



HILLINGDON  
LONDON

A

# Annual Council

**Date:** THURSDAY, 8 MAY 2025

**Time:** 7.30 PM

**Venue:** COUNCIL CHAMBER -  
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.

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## To all Members of the Council

**Published:** Wednesday, 30 April 2025

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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

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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. When present in the room, silent mode should be enabled for all mobile devices.

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# Agenda

## Prayers

To be said by the Reverend Richard Young.

### 1 Apologies for Absence

### 2 Declarations of Interest

To note any declarations of interest in any matter before the Council

### 3 Election of Mayor 2025 / 2026

To elect a Mayor of the London Borough of Hillingdon to hold office from 8 May 2025 until his or her successor becomes entitled to act as Mayor.

- i) The retiring Mayor, Councillor Sullivan, to provide a summary of her year in office.
- ii) Nominations for Mayor invited by the retiring Mayor – election (if necessary).
- iii) The retiring Mayor declares the result.

## Adjournment for the robing of the new Mayor

### 4 Acceptance of Office by the New Mayor

- i) The newly elected Mayor to make and sign the declaration of acceptance of office.
- ii) The Head of Democratic Services to declare the election of the Mayor to be complete.

### 5 Appointment of the Deputy Mayor

To receive the Mayor's appointment, in writing, of a Councillor of the Borough to serve as Deputy Mayor for the forthcoming municipal year.

### 6 New Mayor's Announcements

To receive announcements from the new Mayor.

### 7 Vote of thanks to the Outgoing Mayor

- i) Vote of thanks to the outgoing Mayor to be moved and seconded – vote.
- ii) Presentation of Past Mayor's and Past Mayoress' badges.

### 8 Report of the Head of Democratic Services

- |    |   |        |
|----|---|--------|
| 9  | Committee Allocations and Membership 2025 / 2026  | 3 - 6  |
|    | To determine the number and size of Council committees and allocate Members to serve on those committees based on the political balance of the Council, where required. |        |
| 10 | Select Committees' Annual Report  | 7 - 46 |
|    | To receive the annual report.   |        |
| 11 | Statement by the Leader of the Council  |        |
|    | In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, to receive, without comment, a statement from the Leader of the Council.   |        |

**On the rising of the Annual Meeting of the Council, the Head of Democratic Services will convene special meetings of Committees for the purpose of appointing Chairs, Vice-Chairs and sub-committees, where appropriate.**

## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

*Reporting Officer: Head of Democratic Services*

### i) APPOINTMENT OF CABINET

Members are asked to note the appointment by the Leader of the Council of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet for 2025/26 as follows:

Position/Portfolio	Councillor
Deputy Leader, Corporate Services & Property	Bianco
Finance & Transformation	Goddard
Community & Environment	Lavery
Children, Families and Education	O'Brien
Health & Social Care	Palmer
Planning, Housing and Growth	Tuckwell

### ii) APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY OFFICER

#### Background

1. The Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, along with the Head of Paid Service combine to form the Council's Statutory Officer functions. These roles are key to ensuring lawfulness, fairness, probity and general good governance that supports the Council in achieving its aims. It is important that they work effectively together yet maintain appropriate independence and that the roles are undertaken by adequately skilled and experienced staff supported by appropriate resources.

**RECOMMENDATION: That Mr Andy Goodwin be appointed to the statutory role of Section 151 and Chief Financial Officer of the Council on an interim basis until such time as a formal appointment to the position of Corporate Director of Finance is made.**

#### Information

##### 2. Section 151 Officer:

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint a S151 Officer, also known as a Chief Financial Officer (CFO), whose roles and responsibilities are defined in the Constitution.

3. As such, the CFO must lead on a local authority's financial functions and ensure they are fit for purpose. The CFO must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced. In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the CFO must be a member of one of the following bodies in order to qualify as a responsible officer:
  - (a) the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales,
  - (b) the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland,

- (c) the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants,
  - (d) the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy,
  - (e) the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland,
  - (f) the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, and
  - (g) any other body of accountants established in the United Kingdom and for the time being approved by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this section.
4. Like many other local authorities, the financial challenges facing the Council are significant and, following the departure of the previous, interim S151 Officer, it is intended to undertake a full recruitment process in order to appoint an experienced and permanent Chief Financial Officer.
  5. In the meantime, Council is asked to fulfil its statutory duty and appoint Mr Andy Goodwin to the role of S151 officer, on an interim basis, until such time as a permanent appointment is made.
  6. Mr Goodwin is an experienced, senior member of the Finance team who has been performing the role of the Deputy S151 officer for some time and this proposed appointment is being brought forward to provide appropriate expertise and resilience to the Council in its financial management.

### **Financial Implications**

7. The cost of this appointment will be contained within existing budgets.

### **Legal Implications**

8. The appointment of a Section 151 Officer is a statutory requirement which is reserved to Full Council.

Background papers: None

# Agenda Item 9

## ORDINARY COMMITTEES 2025/26

### **CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE: 7 (4-3)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Makwana (Proposed Chair)	Sweeting (Lead)
Gohil (Proposed Vice-Chair)	Gill
Bhatt	Garg
Smallwood	

Other Co-opted voting Members (for education related items only):

Parent Governor (2-5)	Vacant
Church of England Diocesan Representative	Vacant
Roman Catholic Diocesan representative	Anthony Little

### **CORPORATE RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE SELECT COMMITTEE: 7 (4-3)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Riley (Proposed Chair)	Mathers (Lead)
Bennett (Proposed Vice-Chair)	Garelick
Banerjee	Garg
Choubedar	

### **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE: 7 (4-3)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Denys (Proposed Chair)	Punja (Lead)
Chamdal (Reeta) (Proposed Vice-Chair)	Burles
Haggar	Nelson
Martin	

### **RESIDENTS' SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE: 7 (4-3)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Bridges (Proposed Chair)	Farley (Lead)
Smallwood (Proposed Vice-Chair)	Gardner
Davies	Kaur
Gohil	

**SUBSTITUTES FOR SELECT COMMITTEES ARE ALL COUNCILLORS EXCEPT THOSE IN THE CABINET**

**HILLINGDON PLANNING COMMITTEE: 7 (4-3)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Higgins (Proposed Chair)	Mand
Bennett (Proposed Vice-Chair)	Garelick
Burrows	Singh
Chamdal (Roy)	
<b>Substitutes:</b> All Members that have received appropriate planning training to be substitutes for the Planning Committee, except Cabinet members who are not to be substitutes for the Committee.	

**PENSIONS COMMITTEE: 5 (2-3)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Chamdal (Reeta) (Proposed Chair)	Mathers
Banerjee (Proposed Vice-Chair)	Burles
Burrows	
Substitutes	Substitutes
Riley	Islam
Higgins	

**APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE: 3 (2-1)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Edwards (Proposed Chair)	Curling
Bianco (Proposed Vice-Chair)	
Substitutes	Substitutes
All remaining Cabinet members - to be appointed dependent upon into which Cabinet portfolio the post(s) being interviewed falls	Farley Mathers Punja Sweeting

**REGISTRATION & APPEALS COMMITTEE: 5 (3-2)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Burrows (Proposed Chair)	Judge
D.Mills (Proposed Vice-Chair)	Money
Makwana	
Substitutes	Substitutes
All non-Cabinet members	All Labour Members

*CABINET MEMBERS MAY BE MEMBERS OF THE TWO SUB-COMMITTEES SHOWN BELOW, BUT NO CABINET MEMBERS SHOULD SIT AS MEMBERS OF THE MAIN REGISTRATION AND APPEALS COMMITTEE*

**APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE (SENIOR OFFICER): 3 (2-1)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Membership to be appointed by Group Leaders as required.	

**GRIEVANCE SUB-COMMITTEE (SENIOR OFFICER): 3 (2-1)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Membership to be appointed by Group Leaders as required.	

**OTHER COMMITTEES / PANELS** (*Outside the overall calculation but allocated on the basis of the overall political balance.*)

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 5 (3-2)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Bridges (Proposed Chair)	Nelson
Denys (Proposed Vice-Chair)	Gill
Bennett	
Substitutes	Substitutes
Davies	Mathers

Non-voting Independent Person:

Graeme Armour (until July 2026)

**AUDIT COMMITTEE: 5 (3-2)**

Independent Co-Opted Member (non-voting):

John Cheshire (Chair)

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Denys (Proposed Vice Chair)	Burles
D.Mills	Nelson
Higgins	
Substitutes	Substitutes
Bhatt	Farley
Lewis	

*NB: NO MEMBER OF CABINET MAY SIT ON AUDIT COMMITTEE.*

**LICENSING COMMITTEE: 10 (6-4)**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Davies (Proposed Chair)	Farley
Smallwood (Proposed Vice-Chair)	Gardner
Ahmad-Wallana	Lakhmana
Chamdal (Reeta)	Nelson-West
Martin	
Sullivan	

*N.B. NO SUBSTITUTES ALLOWED FOR LICENSING COMMITTEE*

**LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE (2-1)**

*The sub-committee to comprise three Members of the Licensing Committee (2 Conservative and 1 Labour) selected on a rota basis from the membership of the Licensing Committee. Meetings of the Sub-Committee must be chaired by the Chair of the Licensing Committee, when available.*

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD:** *Outside of the overall calculation and subject to the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013.*

*(as amended at full Council July 2022):*

The membership of the Board shall comprise:

- 1) Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care (Co-Chair)
- 2) Hillingdon Health and Care Partners Managing Director (Co-Chair)
- 3) Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education (Vice-Chair)
- 4) LBH Chief Executive
- 5) LBH Executive Director Adult Services and Health
- 6) LBH Executive Director Children and Young People's Services
- 7) LBH Director, Public Health
- 8) NWL ICS - Hillingdon Board representative
- 9) NWL ICS - nominated lead
- 10) Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust - nominated lead
- 11) The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Chief Executive
- 12) Healthwatch Hillingdon - nominated lead
- 13) Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust - nominated lead
- 14) Hillingdon GP Confederation - nominated lead

Co-Chair

The Board shall be co-chaired by the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and the Managing Director of Hillingdon Health and Care Partners. The Vice Chair of the Board shall be the Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education. Only one Co-Chair may chair a meeting, and this will be determined at the start of each meeting. Should both Co-Chairs be unavailable to chair, the meeting will be chaired by the Vice Chair.

