

Minutes

RESIDENTS' SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

9 September 2025



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Meeting held at CR5

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chair), Peter Smallwood (Vice-Chair), Darran Davies, Elizabeth Garellick, Ekta Gohil, Scott Farley (Opposition Lead) and Kamal Preet Kaur</p> <p>Others Present: Matt Davis (Director – Strategic & Operational Finance) Joanne Howells (Service Manager, ASB Team) Julia Johnson (Director of Planning and Sustainable Growth) Dan Kennedy (Corporate Director of Residents Services) Ceri Lamoureux (Head of Finance) Janice Noble (Head of Safer Communities & Vulnerabilities) Bernard Ofori-Atta (Head of Finance) Liz Penny (Democratic Services Officer) Gary Penticost (Director of Operational Assets) Stephanie Waterford (Head of Public Protection and Enforcement) Richard Webb (Director Community Safety & Enforcement) Chief Inspector Ben Wright (Metropolitan Police)</p>
102.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE <i>(Agenda Item 1)</i></p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
103.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING <i>(Agenda Item 2)</i></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
104.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING <i>(Agenda Item 3)</i></p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 15 July 2025 be agreed as an accurate record.</p>
105.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THOSE MARKED PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE <i>(Agenda Item 4)</i></p> <p>It was confirmed that all items of business were in Part I and would be considered in public.</p>
106.	<p>CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY: SAFER HILLINGDON PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE UPDATE <i>(Agenda Item 5)</i></p> <p>Chief Inspector Ben Wright of the Metropolitan Police, Richard Webb, Director of Community Safety and Enforcement, and Janice Noble, Head of Safer Communities and Vulnerabilities were in attendance to provide an overview of the report and answer</p>

Members' questions.

It was noted that Jan Noble had recently joined the Council and led work on the Community Safety Partnership. A new Community Safety Strategy had been developed and had provisionally been agreed at the last Safer Hillingdon Partnership meeting. The next steps included Cabinet approval and public consultation.

Members heard that several working groups had been formed to address place-based crime and safety issues, and a new Integrated Offender Panel was being developed under probation leadership.

Chief Inspector Wright reported significant pressure on the police due to public demonstrations and budget cuts, resulting in staff reductions. Despite these challenges, it was reported that local progress had been made: the homicide rate was zero for the year, and reductions had been seen in youth violence, burglary, vehicle theft, and shoplifting. Robbery and related crimes remained a concern but were lower than in other London areas.

Members enquired how the £450 million funding gap affected residents and whether neighbourhood officers were being lost due to budget reallocations. Chief Inspector Ben Wright explained that neighbourhood officers were generally ring-fenced and protected due to their importance. However, budget cuts had reduced staff numbers, creating a high-pressure environment. The organisation faced complex restructuring challenges and required more funding to meet demand.

Councillors expressed concern that Hillingdon residents were being left behind as resources were diverted to central London. In response the Chief Inspector stated that decisions were based on risk prioritisation. Despite challenges, efficiencies had been achieved through organisational changes and resilient teams. The focus remained on balancing resources with demand.

The Committee asked whether local demonstrations would be prioritised over central London events. In response, Members heard that risk analysis guided resource allocation. If credible intelligence indicated a need for increased presence in Hillingdon, it would be factored into broader resourcing decisions.

With regard to Project Vigilant, Members enquired whether this was ongoing and what outcomes had been achieved. The Chief Inspector confirmed that the project was ongoing and a key priority. The organisation had strengthened public protection teams and conducted regular engagement events and operations. Arrests were typically made during these operations, and efforts were continuous.

The Committee asked about plans to support residents without digital access or transport following the closure of Hayes Police Station front counter. In reply, it was explained that the closure was due to funding gaps. The decision was not finalised, and feedback was being considered. Attendance at the station averaged four crime reports per day, prompting further review. Members noted that other functions such as bail reporting and advice were also handled at the station. The Chief Inspector agreed and emphasised the importance of supporting vulnerable individuals. He confirmed that other technical functions were also performed at the station.

