3/2025

*** Monthly average 2024/25

**** March 2025

17. In February 2025, Cabinet requested that officers continue to refine and develop the Action Plan, where the measures needed to be more specific to determine whether targets were being met, with ‘SMART’ target setting and monitoring, acknowledging that some estimates would be broad. Targets against the measures have been included, and the following additional success measures have been agreed, in line with the MTF5.

	Target (monthly)	Baseline	April 25	May 25
Fewer households threatened with homelessness (approaches)	600	609 monthly average 24/25	557	563
Private rented sector placements	30	19 monthly average 24/25	26	29
Lettings to homeless households in TA	50	32 monthly average 24/25	14	15

Financial Implications

The Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan outlines initiatives to reduce homelessness spend on temporary accommodation. A wide range of measures are detailed in the plan including preventative measures, more efficient service delivery and new ways of working, as well as supply measures such as procuring properties at lower cost, acquisitions and new build.

Some of these measures will have initial cost implications which have been factored in the budget setting process as part of the MTF5 and ultimately aim to drive the total cost of homelessness down.

The report outlines progress that has been made in taking forward actions in the strategy. The impact of these actions has begun to show some positive results and will be quantifiable as budget monitoring information becomes available in 2025/26.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

Those residents affected by homelessness will benefit from the increased focus on fast and effective case handling and on securing sustainable accommodation solutions. All residents of the borough will benefit from the concerted effort to address the budgetary risk related to temporary accommodation expenditure. Sound financial management is a fundamental part of “putting residents first”.

Consultation & Engagement carried out (or required)

This report has not been subject to consultation. The report provides an update on a previously agreed action plan that covers a range of management actions that are necessary to bring high risk expenditure in line with budgetary constraints. Rapid implementation is critical. The strategy covers a wide range of actions, some of which will or have already been subject to consultation, i.e. the recent amendments to the Social Housing Allocation Policy being an example.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and note the Financial Implications set out above and the progress on taking forward the Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan, which included a range of measures to reduce the significant financial pressure to the Council on Temporary Accommodation. However, it should be pointed out that with three of the four measures reporting an adverse position against target at this stage, that this is likely to be an unfunded pressure within the service by outturn, with this to be reviewed and confirmed as part of the first monitoring cycle for the new year, which will be presented to Cabinet in July.

The Council's budget strategy approved in February 2025, contains an increase in the budget strategy effectively aiming to fund the additional growth that is in the system, with proposed saving measures included within the Strategy and Action Plan to mitigate the rising Homelessness Support, totalling £3.63m for 2025/26 rising to £5.1m by 2027/28. These measures will be monitored through the demand led financial and activity-based model as part of the regular monthly monitoring process and medium-term implications considered as part of the wider MTFS refresh for 2026/27 and beyond.

Legal

This report provides a quarterly update to Cabinet and outlines the progress made in respect of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan approved by them in February 2025.

The recommendation is for Cabinet to note the contents of this report and as such Legal Services confirms there are no legal impediments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Cabinet report 13 February 2025: Temporary Accommodation Strategy & Action Plan Appendix – Hillingdon Temporary Accommodation Strategy and Action Plan](#)

Appendix 1

Temporary Accommodation Action Plan Update – June 2025

Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success	Progress
Objective 1: Manage homelessness demand and increase rates of successful homeless preventions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a communications campaign to promote self-service and 'find your own' housing options to residents. Implement changes to the on-line self-referral portal. 	<p>From Q3 2024/25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in proportion of households whose homelessness is prevented. Achieve a target prevention rate of 40% (% prevention cases closed during period with accommodation secured) – this target is now revised to 54% in line with the London average. No. families with children/pregnant women in non- self-contained B&B for more than 6 weeks. Target zero. 	<p>Communication has included an article in Hillingdon People regarding measures to address homelessness and providing advice on taking control and finding affordable housing. A link was also provided to a video on homelessness assistance.</p> <p>The homelessness sections of the council's website have been completely redesigned. This is to provide advice on actions people can take to help address their homelessness and to ensure that those who most need to be assisted by council employees are able to access help through a more streamlined process.</p>

Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver proactive and quality case work to increase 'no' and 'low' cost preventions – to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the option of a new mediation and accommodation finding service, for residents; ○ embed new case work practice and support, to include weekly reviews of case work preventions. 	<p>Q4 2024/25</p> <p>Q3 2024/25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer households being placed into nightly paid temporary accommodation than during 2024/25 (62 per month). Target <50. 	<p>Case management targets have been implemented and a PowerBI dashboard developed for monitoring purposes. 'Assessment of Suitability' training has been delivered and customer journey mapping has been undertaken.</p> <p>Customer service is improved by a new direct phone line having been introduced into Housing Needs with a duty rota to manage calls.</p> <p>Options for a new external service for sustaining tenancies have been explored. We are continuing to review other options.</p> <p>Processes and procedures around 'Find your Own' accommodation, have been reviewed and updated. Caseworkers have been made aware and reminded to make full use of the process.</p>

Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop our prevention ‘tool kit’, focusing particularly on the most frequent reasons for loss of accommodation, to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ proactive engagement with private sector landlords at scale and working with the Courts, to reduce evictions; ○ launch a new offer for private sector landlords to sustain tenancies to avoid eviction, including the option of a Rent Guarantee Scheme, if the right option for Hillingdon; and improvement grants; ○ a proactive, fast track approach for evictions by ‘friends and family members’. 	<p>Q3 2024/25</p> <p>Q1 2025/26</p> <p>Q4 2024/25</p> <p>Q4 2024/25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased accommodation available and used to prevent homelessness measured against 2024/25 delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 334 Private rented sector placements (including single homeless supported) ○ 383 Lettings to homeless households (relets and first lettings) 	<p>We have engaged with the majority of our main temporary accommodation providers. Discussions have been held about how we can work more collaboratively and future procurement opportunities. Arrangements are underway for a Homefinders Landlord Forum to be held.</p> <p>Work is continuing to engage with the Uxbridge Court. Options for a Rent Guarantee scheme have been explored.</p> <p>A standard offer, including changes to incentives payable for landlords, is now in the final stages of being agreed.</p> <p>Team Leader’s casework management includes checking for fast and effective responses to friends and family evictions. The triage team are mindful of assigning case officers as soon as possible, for early prevention. Casework training is being rolled out during the first week of July.</p>

Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Government departments to ensure effective planned arrangements for leaving accommodation to avoid homelessness. 	<p>From Q3 2024/25</p>		<p>Continued efforts are made with the Home Office and MHCLG to raise awareness of issues faced by the borough. This is particularly in relation to additional pressures from the move on of asylum seekers from initial accommodation. A media campaign has also been initiated with regards to this for fair funding from the Home Office.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver additional rented housing supply to support prevention of homelessness, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ increasing the supply of private rented sector accommodation (see objective 2) ○ enabling an increase in the move-on supply of accommodation to support the single homeless pathway, including the supply accessed by voluntary sector partners 	<p>From Q1 2025/26</p>		<p>Arrangements are in place to meet with current voluntary sector accommodation providers and Housing Association partners to see what more can be done to increase private sector provision through their leasing arrangements.</p>

Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success	Progress
Objective 2: Increase rates of move-on from temporary to settled accommodation			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement policy and processes to maximise the number of lettings to priority homeless households in social rented housing across all registered social housing providers to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement changes to the Social Housing Allocation Policy; apply a local lettings plan; review every quarter the supply of lettings from all Registered Providers to ensure these are being maximised, for the benefit of residents (nominations). 	<p>Q4 2024/25</p> <p>Q2 2025/26</p> <p>Q2 2025/26</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of social sector lettings to homeless households Number of social sector lettings via registered providers Reduced average period housed in temporary accommodation. 	<p>A number of changes to the Social Housing Allocation Policy were agreed in November 2024 and implementation was completed by April 2025.</p> <p>An Annual Lettings Plan is being finalised and aims to increase lettings to homeless households, in line with the approved Policy.</p> <p>During June 2025 a series of meetings are being held with the main Housing Associations in Hillingdon to discuss nominations and working relationships.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the supply of private rented sector accommodation to accelerate move-on from temporary accommodation into long-term sustainable solutions, to include: 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased supply of PRS for settled accommodation at all duty stages. Increase the supply of private rented sector properties by 50% 	<p>A new offer to landlords is being finalised.</p> <p>This will include reviewing and updating policies and procedures related to working arrangements with</p>

Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ an updated Private Sector Rented Policy offer ○ a new package of offers for landlords to sustain tenancies, grant funding to improve properties and options to work with the council on a medium-term basis. 	<p>Q1 2025/26</p> <p>Q1 2025/26</p>		<p>landlords (including payments, compliance etc).</p> <p>Negotiations with nightly providers includes considering converting to Assured Shorthold Tenancies but this is not proving successful currently.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Embed a ‘one-reasonable-offer’ approach to prevent or relieve homelessness. 	Q4 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase in duties discharged particularly on one offer only. 	A ‘one-reasonable’ offer approach is in place. A focus is being placed on ensuring that implementation of this is applied consistently, supporting case workers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase recovery of properties through tackling fraud, including unannounced visits and a ‘key amnesty’ for tenants who wish to relinquish their social housing tenancy. 	From Q1 2024/25 and ongoing thereafter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of properties recovered by fraud. ● Increase in duties discharged as a result of proactive casework e.g. intentionality, fraud, within timescales. 	The fraud team are continuing to carry out checks that temporary accommodation is being occupied as it should be through unannounced visits. The key amnesty has commenced.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete a rapid review and update of Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) for all tenants of 	Q4 2024/25 and ongoing thereafter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No families with children/pregnant women in 	Staff are aware of the need to prepare PHPs for all homeless cases and to review them regularly. Casework

Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success	Progress
<p>temporary accommodation, identifying suitable housing pathways and options for all residents currently in temporary accommodation. Complete a quarterly review and update thereafter.</p>		<p>non-self-contained B&B for more than 6 weeks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in PHPs developed and delivered across all entering and currently living in Temporary accommodation 	<p>supervision is in place to check that this is implemented and support case workers.</p> <p>Two members of staff have been identified to concentrate specifically on high cost and long term temporary accommodation placements and identify suitable pathways to move them on.</p>
<p>Objective 3: Reduce total expenditure on temporary accommodation</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiate reduced nightly rates with all temporary accommodation providers. 	<p>From Q3 2024/25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer households in nightly charged temporary accommodation Lower overall cost of temporary accommodation (after subsidy) 	<p>Targeted negotiations with landlords have been undertaken and achieved success in reducing nightly costs. This work is ongoing.</p> <p>Cost caps for different bedroom sizes for temporary accommodation have been set.</p> <p>The number of households over the cap reduced from 323 households at the start of 2025/26 to 266 at the end April and further reduced to 153 by 26th May. There are now no 1 bed</p>

Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success	Progress
			<p>properties over the cap and no 5 bed properties over the cap.</p> <p>Where it has not been possible to negotiate with those breaching the cap to sufficiently reduce the cost, the cases are presented to a weekly panel to prioritise move on to alternative accommodation as soon as possible.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and implement a new procurement approach for the use of temporary accommodation. Deliver increased supply of lower cost temporary accommodation, to support prevention of homelessness including use of leased accommodation and lower cost council owned options. 	<p>From Q4 2024/25</p> <p>From Q3 2024/25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer households in nightly charged temporary accommodation Lower overall cost of temporary accommodation (after subsidy) Lower cost per temporary accommodation unit (after subsidy) in all bed sizes Increase the use of existing council relets for use as temporary accommodation 	<p>A new approach to procurement of temporary accommodation seeks to scale up and secure deals for larger buildings / portfolios and to secure them over a medium term time frame.</p> <p>We have a pipeline supply of newly signed up leased properties for use as temporary accommodation. An original target of 100 looks can be exceeded.</p> <p>An agreement to lease Frayswater Place (87 units) for 10 years was approved by Cabinet in May and a number of further deals are under</p>

Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success	Progress
			consideration and will be subject to review / approval by Members.
Objective 4: Increase the supply of additional social rented housing and new temporary accommodation through acquisition and new build programmes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree and deliver a pipeline supply programme to increase the volume of council owned properties for use as temporary accommodation 	From Q4 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of temporary accommodation homes managed by the council to control cost and quality. 	There is an ongoing programme to convert some larger council properties to shortlife temporary accommodation to reduce costs for housing larger families.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver an acquisitions programme to increase the supply of social rented properties (minimum 500 homes) 	From Q1 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of acquisition and new build development programme; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased new acquisitions supply to March 2028. 	<p>The outturn figures for 2024/25 were 228 acquisitions.</p> <p>A contract has been agreed to acquire and make lettable 200 homes. The contract runs for 2025/26 and 2026/27 but is being frontloaded with an expectation for all homes to be delivered during 2025/26.</p> <p>Further acquisitions will be completed inhouse.</p>

Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a 5-year programme of new build social and affordable rented housing (minimum 1,000 homes) 	<p>From Q1 2024/25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased new build properties supply to March 2028. 	<p>The outturn figures for 2024/25 were 176 new dwellings. Of these 131 were provided by Housing Associations and the remainder by the Council</p> <p>During 2025/26 there is a supply pipeline of 269 new build dwellings to be provided by the Council and Housing Association partners.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