# Annual Report of the Select Committees

2024 - 2025





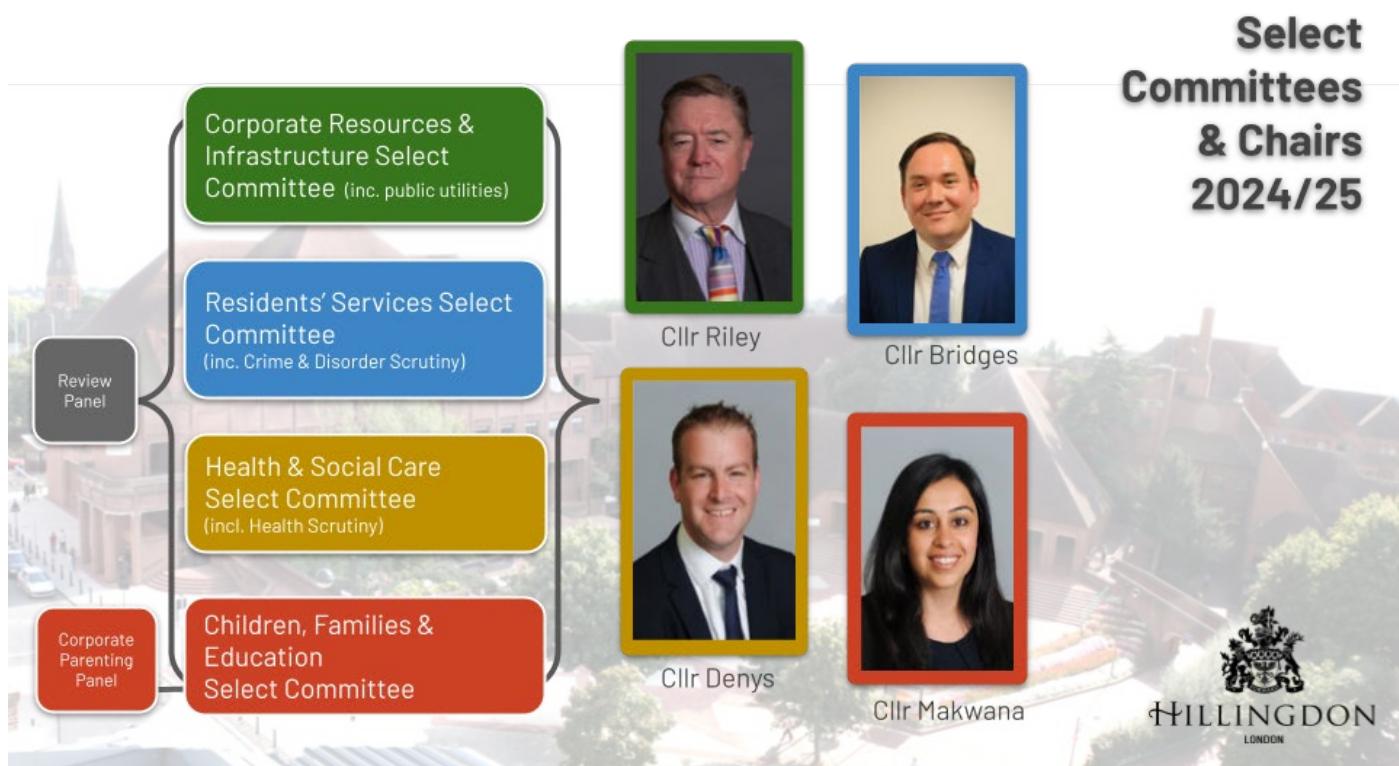
# Introduction

Select committees are a fundamental arm of Hillingdon Council's governance arrangements. They provide strong accountability to the Council's democratic and decision-making process. Whilst Cabinet makes the services decisions and sets out the policy and direction of the Council, select committees provide transparent oversight and scrutiny this, and the Council's Officer Directorates both advise Members and implement the decisions made.

In May 2024, the Council further refreshed and streamlined its select committee arrangements to provide more a more cross-cutting focus through the merger of the former Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee and Finance & Corporate Services Select Committee into a more strategic "Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee".

In summary, the purpose of Hillingdon's select committees is to:

- Assist in the development of Council policy;
- Question and evaluate the actions of the Cabinet before and after decisions are taken;
- Have the power to make reports and recommendations on such matters;
- Scrutinise, externally, local health services and crime and disorder reduction.



Councillors have continued to perform their role monitoring and reviewing both council and external services in the best interests of Hillingdon residents. The committees are in the process of some major policy reviews this year which have raised important recommendations to move services and the Borough forward. This year, there has also been excellent witness and service user participation throughout. This annual report provides an opportunity to recognise the breadth of activity and achievements of overview and scrutiny in Hillingdon during the 2024/25 municipal year. Such focus will, no doubt, continue into 2025/26. On behalf of the Committee chairs, this annual report is commended to Council on 8 May 2025.

# How select committees work

Select committees are responsible for monitoring council services and recommending changes to Cabinet on a range of areas to shape future policy direction, along with the statutory call-in power.

Select committees are also responsible for holding to account and reviewing those services provided by other public agencies, primarily the local NHS and Police services.



Pictured: Health & Social Care Select Committee

All committees undertake their role through a multi-year work programme of scrutiny activities which may include single meeting or in-depth policy reviews on specific topics of community and resident importance. These reviews provide the opportunity to directly engage with resident stakeholders, local interest groups and experts to help shape and drive improvement in local public services.

Committees can request information reports on matters of resident interest, which are ably reviewed through the valuable insight of local councillors. Committees also provide comments on reports to Cabinet for decision and input into Cabinet's annual budget proposals before they are approved by Council each year. These committees, therefore, play a vital role in ensuring that the Council continues to provide high quality, value-for-money services, putting Hillingdon residents first.

The Council's corporate parenting responsibilities are also an integral part within Hillingdon's overview and scrutiny arrangements. The Corporate Parenting Panel actively engages young people in the development of council services, ultimately with a direct line to the decision-making Cabinet.

## Constitutional & statutory compliance

### Finance Scrutiny and Budget and Policy Framework consultees

Select committees are required to be consulted on any budget and policy framework document prepared by the Cabinet for public consultation. All select committees were consulted on the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2025/26 and provided comments. From April 2025, all committees will also receive regular monthly budget spend and savings reports to enhance financial scrutiny and to monitor and the delivery of the 2025/26 approved budget. During the year, the Resident Services Select Committee was consulted on the Council's Statement of Gambling Policy - a policy framework document.

## Councillor Calls for Action

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, select committees can consider 'Councillor Calls for Action' submissions. This power enables any councillor to ask for a discussion at the relevant committee on a local issue where all other methods of resolution have been exhausted. Democratic Services can confirm that no such Calls for Actions have been requested and thereby considered during 2024/25. This is in large part due to the well-established resident petitions scheme in place within Hillingdon, as an alternate democratic mechanism.

## Protocol on Scrutiny & Cabinet relations

Following the publication of Statutory Scrutiny Guidance in 2019 (updated in 2024), Councillors reviewed the overview and scrutiny arrangements and adopted a new Protocol on Scrutiny & Cabinet relations, setting out how these two key arms of the Council's governance arrangements work well together. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer can report there has been good compliance with this protocol during the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

## Scrutiny call-ins

All select committees have a statutory duty to scrutinise executive decisions that have been taken but have not yet been implemented. This acts as the statutory 'checks & balances' upon decisions taken by the Cabinet and Cabinet Members. This action is widely known as the 'call-in' power, where during a period of 5 working days after an executive decision is taken, it may be called in by the relevant select committee to be considered further and referred back to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member to reconsider. During 2024/25, this process was continued to be undertaken in a modern and automated way using the Scrutiny call-in App, accessible on computer and mobile devices. The App enables a councillor on the relevant select committee to request a call-in of a particular decision online, where an automated email is then sent to other committee members to agree, or not, to the call-in request.

Should a majority of the committee agree with the request via the App, then this is deemed a valid call-in, Democratic Services are automatically alerted, and the Cabinet or Cabinet Member decision is immediately put on hold. If this happens, then the matter is formally considered by the committee and referred to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member, if required, to be reconsidered. During 2024/25, there was 1 call-in request initiated following a Cabinet decision made, as set out in the table below:

Date of call-in request	Councillor initiating	Select Committee	Cabinet decision
13 December 2024	Cllr Sweeting	Children, Families & Education	Closure of Coteford Infant Specialist Resource Provision (pupils integrated into mainstream school)

However, in the case above, support for the call-in request did not reach a majority of the committee by the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period. The request was, therefore, deemed not valid, and Cabinet's decision was duly implemented.

## Urgent decisions

Chairs of the select committees have a constitutional prerogative of being able to decide whether to waive the pre-decision publication period and/or the post decision scrutiny call-in period (as described

in the section above). This is where a decision is deemed urgent by the Cabinet or Leader of the Council. In such cases and in accordance with the Constitution, the relevant Select Committee Chair must also agree that the delay is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred and/or agree that any delay would prejudice the Council's or the public's interest or could lead to an [increased] risk of damage to people or property.

Such waivers are exceptional and carefully considered. When approved by the relevant chair, this enables a decision to be implemented quicker and often with immediate effect, so the Council can be responsive in residents' best interests. These are constitutionally known as 'urgency' or 'special urgency' decisions through the formal executive decision-making process depending on the necessity of the matter in question.

During 2024/25, and at the time of finalising this report, there were **17** (as of 28 April 2025) such Cabinet or Cabinet Member decisions where the relevant select committee Chair exercised this constitutional prerogative in the affirmative. They are reported to the full Council regularly in accordance with statutory guidance.

## Accessible, Open and Transparent Scrutiny

Members of the public are welcome to attend any public meetings of a select committee, which are listed on the online [calendar of meetings](#).

All reports, agenda papers, and minutes of select committee meetings for the municipal year are published on the Hillingdon Council's webpage, which also has full details of minutes, attendees at committee meetings and recommendations made by the Select Committees. Reports, agendas, and minutes of select committee meetings for 2024/25 can be viewed [here](#).



All select committee meetings are broadcast live on the Council's YouTube channel to increase democratic awareness of overview and scrutiny. Along with live broadcasting, Democratic Services Officers provide the professional support, research, and advice to councillors on the select committees, both in and outside meetings. You can watch them on YouTube [here](#).

This year has continued to see strong levels of engagement from external witnesses, residents, and service users, who have contributed through providing testimonies, sharing their experiences, and offering valuable insights during select committee proceedings.

Select committees have also been out and about around the Borough with site visits this year. These not only enable Councillors to learn more about front-line service delivery, but also support future reviews and monitoring of such services. Site visits are outlined at the end of this annual report.

# Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Services Select Committee



- **Cllr Bennett** (Vice-Chair)
- **Cllr Banerjee**
- **Cllr Choubedar**
- **Cllr Mathers** (Opposition Lead)
- **Cllr Garelick**
- **Cllr Garg**

**Cllr John Riley**  
(Chair)

**Scrutiny lead officer:** Anisha Teji – Democratic Services

## Brief

The Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee is responsible for the overview and scrutiny role of several different Council service areas. These include internal functions, such as finance, procurement, transformation, human resources, democratic services, legal services and digital. The Committee also oversees infrastructure related services, such as highways, assets and property. Further responsibilities also include the cross-cutting themes of 'resident experience' and 'strategic partnerships'.

## Major review

### Maximising Council spaces

At its meeting in February 2025, the Committee agreed to launch a proactive review titled *Maximising Council Spaces: A Review of Business and Private Hire Opportunities*. Members highlighted the value of establishing a centralised system and council function to monitor and market available rooms, halls, and offices for hire, clearly distinguishing between commercial and individual users.

The Committee recognised the importance of engaging with local businesses and community organisations throughout the review and suggested exploring best practices from other local authorities, as well as building on existing booking systems.

The primary aim of the review is to assess the availability and utilisation of Council-owned spaces for private hire and temporary letting and identify opportunities for optimising and commercialising these spaces to benefit the local economy, community, and generate additional revenue for the Council. This is of particular importance given Hillingdon's strategic location and transport connections. The review

will consider the use and marketing of such assets and importantly enable residents, organisations and businesses to benefit from them.

The review will start by identifying all Council-owned spaces available for hire, including halls, rooms in buildings and libraries, rooms in the Civic Centre, and any other spaces managed by the Council. The next step involves assessing the current usage, facilities, and promotion of these spaces to identify ideas and opportunities to maximise income from these spaces for commercial, public, and private use. The review will then explore marketing potential, including the creation of an online register and booking service for such spaces, detailing their suitability for different types of events, locations, facilities, conditions, and management. It will also investigate best practices and synergies with partners, businesses, and other local organisations that may hire spaces for events or provide services to events in spaces.