With regard to crime statistics and reporting, Members requested statistics on motor vehicle crime, shoplifting, drug-related crime, and serious youth violence.

The Chief Inspector did not have the figures to hand but committed to including them in the next Select Committee report.

Councillors sought further clarification regarding officer allocation per ward and coverage during absences. It was confirmed that most wards had two PCs, with some having more based on crime data. PCSO numbers were increasing. It was reported that the force was at full complement, and retention had improved.

The Committee raised concerns about residents not reporting low-level crime due to perceived inaction. In response, the Chief Inspector explained that volume crime was addressed through intelligence gathering rather than individual investigations. Reporting helped build intelligence to target offenders.

Members suggested that councillors and community leaders could be used to promote positive news stories. The Chief Inspector agreed and noted the launch of Met Engage, which had high resident uptake. Budget cuts had affected media staffing, but efforts were ongoing to improve communication.

Councillors expressed concern that Hillingdon residents were losing out due to both station closures and resource diversion. The Chief Inspector acknowledged the concern and confirmed that feedback had been shared. It was recognised that the organisation faced difficult choices due to funding shortfalls.

Members asked about resident sign-ups to Met Engage following the transition from OWL. The Chief Inspector reported approximately 8,000 members, with monthly growth of 1,000. Engagement was being promoted across wards.

Councillors sought further information in respect of attendance at monitoring groups and stop and search statistics. It was noted that groups were small and rotated. Approximately 3,000 stop and searches occurred annually, with a 36% positive outcome rate.

In response to further questions about youth involvement in advisory and neighbourhood boards, Members were informed that regular youth representation and quarterly informal meetings were held, which provided valuable perspectives.

With regard to the Licensing Team restructure at the Metropolitan Police, Members asked whether this posed risks to local licensing enforcement. It was confirmed that licensing remained a priority. A pod-based system was being considered, and efforts were being made to retain experienced staff.

Councillors requested an update on the promised reopening of Uxbridge front counter. The Chief Inspector stated that the matter predated his tenure and there was no current plan to reopen the station.

In response to queries regarding diversity and cultural improvements within the Met, especially regarding stop and search, the Chief Inspector highlighted internal reforms, increased representation, and improved professional standards. It was confirmed that stop and search was monitored, with positive feedback and low complaint rates.

The Committee asked about the strength of the partnership between the Metropolitan Police and the Council. In response, the Chief Inspector reported strong collaboration, regular communication, and shared goals. Members heard that improvements were

ongoing.

With regard to stations closures, Councillors sought reassurance as to whether this affected bail compliance. Chief Inspector Ben Wright acknowledged the risk and confirmed it was part of ongoing decision-making. Final plans were pending.

The Committee highlighted concerns regarding low public trust due to perceived leniency in sanctions. It was explained that the police were not responsible for sentencing. However, it was noted that the criminal justice system faced challenges, and broader reforms were needed.

Members raised concerns about learning from past station closures and promoting good news to improve engagement. In response, it was confirmed that processes would be developed once decisions were finalised. Met Engage provided data to track engagement, and efforts were being made to ensure even coverage across the Borough.

RESOLVED: That the Select Committee noted the contents of the report and asked questions in order to clarify matters of concern or interest in the Borough.

107. BUDGET AND SPENDING REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

Dan Kennedy - Corporate Director of Residents' Services, Matt Davis – Director, Strategic & Operational Finance, Ceri Lamoureux – Head of Finance, Bernard Ofori-Atta – Head of Finance, Julia Johnson – Director of Planning & Sustainable Growth and Gary Penticost – Director of Operational Assets were in attendance to present the report and answer Members' questions.

Members sought clarification regarding the £1 million shortfall in garden waste charging and enquired whether it was due to low uptake, operational delays, or pricing strategy. In reply, officers explained that the scheme had only been running for two months following a July consultation. The shortfall was due to the delayed start. Uptake was expected to increase in autumn. It was noted that the scheme offered better value than other boroughs, with lower subscription costs and weekly collections for most of the year.