CAPITAL FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR EDUCATION & SEND

Cabinet Member & Portfolio	Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education Cllr Martin Goddard, Cabinet Member for Finance
Responsible Officer	Julie Kelly, Corporate Director of Children Services
Report Author & Directorate	Abi Preston, Director of Education & SEND
Papers with report	Appendix 1 – DfE Guidance High Needs Provisional Capital Allocations: High needs provision capital allocations - GOV.UK Appendix 2 – Capital release request

HEADLINES

Summary	To seek Cabinet approval to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the underspend of £6,065k by rephasing 2 existing 2024/25 budgets (secondary school expansion and temp classrooms) to fund future specialist provision in Hillingdon. 2. Note the strategy to extend the secondary provision as outlined in Hillingdon SEND & AP strategic documents. 3. Approve a Capital Release of £540,000 for internal adaptations to be carried out at Bishop Ramsey School to create a specialist provision of up to 32 places. 4. Delegate authority to efficiently determine further capital projects and spend within the capital budget.
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents This report supports our commitments to residents of: Safe and Strong Communities
Financial Cost	From the budget of £6,056k, the initial project at Bishop Ramsey will cost £540k as outlined above. This is grant funding received by the Department for Education (DfE) to deliver additional capital provision for children.
Select Committee	Children, Families and Education Select Committee.
Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- 1) the creation of a budget from the DfE High Needs Capital funding listed below for the expansion of specialist provision in mainstream schools for 2025/26 and subsequent years, be approved, noting this will be by using the underspend of £6,065k by rephasing 2 existing 2024/25 budgets (secondary school expansion and temp classrooms) to fund future Specialist Resource Provisions and Designated Units in Secondary schools to mirror those created in Primary schools;
- 2) the strategy to extend secondary school specialist provision in line with the Hillingdon Local Area, be noted as set out in the SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy and Hillingdon SEND & AP Sufficiency Strategy. This includes the expansion of Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs) and Designated Units (DUs);
- 3) the Capital Release of £540k for internal adaptations to be carried out at Bishop Ramsey School to create a specialist provision (SRP) of up to 32 places (Appendix 2), be approved.
- 4) authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Corporate Services & Property and Finance & Transformation to:
 - a. To decide which school capital projects will be approved from the budget in line with the above strategies.
 - b. To release funding from the budget for the agreed school capital projects.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The SEND population has grown significantly since the 2014 SEND reforms with the greatest growth taking place in the statutory EHCP category. Historically, the number of children and young people requiring specialist provision has exceeded the capacity of the provision in Hillingdon, however, there have been a number of developments to address this, including a successful bid for an all through special free school. Our ambitious SEND capital programme developments enabled the area to meet the needs of most of the cohort in recent years and work is still ongoing to further develop our specialist provision in mainstream schools.

This is a key focus for the government as there is a plan to develop further provisions in mainstream to accommodate a range of needs and reduce reliance on special schools. There are plans to expand the special schools offer, develop more Specialist Resources Provisions (SRPs) and Designated Units (DU). See Hillingdon SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2025 (Background paper 2).

Alternative options considered / risk management

Rising demand and costs have put pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the LA has developed a DSG Deficit Recovery Programme with a Safety Valve agreement with the DfE. Without this commitment for the 2025/26 capital funding, officers would not be able to deliver on the key strategic priority for the Council through creating additional specialist provision within mainstream secondary schools. This would lead to additional costs being incurred by the LA through placement of children and young people in Independent, Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) which could be out of borough, including additional transport costs. Part of the SEND & AP strategy is to aim to educate children in their local community wherever possible to avoid lengthy journeys to school and be educated with their peers in their community.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The capital investment will support delivery of new SRPs and DUs in secondary schools, to support the increasing demand for specialist places as outlined in our SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy and Hillingdon SEND & AP Sufficiency Strategy mentioned earlier, including:

- Developing more provision to meet the range of needs locally in the Borough, including additional SRP places and Designated Units
- We will deliver new, ambitious and innovative provision that enables children and young people with SEND to receive excellent education in their local community

This will include a range of projects aimed at delivering at least 80 new specialist provision places in mainstream secondary schools across the Borough by September 2026. In order to progress these projects, a range of actions are required as set out overleaf:

1. **Approve the creation of a budget totalling £6,065k** to ensure that capital funding is committed to the creation of specialist provision in mainstream schools in Hillingdon from the current High Needs Provision Capital Allocations, and the allocations for 2025/26 and subsequent years

High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) are paid to local authorities to support the provision of places for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and those pupils requiring Alternative Provision (AP). The funding can be used to adapt classrooms to be more accessible for children with SEND, to create specialist facilities within mainstream schools that can deliver more intensive support adapted to suit the pupils' needs, and to create special school places for pupils with the most complex needs.

Note and agree the strategy to extend our secondary provision in line with strategic priorities. A key priority in the SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2025 is to "deliver new, ambitious and innovative specialist provision that enables children and young people with SEND to receive excellent education in their local community, with sufficient places at all stages planned to meet the current and future demands." Also, within the Local Area Partnership SEND and AP strategy 2023-28, our third Ambition is focused on ensuring 'Provision meets the needs of Hillingdon's children and young people'. The current challenge is to continue to develop more specialist provision within mainstream settings through SRPs and DUs in mainstream secondary schools.

There are currently 81 more places in primary resource provisions (SRPs and DUs) than in secondary schools. This means there is no clear pathway for these young people to move into from primary school, often putting more pressure on high demand special school places as a result. Additional places in secondary schools must be created to enable primary age children to move seamlessly through their mainstream education with the appropriate levels of support. The latest data suggests that the average cost of a special school placement is £33,678 per year and for INMSS it is £50,112. In comparison, a placement at an SRP costs £20,000 and in a Designated Unit is £25,000. Therefore, the new provisions will lead to long term cost savings and allow special schools to focus on supporting the most complex children and young people.

These additional specialist places need to be developed in Hillingdon in the next few years to meet the rising demand for places, to minimise the use of independent provision, and to reduce travel times for children and young people. The aim is to increase the use of local maintained education spaces and promote integration of pupils into mainstream, where possible. Recently completed projects have been delivered in partnership with schools and academies that have surplus physical capacity and have commitment to inclusion along with expertise in managing change.

The diagram below demonstrates the graduated approach to the structure of our education provision, starting with mainstream school for the majority of pupils, and reaches specialist provision for pupils with the most complex needs. It is expected that pupils will access the level of educational provision that best meets their individual needs, which are assessed and reviewed regularly by a range of professionals.