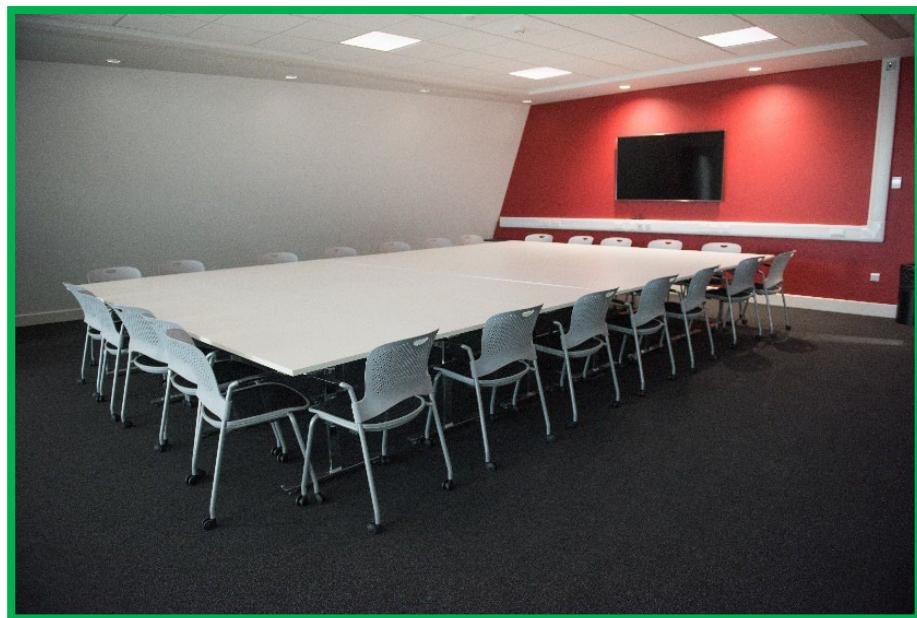
Additionally, the review will compare levels of fees and charges against private and public competitors to maximise income. Gathering feedback from the community to understand their needs and preferences regarding the use of Council-owned spaces will be included in the review. This feedback will be collected through surveys, public consultations, and community meetings, helping tailor the spaces to better serve the community and enhance their utilisation. Finally, the review will present innovative and deliverable recommendations to the Cabinet on the resourcing required, investment needed, and charges to maximise income from these spaces.

With the scoping report detailing the purpose and methodology for the review approved, the Committee has now moved into the investigation phase of the review.

## Monitoring & scrutiny

### Council's Emergency Management and Response Service

The Committee heard from the Council's Emergency Management and Response Service Manager, who provided an overview of the service, highlighting its legal obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Members were informed that the service was responsible for planning, responding, and providing resolutions during emergencies, maintaining the Hillingdon Multi Agency Community Risk Register, and ensuring efficient multi-agency working through the bronze, silver, and gold model. The Committee discussed the impact of location and risk of emergencies, the importance of mutual aid arrangements and the threat of cyber-attacks. The Committee thanked the Emergency Management and Response Service Manager for the informative presentation and considered it useful to receive yearly data on emergencies.



## Road Safety Review Update

Members of the Committee received an update on the Council's Road Safety Initiatives and Activities following a review by a former select committee, which had focussed on measures implemented around the Borough's schools. Members considered the outcomes of the former Committee's review, and the recommendations (approved by Cabinet) had proposed to improve safety for pupils and residents. The report highlighted positive impacts, including a noticeable reduction in accidents near school zones following the introduction of enhanced signage and stricter speed limit enforcement. Members welcomed these developments and acknowledged the Council's ongoing efforts to promote safer travel environments for young people. The Committee also discussed areas requiring further attention, such as minor collisions at high-risk junctions, and recommended continued monitoring and exploration of smart traffic technologies. Overall, the Committee supported the direction of the road safety programme and emphasised the importance of collaboration with schools, parents, and local enforcement to maintain momentum and deliver lasting improvements.

## Internal and External Communications

Members welcomed a comprehensive update on the Council's internal and external communications and recognised the continued efforts of the Corporate Communications team in keeping residents and stakeholders well informed. The Committee heard how strategic narratives were being developed and delivered through a variety of channels, including social media, publications, and new digital platforms like TikTok and WhatsApp. The report highlighted an increase in engagement across most platforms and showcased successful campaigns such as the promotion of health equipment in libraries and fostering initiatives. Members noted the effectiveness of Facebook in engaging residents, despite Twitter having a higher follower count, and commended the collaborative work with partners such as the NHS and police to streamline messaging and avoid duplication. Whilst challenges such as a decline in local press and reduced activity on Next-door were acknowledged, the Committee supported the shift towards more sustainable communication methods, including the exploration of digital boards in public spaces. Members also called for improved interdepartmental coordination and better performance tracking of communications, and thanked officers for the informative and forward-looking report.

## EV Infrastructure Update

Following a major review by a former Select Committee on this matter, Members noted the progress made in Hillingdon's Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure over the past year, as outlined in the 12-month update. Members heard that 34 of the 46 planned charging points had already been installed, with the remaining due for completion soon, along with plans to introduce 14 ultra-rapid chargers capable of powering vehicles within 15–20 minutes.

The Committee welcomed the Council's short-term efforts to enhance existing infrastructure and its medium-term ambition to expand on-street charging for residents without off-street parking—supported by OZEV funding and a joint £1.2 million funding bid. In the long term, it was advised that it was noted that the Council aimed to build a comprehensive and sustainable EV network that aligns with its climate change goals, using



stakeholder engagement, performance monitoring, and data-led planning. Members recognised challenges around electricity supply and market dynamics but praised the Council's strategic, balanced approach, including the adoption of the Oxford model and a focus on equitable access. They also suggested improving public visibility through clearer online information about EV charging locations.

## **Hayes Estate Regeneration**

The Committee reviewed the Hayes Estate Regeneration Programme, a key initiative under the Council's Housing Strategy, aimed at enhancing the quality of housing and public spaces in Hayes Town Centre and Avondale Drive Estates. It was noted that the project, which began construction in September 2022 with Higgins PLC as the selected developer was progressing well, with the first phases set to deliver 110 homes for existing residents by 2025. In addition to improving housing, the redevelopment emphasised community engagement and social value programs. The Committee acknowledged the success of the resident ballot process, the strong community presence of the contractor, and the ongoing management of housing placements for impacted residents. Discussions also covered the integration of mixed ownership, service charges, and the strategies in place to address construction industry pressures. The Committee emphasised the importance of uniform property designs to ensure sociability, with reassurances provided that all properties would meet building regulations. Members were pleased to hear that the project remained on track, with efforts to expedite its completion, and the Committee would receive further updates throughout the year.



## **Draft Hillingdon Digital Strategy**

The Committee considered the Draft Hillingdon Digital Strategy for early pre-scrutiny of Cabinet's formal consideration of it in October 2024. The Strategy set out the Council's vision for a modern, efficient and digitally inclusive future from 2024 to 2027. Members heard how the Strategy aimed to enhance service delivery by prioritising customer needs, leveraging data for better decision-making, and expanding digital access. Officers outlined five key workstreams covering online service improvement, infrastructure modernisation, data-led decision-making, digital inclusion, and technological innovation. The Committee welcomed the direction of the Strategy, including successful use of platforms such as AWS and plans to integrate generative AI and web chat tools. Members acknowledged the importance of ensuring services remained accessible to vulnerable residents and those less digitally engaged, highlighting ongoing digital inclusion efforts such as device recycling and skills training. Concerns were raised about certain systems like Goss and the impact of transitioning to newer programmes, which had caused challenges for some service users. The Committee stressed the need for balanced digital and personal engagement, robust performance indicators, and continued cultural change within the organisation to deliver better outcomes for all residents. Overall, Members welcomed the progress made and looked forward to future updates on the Strategy's implementation.



## Digital Transformation Update

Following on from its earlier consideration of the draft Digital Strategy outlined above, the Committee received an update on its progress following Cabinet approval in October 2024. The strategy included a three-year investment program aimed at improving efficiency and modernising processes. Key updates included the launch of the Resident Hub, automation of services like financial assessments, and the

introduction of AI-powered telephony systems across various departments. It was noted that the Council had also provided laptops to vulnerable residents as part of the Digital Inclusion program. Efforts to consolidate telephony platforms and improve data governance were highlighted, alongside a focus on balancing digital and non-digital services. The integration of AI tools, like chatbots and Microsoft Copilot, were also discussed to enhance service efficiency. The Committee commended the progress made and the investment in both digital and non-digital services.

## 2025/26 Budget Proposals

The Committee reviewed the draft budget, which outlined the financial strategies and challenges faced by the Council for 2025/26. The Council aimed for a balanced budget, requiring a £6.4 million drawdown from reserves and a focus on efficiency through digital transformation and service reviews. This was part of the agreed consultation process for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets, alongside the Council's Capital Programme. Officers addressed challenges like inflation, rising demand, and reduced government funding. Members highlighted the need for strong leadership and financial skills across departments. They noted the Council to ensure effective management and timely achievement of financial goals. The Committee recognised the efforts of officers during these challenging times and discussed the complexities of managing multiple high-cost service areas, acknowledging the impact of external financial pressures.

## Mid-year finance scrutiny

Along with the other select committees, in April 2025, Members embarked on a round of regular monthly budget scrutiny, with the Corporate Resources & Infrastructure taking the lead. The aim of which was to ensure accountability and transparency, as well as scrutiny, of the Council's finances and the delivery of 25/26 Budget approved by Council in February.

At the meeting Members were provided with an overview of the financial performance relevant to the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee remit, emphasising the approach to financial monitoring, budget adjustments, savings proposals, and risks. At the meeting, Members addressed the need for strong financial management and transparency, with a focus on improving the financial systems and processes. The importance of cross-departmental collaboration and the role of Corporate Directors in achieving savings targets was discussed with regular performance management and accountability measures in place. The Committee held detailed discussions regarding specific budget items, such as the commercialisation of assets, the review of garage voids, and the adjustment of fees and charges to generate additional income. Members welcomed the Committee's upcoming review into Maximising Council Spaces and noted how this may contribute to

generating additional income for the Council by creating a single register asset that could be used by residents and businesses across the Borough. Members emphasised the importance of early intervention in high-cost areas like adult social care, children's social care, and homelessness to reduce long-term financial pressures.

Members questioned Chief Officers on the various savings proposals and welcomed the Committee's regular monitoring of financial performance, ensuring that spending and savings targets were being met to support efficient service delivery to residents.

## Fleet Management and Future Plans

The Director of Procurement & Commissioning and Fleet Manager provided an update on the Council's fleet operations, discussing key challenges such as driver behaviour and fleet damage, which costs the Council significant sums around £700k annually. The report highlighted the vehicle replacement program, including plans to replace 32 vehicles with electric alternatives. Details on fleet management, including the costs of damage repairs and insurance claims, were also shared. The discussion focused on the procurement process, emphasising value-for-money despite Hillingdon's smaller fleet size, and the potential for joint procurement with other boroughs.

The Committee addressed the integration of electric vehicles (EVs) into the fleet, and the infrastructure challenges involved, particularly their high initial cost. Additionally, collaboration with HR and health and safety teams was noted for improving driver performance. The meeting concluded with a recommendation to remind residents about proper battery disposal and to receive a yearly update on how the service was progressing.