Councillors requested a breakdown of the £1.4 million savings carried forward into 2025/26. Officers directed attention to Table 7, which included a "brought forward" column detailing items such as the £260K for developing the commercial trade waste service. They apologised for the lack of clarity in the report text.

Members sought further clarification as to how Heathrow contributed to the £6.1 million pressure from temporary accommodation and homelessness. It was explained that national housing pressures were compounded locally by Heathrow-related demand. The Home Office placed asylum seekers in hotels near Heathrow, leading to disproportionate homeless presentations. Additional unfunded responsibilities included housing UK nationals returning to the country, who were ineligible for welfare benefits during their residency qualification period.

The Committee asked whether asylum seekers were treated differently under the homelessness policy. In reply, officers confirmed that all policies were applied consistently. However, the Council had to intervene where vulnerabilities existed, regardless of status.

Councillors raised concerns about the clarity of the budget presentation and the use of outdated data (Month 2). Officers explained the structure of Table 2, including definitions of approved budget, underlying forecast, earmarked reserves, provisions, and transformation capitalisation. They clarified that Month 2 data was the latest validated set approved by Cabinet, with Period 4 data pending sign-off.

Members enquired what proportion of the £1.4 million savings were structural versus one-off, and how confident the Council was in achieving them. **In response, officers committed to providing a breakdown in the future.** They gave an example of the commercial trade waste service, which had struggled to meet targets due to competitor pricing. It was confirmed that a new approach was being developed to improve uptake.

Members sought further clarity regarding contingency plans for red-rated items. Officers explained that budget leads were accountable and did not have permission to overspend. Mitigations included cost controls, recruitment reviews, and alternative delivery methods. Colleagues provided examples of income uplifts, fast-track planning services, and asset utilisation (e.g., NHS tenancy in the Civic Centre).

The Committee sought confirmation of the number of people housed in temporary accommodation and the cost per day. It was reported that approximately 1,500 households were currently in temporary accommodation, with around 750–800 requiring subsidy. The average net cost was £50K per night, which was lower than other London boroughs. It was estimated that, of the 1,500 households, approximately 10-15% were refugees. **Officers committed to provide more precise figures in the future.** In response to further questions from Members, officers estimated a shortfall of £5 million annually for asylum seeker-related costs, with additional unfunded costs for UK nationals.

Councillors enquired why fees and charges appeared in the red column of Table 7. It was explained that some income targets were unachievable due to consultation requirements or market realities. A full review of the parking revenue account was underway to reset targets.

In response to Members' questions regarding the £50K income target from filming and efforts to grow the industry, officers confirmed that the target had been achieved. It was noted that the communications team was actively promoting the Borough to filming companies through industry connections.

The Committee asked about the timeline and scope of the parking income review. In response, officers stated that the review would conclude in time for December Cabinet proposals. It would be analytical and market-informed, with options to adjust or phase targets.

Members enquired whether there were early signs explaining income shortfalls. Officers responded that a root-and-branch analysis was needed. A parking strategy was being developed to align with the Council's corporate plan.

In response to further questioning from the Committee regarding refugees and asylum seekers, it was clarified that asylum seekers were housed by the Home Office. Once their claim had been determined, responsibility transferred to the Council.

At the request of Members, it was agreed that clearer language would be used in future