Graph 1: A Spectrum of Provision



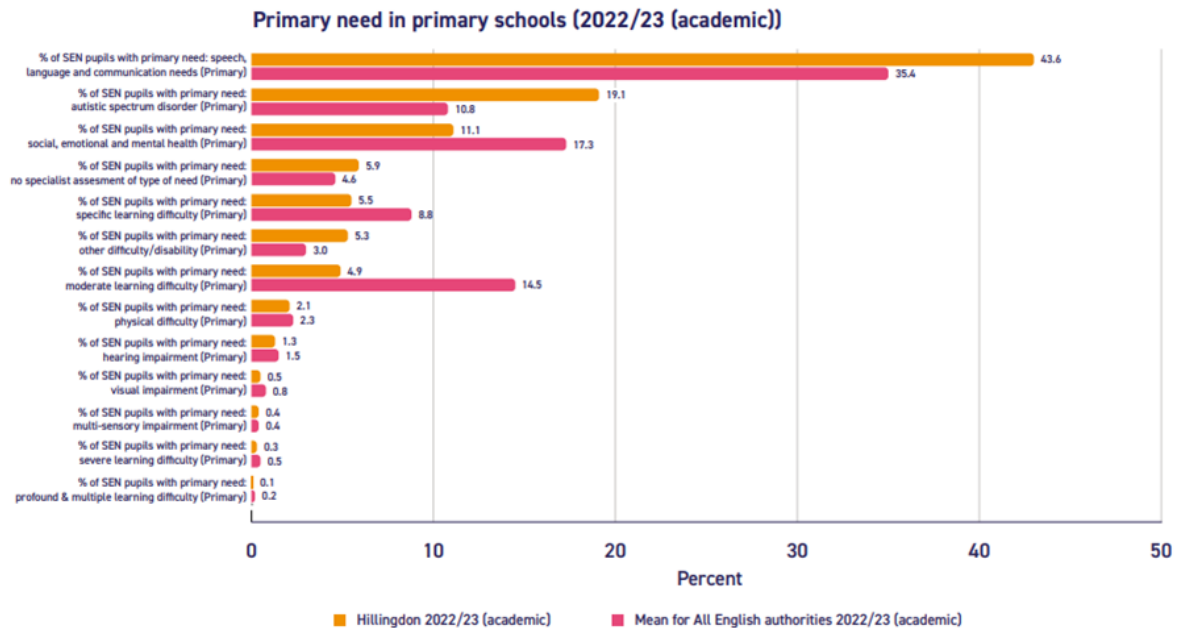
There are currently a total of **142** SRP and DU places in primary schools compared to **61** places in secondary schools. Around 65% of the total number of places in these SRPs and DUs are for pupils with ASD, which is our largest cohort, followed by pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) at around 14%. Projections suggest these two designations will continue to increase for the next 7 years.

Table 1: Current provision in Hillingdon based on designation

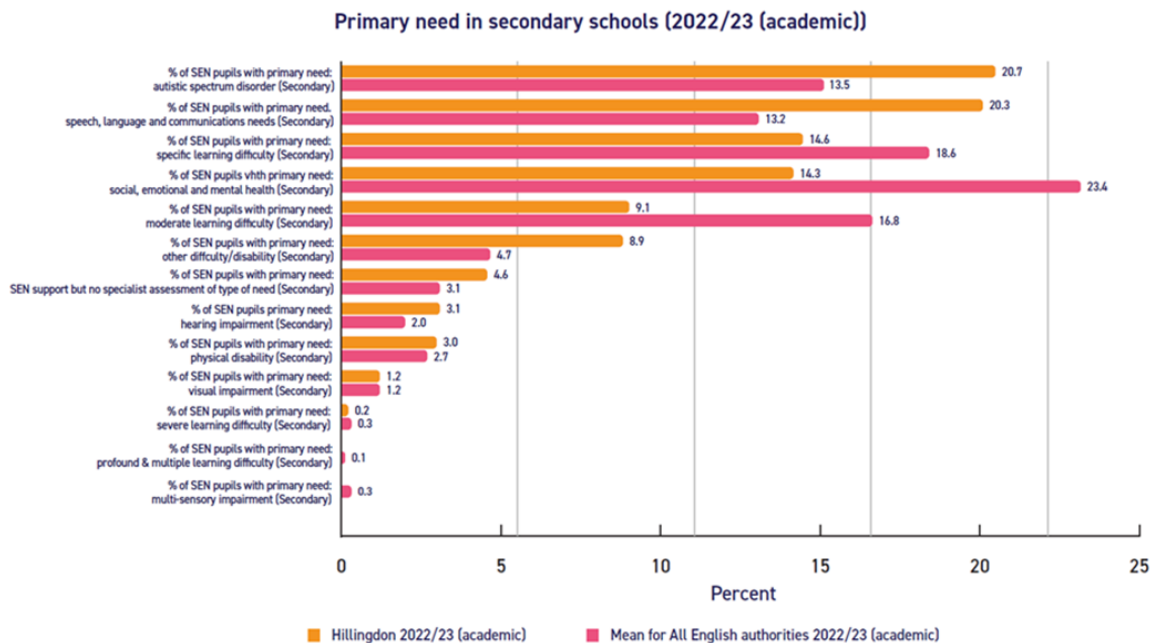
	Primary SRP Places	Secondary SRP Places	Difference	Primary DU Places	Secondary DU Places	Difference
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	80	12	68	24	16	8
Physical Disabilities	9	7	2	0	0	0
Speech, Language & Communication Needs	18	10	8	0	0	0
Hearing Impairment	11	16	-5	0	0	0
Total	118	45	73	24	16	8

Based on the data available, we predict there will be an increase of 25% in the number of EHCPs where autism (ASD) is identified as the primary need. We know that the current available provision in the borough will not be meet this demand. Through the strategy, we aim to continue the work we started in increasing the local specialist provision to meet the needs of pupils with autism in Hillingdon schools.

Graph 2: Primary Need in Primary Schools 2022/23



Graph 3: Primary Need in Secondary Schools 2022/23



2. **Note the strategy to extend our secondary school specialist provision in line with the Hillingdon Local Area: SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy for Children and Young People 0-25 years 2023 – 2028 Strategy (Background paper 1) and Hillingdon SEND & AP Sufficiency Strategy 2025 – 2030 (Background paper 2). This includes the expansion of Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs) and Designated Units (DUs). The Hillingdon SEND and AP Strategy, along with the SEND Sufficiency Strategy, sets out how the London Borough of Hillingdon and our partners across the SEND Local**

Area Partnership intend to ensure that there is sufficient high-quality specialist provision, in both mainstream and special school settings, to meet the future needs of children and young people with SEND in Hillingdon.