# Children, Families & Education Select Committee

- **Cllr Haggar** (Vice-Chair)
- **Cllr Smallwood OBE**
- **Cllr Bhatt**
- **Cllr Sweeting** (Opposition Lead)
- **Cllr Rita Judge**
- **Cllr Gill**
- **Mr Little** (Education Co-opted Member)

## Corporate Parenting Panel



**Cllr Heena Makwana**  
(Chair)

**Lead Scrutiny Officer:** Ryan Dell, Democratic Services

## Brief

The Children, Families and Education Select Committee is responsible for undertaking the overview and scrutiny role in relation to Children's Services (including Corporate Parenting), Children's Safeguarding, Education, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Children and Families Development. In addition to monitoring performance of services over the year, considering the Budget and receiving several scrutiny reports, the Committee has undertaken a major review into "Persistent Absenteeism" in schools.

## Corporate parenting

Corporate Parenting is a significant responsibility for the Committee, and for all Members, who are all 'Corporate Parents'. Therefore, all Members have a duty to safeguard the best interests of our Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People.

Through the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel (which reports to the Select Committee), the Council has actively explored ways to improve aspirations of young people. The Corporate Parenting panel consists of Councillors Nick Denys (Chair), Heena Makwana (Vice-Chair) and Jan Sweeting. The Panel also includes young people, service officers, nursing, and virtual school representatives.



The Panel provides for greater integration of Corporate Parenting within the Council's democratic governance arrangements and directly engages with our Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People. The Panel's work programme includes thematic topics of interest including Safeguarding, Health & Wellbeing, and Education & Opportunity.

The Corporate Parenting Panel has continued to support Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People in a variety of avenues. The Panel has reviewed key information reports such as annual reports from the Independent Reviewing Officer, the Looked After Children Health Team and the Virtual School. Over the year, young people have also provided the Panel with their insightful thoughts and feedback, including a presentation, feedback on the Kids in Care Awards (KICA), and a summary of the year.

## Major review

### Persistent Absenteeism

The Select Committee continued its review of persistent absenteeism among statutory school age children in Hillingdon, which had begun in the previous year. The Committee held four additional witness sessions with schools, young people, safeguarding officers, and parents & carers.

In June, Members met with representatives from schools and sent out a survey to schools in the Borough to ask about their experiences of persistent absenteeism. In July, Members met with safeguarding officers to discuss keeping children safe. In August, the Committee were able to meet directly with young people. This was a valuable opportunity to hear first-hand experiences of attendance struggles. For its final session, in November, Members met with parents and carers. This allowed the Committee to hear direct feedback from them on the challenges facing their families.

Following the conclusion of the witness sessions, the Committee considered its findings and recommendations. At its April meeting the Committee confirmed its seven recommendations, with the final report to be concluded in the coming weeks before being presented to Cabinet.

## Monitoring & scrutiny

### Hillingdon Youth Justice Strategy 2024-2029 Overview

As part of pre-scrutiny activity, officers introduced the draft Youth Justice Strategy for 2024-2029, outlining five key priorities to address youth offending in Hillingdon. These included prevention and early intervention; tackling over-representation and disproportionality in the system; child-centred practice; reducing re-offending; and supporting victims through restorative justice.

Key points from the strategy included a focus on early intervention, particularly through the AXIS service, and reducing re-offending by using trauma-informed approaches. The strategy also addresses the over-representation of Black and mixed-heritage children in the criminal justice system, with a disproportionality action plan in development. Officers emphasised a child-centric approach and improving the participation of young people in decisions regarding services.

There were discussions about funding, with officers stating that existing grants and resources would support the strategy, though concerns about future financial pressures and funding cuts were raised.

The strategy also touches on the rise in gang culture and how the Council is collaborating with local partners to address youth violence and exploitation.

Members inquired about the impact of COVID-19, the role of schools and community organisations in preventing youth offending, and the importance of family engagement in rehabilitation. They also raised the importance of restorative justice in helping victims and the potential for greater collaboration with neighbouring boroughs to improve outcomes.

## **Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership**

The Committee considered the Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report which outlined the collaborative efforts of the Council, Integrated Care Board (ICB), and Metropolitan Police in safeguarding children and adults within the Borough. The partnership operated a 'think family' approach, ensuring that both child and adult-focused practitioners considered the broader family context. With a focus on early intervention, multi-agency working, and youth engagement, the partnership launched initiatives such as the Contextual Safeguarding Strategy and PANTS campaign to prevent child sexual abuse. Despite challenges like increased demand and resource limitations, the partnership remained committed to continuous improvement, particularly through audits, training, and the inclusion of education as a statutory partner in safeguarding. The report highlighted a strong emphasis on consistency, communication, and the well-being of vulnerable young people, with initiative-taking measures to engage parents and carers.

## **In-year admissions**

An update on in-year admissions was presented to the Committee, highlighting the current local context. It was noted that at that time, there were no unaccompanied asylum-seeking children residing in hotels within the area, as the Local Authority had provided timely accommodation and facilitated transfers through the National Transfer Scheme. Some children, accompanied by their families and placed in local hotels by the Home Office, were receiving educational support, including ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision. The Fair Access Panel continued to play a key role in placing hard-to-place children, particularly those who had been out of education for an extended period.



## **Family Hubs**

The Family Hub strategy had been presented to and approved by Cabinet in September 2023. Following this, it was noted that a second Family Hub in Hayes had been opened in January 2024. The two hubs (Uxbridge and Hayes) delivered services to young people aged 0-19, and up to 25 for those with SEND. A strategy to advertise the family hub services had been developed, including a family hub graphic on all communications and a short film showcasing the services. The 0-19 service directory was on track to be published in January 2025. An outcomes framework was being developed to track and monitor the services more closely. The strategy was to deliver six hubs. Two were up and running, and a third was in production. The Committee will continue to monitor progress.

The Council was looking to source an alternative provider to maintain childcare on the sites, rather than delivering the services directly. Surveys of the sites had been conducted and offers from three distinct providers had been received. Negotiations were ongoing with one preferred provider which has since been approved by Cabinet.



## Youth Offer

The Committee received an update on the implementation of the Council's refreshed Youth Offer, also agreed by Cabinet in September 2023. It was noted that the key teams within the Youth Service are the universal, targeted, and community & voluntary sector teams.

The Universal Team delivered youth work and detached sessions from multiple community locations across the borough. The Targeted Team responded to emerging needs with programmes co-produced with young people. The Community and Voluntary Sector Team delivered the Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) and support groups for young carers, Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support (HACS), and transition to Excel.

It was noted that the Youth Offer required a comprehensive and diverse approach, collaborating with various organisations and the National Youth Agency. A five-year strategy had been developed, focusing on nine priority areas, and a workforce development plan guides recruitment and training. The 'Stepping into Hillingdon's Youth Offer' training programme was launched in August and will continue for all new recruits.

The teams used flexible community assets, including young people's centres, family hubs, schools, libraries, and community spaces, ensuring accessibility seven days a week. A new communications strategy includes a three-month campaign was also under development with young people.

In a subsequent update later in the year, officers highlighted a successful campaign launch event, the #NextGen campaign, developed in partnership with young people, and use of the new TikTok channel. A youth participation strategy had been created, and the youth work curriculum had been aligned with the National Youth Agency's national curriculum.

Youth Council Members praised the Youth Offer for its accessibility and use of platforms like TikTok.

## Special Resourced Provision (SRP) at Coteford Infant School

Officers introduced a proposal on the closure of the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) for Physical Disabilities (PD) at Coteford Infant School. It should be noted that the term "closure" is a technical term used by the Department for Education for changing such services, but that in fact it was advised that such provision would continue to be provided through the mainstream school environment.

Historically, the SRP had 10 commissioned places but due to declining demand only three children currently attended. The SRP operated differently from a typical SRP in that there was no separate

specialist room or facility, functioning instead as an inclusive mainstream school. This meant no change for the children, who are already supported in an inclusive mainstream environment. The funding for the children will remain the same, with the place funding of £6,000 being replaced by exceptional funding of the same value to support highly inclusive schools. The level of therapy would remain as detailed in each child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), though there may be a change in the provider, to be agreed with the school.

A formal statutory consultation was conducted from 25 September to 25 October 2024, including an online survey, a virtual event for families, and a face-to-face event at the school.

Members spent time scrutinising officers on the matter seeking clarifications. The Committee commented that while it recognised that the proposal has become a contentious issue within the local community, the Committee was given assurances that the proposal would not impact the support provided by the school for the children with EHCPs, nor would it affect the mainstream school.

Cabinet agreed to the closure of the SRP in December 2024 following consultation and consideration of the select committee's comments. This decision was subject to a call-in request, as set out above in this report, but it did not receive a majority of committee votes.

## **Proposal to Extend Age Range for Assessment Base at Ruislip Gardens Primary School**

A proposal to extend the age range of the assessment base at Ruislip Gardens Primary School was brought forward for consideration, aiming to include two-year-olds in exceptional circumstances. Currently supporting children aged three to five, the assessment base played a vital role in the early identification and support of developmental needs. The proposed extension would enable earlier access to assessments and tailored interventions for children approaching their third birthday.

The Committee welcomed the proposal, noting that earlier inclusion of two-year-olds would enhance the Council's ability to identify needs at the earliest opportunity and provide appropriate support.

Cabinet approved the proposal at its meeting on 12 December 2024.

## **Proposal to Lower Age Range for Community Schools to Offer Two-Year-Old Places**

Officers introduced a proposal to lower the age range at three community schools - Colham Manor, Field End Infants, and Minet Infant and Nursery School - to provide funded places for two-year-old children, starting in September 2025. This initiative followed an increase in early years childcare entitlements, set to expand from 15 to 30 hours per week for eligible children over the next few years. The local authority had a responsibility to ensure sufficient childcare for working parents and those in training or education. Given the reduced availability of sessional care providers, schools were seen as well-placed to offer this service. A public consultation was held, with responses being reviewed before the proposal went to Cabinet in December 2024. While Members expressed support, they highlighted the potential future need for increased capacity due to rising birth rates. The Committee commented that developing the provision for 2-year-old children would support parents and families to have choice and accessibility in the childcare market.

At its meeting on 12 December 2024, Cabinet agreed to implement these proposals.

## Draft Education Strategy 2024-2029

As part of continuing pre-decision scrutiny activity on education matters, the Council's Draft Education Strategy 2024-2029 was presented to the Committee, setting out the Council's vision and priorities for education over the next five years, alongside details of the consultation process with schools and education providers. The strategy centred on three core priorities, with a strong focus on re-establishing collaborative working between schools – an area significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also aimed to tackle long-standing challenges, including persistent absence and the attainment gap affecting disadvantaged pupils.

Co-produced with young people, the strategy took a holistic approach, integrating wider services such as education and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). Members welcomed the report and commended its ambition but raised points for consideration, including barriers to collaboration, emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA), and inclusive practices. Officers responded by outlining ongoing engagement with secondary schools, efforts to strengthen partnerships, and work to expand vocational education pathways. Support for children with complex needs remained a priority, aligned with the wider SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy.

The Committee endorsed the strategy, recognising it as a clear demonstration of the Council's ongoing commitment to improving education and employment outcomes for children and young people in Hillingdon. Cabinet approved the strategy at its meeting on 12 December 2024.

## Learn Hillingdon annual self-assessment review

The Committee received its annual update on the Learn Hillingdon service, highlighting progress, challenges, and recent developments in the adult education offer. A new advisory board had been established, bringing together representatives from the Council, learners, staff, community partners, and the Safer Hillingdon Partnership. The board focused on financial oversight, performance against targets, and quality assurance.

Members learnt that around 77% of learners were women – many of whom were caregivers from disadvantaged backgrounds – engaged in entry or pre-entry level learning. The programmes were designed to build confidence, develop key skills, and enhance employability, with long-term benefits for both the learners and their families. Attendance remained strong at 94%, although public transport issues and personal circumstances continued to pose barriers for some.