	<p>reports to avoid ambiguity. Officers committed to improving clarity in future updates.</p> <p>Councillors asked how transformation resources had been applied to waste services. It was explained that the funding supported the garden waste scheme, including tags and caps for identifying paid subscriptions.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Select Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted the 2024/25 outturn position; and 2. Noted the 2025/26 Month 2 budget monitoring position
108.	<p>ABANDONED VEHICLES <i>(Agenda Item 7)</i></p> <p>Joanne Howells - Service Manager, Antisocial Behaviour Team and Stephanie Waterford – Head of Public Protection and Enforcement were in attendance to answer Members' questions in relation to the Abandoned Vehicles report.</p> <p>Noting that, between October 2024 and July 2025, the ASB Team had only issued 3 FPNs for wilful abandonment of vehicles on a public highway, Members enquired why this number was so low. In response, it was confirmed that the low number could be attributed to enforcement challenges in terms of evidence. Members heard that DVLA delays did not cause enforcement issues.</p> <p>The Committee enquired how Hillingdon's enforcement figures compared to those of other local authorities. Officers noted that other local authorities faced similar challenges. It was agreed that enforcement benchmarking data against other local authorities would be sourced and circulated to the Committee via Democratic Services.</p> <p>In response to Members' questions regarding the use of ANPR cameras, the Committee was informed that Hillingdon did not utilise ANPR in relation to stationary abandoned vehicles. However, it was confirmed that the ANPR system was used to log vehicles that moved around the Borough.</p> <p>Members sought further clarification as to the percentage of the cost for removing vans or vehicles which was covered by the Council. In response, officers confirmed that the majority of the cost was covered by the West London Waste Authority. The Council operated a contract with them, and contractors removed vehicles on behalf of Hillingdon Council and other boroughs across Greater London. Members were informed that, when vehicle owners came forward, they bore the cost of storage and removal, which contractors recovered directly. For vehicles recovered but not collected, the Council was responsible for storage and destruction costs.</p> <p>Councillors asked whether there was active patrolling across the Borough to identify abandoned vehicles, such as those with weeds growing underneath them, and enquired whether there was any collaboration with the police to identify stolen vehicles. Officers confirmed that, in the past six months, 351 cases had been assigned to officers, with 236 site visits conducted. Officers inspected vehicles, took photographs, and made the necessary enquiries. The Council worked with local police teams who checked whether vehicles were stolen and took appropriate action. Members heard that stolen vehicles were not removed by the Council.</p> <p>Regarding vehicles parked on private land, the Committee was advised that, if the</p>

landowner objected to removal within 15 days, the Council could not proceed with removal. In cases where there was an environmental hazard, such as someone living in the vehicle or a rat infestation, it was confirmed that the vehicle could not be removed under abandoned vehicle legislation. However, the Council could pursue removal under Environmental Protection and statutory nuisance legislation.

In response to their questions regarding the average officer time spent investigating a suspected abandoned vehicle case, Members were informed that the time varied and was difficult to quantify without a time-motion study. The process included site visits, DVLA checks, correspondence with registered owners, and coordination with contractors. Officers sometimes needed to revisit sites multiple times due to objections or removal issues. The Committee heard that over 600 misdirected cases had been triaged by the front-door team, which did not meet the definition of abandoned vehicles. These included vehicles that were taxed or had valid MOTs. The triage process was very resource intensive.

In respect of data on suspected abandoned vehicles linked to Heathrow travellers, officers stated that such cases were screened out as nuisance parking and not processed as abandoned vehicles. The Council did not collect data on whether vehicles belonged to holiday travellers.

Members sought further clarity as to what percentage of removed vehicles were not collected. It was confirmed that, in the past six months, 87 vehicles had been removed. Only two had been claimed by registered owners, and 57 had been destroyed.

Councillors enquired whether there had been an increase in abandoned vehicles since the introduction of ULEZ in London. **Officers agreed to provide before-and-after figures following the meeting.**

With regard to “surrender your car” initiatives to help residents dispose of vehicles, it was noted that no such initiatives were run by the Council. However, Government scrappage schemes existed at the national or London-wide level.

The Committee sought further information regarding the removal of HGV trailers in areas like Springfield Road. Officers emphasised that the Council was aware of the issue. Removal was complicated due to size and occupancy. It was confirmed that several cases were currently open relating to Springfield Road. With regard to other hotspots for trailers, Members were informed that data collection was underway to identify such areas and enable proactive enforcement.

In response to Members’ queries regarding staffing, it was noted that the six officers who dealt with abandoned vehicles also covered a wide range of other issues including fly-tipping, littering, highway obstructions, and overgrown hedges. It was noted that abandoned vehicles were among the top three categories of service requests. It was further confirmed that enforcement responsibilities were split between LBH-employed staff and contracted services. On-street enforcement was contracted out. The Council had six street enforcement officers and two senior investigators for complex cases.