Officers have been working closely with a number of secondary schools, and 3 feasibility exercises have already been completed so far to understand the options available on each site. Options range from internal adaptations to existing buildings to the creation of a standalone building on site to provide specialist provision. For internal adaptations estimates for a range of sites that we have considered were quoted upto £645k (not including the contingency costs). If a separate building is considered as the best possible option (or the only option) for the site, these costs would be significantly higher than the costs provided for the internal adaptations. The focus currently is to identify schools with the available space that could be repurposed, as opposed to building new provisions, in order to maximise the use of the budget. This must be balanced with the need for schools to be positioned throughout the Borough so they are accessible to those families where there is the highest need. There is also a need to ensure that any new secondary schools who we are considering developing an SRP or DU needs to be in a school who demonstrate a strong inclusive ethos.

The aim is to open a new specialist provision in 3 secondary schools for September 2026, enabling at least a further 80 children to access specialist provision in a mainstream secondary school in Hillingdon. This would allow those children who are supported in provisions in primary schools to continue with similar support into their secondary school phase.

- 3. Approve the Capital Release of £540,000 for internal adaptations to be carried out at Bishop Ramsey School to create a specialist provision of up to 32 places (Appendix 2).** The new ASD provision at Bishop Ramsey secondary school is planned to open at the start of September 2026. With the construction phase of the scheme taking place in the summer term and holidays in 2026. This school has been identified as it is in an appropriate location and the school has a strong inclusive ethos. The project is estimated as £540,000 and uses existing space within the school to create the new provision. The project includes fees & surveys, construction, fixtures & fittings, and contingency costs.
- 4. Delegate authority to Cabinet Members for more efficient decision-making on project and spend decisions within approved budgets.**

Financial Implications

Creating the budget to receive the DfE capital allocations outlined above, and delegating authority as outlined above, allows the additional provision to be delivered to support the needs of children across Hillingdon in line with the agreed strategies for education.

If the Local Authority are not able to create provision in the secondary phase to help match the provision created through the primary school projects, this would lead to additional costs being incurred by the Council through placement of children and young people in Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) which will have a negative impact on the DSG recovery plan

and could also be out of borough and, therefore, include significantly higher transport costs which are funded by General Fund revenue.

The creation of additional provision within the borough will result in the reduction of operational costs of education for children with SEND. This will reduce pressure in achieving strategic targets for the operation and management of the high needs block.

Secondary Schools Expansion Budget £6,065k; Previously Released £0k; Capital Release Requested £540k - Appendix 2

The report seeks the rephasing of £6,065k underspends from 2024/25 to 2025/26, this currently comprises of two existing budgets which are the secondary school budget and the temporary classrooms budget once rephased this will be combined to make one secondary school budget. The budget is financed combination of £4,765k grant funding and £1,300k Council resources. The rephasing is subject to ratification by Cabinet in the outturn report.

The report also is seeking the capital release request of £540k from the Secondary School Budget for the internal adaptations at Bishop Ramsey School to create a Specialist Provision (SRP) of up to 32 places. The scheme will be carried out by the school and overseen by LBH officers. Payments will be made to the school in stages.

The remaining £5,465k of the secondary school budget will be allocated to future special resource provision and or designated unit schemes in secondary schools and is subject to the capital release process.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

The recommendations, if approved, will ensure there are sufficient specialist education provision within our mainstream schools to meet the needs of our residents.

Consultation & Engagement carried out (or required)

Consultations will be undertaken when proposing to open a specialist provision in a mainstream school following the relevant DfE guidance [Making significant changes to maintained schools](#) or [Making significant changes to an academy](#).

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting approval is sought to establish a budget from the Department of Education's High Needs Capital funding of £6,065k to support the expansion of specialist provision in mainstream secondary schools from 2025/26 onwards to align with the Hillingdon Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-2028 and the SEND & AP Sufficiency Strategy 2025-2030,

along with approval for the capital release of £540k from the new established budget for the internal adaptations required at Bishop Ramsey School to create a 32-place SRP.

Furthermore, it is noted that the new capital budget of £6,065k for the expansion of specialist provision in mainstream secondary schools will be met through the rephasing of underspends from 2024/25 to 2025/26, from two existing capital budgets within the secondary school expansion capital programme and the temporary classrooms capital programme, with the financing being met through a combination of £4,765k grant funding and £1,300k of Council resources.

The capital expenditure and financing relating to this project will be monitored through the monthly monitoring cycle and as part of the wider MTFS.

Legal

The Education Act 1996 imposes various duties on the Council with regards to education and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education, secondary education and further education is available to meet the needs of the population of their area. Section 14 of the 1996 Act further requires the Council to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available in their area, "sufficient" referring to number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education. The Council is required to exercise this function having particular regard to the need for securing that special educational provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs. Moreover, under section 19 of the 1996 Act, the Council is required to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise for children who, for any reason, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them. "Suitable education" means efficient education suitable to a child's age, ability, aptitude, and special educational needs.

More specifically, Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 imposes on the Council various duties in relation to children with special educational needs or disabilities. Pursuant to section 27 of the 2014 Act, the Council must keep under review the education provision, training provision and social care provision made in its area for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability and to consider the extent to which the provision is sufficient to meet educational needs, training needs and social care needs of the children concerned.

The recommendations set out in this report will help the Council deliver on its legal duties outlined above. Thus, there are no legal implications to following the recommendations set out in this report.

On an ongoing basis, the Council must ensure it complies with the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and the terms and conditions of the Dedicated Schools Grant and Safety Valve Agreement. The Council must, in exercising its SEND functions, consider and follow the relevant statutory code of practice: Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015).

This report also states that consultations will be undertaken when proposing to open a specialist provision in a mainstream school. For a consultation to be lawful, it must meet public law principles of fairness and adequacy along with any statutory or policy requirements specific to the consultation at hand.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background paper 1 – [Hillingdon Local Area: SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy for Children and Young People 0-25 years 2023 – 2028 Strategy.](#)

Background paper 2 – [Hillingdon SEND & AP Sufficiency Strategy 2025 – 2030](#)

TITLE OF ANY APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – DfE Guidance High Needs Provisional Capital Allocations: [High needs provision capital allocations - GOV.UK](#)

Appendix 2 – Capital Release Request

APPENDIX 2 – CAPITAL RELEASE REQUEST

Secondary Schools Capital Budget (CR 2)

Location	Project/ Expenditure Title	Information	Funds Release Sought £000's	Approve	Hold	More Information Required
Bishop Ramsey School	Internal adaptations for Specialist Resource Provision	Internal adaptations to be carried out at Bishop Ramsey School to create a specialist provision (SRP) of up to 32 places	540			
Total seeking release			540			
Previously released			0			
Budget			6,065			
Remaining budget			5,525			

This page is intentionally left blank

UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND - 2025/26 ALLOCATION

Cabinet Member & Portfolio	Cllr Steve Tuckwell, Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Growth
Responsible Officer	Karrie Whelan, Corporate Director for Place
Report Author & Directorate	Sam Robins, Planning and Sustainable Growth
Papers with report	None