The service targets individuals with low prior attainment or challenging educational histories, with a particular emphasis on improving language skills and promoting functional independence.



## Mid-year budget review

A financial update was provided on the Children's Services directorate budget, outlining the current pressures and strategic responses. Significant savings were required, and officers were commended

for their continued dedication in managing these challenges. Balancing the Schools Funding Block, particularly in relation to SEND, remained complex. A forecasted overspend was noted, primarily driven by rising costs associated with looked after children. It was noted that the increase in both savings targets and spending requirements was largely due to demand in children's social care placements. Savings measures included efficiencies in semi-independent and shared accommodation, the redesign of the social care delivery model, and the introduction of a refreshed foster care offer. The Capital Budget included investment to expand special educational needs provision. Members heard that zero-based budgeting exercises had supported a clearer understanding of financial allocations, while the wider budget strategy now included increased contingency funding for 2025/26 to help safeguard services.

The Committee highlighted the critical role of early help and intervention in supporting Hillingdon's families and young people. Members praised initiatives such as 'Staying Close', the review of the Early Years Operating Model, and the development of a new Care Operating Model, aimed at delivering cost-effective and impactful services.

## **Budget & Spending Updates**

To further strengthen financial transparency and scrutiny, the Committee, along with other select committee in April 2025, began to receive regular reports on financial monitoring of the budget and spending. Officers outlined the approach of updating the Committee on expenditure, savings and growth across service areas and provided detailed insights into the savings target for 2025/26. This approach will allow Members to scrutinise the budget effectively.

Members queried agency costs, and whilst further reductions in agency costs were always possible, it was noted there were realistic limitations due to recruitment and retention. Officers advised that the focus had been on educational psychologists, social workers, and SEND officers. It was advised that significant progress had been made in reducing agency staff, now around 8%.

Members reviewed the cost of accommodation, noting it was important to note the continuum of care for young people. It was noted that a predictive model had been developed to forecast needs over the next five years, and specifications for placements had been reviewed to ensure clarity in provider expectations. The goal was to prepare young people for independence by the age of 18, with alternative support options available for those who need it.

## **SEND & Alternative Provision Strategy (update)**

An update was provided on the implementation of the SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy, which was approved in December 2023. Following the Ofsted inspection of SEND provision in April 2024, an improvement plan was developed in alignment with the strategy. Since then, the strategy has been effectively embedded across Council services, schools, and partner organisations.

Key developments the Committee were apprised of included the rebranding of the partnership to "SEND Local Area Partnership" to reflect a stronger emphasis on collaboration between education, health, the voluntary sector, young people, and families. Furthermore, governance arrangements had been enhanced, and multi-agency ambition groups had been introduced. An increase in SEND support data suggested improved identification of needs, while the reshaping of the SEND Advisory Service was enabling more holistic support. It was noted that the SEND Youth Forum had played a vital role in co-producing a charter, logo, and webpage for the Local Offer, ensuring that the voices of young people remained central to the strategy's delivery.

## **SEND Sufficiency Strategy**

Officers provided an overview of the draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy, which set out plans to secure sufficient, high-quality specialist provision across both mainstream and special education settings. Over the past four years, the number of EHCPs had increased by 37%, with autism identified as the most common primary need. The strategy was underpinned by eight-year projections and placed a strong focus on early intervention and delivering excellent local education. Ongoing development included a bid for a 280-place free school. Listening to and incorporating feedback from young people remained a central element of the approach.

The Committee welcomed the strategy, noting its clear commitment to putting children and young people with SEND at the centre of decision making. Members also highlighted the importance of working closely with families to ensure the needs of each young person are fully met, supporting the continued delivery of a high-quality service. The Committee commended officers for the extensive work underway within SEND in Hillingdon.

The SEND Sufficiency Strategy was formally approved by the Cabinet Member in February 2025.

## **Orchard Hill College**

A representative from Orchard Hill College attended the committee to inform Members about its educational role in the area. The college operated across multiple locations, including Hillingdon, and served a diverse range of students, including those with medical needs and learning difficulties. The College focused on preparing students for adulthood with a strong emphasis on employment, independent living, and social integration. It offered supported internships and works closely with local organisations, including Uxbridge Football Club and Hillingdon Hospital. The College advised it valued student feedback, with changes implemented through the Student Council, such as social events and improved timetables. Despite limited space, Orchard Hill College aimed to expand its supported internship programs and vocational offerings. The College provided transformative opportunities, as evidenced by success stories of students overcoming challenges and securing employment. The College's reputation was affirmed by its outstanding Ofsted inspection in 2019, and it continued to prepare for future inspections with comprehensive training and feedback for staff. Members acknowledged the College's impact and expressed support for increasing awareness and participation in its programs.

## **Uxbridge College**

A representative from Uxbridge College (part of Harrow, Richmond, and Uxbridge Colleges or HRUC) attended the Committee. It was noted that the college was a rapidly growing institution with 15,000 students, 8,500 of whom were aged 16-18, with a focus on offering diverse academic and vocational programs. The College excelled in supporting high-needs students, including those with profound learning disabilities, while maintaining strong academic achievements, with a 96% positive destination rate and top national performance despite challenges such as incoming students lacking GCSEs in English and Maths. Uxbridge College prided itself on its employer-focused approach, strong partnerships with local schools, and innovative programs in STEM and engineering, including a £12 million investment in the Institute of Technology. It also ensured comprehensive support for disadvantaged students, offering mental health services, hardship bursaries, and mentoring. The College's commitment to student success was reflected in its low withdrawal rates and tracking of student progress and destinations. With further plans to expand and improve the campus experience,

the College continues to set lofty standards in further education. Members welcome the update and overview of the college's work.

## **Brunel University of London**

A representative attended from Brunel University to outline their current plans in the higher education field. Brunel was known for producing highly employable graduates, driving social mobility, and conducting research informed by societal needs in fields such as social science, engineering, and computer science. The University currently had 10,000 undergraduate students, 6,000 master's students, 1,000 doctoral students, and 2,300 staff, with a turnover of £300 million. The civic agreement between the University and the Council aimed to foster closer collaboration.

Brunel's apprenticeship programme had received an outstanding rating from Ofsted, making it the only institution in London to achieve this. The University also runs two large transnational education programmes in China.

It was advised that Brunel recruits locally, with 45% of students from the UK, 10% from Europe, and 45% from the rest of the world. Most UK students come from West London and surrounding areas, with strong relationships with local schools and colleges, particularly Uxbridge College.



## **Stronger Families Hub review update**

Officers provided an update on the recommendations from the Committee's previous major review of the Stronger Families Hub.

Officers advised that the profile of the Hub continued to be raised with all stakeholders through the creation of the Stronger Families Partnership, which includes partners in health and education. The Stronger Families Hub was also using a range of methods to communicate such as via the Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership and Children's Participation Team newsletters. This included key agencies such as school and other education settings. A directory of services was in the latter stages of being developed.

Recruiting for vacant posts had presented some challenges. Factors such as staff turnover, maternity leave, and reliance on locum cover had contributed to fluctuations in staffing levels. However, additional resources had been allocated, and efforts were being made to fill all vacant posts. Investments were also made to ensure the continuity of the service despite staffing variations.

The capacity of the Hub had been bolstered by the introduction of the Asylum Intake Team (as a pilot) who now work exclusively with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Signposting to mental health services had been enhanced through the introduction of the Thrive practitioner.

The work undertaken by the Stronger Families subgroup was time limited and has been concluded. The ethos of the work being undertaken by the subgroup evolved into a collaboration meeting, led by

the Stronger Families Hub, held monthly with professionals from a range of agencies across the partnership.

It was noted that the Stronger Families Hub website could now be translated into 68 different languages. Once residents have selected their chosen language, they are automatically redirected to Google Translate. The most recent census data is utilised to help inform access to services to address barriers such as English as a second language and/or speakers of other languages. A cornerstone of the Stronger Families Partnership was its use as a mechanism for sharing information including to community groups and resident that may not be digitally enabled.

## **School Organisation Plan & School Place Planning**

The Committee received its annual update on the School Organisation Plan, outlining the approach to school place planning and the latest trends in local demand. The process involved careful analysis of birth rates, migration patterns, and wider demographic changes across two defined education planning areas. The plan played a key role in monitoring pupil numbers and ensuring there are sufficient school places to meet current and future needs.

The School Organisation Plan also supported regular engagement with school leaders to discuss capacity and provision. Notably, the number of special school places in the borough exceeded the national average, while ongoing efforts continue to support pupils with EHCPs in mainstream settings. Inclusivity remains a core aim across all schools.

The Committee welcomed the update, and the robustness sought in relation to school place projections. Members agreed that the School Organisation Plan represents a valuable tool in securing adequate provision. In April 2025, the Cabinet Member agreed the School Organisation Plan 2025 for publication.

## **Annual Education Standards**

The Annual Education Standards report presented to the Committee provided an overview of performance across key stages and outlined ongoing areas of focus. Although a gap remained in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, targeted work was being undertaken to address this disparity. Several schools were highlighted as delivering excellent outcomes.

Key Stage 2 results remained above the national average but continued to fall short of regional benchmarks. Similarly, Key Stage 4 outcomes exceeded national figures but were below those of regional and statistical neighbours. Addressing these gaps remained a key priority.

The five-year education priorities had now been shared with all schools and stakeholders. Encouragingly, the number of secondary schools on the at-risk register had declined since 2023–24. Officers continued to work closely with schools to monitor and support pupils missing from education, while overall school attendance had shown improvement.

The Committee acknowledged the continued gap in attainment and some comparative underperformance but expressed reassurance that proactive measures were being taken to improve outcomes. This annual update is scheduled for consideration by the Cabinet Member in 2025.

## **Outcome of the consultation for the proposal to amalgamate Grange Park Infant and Nursery School and Grange Park Junior School**

Following a public consultation, officers presented the proposal to amalgamate Grange Park Infant and Nursery School with Grange Park Junior School. The plan would see both schools operating as one within the same building. While some concerns were raised by parents, the proposal was generally well received – 87% of respondents supported the amalgamation, with over half of those respondents being parents of pupils at the schools.

The Committee expressed its support for the proposal, noting several potential benefits, including an improved learning experience for pupils, a smoother and more consistent educational journey, and the effective sharing of resources across both schools. Cabinet approved the proposal at its meeting in April 2025.

### **Admissions update**

The Committee received an update on school admissions including in-year admissions and an overview of primary and secondary allocations and noted the good work being done by the Council in this area compared to neighbouring boroughs. There had been a drop in the percentage of first preferences, though parental preferences played a significant role in admissions. Sometimes first preference schools were not the closest school, and this impacted the number of first preferences received. Some grammar schools had also tightened their admissions criteria which also had an impact. It was noted that while there were a small number of families who did not receive any of their preferences, this included those who were allocated to their closest school.

### **Families First Reforms and Children's Wellbeing & Schools Bill**

Members received an update national legislative changes and an introduction to the Families First Partnership Programme (Children's Social Care Reforms). A policy statement ("Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive") outlined the vision for the future of the children's social care system and core legislative proposals. The aim of Family Help was for families to receive high quality support at the earliest opportunity, so that they can overcome challenges, stay together and thrive. The Family Help model sought to respond directly to the issues with family support that were highlighted by the Independent Care Review and builds on evidence of effective practise from a range of programmes.

Next steps for Hillingdon included a restructure at the senior level (already achieved); a revised integrated front door (in progress); creation of multi-disciplinary Child Protection Teams; creation of locality-based Multi-Disciplinary Family Help Teams (in progress) and a policy & practice review and co-production, along with multi-agency collaboration and design.

# Residents' Services Select Committee

(incl. statutory crime & disorder scrutiny)

- **Cllr Smallwood OBE** (Vice-Chair)
- **Cllr Davies**
- **Cllr Gohil**
- **Cllr Farley** (Opposition Lead)
- **Cllr Gardner**
- **Cllr Kaur**



**Cllr Wayne Bridges**  
(Chair)

**Lead Scrutiny Officer:** Liz Penny, Democratic Services

## Brief

The Residents' Services Select Committee is responsible for the overview and scrutiny of a diverse range of Council services central to residents' quality of life. Its remit extends to green spaces, planning, waste and recycling, sport and leisure, enforcement, housing, and beyond. Additionally, the Committee has an outward facing role undertaking the statutory scrutiny of the crime and disorder partnership locally, through bi-annual meetings with the Police and other partners, ensuring the Council meets its statutory obligations under the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009. Furthermore, the Committee has finalised its major review into Homeless Prevention & the Customer Journey.

## Major review

### **Homeless Prevention and the Customer Journey in Hillingdon**

As part of its ongoing commitment to improving services for vulnerable residents, the Residents' Services Select Committee completed its in-depth review of Homelessness Prevention and the Customer Journey in Hillingdon. Over four detailed witness sessions, the Committee received valuable input from Council officers, voluntary sector organisations, and frontline experts, covering issues from housing supply and rough sleeping to support for victims of domestic abuse. In support of the review, Members of the Committee also undertook site visits to the Council's Housing Reception area and customer contact centre and visited two B&Bs used to accommodate local residents on a temporary basis.

Further to the review, a range of practical recommendations were developed to enhance resident experience, including clearer communication, a more welcoming Housing Reception Centre, greater use of digital tools, and continued quality checks and feedback collection. Now cleared by the

Committee, the final report will be ready for submission to Cabinet shortly, and reflects the Committee's dedication to making meaningful, resident-centred improvements.

## Monitoring & scrutiny

### Graffiti Removal

Members reviewed the Council's approach to graffiti removal. Discussions covered coordination with TfL, initiative-taking cleaning in hotspot areas, and the effectiveness of current monitoring, with concerns that flyposting was often overlooked. Members also explored the benefits of outsourcing the service, noting cost savings and reduced liability, and were informed that market research would inform the upcoming contract renewal. Challenges in issuing fines for flyposting and identifying graffiti offenders were acknowledged, with suggestions to collaborate with police and schools.

### Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service Update

Officers presented an update on the Council's ASB Service. Noting challenges in respect of fly tipping enforcement, deployment strategies, and availability of ward-specific data, Members welcomed the ongoing development of a new case management system. The Committee explored challenges in dealing with repeat issues such as aggressive begging, fly tipping, and communal ASB in tower blocks, noting a need for longer-term strategies. Discussions also touched on inter-agency collaboration, contractor performance, and the underreporting of ASB in some areas. Members called for improved responsiveness to enquiries, more accurate and transparent data, and the continuation of successful initiatives like Action Days.

### Sports Facilities & Engagement

Members heard from officers, who provided clarification on the accessibility, funding, and promotion of sports and physical activity programmes across the Borough. In respect of the availability of free tennis in areas such as Rosedale and Harmondsworth, Members were reassured that targeted initiatives, including Free Parks Tennis coaching, were already in place with plans to expand further. The importance of inclusive engagement was discussed, with officers outlining ongoing work to connect with diverse communities through schools, GP practices, community groups and social media.



Challenges in reaching certain demographics, particularly teenage girls, working adults and older residents, were acknowledged. The Committee highlighted the need for improved visibility, suggesting the reintroduction of physical promotional materials and greater use of community spaces. Officers also responded to queries regarding outdoor gym usage, seated exercise class capacity, and the impact of reduced paper-based communication. Members were informed that programmes were continually monitored and adapted based on attendance and community feedback. Successful

initiatives such as Parkrun and Couch to 5K were highlighted, with officers welcoming councillor support in promoting activities at a local level to enhance community participation and wellbeing.

## **Landlord Service Housing Complaints**

The Committee received the first statutory submission on complaints to the Housing Ombudsman Service by the Council's 'Landlord Service' for the year 2023/2024. The report detailed the new proactive regulatory regime for social housing providers that had come into force from April 2024, following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017 and the death of Awaab Ishak in 2020. Members heard that the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 aimed to give tenants greater powers and improve access to quick and fair solutions to problems. Members were appraised of the four new consumer standards that applied to all social landlords, including the Council, and the importance of addressing complaints fairly, effectively, and promptly was highlighted. Councillors heard that the Council's first statutory submission to the Housing Ombudsman included a written report and an online submission and was published on the Council's website in line with regulatory requirements.

## **Landlord Service Complaints (Annual Update)**

Continuing from above, as part of its ongoing commitment to transparency and resident-focused service, the Committee reviewed the Landlord Service's 2024/25 complaints handling performance in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. This annual review, a key requirement under the new Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, ensured that tenant feedback is used to drive service improvements and uphold accountability. Members considered the draft Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report, endorsed the self-assessment against the Code, and noted the updated action plan developed from the previous year's findings. This process also gave the Committee the opportunity to provide feedback ahead of the Council's statutory submission to the Housing Ombudsman by June 2025, reinforcing the role of effective governance in promoting a positive complaints culture and continuous improvement across housing services.

## **Housing Allocation Policy Consultation Draft**

Members undertook pre-decision scrutiny on the Council's Housing Allocation Policy Consultation Draft. Clarification was provided on the exclusion of asylum seekers temporarily housed in hotels from homelessness figures, as these fell under Home Office responsibility. Officers explained that the proposed changes to overcrowding criteria were intended to ease pressure on larger properties by enabling families to bid for smaller homes where appropriate. The importance of managing residents' expectations was emphasised, with the proposed banding system aiming to provide greater clarity around housing prioritisation. Members highlighted issues around residents in temporary accommodation outside the Borough, and officers confirmed that residency status with Hillingdon was retained unless individuals opted for private rental arrangements. The consultation process was discussed in detail, with 241 responses having been received at the time. Members welcomed the proposed review of consultation practices, including extended deadlines, ensuring greater engagement with those directly impacted and improving accessibility to printed



materials and simplified policy documents. Members recommended that those on the housing register be prioritised in future housing policy consultations. Cabinet approved the updated policy in November 2024.

## **Draft Statement of Gambling Policy**

As a statutory consultee on policy and budget framework documents, the Committee received the draft Statement of Gambling Policy for review. In respect of the concentration of gambling establishments in certain areas, it was clarified that each application was assessed individually, considering all relevant data and the local impact. It was noted that complaints related to gambling establishments were relatively low compared to those regarding alcohol-serving venues, and applications could only be refused with unmistakable evidence of substantial harm. Members were reassured that work was underway to address issues relating to funfairs and flyposting. Members also enquired about the enforcement of the Gambling Policy, with officers explaining that proactive risk inspections and recent collaborations with the Gambling Commission were conducted to ensure compliance. Cabinet recommended the updated Policy to full Council in January 2025 and it was adopted.

## **Safer Hillingdon Partnership Scrutiny**

In September 2024, in relation to the Committee's statutory crime and disorder scrutiny role, Members received an update on the Safer Hillingdon Partnership's work, including the Making Hayes Safer Project, aimed at reducing violence, and plans for a new Community Safety Strategy and monthly crime update dashboard. The Committee heard that a survey would soon be launched to gather public input for shaping future strategies.

The Chief Inspector of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) discussed local crime trends, including stable burglary rates, a decrease in motor vehicle thefts, and a 75% reduction in homicide rates. He highlighted challenges including prisoner releases, recidivism, and international conflicts impacting community relations. Members were reassured that recruitment efforts were ongoing, with a focus on diversity and increased community engagement.

Regarding low-level crimes, such as theft and anti-social behaviour, and barriers to reporting, the Chief Inspector emphasised efforts to build trust with residents, improve communication, and address resource challenges. Councillors were assured that these issues would be addressed, and ongoing initiatives would continue to strengthen local policing.

Additionally, in March 2025, Members received a further update on the work of the Safer Hillingdon Partnership and were informed about practical improvements such as a cuckooing protocol to support vulnerable residents and a crime and disorder survey to inform the community safety strategy. The Chief Inspector highlighted key issues affecting policing, including a budget deficit leading to paused recruitment and reduced officer numbers, challenges with prisoner releases, court backlogs, and increased demand from immigration removal centres and hotels. Despite these challenges, successes were noted in reducing homicide, violence with injury, and violence against women and girls.

Members sought further clarification regarding the statistical impact of prisoner releases and policing cuts in Hillingdon. The Chief Inspector acknowledged the complexity of crime statistics and emphasised the importance of public understanding of the broader criminal justice system. The Committee discussed the decrease in reporting of violence against women and girls and the lack of trust in the police, with efforts being made to improve victim care and increase police visibility through

outreach work. Additionally, the effectiveness of ward panels and community monitoring groups was discussed, highlighting the importance of driving learning among chairs and officers.

## **Uxbridge Town Centre vision**

Officers provided an update on the Draft Uxbridge Town Centre Vision. Over 1,000 people had been consulted through Brunel University in the initial engagement phase, and ongoing involvement from residents and businesses was vital, with plans to engage schools, colleges, and community groups. The vision emphasised celebrating Uxbridge's heritage, with efforts to protect and highlight historic buildings like the Regal Cinema. It was noted that, although the library was due to relocate to the Civic Centre, it would remain in Uxbridge and contribute to the creation of a wider community hub area [Note the new relocated Library opened in April 2025]. The vision's success would be monitored by tracking vacancy rates, footfall, and new commercial and residential developments. Funding for the vision would come from private investment and government grants, and it would also support charity and third-sector activities, with plans to use the Civic Centre forecourt for markets and events. Members also requested clarification on the monitoring framework and expressed support for including third-sector entities in the vision. A final version of the vision is due to be presented to Cabinet in 2025.



## **Climate Action Plan**

Officers presented the refreshed Strategic Climate Action Plan, responding to queries from Members about biodiversity mapping, infrastructure costs, and carbon offsetting. It was noted that, while biodiversity was not currently mapped in the plan, it would be a focus in the next three years with Defra-funded consultancy work linking biodiversity with tree planting and green space management.

The Committee heard that the plan covered various sub-plans such as electric vehicle charging and sustainable transport, with ongoing flood risk management efforts and collaboration with the Environment Agency. It was noted that the Council also planned to engage with the community to reduce carbon footprints through campaigns and a People's Assembly in 2026. Members welcomed the significant progress made in flood risk management but noted that challenges remained, particularly in securing funding for projects like the Mill Road drainage.

Regarding air quality, Councillors were informed that the Council was investing in monitoring equipment and had plans for continuous reporting on pollutants. Members also discussed the rollout of electric vehicle chargers, the ongoing work at the crematorium to reduce emissions, and the need for cavity wall insulation in Council properties. At the behest of the Committee, officers committed to investigating and ensuring Section 106 funds for air quality monitoring would be effectively used. It was confirmed that the draft of the Climate Action Plan would be reviewed in 2025, with further initiatives to improve air quality and integrate environmental efforts.

## **Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023/24**

As part of its oversight role, Members received a detailed update on the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) 2023/24 and held a constructive discussion with officers. The Committee welcomed the transparency of the published IFS and explored key areas including air quality monitoring, affordable housing contributions, and the balance of Section 106 funds. Members were reassured that although delays in spending were sometimes necessary due to project development and pooling requirements, there was minimal risk of funds being lost. The Committee was also updated on the rollout of a new system, Exacom, which would provide clearer links between income and expenditure. Additional commitments were made to explore ward-level funding breakdowns and to include apprenticeship and construction targets managed through a third-party provider. The Committee appreciated the opportunity to contribute comments to Cabinet on this matter and looked forward to further updates as progress continued. Cabinet agreed the IFS at its meeting in December 2025.

## **2025/26 Budget Proposals**

The 2025/26 budget proposals for services within the remit of the Residents' Services Select Committee were presented by officers. The report acknowledged ongoing national challenges impacting local government, particularly in the housing sector, yet demonstrated the Council's proactive and transparent approach to managing these pressures.

Members heard that, despite a difficult economic climate—characterised by inflation, increased contractor costs, and a 5% interest rate—the Council had secured a £3.8 million settlement above expectations. While reserves had previously been used to address urgent demands, there was now a clear commitment to rebuilding them in a sustainable and responsible manner.

It was noted that addressing the rising costs of temporary accommodation and the pressure of homelessness remained a priority, with a forecasted overspend of £5.7 million. Nevertheless, the Council has set out ambitious plans to increase housing supply and reduce homelessness, including the strategic use of land assets and the pursuit of government funding. It was confirmed that the budget was on track to be finalised in February 2025, with constructive input from the Committee helping to shape a well-informed and forward-looking financial strategy.

## **Fun Fairs - Regulations and Hiring arrangements**

Members reviewed the regulations and hiring arrangements for funfairs in parks. Noise management and how complaints were handled were discussed, with confirmation that residents could report issues for officers to assess. The Committee also enquired about noise and lighting conditions in hire agreements, and it was confirmed that any nuisances could be reported to the Environmental Protection service. Advertising boards left up after events were addressed, with fines in place for non-compliance, though the introduction of a bond system for operators was suggested to ensure proper removal. Members also explored food hygiene and safety, confirming that mobile caterers must be registered and that food inspectors respond to complaints. It was noted that health and safety enforcement at funfairs was managed by the Health and Safety Executive, and funfair operators would be required to confirm no prior incidents when signing up. Finally, the Committee emphasised the importance of initiative-taking measures to ensure operators adhered to regulations and improved the overall management of funfairs in the area.

## Parking Services & Contract Monitoring

Regarding Parking Services and Contract Monitoring, Members discussed the contract's key performance indicators, noting that while the report presented a positive snapshot, there had been some less favourable results. Enforcement challenges at Ruislip Lido during the summer were highlighted, with the deployment of tow trucks and CEOs. Discussions on cashless parking systems, blue badge fraud, and the safety of CEOs, particularly regarding body-worn cameras, were held, with officers assuring that protocols were in place to manage incidents. The issue of banding for parking fines was raised, with the Council's application to move from Band B to Band A complicated by a city-wide increase in fine rates. Finally, it was agreed that officers would explore the possibility of simplifying the current pay-by-phone system.



## The Hillingdon Council Chrysalis Scheme

Members welcomed the update on the Council's popular Chrysalis Scheme. It was confirmed that applicants for projects over £100,000 were responsible for raising additional funds, as the Council could not provide extra resources. The match funding concept was discussed, with officers explaining that applicants provided funding estimates, and the Council explored further options when necessary. Members suggested increased publicity of the Scheme, particularly in the southern part of the Borough. Officers clarified that, while diversity data was not specifically collected, community usage was considered in project selection, which aimed for a spread of projects across the Borough. The selection process and project timelines were outlined, with most projects completed within the financial year. Officers agreed to prepare a briefing note for Councillors to help engage with community groups and noted that Chrysalis funding applied only to Council-owned assets.

## Community Payback Scheme

The Community Payback scheme involves individuals sentenced by the courts to perform unpaid work in their communities, typically as part of a probation order. The Committee was advised that the scheme currently included 11 projects across the Borough, with 1,185 hours of community service completed in February 2025. It was noted that the scheme was available throughout the Borough, and both Members and residents were encouraged to propose projects via the Government website or directly to the Street Scene Enforcement team. Projects had included maintenance of empty properties and private alleyways, with potential future involvement of the Canals and Rivers Trust. While the scheme's rehabilitation impact was still under review, the Council would assess its cost-effectiveness in 12 months. Transportation issues had not been a concern, as the scheme was now locally based, and the option of offering participants training or job opportunities would be considered in the future. Members were reassured that no adverse reports had been received in respect of the scheme which had been positively reintroduced after COVID-19 in April 2024.

## Community Safety in Focus: Review of the Alley Gating Scheme



As part of its ongoing review into community safety initiatives, the Committee received an update on the Council's alley gating scheme from Community Projects Officers, following its review on the matter the previous year. Members welcomed the efforts made to raise awareness through Hillingdon People, with one article already published and another in preparation by the corporate communications team. Discussions included the challenges of fly-tipping within gated alleys—primarily linked to resident responsibility—and the importance of reporting external incidents to the anti-social behaviour team. While feedback from residents had been limited so far, officers confirmed that further insights would be gathered at key project milestones. The Committee also positively discussed the potential for stronger engagement with local Safer Neighbourhood Teams to help assess the impact of the schemes.

## Budget and Spending

To strengthen financial transparency and ensure robust scrutiny, the Committee in April 2025 endorsed a new approach to regular monthly financial monitoring. Officers outlined a comprehensive structure for presenting financial performance, including updates on expenditure, savings, and growth across service areas. Corporate Directors and Finance Business Partners attended the first meeting to provide detailed insights and answer questions. The Committee welcomed this development as a key step in tracking delivery against the savings target for 2025/26 and monitoring risks, mitigations, and progress on the budget. This structured reporting allowed Members to scrutinise variances, ensure services remain within budget, and uphold accountability for residents.

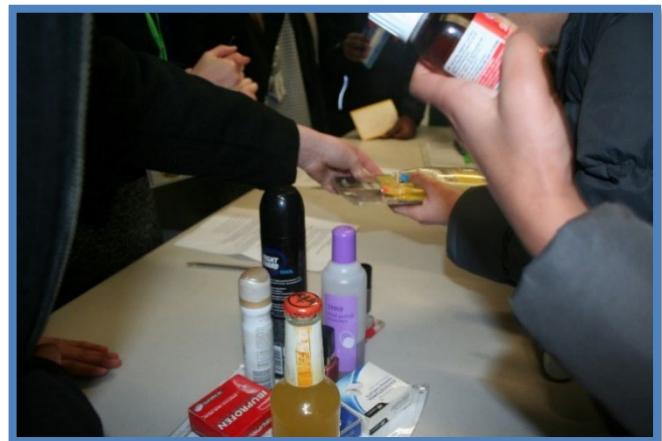
## Anti-Social Behaviour

Demonstrating its commitment to maintaining safe, clean, and welcoming neighbourhoods, the Residents' Services Select Committee reviewed a detailed report on anti-social behaviour (ASB) and environmental crime across the Borough throughout 2024. The report outlined the Council's statutory duties and highlighted the scale and complexity of the issues reported by residents, elected members, and businesses—including fly-tipping, noise nuisance, vehicle-related disturbances, aggressive begging, and out-of-control dogs. The Committee acknowledged the Council's strong operational response and the importance of having well-trained officers equipped with the right legal knowledge and enforcement tools. Members also welcomed the Council's review of the Borough-wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), due for implementation from 1st May 2025, which strengthens existing controls and introduces new prohibitions—such as restricting smoking and dog walking in children's play areas, curbing the misuse of e-scooters in public green spaces, and tackling unauthorised street trading and car meets. The Committee commended the Council's continued focus on prevention and early intervention, and used the opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, and support further improvements in how the Council responds to ASB and protects local communities.

## Trading Standards Service - Underage Sale of Vapes and Alcohol

Members reviewed the proactive work being carried out by the Council's Trading Standards Service to tackle the underage sale of alcohol and vapes, and the importation and supply of unsafe and non-compliant e-cigarettes.

The Committee commended the team's robust enforcement approach, which included regular test purchasing operations, targeted inspections, and successful prosecutions. Officers also had played a key educational role by advising businesses and distributing compliance booklets.



With over 545,000 illegal vapes seized at Heathrow and nearly 4,000 removed from local retailers since January 2024, it was noted that the Council was playing a critical role in protecting residents—especially young people—from harmful products. The Committee noted the wider benefits of this work in safeguarding public health, supporting responsible retail, and reducing anti-social behaviour, and welcomed future measures such as the upcoming ban on disposable vapes and new licensing requirements under the Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

## Site visits

Throughout the year, Members on the Select Committee have undertaken several site visits. This included a visit in September 2024 to the 'super' Material Recycling Facility at Edmonton used by the Council to process co-mingled recycling collected from homes and businesses across the Borough. It separates the recyclable materials into single material streams in preparation for shipment to market. Pictured (right) is the Committee Chair, Cllr Wayne Bridges at the facility.

Members also went out with the Council's Noise Team and Traffic Wardens during the year.



# Health & Social Care Select Committee

(incl. statutory health scrutiny)

- **Cllr Reeta Chamdal** (Vice-Chair)
- **Cllr Corthorne**
- **Cllr Martin**
- **Cllr Punja** (Opposition Lead)
- **Cllr Nelson**
- **Cllr Burles**



**Cllr Nick Denys**  
(Chair)

**Lead Scrutiny Officer:** Nikki O'Halloran, Democratic Services

## Brief

The Health and Social Care Select Committee undertakes the overview and scrutiny role of a range of Council services including adult social work, safeguarding, social care commissioning, public health, and the voluntary sector. Importantly, the Committee undertakes the statutory health scrutiny role as required by the Health & Social Care Act 2001, working closely with NHS and health partners. The Committee also has a cross-cutting brief on domestic abuse services and support.

## Major Review

### Review of Adult Social Care Early Intervention and Prevention

During the year, the Committee commenced its review of early intervention and prevention in Adult Social Care (ASC). As part of its positive and informative first witness session, Members welcomed key officers including the Director of Public Health. The session highlighted the importance of prevention across all aspects of health and social care, including tackling hypertension, reducing hospital admissions and supporting unpaid carers. Members were encouraged by the investment in preventative services, improved contract arrangements, and a stronger focus on co-producing services with communities. The Committee also explored how the Council is addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, such as those with autism, older residents and people with long-term conditions, while aiming to create age-friendly, healthier environments across the Borough. Concerns were raised around service accessibility, communication gaps and maintaining local expertise, but plans were in place to monitor performance closely and engage new service providers.

The Committee held its second witness session in March 2025 where Members spoke to representatives from the Hillingdon GP Confederation and Comfort Care Services about the impact of neighbourhood working and preventative services such as reablement and the bridging care service. Witnesses talked about the need for all health and social care partners to work collaboratively to wrap

care around patients – whilst this was challenging for partners, it provided a much better experience for residents. This collaborative approach had been successfully developed in the Neighbourhood Hubs where several services were now fully integrated and could be used as a template for transforming other services.

To gain further insight in support of the Committee's review into ASC early intervention and prevention, Members visited the Pembroke Centre in Ruislip and spoke with health partners about the joined up working practices that had been developed to provide care that wrapped around patients' needs.

Further witness sessions will be undertaken in the new municipal year to then provide Cabinet with a comprehensive summary of the Committee's findings and recommendations.