Further to their questions regarding the removal of vehicles on private land, Members were informed that, if a landowner objected during the 15-day notice period, the Council was not at liberty to remove the vehicle in question. However, in cases where there was an environmental hazard, the Council would use alternative legislation such as Environmental Protection to address the issue.

In respect of the rollout of the Love Clean Streets app it was highlighted that the Council was working with digital and intelligence teams to develop process maps and configurations. No fixed start date was committed, but an indicative go-live for the first stage was around November 2025.

It was confirmed that the decision to engage with the app had been made by the Council's digital and intelligence team. The app was part of a broader solution to improve issue reporting across services.

RESOLVED: That the Residents' Services Select Committee noted the content of the report.

109. PROPOSED REVIEW OF FOOTWAY PARKING IN PRIORITY AREAS (PHASE 1)
(Agenda Item 8)

Democratic Services introduced the item and outlined the proposal to initiate a review of footway parking within the Borough. It was reported that this proposal had been agreed in principle by Councillors Bridges and Farley during prior discussions.

Given the extensive list of roads, it was deemed impractical to review them all, therefore, the review would focus on selecting approximately 20 roads where specific issues had already been reported by residents or identified by Ward Councillors. Councillors were invited to suggest additional roads from the list that they considered priority areas. It was noted that the intention was to complete the review within the current municipal year, acknowledging the limited time available.

Councillor Bridges added that the approach would be phased, beginning with a small number of roads. Emphasis would be placed on reviewing roads that had been suspended for several decades, some dating back to the 1980s. It was considered that the continued designation of these roads as "pending review" was inappropriate and required urgent attention. It was noted that the selected roads would be primarily located in areas of economic activity, such as shopping districts, where effective schemes could support economic growth.

It was confirmed that some suggestions for review items, such as funfairs, were being addressed internally and therefore deferred, while others had been added to the Committee's work programme as information items for future scrutiny.

With regard to the Footway Parking review, Members emphasised the importance of ensuring a fair geographical spread across the Borough to obtain a representative understanding.

The Committee noted that there might be a higher concentration of suspended roads in the southern part of the Borough, but a balanced approach could be achieved, particularly in areas with shopping facilities.

Councillors queried the timeframe for the review, referencing a proposed site visit mentioned on page 34 of the report, scheduled for December. Councillors highlighted that certain estates within the Borough had been constructed during periods that did not accommodate on-street parking, which had led to pavement parking arrangements. Members stressed the importance of formalising these arrangements and understanding their legitimacy and requested clarity on how the list would be agreed

upon, particularly in relation to areas with historical infrastructure constraints.

The Committee cautioned against an overly rigid equal split, which could result in the exclusion of significant roads—such as long roads near schools in the north—that had been suspended. It was suggested that one option would be to use the Borough's gritting map, as a model to identify priority roads for the review. It was agreed that the list should remain precise but focusing on road length and strategic importance was recommended.

Councillors referred to a school safety review conducted in July 2024, which had included presentations from schools and residents concerning pavement parking near educational establishments. They recommended revisiting that review to identify any relevant roads.

It was agreed that Democratic Services would reach out to relevant officers to obtain a suggested list of roads. This list could then be compared with the current proposals before seeking further input from councillors.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agreed to embark upon Footway Parking in Priority Areas (Phase 1) as their next review topic and agreed the draft Terms of Reference, scope of review and review structure as set out in the scoping report.

110. **FORWARD PLAN** *(Agenda Item 9)*

Councillor Scott Farley requested further information in respect of two items on the Forward Plan – the Out of Hours service and HMOs. It was agreed that Democratic Services would follow up on this and revert to Cllr Farley directly.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.

111. **WORK PROGRAMME** *(Agenda Item 10)*

Democratic Services reminded Members that they had been invited to attend a financial scrutiny training session on 10 September from 18:00 hours. The training session would be held on Teams.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.04 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Liz Penny, Democratic Services Officer on epenny@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, officers, the press and members of the public.