HEADLINES

Summary	This report sets out the proposed allocations for utilising Hillingdon's 2025/26 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) grant. UKSPF is central government grant administered through the GLA to improve pride in place, support high-quality skills training and boost local businesses.
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Enjoy access to green spaces, leisure activities, culture and arts This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Thriving Economy
Financial Cost	This report sets out the allocation and use of a grant which the Council is due to receive; there are no costs to the Council's core budget associated with the recommendations in this report.
Select Committee	Residents' Services Select Committee
Ward(s)	Residents and businesses from all wards will have the opportunity to benefit. Uxbridge and Hayes Town wards will benefit largely from the proposed capital spend.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- 1) the proposed allocations in Section 2 of the Supporting Information, for spending Hillingdon's 2025/26 UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant, be approved
- 2) authority be delegated to the Director for Planning and Sustainable Growth to sign-off on all expenditure of the grant in-line with the approach set out in section 2 and make procurement decisions on contracts below £100,000 in value, reporting decisions for transparency.
- 3) note that the Corporate Director of Place, following legal advice, has agreed and signed the UKSPF grant agreement with the Greater London Authority for 2025/26.
- 4) note that the Director for Planning and Sustainable Growth has agreed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Ealing Council for an additional tri-borough grant element.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The recommendations will enable Hillingdon Council to utilise its UKPSF grant allocation of £1,106,910 for 2025/26. This consists of Hillingdon's GLA allocation of £996,910, plus an additional £110,000 secured through a competitive tri-borough bid for a business support project, working with the boroughs of Ealing and Harrow. In accordance with the grant conditions the proposal is for funds to be spent on projects which support residents into work, support local businesses to grow, and make improvements to the public realm of our main town centres. This can be achieved by driving delivery of the Uxbridge Vision and a programme of regeneration in Hayes, along with supporting other high streets.

The request for delegated authority for the Service Director to sign off spending and procurement, within the framework of projects and priorities set out in this report, will allow the programme to be delivered a much more efficient and timely manner. The tight funding timeline poses a substantial risk to delivery, and from the experience of the previous year this delegation would mitigate the risk posed to successful delivery.

Alternative options considered

Do nothing. This is not considered a viable option as Hillingdon would simply forgo an opportunity to utilise this grant to support businesses and residents, and improve our town centres.

In order to be claimed, the grant must be spent on new projects providing additionality for the borough – it cannot be used to fund existing or already planned activity.

The proposed approach to utilising the grant which is set out in this report is focused on deliverable projects which are compatible with the grant criteria and address existing Council priorities.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background and Current Status

1. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a government grant provided to local authorities for Councils to investment in local economic development, place, business support and skills. £2.6 billion of funding was provided between April 2022 and March 2025, replacing the European Regional Development funding. Hillingdon received £2.5million in the initial 3 year period. The programme has been extended in the 2025/26 financial year with Hillingdon allocated a further £1,106,901.
2. Utilising the UKSPF is predicated upon agreement with the GLA on priorities, credible delivery strategies and measurable outputs. The fund looks to support initiatives falling under the following three investment strands:
 - Communities and Place
 - Supporting local business
 - People and Skills
3. Officers have successfully delivered the previous UKSPF programme over the last year, with all three strands making a significant impact on unemployed residents, local businesses, green spaces and playgrounds. The Business Support and People and Skills programmes in Hillingdon significantly outperformed targets, with the borough ranking first among all west London boroughs for People and Skills outcomes. Key achievements include:
 - **Over 350 residents** received skills training and employment support, helping many long-term unemployed individuals secure jobs.
 - **200 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** were provided with tailored guidance to help them grow, invest, and expand—some even moved into larger premises as a result.
 - **108 SMEs** were prepared to compete for large-scale procurement opportunities through targeted readiness support.

2025/26 UKSPF Allocation

4. The London Borough of Hillingdon's allocation is as follows:

Capital (High Street Regeneration Fund)	£665,656
Revenue (Business Support and People and Skills)	£331,253
Additional revenue grant (Supplier readiness tri-borough project)	£110,000
Total	£1,106,901

5. There is a new requirement for 2025/6, in support of the priorities of the London Growth Plan for the capital element of the grant to be used as a 'High Street Regeneration Fund' to be spent on projects to enhance and regenerate town centres.

6. The Corporate Director for Place, in consultation with officers including Legal, has agreed and signed the 2025/26 grant agreement with the Greater London Authority in order to draw down the grant funding. This paper seeks final approval of how the funding we will be allocated. Boroughs will be required to report directly to the GLA on spend and progress throughout the year.

Section 2 - Recommended Approach

7. This section provides a breakdown of the recommended approach and priorities for utilising the 2025/26 allocation of UKSPF funding. This approach seeks to build on the successes of the previous year, along with addressing some of the Place priorities of delivering the Uxbridge Vision and regeneration/enhancement of Hayes town centre.

8. Capital Allocation: High Street Regeneration fund - £665,656

Uxbridge Town Centre - £315,000:

- Commission detailed designs and costings for key public realm projects proposed in the Uxbridge Vision and progress to planning permission.
- Key priority projects to be progressed include the Civic Centre Forecourt, St. Andrew's Roundabout redesign and improvements to Station Square.
- Funding for the delivery of the proposed Business Innovation Hub in the Civic Centre in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Brunel University.
- Project management costs for a fixed term Strategic Regeneration Officer to deliver the priority projects within the Uxbridge Vision.

Hayes Town Centre - £300,000:

- Delivery of projects that aim to enhance the public realm in Hayes town centre with a focus on the canal and approach to the train station – kickstarting delivery of proposals already developed using the Mayor's existing Good Growth Fund grant.
- Address public safety concerns related to anti-social behaviour hotspots, by enhancing public realm, lighting, visibility and wayfinding.
- Invest where possible in meanwhile or small scale sports facilities in flexible spaces in the town centre to support existing community safety and public health priorities.
- Work will be a combination of commissioning detailed designs, costings and planning permission for major projects and undertaking delivery of smaller capital projects which can be delivered in-year, such as lighting and signage.

Other Local High Streets - £50,656:

- Extension of the borough-wide shopfronts improvements grant scheme, offering grants to improve high street frontages, focused on high streets that are not receiving other funding from the UKSPF.
- It is proposed that this funding is offered for applications from organisations and businesses from local high streets to undertake projects.

9. Revenue - £331,253 plus an additional £110,000 from successful bid for tri-borough programme:

Supporting Local Business - £171,253

- Commission a programme of business mentoring and guidance for local SMEs to support them to innovate, build resilience and most importantly grow. This will support roughly 100 businesses.
- Commission of 1-2 smaller contracts to deliver niche support to SMEs such as search engine optimisation, or deliver bespoke support to targeted under-represented demographics, such as women and BAME led businesses.
- Up to £31,000 on existing Hillingdon Council Staff time to support the programme.