## Scrutiny activity

### **Hospice and End of Life Services in Hillingdon**

The Health and Social Care Select Committee held a highly productive meeting focusing on Hospice and End of Life Services in Hillingdon, highlighting both the strong progress made and the future direction of care provision in the Borough. Members were welcomed following a valuable site visit to Michael Sobell House, where they heard positive feedback from staff, patients, and families. The Committee discussed the proposed sale of Lansdowne House, which, while a source of community concern, was explained as a necessary step to secure long-term financial sustainability and protect vital services. Harlington Hospice and its partners reassured Members that end-of-life services would not be reduced, and efforts were underway to relocate services and improve access in underserved areas. Michael Sobell House has expanded its capacity, while innovative community care models, including enhanced nursing home beds, 24-hour support lines and dedicated services for children and neurodiverse individuals, continue to grow. Members praised the integrated and compassionate approach to care and noted Hillingdon's leading position in palliative care across Northwest London. Challenges around early referrals, system integration and equitable access remain, but strong partnership working, data-driven planning and upcoming consultations aim to address these issues. The Committee will continue to monitor developments and engage with stakeholders to ensure that residents receive high-quality, accessible, and dignified end of life care.

### **Pharmacy Services in Hillingdon**

As part of its ongoing commitment to improving local healthcare services, the Committee held a single meeting review focused on pharmacy services in Hillingdon. Members heard from key stakeholders including Healthwatch Hillingdon, the Middlesex Pharmaceutical Group of Local Pharmaceutical Committees, and the Council's Public Health team. The discussion highlighted the vital role community pharmacies play in easing pressure on GPs, the challenges faced due to rising costs, medicine shortages and inconsistent service provision. Issues around repeat prescriptions, access disparities (particularly in the Heathrow Villages) and workforce shortages were also explored. Members welcomed the insight provided, recognised the need for improved transparency and communication and acknowledged the positive impact of outreach services. Given the breadth of the discussion and emerging questions, it was agreed that this topic would be revisited at a future meeting to ensure further investigation and action.

## Older People's Plan Update

The Committee had a comprehensive and positive discussion on the Older People's Plan, highlighting the collaborative efforts between the Council, Age UK Hillingdon and other partners to support the older population. Key initiatives include support for pension credit claims, prioritising older tenants for housing improvements, providing warm spaces for residents and expanding dementia support and falls prevention activities. The plan also addresses the challenges of digital access for some residents and the importance of community-based services. Members commended the range of services available, including physical activities, Telecare and benefit entitlement checks, and emphasised the need for better monitoring and expansion of these services to ensure all older resident's benefit. Additionally, the focus on combating social isolation and promoting healthier lifestyles for older residents was acknowledged as crucial for improving wellbeing in the community.



## Heathrow Villages Wellbeing Bus Pilot

As part of its continued efforts to address health inequalities, the Committee considered the evaluation of the Heathrow Villages Wellbeing Bus pilot, which had provided valuable insights into the health needs of residents. The pilot underscored the importance of direct engagement with the community and highlighted key priorities such as improved access to GP outreach and pharmacy services. Members welcomed plans for a modular health facility at 45 Holloway Lane, offered by CNWL in partnership with Heathrow Airport, and noted ongoing efforts to secure funding to make the site operational. In the interim, alternative venues such as church halls were being explored. The Committee recognised the significance of learning from the pilot to ensure that any future services prioritise dignity, accessibility and community empowerment.

## 2025/26 Budget Proposals for Services Within the Remit of Health & Social Care Select Committee

As part of its annual budget scrutiny, the Committee positively reviewed the 2025/26 budget proposals for Health and Social Care, acknowledging the difficult financial climate facing local government. Despite rising costs driven by increased demand, complex care needs and economic pressures, Members commended officers for producing a balanced and forward-thinking financial plan. The Council remained committed to delivering high-quality services while maintaining the lowest Council Tax in outer London. Members welcomed the use of technology and AI to improve efficiency and reduce costs without compromising care quality. They also noted the importance of reablement, local bed capacity and early intervention in managing long-term pressures. Importantly, Hillingdon's Adult Social Care services were rated 'Good' by the CQC and the Council was praised for continuing to meet its statutory responsibilities while adapting to meet future challenges.

## The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Update

The Committee welcomed a positive and honest update from senior representatives of the local NHS trusts. A clear commitment was made to prioritising patients at Hillingdon equally, with a candid discussion on both the challenges and opportunities facing the Trust. Members were encouraged to hear about progress on the new hospital development, improvements in digital infrastructure and a renewed focus on efficiency, governance and patient care.

While concerns around performance and service user experience remained (particularly in emergency care and specialist areas such as ENT and rheumatology), a clear, data-driven approach to improvement was outlined. The importance of staff welfare, openness and collaboration with the Council to support local communities was also emphasised. The Committee appreciated the transparency shown and looks forward to future updates, especially in relation to the hospital redevelopment.

## Budget and Spending Report - Select Committee Monitoring

In March 2025, as part of more robust scrutiny of the Council's finances, the Committee held a productive discussion on the Council's budget and spending, with a focus on maintaining financial stability while fulfilling statutory obligations. The Chair emphasised the importance of balancing necessary expenditures with efforts to minimise unnecessary costs. Moving forward, the Committee will receive regular reports on the budget and spending within Adult Social Care, covering financial summaries, savings progress and risk management.

## Health Updates

As part of its ongoing commitment to effective health scrutiny, the Committee received a comprehensive update on local health services, focusing on performance, challenges and key developments across the Borough. Members welcomed progress in A&E targets, improvements in elective care and major capital investment supporting the redevelopment of Hillingdon Hospital. Positive steps were also noted in digital upgrades, patient safety and staff wellbeing. Integrated working was highlighted through initiatives tackling rising demand in emergency and mental health care, with collaborative work underway to prevent hospital admissions and support patients at home. Updates on children's services, immunisations and community engagement reflected a Borough-wide effort to enhance care and outcomes. The Committee valued the open dialogue with health partners and reaffirmed its support for continuous improvement and transformation across the system.



The Committee commended the significant progress made across health and care services in Hillingdon over recent months. It was particularly encouraged by the enhanced 24/7 model of the Crisis House (The Retreat), the innovative approach of the Cove Café and the rollout of the new ARCH service supporting addiction recovery. Improvements in children's mental health services through the CAMHS transformation and expanded early intervention were also welcomed. Additionally, close collaboration between CNWL and local authorities on public health initiatives such as obesity and early help was

recognised. Members appreciated the transparency and accountability shown, especially in the discussions around the wellbeing bus pilot and speech and language therapy provision. The Committee looks forward to receiving more data on outcomes and reach at future meetings.

The Committee also received updates from NHS partners including Harefield Hospital, London Ambulance Service (LAS), Hillingdon Health and Care Partners and Healthwatch Hillingdon. Notable developments included the LAS's continued work on staff wellbeing and safety, the implementation of alternative care pathways to ease A&E pressures and the introduction of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams aimed at delivering care closer to home. Despite challenges such as the cyber-attack at Harefield and pressures on diagnostic waiting times, the Committee recognised the resilience shown and welcomed efforts to improve digital systems, increase critical care staffing and explore new models of care delivery. Healthwatch Hillingdon's insight into community concerns and mental health inequalities further underlined the importance of early intervention, consistent support and coproduction of services. Members expressed appreciation for the cross-sector collaboration and ongoing commitment to improving health outcomes in the Borough.

## **Northwest London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Members of the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NWL JHOSC) have met on four occasions over the last twelve months to discuss matters affecting boroughs in NWL. Topics have included the review of adult community-based specialist palliative care, the NWL Mental Health Strategy, primary care access, an update on the winter campaign and LAS performance, the NWL Health Equity Programme and an update on the integrated care system. Consideration has also been given to the Planned Care Strategy and the new Involvement Strategy and Members have received an update on the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre.

## **Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

On 11 July 2025, Council agreed that the Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee would be appointed as the London Borough of Hillingdon representative to the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre (MVCC JHOSC), and that the appointment of further Members be delegated to the Head of Democratic Services. The first formal meeting of the MVCC JHOSC took place in December 2024 where Committee Members considered the case for change and agreed the JHOSC's Terms of Reference. This was followed by a second meeting in March 2025 where the Committee reviewed and provided feedback on the consultation plan.

The Committee's work will be instrumental in guiding discussions and scrutinising key decisions that aim to significantly improve cancer services across the region. One of the committee's main areas of focus is the quality and safety of patient care.

It has been widely acknowledged that the current MVCC site at Northwood lacks essential clinical services such as critical care and high dependency units, which are vital for the effective management of cancer patients undergoing complex treatments.

Clinicians and stakeholders highlighted that without these facilities, patients face increased risks as the site's limitations are impacting the delivery of high-quality care. The proposed relocation to Watford General



Hospital has been seen as an opportunity to resolve these challenges and provide patients with access to state-of-the-art treatment environments.

A key benefit of the proposed move is the co-location of cancer services with a wider range of acute medical facilities at Watford. The Committee has heard how this integration would help improve treatment outcomes by ensuring that patients had access to all necessary services on-site, especially during emergency situations. Co-location is also expected to streamline care pathways and make the overall treatment journey safer and more efficient.

Through careful scrutiny and collaboration with healthcare partners, and a focus on patient outcomes, the Committee will help to pave the way for a modern, safer and more effective future for cancer care in the region.

# Engagement

Select committees actively involve residents, interest groups, experts, private and public organisations in the policy reviews and scrutiny activity their respective Committees undertake. Strong witness testimony continues to provide added verifiable value to the Committee's findings presented to the Cabinet.

This year was no exception, with the following voluntary groups, organisations, private sector companies, groups, services or specific witnesses engaging in this important aspect of Hillingdon's governance process:



## External witnesses and organisations

Alzheimer's Society  
Brunel University of London  
Central and Northwest London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL)  
Citizen's Advice Service  
Comfort Care Services  
H4All  
Harlington Hospice & Michael Sobell Hospice  
Haydon School  
Healthwatch Hillingdon  
Hillingdon Carers  
Hillingdon GP Confederation  
Hillingdon Health and Care Partners  
Hillingdon Mind  
Metropolitan Police  
NHS England & Improvement – East of England  
NHS Northwest London ICB  
NHS, Colne Union PCN  
Orchard Hill College  
Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals – Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust  
The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust  
The Middlesex Pharmaceutical Group of LPCs  
Trinity  
P3  
Thames Reach  
Colne Union PCN, NHS  
Uxbridge College  
Wood End Park Academy  
Hillingdon Youth Council  
All schools (survey)

## Cabinet Members attending

Councillor Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care  
Councillor Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Community & Environment  
Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education

## Supporting Council Teams

Corporate Directors  
Education & SEND  
Children Safeguarding & Care  
Strategic Finance  
First Response Service  
Children's Rights & Participation Team  
Finance Business Partners  
Children & Family Support Services  
Adult LADO and Quality Assurance  
Adult & Com Learning  
Housing Strategy and Policy  
Corporate Parenting and Fostering  
Health and Social Care Integration  
Operational Assets  
Hospitals, Localities, Sensory and Review Team  
Environmental Specialists  
Direct Care and Business Delivery Service  
Street Scene Enforcement Service Manager  
Policy Officer  
Planning and Sustainable Growth  
Prevention and Youth Justice  
Director of Public Health  
School Placement & Admissions Manager  
Virtual School Headteacher

Proceeds of Crime Officer  
Education & Lifelong Learning  
Community Projects Officers  
School Place Planning and Policy Team  
Director of Environment  
Independent Domestic Violence Team  
Public Protection and Enforcement  
Counter Fraud  
Property Team  
Capital Programme Team  
Major Adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grant Team  
Community Safety & Enforcement  
Sport and Physical Activity Team  
Homes & Neighbourhood Service  
Permanence & Specialist Service Team  
Strategic Planning and Regeneration  
Sports Contract Manager

**Democratic Services**  
London Borough of Hillingdon  
Council AGM – 8 May 2025

Report produced by Democratic Services Apprentice: Mr Naveed Ali