People and Skills - £160,000

- Procurement of an employability support and employment brokerage service, from a provider that will ideally be a local SME.
- Procurement of an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) into work programme for local people where English language skills are a major barrier to work.
- Up to £15,000 on existing Hillingdon Council staff time to support the programme

Tri-borough Supplier Readiness Programme - £110,000

- Commission a supplier to deliver a programme of support for 95 local businesses to guide them on bidding for large scale procurement opportunities with major buying organisations and public procurement. This will be delivered in partnership with Harrow Council and Ealing Council, following a successful bid for further UKSPF funding from the GLA.
- Up to £41,000 on existing Hillingdon Council staff time

Procurement

10. Under the previously UKSPF funded projects, Procurement supported colleagues in the Planning and Sustainable Growth Team to award contracts under a number of UKSPF investment priorities, primarily 'Supporting Local Business' and 'People and Skills' as outlined below

Investment Priorities	Contract	Supplier	Start Date	End Date	Value
Supporting Local Business	Hillingdon Business Support Programme	Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce	06.06.24	31.03.25	£206,046.00
Supporting Local Business	Supplier Readiness Programme	Brandiun	11.12.23	31.03.25	£95,000
People & Skills	Homeless & employment support programme (* additional outputs Aug – 24)	Seetec	31.01.24	31.03.25	£178,558.92 (£79,000)

(*) The additional outputs were funded via underspend in the 'People & Skills' priority.

11. In awarding contracts, officers will seek the relevant approval to either direct award in accordance with the Procurement Contract and Standing Orders or seek a minimum of 3 quotes – depending on the specific requirements of each contract. Please note

recommendation 2 in this report seeks Cabinet to delegate authority for approval for procurement decisions on contract values lower than £100,000 to the Service Director, rather than Corporate Director.

Resources

12. The programme of work will be delivered within the Regeneration and Economic Development team, through a combination of existing officers and a dedicated post for work in Uxbridge.
13. The UKSPF Programme Officer, a part-time fixed term post funded by the UKSPF, will contract manage delivery of the Business Support and People and Skills programmes with support from the Economic Development Team Leader. A fixed-term Senior Strategic Planning and Regeneration Officer, funded by the UKSPF, will be recruited to deliver all work on the Uxbridge Vision, and the existing Senior Strategic Planning and Regeneration Officer for Hayes will deliver capital work in Hayes (their salary is funded by the GLA's Good Growth Fund).
14. All of these officers will have support from the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager, who has overall oversight of the grant, reporting into the Head of Strategic Planning and Regeneration, and the Service Director for Planning and Sustainable Growth.

Monitoring

15. It will be essential to demonstrate the economic benefits arising from this investment in business support and employment skills. This is also a requirement of the grant agreement with the GLA, where we are required to demonstrate the delivery of specific outcomes which are proposed as follows (from a predetermined list).

Communities and Place			
Code	Output/Outcome	Sub theme	Total 2025-26
OP5	Number of amenities/facilities created or improved	High streets and town centres improvements	5
OP28	Number of feasibility studies developed as a result of support	High streets and town centres improvements + Safe: reduce crime and the fear of crime	3

Supporting Local Business			
Code	Output/Outcome	Sub theme	Total 2025-26
OP10	Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Advice and support to businesses	166 businesses will be supported
OP1	Amount of commercial space completed or improved	Advice and support to businesses	300 sqm

People and Skills			
Code	Output/Outcome	Sub theme	Total 2025-26
OP18	Number of people receiving support to gain employment	Essential Skills & Supporting people to progress towards and into employment	99 participants supported through the programme
OP21	Number of people supported to access basic skills courses	Employment related skills & Essential Skills	88 participants supported with ESOL

Financial Implications

This report seeks the approval of the Cabinet member to enter into the UKSPF and Tri-borough grant agreement. It also requests the delegation of authority to the Director for Planning and Sustainable Growth to approve all UKSPF spending and procurement, in accordance with the recommended approach outlined above. The UKSPF grant amount totals £996,910, comprising £665,656 for the capital programme and £331,254 for revenue expenditures. The additional Tri-Borough UKSPF revenue fund totals £110,000.

The recommendations of this report pose no cost to the Council, as it concerns spending of grant funding that would not be received otherwise.

There is the potential to reduce in year expenditure against staff budgets by £74,076 through using grant allocations from both funding streams to fund existing resources. This is made up of 4% of the total UKSPF grant of totalling £39,876 to be retained to fund administration costs and an additional £87,000 as detailed under each revenue work stream, minus funding of a Fixed Term Contract at £52,800.

The goal of the approach for spending the capital elements, set out in this report, is that it will set the stage for officers to bid for much larger pots of capital grant funding in the future (such as CIL, S106, GLA, Government and local funds). This is because detailed designs for public realm projects will be commissioned, which are needed for shovel-ready funding bids in the future.

One of the recommendations of this report is that Cabinet provide delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Sustainable Growth to sign-off all spending and procurement decisions for UKSPF grant funding, within the parameters and priorities set out in this report. This will allow timely and efficient delivery within the tight timeframe that is available – as in the 2024/25 year, the need for Corporate Director approval for all spend was a major barrier and risk in delivery given the need to be agile and make swift decisions.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

The purpose of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is to improve the economic outcomes of people and businesses, and to improve our places, making them better to spend time in and improving economic viability and amenity. The recommendations in this paper are to utilise the funding for those specific goals.

The capital element of the fund will kickstart delivery of the Uxbridge Vision and Hayes town centre regeneration, both of which are programmes of work with the explicit purpose of benefiting residents, workers and visitors by enhancing public realm and amenities, along with catalysing economic growth and investment.

The revenue element of the fund will be spent on contractors to deliver the aforementioned support programmes for people and businesses, directly benefiting them (at no cost to them) through enhancing their skills and chances of creating income and prosperity.

Consultation & Engagement carried out (or required)

The capital projects proposed to be supported through this fund are a result of major public and stakeholder consultation in both Uxbridge and Hayes. The Uxbridge Vision had a two-stage public consultation process where over 1500 local people have been engaged, and their viewpoints informing the direction of the report and design of projects. Key stakeholders engaged through this process include the GLA, Transport for London, major landowners in Uxbridge, Uxbridge BID and Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce. We are awaiting the analysis of the final survey to gather public feedback on the Uxbridge Vision, and are preparing another report for Cabinet to consider it. Initial results are generally positive towards the Vision, and project designs will be amended based on the detailed results.

In Hayes, Brunel University have undertaken a consultation with the local community, through focus groups, interviews and a survey, about their views on the issues in the town centre and how they could be addressed. 335 Hayes residents were engaged in the process, and their views have directly informed the priorities for capital improvements in Hayes town centre, and the design of the proposed projects which have been developed by MUF Architecture.

The proposed allocation of the revenue element of this grant has been informed through discussions with providers of business support and skills programmes, helping identify local need and drivers, such as the need for English language support for many people out of work.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting that approval is sought for entering into the UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant agreement for £997k with the Greater London Authority, along with the proposed allocations of

this funding. Approval is also sought for the agreement to enter a Memorandum of Understanding with the London Borough of Ealing for an additional £110k tri-borough grant allocation.

Furthermore, it is noted that there is no direct cost to the General Fund in relation to the proposals within this report, the proposals are to be funded from the total grant allocation of £1,107k. Potential in-year savings of £75k have been identified from the use of the grant funding towards staffing funded through the General Fund, however, due to the tight delivery timelines, these identified savings may need to be redirected to ensure programme completion. The expenditure and funding relating to these proposals will be monitored as part of the regular monthly monitoring cycle, where any variances, whether savings or redirection of funding will be addressed.

It is also noted that the proposal for the capital element of funding is to commission detailed designs for public realm projects, this strategy is with the view of enhancing the Council's ability to submit competitive bids for future external funding, along with opportunities of funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 Contributions.

Legal

There are no specific legal implications to consider in respect of the content of the body of this report. However, the Council is required to comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and relevant state aid requirements to ensure rules and regulations are not breached (where this applies) and officers will need to ensure compliance with procurement rules and legislation. The Council's legal team will provide advice and assistance in respect of legal matters relating to subsequent contracts/grant agreements that will be required. As such there are no legal implications in agreeing to the recommendations as set out in the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26: Technical note](#)
- [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26: additional information](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

PUBLIC PREVIEW:

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED LATER IN PRIVATE

Cabinet Member(s)	As appropriate
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	As appropriate
Officer Contact(s)	Mark Braddock – Democratic Services
Papers with report	None

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.</p> <p>This will enable Cabinet Members to openly discuss such matters generally in public, and via the Council’s live broadcast of the meeting, without prejudicing their later consideration in private.</p>
<p>Putting our Residents First</p> <p>Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026</p>	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Digital-Enabled, Modern, Well-Run Council</p>
Financial Cost	As set out in the report.
Relevant Select Committee	As set out in this report under each item – however, this item is not for scrutiny call-in as it is information only.
Ward(s)	As set out in the report

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet note the reports to be considered later in private and Part 2 of the Cabinet agenda and comment on them as appropriate for public information purposes.

Reasons for recommendation

Why are certain reports considered in private?

As a transparent, democratic organisation, the Council's Cabinet will consider matters in public on Part 1 of this Cabinet agenda. However, there will inevitably be some reports that will need to be considered in private. These would generally relate to contracts, property transactions or commercially sensitive information, for example, tender bids from commercial organisations, which if made public, could prejudice the Council's ability secure value-for-money for resident taxpayers.

This information is also called 'exempt' information and is considered in Part 2 of any Cabinet agenda by applying the relevant section of the Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), in that the report contains certain information and that the public interest in withholding that information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

How can the public find out more about the private reports?

To ensure maximum transparency when the Cabinet considers such private reports:

- 1) They are first given advance notice on the Cabinet's Forward Plan in summary form setting out the reason why they will be considered in private. The [Forward Plan](#) is a public document setting out all the expected decisions the Cabinet will make over the coming year, except those that are urgent, and is available on the Council's website to view;
- 2) This report provides a fuller public preview of the matters to be discussed in Part 2 of this Cabinet meeting and gives an opportunity for Cabinet Members to highlight issues of significance within and for public information purposes, without prejudicing their later fuller consideration in private. It also sets out the recommendations in general terms that are being proposed for a decision on.
- 3) Consideration of this report will also be broadcast live on the Council's YouTube channel: Hillingdon London, and available for viewing afterwards, for wider democratic engagement.
- 4) After these private reports are considered in Part 2 of this Cabinet meeting, Cabinet's full decisions on them will then be published on the Council's website the day after the Cabinet meeting, along with the decisions on the other matters already considered in public.

Alternative options considered

Cabinet could resolve to release any private report into the public domain in extraordinary or highly exceptional cases, where it considers the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in withholding it. However, to ensure greater transparency on all private matters considered, this public preview item is advised as the most suitable way forward.

Legal comments

Such private matters are considered in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) Access to Information provisions and also The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. This report enables such matters to be discussed in public as far as is possible under the relevant legislation.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

ITEM 11 - PURCHASE OF STREET SWEEPERS	
Relevant Cabinet Members	Councillor Martin Goddard Cabinet Member for Finance & Transformation
Relevant Ward(s)	N/A
Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Information	
<p>The report outlines a proposal for the purchase and maintenance of seven small street sweepers to support street cleansing operations.</p> <p>The street sweepers are essential for maintaining cleanliness in the Borough. They help in removing debris, litter, and other waste from streets, ensuring a clean and safe environment for residents. These vehicles are particularly important for urban areas where manual cleaning would be less efficient and more time-consuming. The new sweepers will replace the current fleet, which is at the end of its life cycle, leading to reliability issues and high maintenance costs.</p>	

ITEM 12 - CONTRACT VARIATION FOR FIRE SAFETY WORKS FOR SCHOOL CONDITION PROGRAMME YEAR 1	
Relevant Cabinet Member	Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Property
Relevant Ward(s)	N/A
Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Information	
<p>This report outlines the School Condition Programme Year 1 2025/26, focusing on fire safety works. It includes a recommendation, and the necessary contractual decisions required, for the installation of fire door sets at various schools in the Borough following surveys.</p>	

ITEM 13 - CONTRACT FOR REVENUES, BENEFITS, HOUSING & OTHER CORPORATE SOLUTIONS SOLUTION	
Relevant Cabinet Members	Councillor Martin Goddard Cabinet Member for Finance & Transformation
Relevant Ward(s)	N/A
Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Information	
<p>This report seeks approval to award a systems contract for the Council's Revenues and Benefits and Housing systems, and the purchase of new modules. These are essential critical systems to enable the Council to continue to deliver and enhance efficient and effective services for its residents and to ensure informed decision-making and effective governance.</p>	

ITEM 14 - NON-DOMESTIC RATES IRRECOVERABLE DEBT	
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Martin Goddard Cabinet Member for Finance & Transformation
Relevant Ward(s)	N/A
Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Information	
This report seeks to write-off some debt which is deemed irrecoverable, i.e. no possibility of recovering.	

STRICTLY NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Exempt information by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Agenda Item 11

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

STRICTLY NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Exempt information by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Agenda Item 12

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

STRICTLY NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Exempt information by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Agenda Item 13

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank