



HILLINGDON
LONDON



CABINET

To all Members of the Cabinet:

Date: THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2024

Time: 7.00 PM

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

**Meeting
Details:** Members of the Public and
Media are welcome to attend
this meeting and observe the
public business discussed.

This meeting will also be
broadcast live on the
Council's YouTube Channel.

Ian Edwards, Leader of the Council
(Chair)

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

Martin Goddard, Cabinet Member for
Finance

Douglas Mills, Cabinet Member for
Corporate Services

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

Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health
& Social Care

Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for
Residents' Services

You can view the agenda
at www.hillingdon.gov.uk or use a smart
phone camera and scan the code below:



Published:

Wednesday, 19 June 2024

Contact:

Mark Braddock

Tel: 01895 250470

Email: mbraddock@hillingdon.gov.uk

Putting our residents first

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

Attending this meeting

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend this meeting. To ensure our buildings and public meetings are safe and accessible to everyone attending, we will carry out security measures when needed. This may include searching people and their belongings before allowing entry. If you refuse to be searched, you will not be able to attend the meeting. We may also confiscate items which could pose a danger to other people. In order to ensure your personal safety you will also be required to produce satisfactory proof of identity & sign in on arrival. If you refuse to comply with this requirement, you will not be able to attend the meeting.

Watching & recording this meeting

You can watch the public part of this meeting on the Council's YouTube channel, live or archived after the meeting. Residents and the media are also welcome to attend in person, and if they wish, report on the public part of the meeting. Any individual or organisation may record or film proceedings as long as it does not disrupt proceedings. It is recommended to give advance notice of filming to ensure any particular requirements can be met. The Council will provide seating areas for residents/public, high speed WiFi access to all attending and an area for the media to report. The officer shown on the front of this agenda should be contacted for further information and will be available to assist. When present in the room, silent mode should be enabled for all mobile devices.

Travel and parking

Bus routes 427, U1, U3, U4 and U7 all stop at the Civic Centre. Uxbridge underground station, with the Piccadilly and Metropolitan lines, is a short walk away. Limited parking is available at the Civic Centre. For details on availability and how to book a parking space, please contact Democratic Services. Please enter via main reception and visit the security desk to sign-in and collect a visitors pass. You will then be directed to the Committee Room.

Accessibility

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

Emergency procedures

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

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



Notice

Notice of meeting and any private business

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

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

27 June 2024 at 7pm in Committee Room 6, Civic Centre, Uxbridge

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

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

Notice of any urgent business

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

Notice of any representations received

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

Date notice issued and of agenda publication

19 June 2024
London Borough of Hillingdon

Agenda

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

Cabinet Reports - Part 1 (Public)

- 5 Select Committee Review: The Council's consultation arrangements (Cllr Douglas Mills) 13 - 32
- 6 Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (Cllr Eddie Lavery) 33 - 40
- 7 Update to the Corporate Complaints Policy (Cllr Douglas Mills) 41 - 50
- 8 Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029 - Policy Framework (Cllr Susan O'Brien) 51 - 82
- 9 Budget Outturn 2023/24 (Cllr Martin Goddard) 83 - 126
- 10 Public Preview of matters to be considered in private (All Cabinet Members) 127 - 130

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

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|
| 11 | Beck Theatre, Hayes - contract extension (Cllr Eddie Lavery) | 131 - 136 |
| 12 | Enterprise Architecture Infrastructure & Hosting of key business applications (Cllr Douglas Mills) | 137 - 144 |
| 13 | Contracts for vehicle hire and damage repairs arrangements in support of the Fleet operation (Cllr Jonathan Bianco) | 145 - 154 |

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

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

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Minutes

CABINET

Thursday, 23 May 2024

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



Decisions published on: 24 May 2024

Decisions come into effect from 5pm, 3 June 2024 or as stated

Cabinet Members Present:

Ian Edwards (Chair)
Jonathan Bianco (Vice-Chair)
Douglas Mills
Jane Palmer
Eddie Lavery

Other Members Present:

Peter Curling
Stuart Mathers
June Nelson

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Goddard and Councillor O'Brien.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS BEFORE THIS MEETING

Apologies were received from Councillor Goddard and Councillor Lavery

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST CABINET MEETING

The decisions and minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 April 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

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

It was confirmed that the reports, as marked public and private on the agenda, would be considered as such. Two additional urgent items were also tabled to Cabinet, one in public and the other private.

5. SCHOOL CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet

1. Note the progress made with primary and secondary school expansions, the school condition programme and other school capital projects.
2. Agree to delegate all future decisions required to facilitate the projects linked to the School Condition Programme to the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways & Transport, with other Cabinet Portfolio holders as appropriate, and in consultation with the Head of Capital Programme Works.

Reasons for decision

The Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport presented a report on the Council's school building and conditions programme, including the expansion of primary, secondary, and special schools. It was noted that pupil numbers had been changing, with the demand for primary school places, which had been increasing until 2018, now on the decline. This has resulted in excess capacity at many primary schools, reducing the urgency to create more primary places. However, secondary schools were still experiencing some pressures, although it was considered that the current demands would be met. The main area highlighted by the Cabinet Member was the need for special school places, which were anticipated to require significant funding in the upcoming period. The projected total expenditure for this was £43.4 million, compared to the £18.5 million allocated for the wider school condition building program.

The Leader of the Council emphasised the importance of ongoing school condition surveys to prevent future incidents where schools become unusable due to infrastructure issues like leaks or boiler failures.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Decision No.2 can be called-in by the relevant Select Committee by 5pm, Monday 3 June 2024. If not called-in, it can be implemented from this time/date by officers.
Officer(s) to action	Bobby Finch
Directorate	Place
Classification	Public <i>The report and any background papers relating to this decision by the Cabinet are available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.</i>

14. NEW PAVEMENT LICENSING REGIME 2024

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

- 1) Note the new pavement licensing provisions from the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023, and as set out in Annex 1.
- 2) Authorise new pavement licence fees of £350 for renewals and £500 for new applications.
- 3) Authorise Officers to make amendments to the standard licence conditions to reflect the legislative changes required, as in Annex 2, and apply a duration of two years for pavement licences.
- 4) Note that when reviewing pavement licence applications officers will ensure that businesses make reasonable provision for non-smokers to use outdoor seating space and that smoking and non-smoking areas are adequately separated.

Reasons for decision

The Cabinet Member for Residents' Services introduced a report on the new pavement licensing regime under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, which replaced the emergency provisions of the Business and Planning Act 2020, initially introduced to aid hospitality businesses during the COVID pandemic period by allowing them to place furniture outside their premises. The Cabinet Member highlighted that there would be an increase in the fees from the original £100 to £350 for renewals and £500 for new applications, covering a two-year period. The Cabinet Member also outlined the need for the reasonable provision for non-smokers in outdoor seating areas, ensuring that smoking and non-smoking zones were adequately separated.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the clarity provided by the new guidelines, especially regarding the accommodation of non-smokers in outdoor seating arrangements.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None, other than for the Council to not meet its statutory obligations.

Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions (2&3) can be called in by a majority of the Select Committee by 5pm, 3 June 2024. If not called-in, the decisions can be implemented by officers from this time/date.
Officer(s) to action	Richard Webb / Daniel Ferrer
Directorate	Place
Classification	Public - <i>The report and any background papers relating to this decision by the Cabinet are available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.</i>

Urgency provisions – *The Leader of the Council agreed the report relating to this decision as an urgent item. This decision was taken under special urgency provisions in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.*

6. PUBLIC PREVIEW OF MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Cabinet received a report noting those reports to be considered later in private and Part 2 of the Cabinet agenda.

7. SCHOOL CONDITION BUILDING PROGRAMME 2024-2025: ROOFING WORKS AT 5 SCHOOLS

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet approves:

- 1) The award of a building works contract to CWG Group Ltd for works outlined in this report at Bourne Primary School, Whitehall Infant School and Whiteheath Infant School at a cost of £1,148,624;
- 2) The award of a building works contract to CWG Group Ltd for works outlined in this report at Newnham Infant School and Hayes Park School at a cost of £1,487,810 and;
- 3) The capital release request of £3,057,394 from the 2024/25 School Conditions Building Programme budget relating to roofing works at 5 schools, Newnham Infant School, Bourne Primary School, Whitehall Infant School, Whiteheath Infant School and Hayes Park School, and associated costs.

Reasons for decision

As part of the Council's programme to improve school buildings, Cabinet agreed contracts for roofing works at 5 schools - Newnham Infant School, Bourne Primary School, Whitehall Infant School, Whiteheath Infant School and Hayes Park School.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions can be called in by a majority of the Select Committee by 5pm, 3 June 2024. If not called-in, it can be implemented after this time/date.

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

8. PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL OFFICIAL VETERINARY SERVICES AT THE IMPORTED FOOD OFFICE

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the variation to the Senlac Associates contract for provision of Veterinary Services at the Imported Food Office (IFO) to change the number of Official Veterinarians from five to eight over the period from 29 April 2024 to 31 March 2026, noting that this will be at an additional cost of £721,402.**
- 2. Ratify the new fees & charges implemented at the Imported Food office as set out in the report, which were approved by the Leader of the Council under urgency measures, due to DEFRA enacting changes to border controls on EU imports.**

Reasons for decision

Cabinet agreed to vary the existing veterinary services contract at the Imported Food Office, Heathrow Airport, to increase the number of official veterinarians to meet the introduction of additional checks on medium-risk animal products from the EU, noting that this would be recovered through new fees and charges from importers, agreed recently by the Leader of the Council.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None, as the Council would fail to meet its statutory obligations.

Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decision No.1 can be called in by a majority of the Select Committee by 5pm, 3 June 2024. If not called-in, it can be implemented after this time/date. Cabinet's decision No.2 to ratify the fees set out cannot be called-in.
Officer(s) to action	Samantha Doherty – Imported Food Office

**Directorate
Classification**

Place

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

9. HILLINGDON SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE ROOFING WORKS FOR DECARBONISATION PROJECT

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the Direct Award to Greyline Group Limited for the provision of the Renewal of the Roof, Insulation and Man-safe system, utilising the LHC Lot 8 – Environmental and External Works framework agreement - to aid the de-carbonisation of the Hillingdon Sports & Leisure Centre at a value of £650k.**
- 2) Agree to the capital release request of £783k from the Carbon Zero Initiatives 2024/25 Programme capital budget for the provision of the Renewal of the Roof, Insulation and Man-Safe System.**

Reasons for decision

As part of the Council's decarbonisation plans, Cabinet agreed a contract to undertake roofing works at the Hillingdon Sports and Leisure Centre to prepare for the installation of PV Solar panels.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Cabinet could have requested a full tender exercise for these, but discounted this due to the timescales and financial impact involved.

Relevant Select Committee Corporate Resources & Infrastructure

Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)

Cabinet's decisions can be called in by a majority of the Select Committee by 5pm, 3 June 2024. If not called-in, it can be implemented after this time/date.

Officer(s) to action

Gary Penticost / Glen Martin

Directorate

Place

Classification

Private - Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the

Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

10. CIVIC CENTRE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME 2024-2025: ASBESTOS REMOVAL AND ASSOCIATED REMEDIAL WORKS

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

- 1) Approves the Direct Award to European Asbestos Services Ltd. for the provision of the Removal of Asbestos to aid the Civic Centre Transformation Project for a period of 2 years, utilising the Fusion 21 Framework, and at a value of £1,084,898.50.**
- 2) Approves the Direct Award to Trac Ltd. for the provision of Site Investigation, Sampling and Analytical Surveys working in conjunction with European Asbestos Services Ltd, for the period of 2 years, utilising Fusion 21 Framework, and at a value of £223,110.**
- 3) Agree to the release request of £1,504k from the Civic Centre Transformation and Enabling Works Programme 2024/25 Capital budget for the Asbestos Removing, Asbestos Surveying and Monitoring to 9 Quadrants, 2 Smoke raisers and Reception area.**

Reasons for decision

Cabinet agreed the necessary contracts and capital funding for Asbestos Removal and associated Asbestos Surveying and Monitoring as part of the remaining phases of the Civic Centre Transformation Project.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Cabinet could have decided to procure such services alongside project phases, but considered this uneconomic.

Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions can be called in by a majority of the Select Committee by 5pm, 3 June 2024. If not called-in, it can be implemented after this time/date.
Officer(s) to action	Glen Martin
Directorate	Place
Classification	Private - <i>Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in</i>

withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

11. SHORT-TERM NURSING CARE HOME BEDS CONTRACT FOR HOSPITAL DISCHARGE

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet accepts a single tender from Halton Services Limited for the provision to the London Borough of Hillingdon of a block contract of ten short-term nursing care home beds at Parkfield House Nursing Home for a period of three years from June 2024 at a total cost of £2,033,571.

Reasons for decision

Cabinet agreed a contract to continue to secure nursing beds at Parkfield House Nursing Home to support timely discharge from hospital of residents who require short-term support in a care home setting and have nursing needs, noting that this was at no cost to the Council and funded by the NHS.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Relevant Select Committee	Health & Social Care
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions can be called in by a majority of the Select Committee by 5pm, 3 June 2024. If not called-in, it can be implemented after this time/date.
Officer(s) to action	Gary Collier / Sally Offin
Directorate	Adult Services & Health / Finance
Classification	Private - <i>Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</i>

**12. MINOR PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS - HIGHGROVE SWIMMING POOL:
LEASES FOR POWER SUBSTATIONS**

RESOLVED:

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

Reasons for decision

Cabinet agreed the proposed part surrender and grant of a new long-term lease to UK Power Networks of 99 years to ensure suitable power supply for a key Borough facility, Highgrove Pool in Ruislip.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions can be called in by a majority of the Select Committee by 5pm, 3 June 2024. If not called-in, it can be implemented after this time/date.
Officer(s) to action	James Raven
Directorate	Place
Classification	Private - <i>Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</i>

15. RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS PROGRAMME 2024/25

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1. Agrees in principle to work with a partner organisation or organisations to expedite the acquisition of up to 200 residential properties for affordable social rented housing within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), in line with the Council's agreed policy and budget strategy to acquire 500 additional affordable rented homes over the next three years.**

2. Agrees to the direct appointment of Madison Brook, to undertake a pilot programme to a 'contract value' of £607k to acquire 20 residential properties in Borough including full refurbishment of the properties to our lettings standard as required as part of the acquisition plan, for review, evaluation and feedback to Cabinet following the completion of the first 10 property acquisitions, to inform the future delivery options for the remainder of the acquisitions programme.
3. Delegates authority to the post of the Corporate Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, to agree the purchase price, refurbishment costs and all associated fees and related costs of all properties within the pilot acquisitions programme and to make all necessary decisions in respect of the due diligence work required in support of this, and to make the final decision on the purchase of the accommodation, including the release of capital funds for each property as required, to be reported back to Cabinet.
4. Releases funds of up to £7,248k capital funding to undertake the 20-property pilot from the Housing Revenue Account Acquisition and Development Budget Unallocated 2024/25, to include all necessary costs for due diligence, legal work the purchase of the properties, fees and cost of any refurbishment work (Appendix A)
5. Notes that Officers will be seeking from the Greater London Authority and the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing additional grant funding to support the programme to acquire additional residential properties.
6. Requests that the Chair of the Residents' Services Select Committee considers waiving the scrutiny call-in period on these recommendations due to the urgency reasons set out in the report.

Reasons for decision

Cabinet agreed a pilot programme and partner company to work with in order to accelerate the acquisition and refurbishment of housing, in order to both meet the Council's housing target and importantly to meet social housing need locally. The innovative approach to the expansion of the Council's housing portfolio was welcomed.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Cabinet considered various options, as set out in the confidential report.

Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	These decisions cannot be called in and take immediate effect following the Cabinet meeting, because the Chair of the Residents' Services Select Committee agreed to waive the scrutiny call-in period.

Officer(s) to action
Directorate
Classification

Dan Kennedy
 Central Services

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

Urgency provisions – The Leader of the Council agreed the report relating to this decision as an urgent item. This decision was taken under special urgency provisions in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

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

Other than the two urgent matters in these minutes, no further additional items were considered by the Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 19:21pm

Internal Use only*

Implementation of decisions & scrutiny call-in

When can these decisions be implemented by officers?

Officers can implement Cabinet's decisions in these minutes only from the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period, unless otherwise stated in the minutes above, which is:

5pm, Monday 3 June 2024

However, this is subject to the decision not being called in by Councillors on the relevant Select Committee. Upon receipt of a valid call-in request, Democratic Services will immediately advise the relevant officer(s) and the Cabinet decision must then be put on hold.

Councillor scrutiny call-in of these decisions

Councillors on the relevant Select Committee shown in these minutes for the relevant decision made may request to call-in that decision. The call-in request must be before the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period above.

Councillors should use the Scrutiny Call-in App (link below) on their devices to initiate any call-in request. Further advice can be sought from Democratic Services if required:

[Scrutiny Call-In - Power Apps](#) (secure)

Notice

These decisions have been taken under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

This Cabinet meeting was also broadcast live on the Council's YouTube channel [here](#) for wider resident engagement.

Please note that these minutes and decisions are the definitive record of proceedings by the Council of this meeting.

If you would like further information about the decisions of the Cabinet, please contact the Council below:

democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk

Democratic Services: 01895 250636

Media enquiries: 01895 250403

FORMER FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE: A REVIEW INTO THE COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Cabinet Member	Councillor Douglas Mills
Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Officer Contact	Marion Finney, Central Services Directorate Anisha Teji, Central Services Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix – Data Slides

HEADLINES

Summary	Cabinet is asked to consider the findings, conclusions and recommendations made by the former Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee after its review into the Council's Consultation Arrangements.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the Council's objective of: <i>An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents</i> This report supports our commitments to residents of: <i>A Digital-Enabled, Modern, Well-Run Council</i>
Financial Cost	There are no direct cost implications resulting from this report.
Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee
Ward(s) affected	None

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet welcomes the insights, findings and conclusions of the Committee and notes this review was highlighted in the Select Committee annual scrutiny report. The Cabinet asks Officers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, to:

1. Explore the integration of digital devices in libraries, providing users with language preferences for live consultations.
2. Provide quick survey options during detailed consultations for users who prefer faster responses.
3. Consider adding a dedicated section within 'My Account' for live consultation documents to enhance user participation.

4. Foster collaboration with the Youth Council to ensure relevant involvement in consultations, encouraging feedback from the youth demographic.
5. Consider ways to increase engagement on social media platforms, like Facebook, such as addressing comments about consultations and guiding users to relevant consultations.
6. Facilitate easier interaction for Councillors by providing shareable links to consultations within their wards or wider related issues.
7. Establish a 'You said, we did' approach to provide feedback on decisions made and actions taken based on received feedback.
8. Approve using post-meeting links to Council surveys and consultations on relevant council meeting YouTube broadcasts to further promote them.
9. Consider introducing an annual evaluation across consultations looking at their effectiveness in achieving geographical and demographical parity to set measurable objectives for improvement.

Reasons for recommendations

Following a request from the Full Council to review the Council's consultation arrangements, the Committee undertook a short review on the matter in conjunction with the Council's consultation team and using other analysis and best practice information. The Committee has made some practical recommendations to aid the way consultations are devised going forward to increase resident and community interest and take-up, by making them more engaging and dynamic. Ultimately the '**voice of residents**' help to shape the way services are delivered to meet residents needs and for better service delivery and resident experience. The Full Council was updated on the review at its meeting on 9 May 2024, through the Annual Scrutiny Report. The review was finalised under the auspices of the former Finance & Corporate Services Select Committee, which has since been superseded by the Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Cabinet could choose to not approve or amend any of the recommendations.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

At the Council meeting held on 28 September 2023, a motion, as amended, was agreed as follows:

"That this Council regrets a low response rate to its public consultations and asks the Corporate Services select committee to review the Council's consultation process to ensure the voices of our diverse communities are heard, working towards geographical parity."

On 19 October 2023, the Committee had a kick start meeting with the Council's Community Engagement Manager who provided an overview of the Council's consultation process focusing on how the Council engaged with diverse communities and ensured geographical parity. Members expressed a number of points about low response rates and a lack of diverse voices in more universal borough-wide consultations, such as those related to the Budget, SEND Strategy and Library Strategy. The Committee supported a single meeting review on this at a subsequent meeting to enable it to explore the matter further and consider geographical parity and demographic analysis of the Council's consultations in more depth.

The Committee's review

The Committee embarked on its single meeting review on 11 January 2024 where it considered aspects of the consultation process and the key data and consultation response analyses. The Committee was able to question and solicit evidence from the Community Engagement Manager.

The Terms of Reference for the review were agreed as follows:

1. To investigate the Council's Consultation Arrangements as requested by the motion (initial discussion at Select Committee in October).
2. To review how the voice of our diverse communities are heard working together towards geographical parity.
3. To make any necessary recommendations to Cabinet based on the Committee's findings.

Purpose of consultations

Members understood that consultations were activities that gave local people a voice and an opportunity to influence important decisions. It involved listening and learning from local people before decisions were made or priorities were set. Resident surveys fell under the heading of consultations, but the term was usually applied when considering formal or detailed pieces of work such as finding out what residents thought about significant changes or proposals that affected them, such as plans to change services, regenerate or redevelop a local area, or on particular planning applications.

The Committee heard about the different types of consultations including Statutory vs Non – Statutory and their significance. Some issues, such as planning or redevelopments, required Councils to consult their residents by law. These statutory consultations followed legal requirements and had strict rules on how they should be conducted. Other consultations had no legal status but served various purposes such as improving policies, providing consent, encouraging participation and aligning activities with resident needs and aspirations and the delivery of the Council Strategy.

Geographical and demographic parity

The Committee was informed that geographical parity referred to ensuring that residents from all geographic areas within the Borough had equal opportunities to participate in consultations and have their voices heard. This, along with demographic parity, e.g. gender, also aimed to avoid any bias or disproportionate representation. In the context of the Council's consultation arrangements at the present time, Members learnt that achieving such parity involved:

1. *Equitable Representation*: Ensuring that residents from different neighbourhoods, wards, or districts were equally engaged in consultations. This prevents over-reliance on feedback from specific areas while neglecting others.
2. *Balancing Response Rates*: Analysing response rates across various geographical areas. If certain areas consistently had lower participation, efforts should be made to encourage engagement from those communities.
3. *Tailored Approaches*: Recognising that different neighbourhoods may have unique needs, concerns, and preferences. Consultation methods should be adapted to suit the characteristics of each area.
4. *Inclusivity*: Making sure that residents from all walks of life, regardless of where they live, their sex or age, had equal access to information about consultations. This includes considering language barriers, accessibility, and digital literacy.

Consultation methods

The Committee was informed that the Customer Engagement Team (CET) was in the main responsible for coordinating consultations and engagement activities across the Council. The team organises events for residents and partner organisations, including conferences, forums, and assemblies.

Members were advised about the different opportunities for residents to engage in a variety of ways, via the use of digital tools as well as 'in-person' contact. Members understood the need for engagement to be non-exclusionary, and not be limited to only digital means but instead provide a breadth of options to give a voice to all residents.

The Committee acknowledged the different methods of consultations used by the Council at the current time including:

- Face to face meetings
- Virtual meetings / discussions
- Surveys (online and paper-based, telephone / postal methods)
- Hybrid sessions
- Information shared on noticeboards
- Social media comments / feedback
- Estate-based events
- Regular engagement with community and faith leaders
- Regular engagement with residents' associations, tenant groups etc.
- Assemblies (e.g. older people)
- Forums (e.g., carers, young people etc.)

It was confirmed that all the above methods were supported with interpretation and translation services where these were required, addressing any potential language barriers to resident engagement. Members noted that the Council also had a database of residents with relevant focus or special interests in various service areas. Some of these residents had also indicated

their preferred method of engagement. The Committee welcomed that the CET was always looking at opportunities to improve its service delivery and add value to its consultation process.

The Committee sought to focus on the wider service consultations by the Council that reach out to a far larger numbers of residents, rather than resident direct democratic engagement such as through voting, petition hearings and speaking at planning committees, which are enshrined within the Council’s governance arrangements.

Consultation planning

Members sought to focus on the process for planning non-statutory larger public consultations, where there was some more scope for the Council to plan its own approach. The different stages were outlined below:

<i>Information gathering</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What exactly do we need to know? • What questions do we need to ask? • Is the information already available elsewhere? • How will the feedback from responses be used?
<i>Target audience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do we need to engage with? • How will they be reached? • Will residents require assistance to participate? Accessibility, language barrier, specific days, and times etc.
<i>Engagement methods</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which method of engagement is the most suitable for the target audience? • Are there any possible alternatives to the preferred method? • If a survey or consultation – what is the appropriate timeframe? • What are the financial resources available?
<i>Analysis and reporting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will information be collated? • What will be the best way to report the findings? Depending on the audience, e.g., Cabinet, residents, staff etc.
<i>Feedback</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be done with the feedback/information received? • How will we demonstrate to stakeholders that we have listened to feedback and where appropriate, acted on it? • Where necessary, how will information received be kept in line with GDPR guidelines?

The Committee was pleased to hear that the CET worked alongside the Communications Team and Digital Team, along with any relevant service areas, to ensure that surveys and consultations were carefully planned and then promoted through various communications channels to residents.

Analysis of consultations

The Committee’s review was supported by data collated from recent consultations to identify any potential engagement trends.

The Committee explored various charts and graphs, including those as evidenced in the Appendix, which provided further insight into resident ethnicity, religion, disability and age. The document provided demographic data and consultation responses for various topics in the boroughs of Hillingdon, Harrow, Brent, Ealing, and Hounslow.

Members were told that it was important to understand Hillingdon's demographic data from the census before delving into specific engagement trends. It was reported that the total population of Hillingdon was 305,900, with a focus on the 18-plus age group, constituting 76.7% of the population. Key demographic breakdowns included ethnicity (51.8% white, 32% Asian), 14% registered disabled, gender (51.2% female, 48.8% male), and religion (41.4% Christian, 19.4% prefer not to say or no religion, 12.1% Muslim). The Committee was informed that 18 + year old residents were more likely to complete surveys and engage with the Council.

Three examples of community consultations were analysed in relation to the Library Strategy, the Council's budget and the recent (Ultra Low Emission Zone) ULEZ consultation. In terms of the Council's budget consultation, there had been a significant increase in responses from 33 in 2021 to 611 in the last year and this was attributed to enhanced engagement efforts. Male respondents consistently dominated, and specific postcodes like UB8, UB10, UB7, and UB3 showed higher engagement. The age range of 35 to 54 recorded the highest response rates, with an interesting uptick in responses from 35 to 44 in the last year. With regard to the Library Strategy consultation, there were 865 responses. 76% of respondents were female and 74% were White. Also 74% were from areas in the North of the Borough. These results vary somewhat from the Borough-wide demographic breakdown outlined above.

In relation to the ULEZ consultation, it was noted that the majority (84.04%) of respondents identified themselves as residents, whilst a smaller percentage represented local businesses (2.35%), community or voluntary groups (0.66%), or individuals who worked or studied in the Borough (6.59%). A small percentage (2.95%) responded on behalf of a local resident. When asked if their vehicle was ULEZ compliant, 45.08% of respondents answered "Yes," indicating that their vehicle met the emission standards required to enter the ULEZ. On the other hand, 54.51% answered "No," indicating that their vehicle did not meet the emission standards.

Regarding the vehicle scrappage scheme, the majority of respondents (92.20%) stated that they were not eligible for the scheme. Only a small percentage (7.80%) indicated that they would be changing their vehicle before the specified deadline. When asked if they would be applying for a vehicle replacement grant, 85.52% of respondents answered "No," indicating that they would not be applying for the grant. A smaller percentage (4.96%) answered "Yes," indicating that they would be applying for the grant. Additionally, 9.52% of respondents answered "Maybe," suggesting that they were uncertain about whether or not they would apply for the grant.

The Committee was also provided with an analysis of data comparisons with neighbouring boroughs of Harrow and Brent and it was revealed that Hillingdon had higher response rates.

Challenges and barriers

The Committee sought clarification on the different challenges and barriers both residents and Council officers had encountered when conducting consultations. Some of the challenges included residents having a lack of trust in the process, lack of awareness of ongoing consultations, lack of time, digital exclusion and communication barriers.

Although officers had implemented several diverse initiatives and platforms had been put into place such as offering translation surveys, engaging with community leaders and different methods of communication both digitally and in person, the response to consultations was ultimately dependent on peoples' awareness and interest.

Conclusions

The Committee believes that consultation is a core process of the Council that allows local people to have a voice and influence important decisions. The Committee concluded that the Council needs to have a very clear understanding of the target audience for any consultation and the challenges in engaging various communities across the geographical spread of the Borough.

The Committee has found that broadly, the Council makes a strong effort to ensure it engages with those hard-to-reach or hidden communities as part of consultations to gain a fair representation and response and thereby seek to achieve geographical and demographic parity. Members commended officers for their collaborative work with neighbouring boroughs and the ongoing efforts to understand and engage with various groups.

Examples given of this included tailoring certain consultations, engaging with community leaders, both face-to-face and digital methods and in some cases offering translation services. Additionally, there was no recurring evidence to suggest the Council's response rates to consultations was lower to neighbouring local authorities, in fact the opposite in one example.

However, the Committee concluded that ultimately any response to consultations was largely dependent on peoples' own awareness and furthermore interest in the topic, so further efforts by the Council should also be focussed on how we promote and stimulate such interest.

Recommendations

To this endeavour, the Committee has proposed some practical recommendations to foster a more inclusive, responsive and effective approach to consultations, using methods that are more interesting, engaging, adaptable and dynamic. They are designed to suit both local and universal consultations, and meet the changing needs of communities and embrace the Council's wider digital strategies:

- 1) **Integration with digital devices:** This aims to make live consultations more accessible and inclusive by accommodating users' language preferences on Council computers and other devices in libraries for responses.
- 2) **'Quick survey' option:** Recognising that some users prefer faster interactions, this feature will enable us to gather valuable feedback without demanding too much of their time, whilst still providing for more fuller responses for those who have time.
- 3) **Dedicated section within 'My Account':** By making consultation documents readily available in residents' online account with the Council, this aims to encourage greater user participation and engagement.
- 4) **Collaboration with the Youth Council:** To further ensure that the perspectives of our younger demographic are adequately represented in our consultations, by ensuring they are consulted by default on universal consultations, along with any specific matters impacting young people.

- 5) **Increased social media engagement:** By actively addressing comments about consultations and guiding users to relevant consultations on platforms like Facebook, this recommendation aims to reach a wider audience and foster greater community involvement.
- 6) **Shareable consultation links for Councillors:** The role of Ward Councillors is vital in bridging the link between residents and the Council. This feature will enable Councillors to easily engage with consultations relevant to their wards, sharing details to their own resident contacts and groups in their wards, promoting a more informed and collaborative decision-making processes. In local consultations Councillors who were familiar with residents in the area may be helpful in identifying effective engagement methods.
- 7) **'You said, we did' approach:** By standardising such an approach to all our consultations, this aims to provide greater transparency and demonstrate how user feedback directly influences Council decisions and actions.
- 8) **Democratic Services broadcasts:** There are options within YouTube to add links to Council meeting broadcasts to sign-post residents when watching to relevant webpages and other links, which could be used to promote key consultations taking place on topics raised during Council meetings and help increase take-up via this popular digital channel.
- 9) **Annual evaluations:** To set measurable objectives for improvement an annual evaluation will be conducted with specific focus on the use of guidelines provided to help service areas achieve maximum engagement on surveys carried out. This will be done within allocated budget.

The Committee believe that these practical recommendations would have minimal resource implications and could be met within existing budgets.

Officer comments on implementing the recommendations

Should Cabinet approve the recommendations, then the Customer Engagement Team will work with other service leads to ensure that the recommendations made are implemented, monitored and reviewed to aid overall resident engagement, service improvement and delivery. The aim is to embed resident engagement and involvement as a golden thread that runs through everything we do as an organisation.

Evaluation will be conducted with specific focus on the use of guidelines provided to help service areas achieve maximum engagement on surveys and activities conducted. This will be carried out within allocated budget.

Democratic Services can sign-post viewers of Council meetings to key live Council consultations discussed at Cabinet/committee meetings by adding in-video links and in the description.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations contained in this report.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

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

The recommendations in this report are designed with the purpose of improving the Council's consultation process for residents. Hearing, physical and learning disability factors all need to be considered when devising consultations.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

Witness testimony from the Committee as outlined in this report.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed the report and concurs with the financial implications set out above, that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report. The Council increased the Corporate Innovation & Technology approved capital programme budget in February 2023, meaning the Council is in a strong position should any further investment in the digital strategy be required to fund any solutions that may follow on from the recommendations in this report.

Legal

The Borough Solicitor confirms that the legal implications are included in the body of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Committee minutes – 11 January 2024](#)

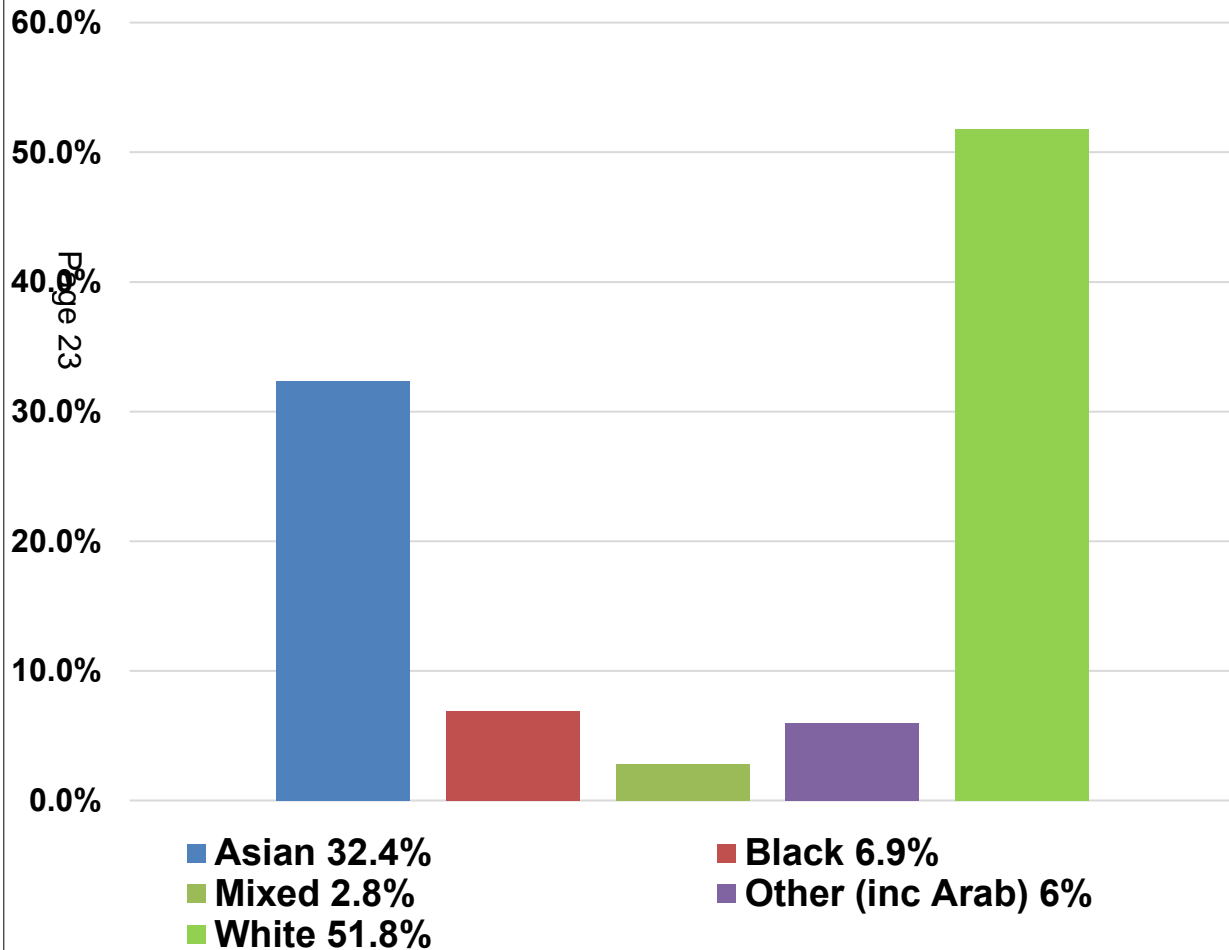
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Overview of 18+ census data

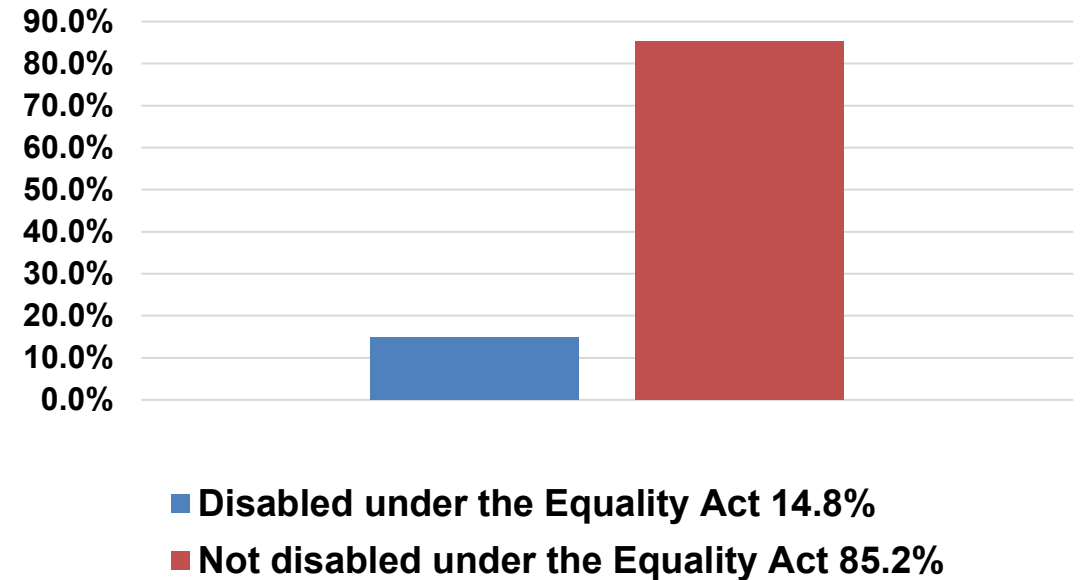
Total borough population – 305,900

Those aged 18+ - 234,544 (76.7%)

Ethnicity as a proportion of those aged 18+



Disability as a proportion of those aged 18+



Overview of 18+ census data

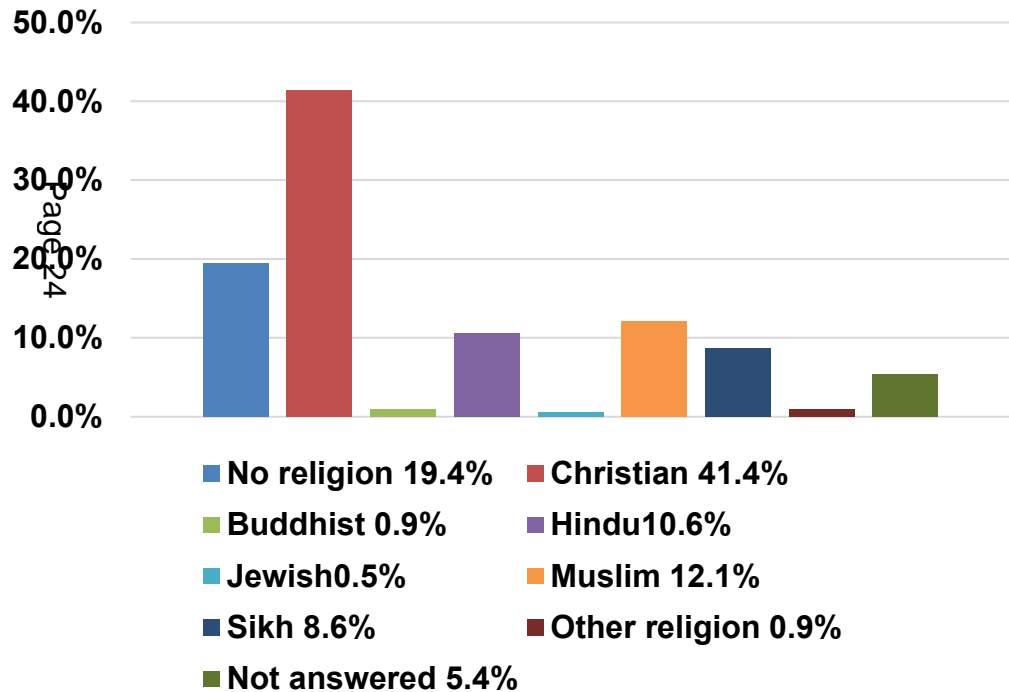
Total borough population – 305,900

Those aged 18+ - 234,544 (76.7%)

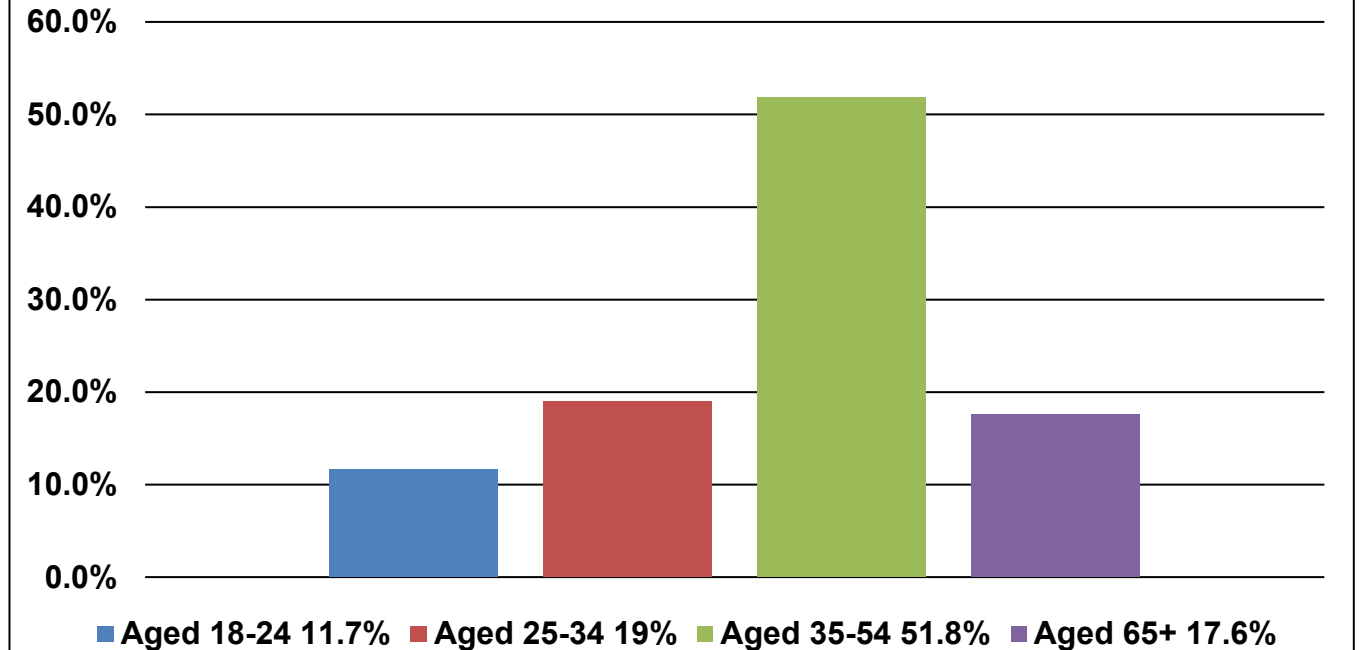
Gender: Female: 51.2%

Male: 48.8%

Religion as a proportion of those aged 18+



Age range as a proportion of those aged 18+



LBH Budget Consultation comparison

Page 25

Financial Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
No of responses	33	115	611
% of residents who responded	94%	99%	95%
% of businesses or organisations that responded	6%	1%	5%
Postcode with most responses	HA6/UB8	HA4/UB7/UB3	HA4 /UB8/UB10
% of female respondents	30%	39%	51%
% of male respondents	60%	53%	41%
Age range of highest respondents	65+ 45-54 25-34	55-64 35-44 25-34	35-44 55-64 65+

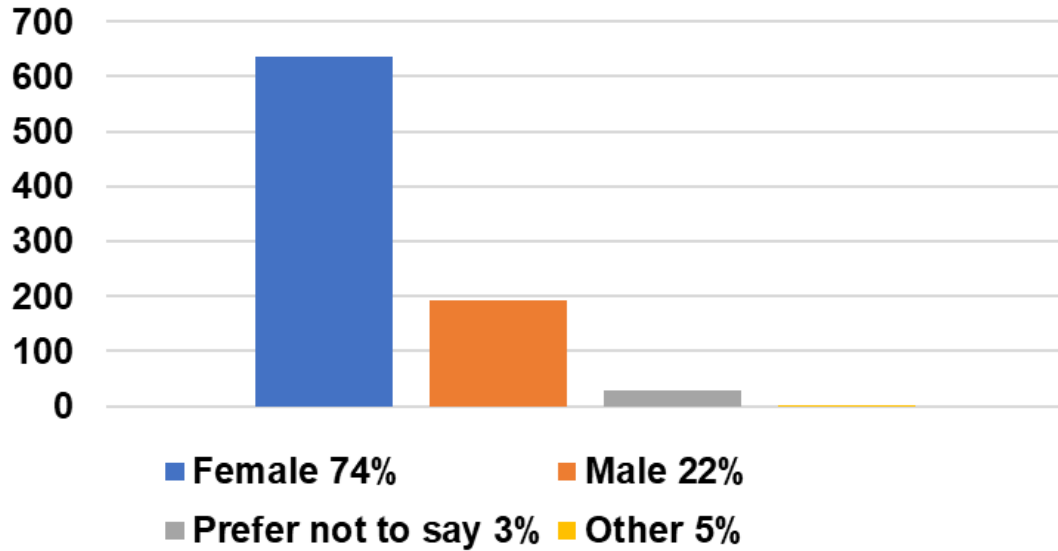
Budget consultation comparison - Hillingdon, Harrow and Brent

2023/24	Hillingdon	Harrow	Brent
No of responses received	611	230	101
% of residents who responded	95%	93%	90%
% of organisations/businesses that responded	5%	7%	10%
% of female respondents	51%	38%	44.6%
% of male respondents	41%	55%	50.8%
Age range of highest respondents	35-44	45-64	51-60

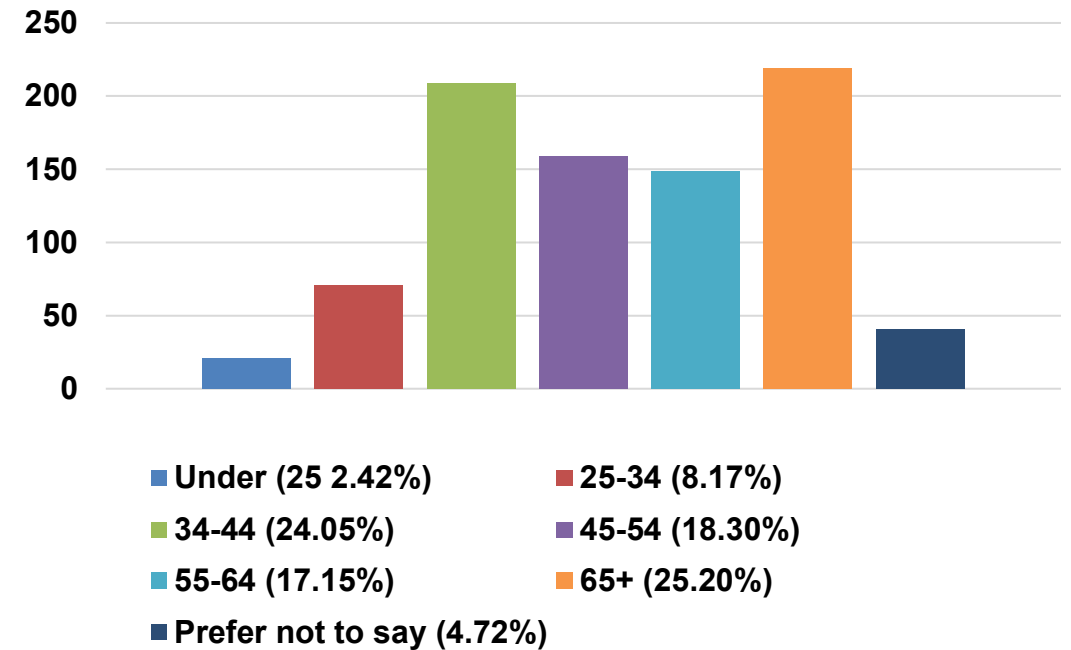
Note for this year, Ealing and Hounslow did not undertake a wider public budget consultation.

LBH Library Service Consultation (869 responses)

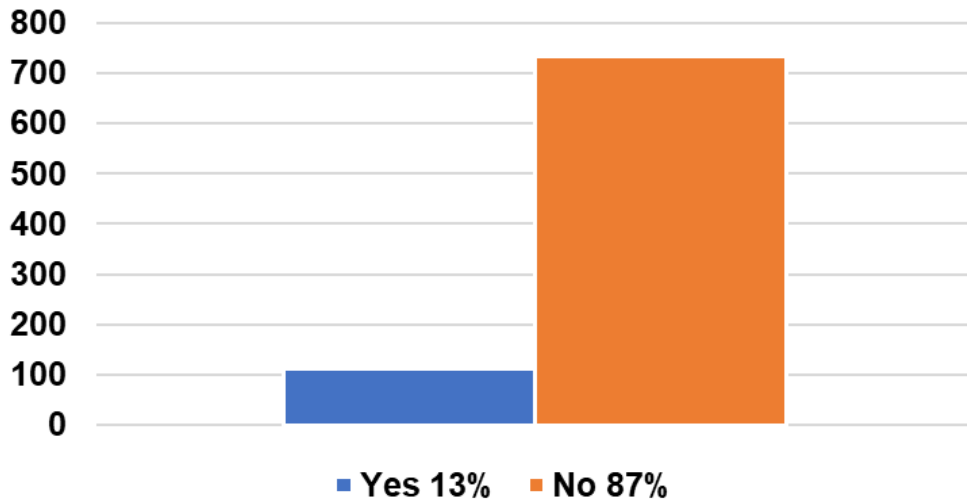
Gender



Age Range

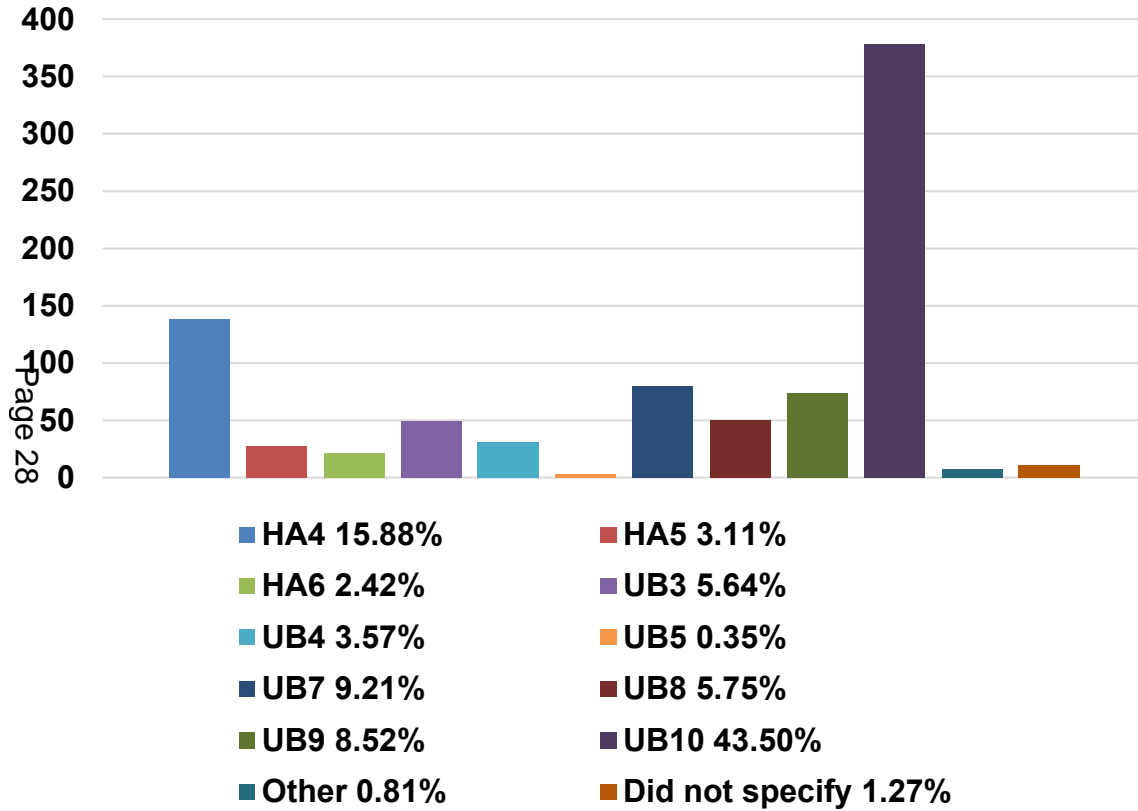


Disability

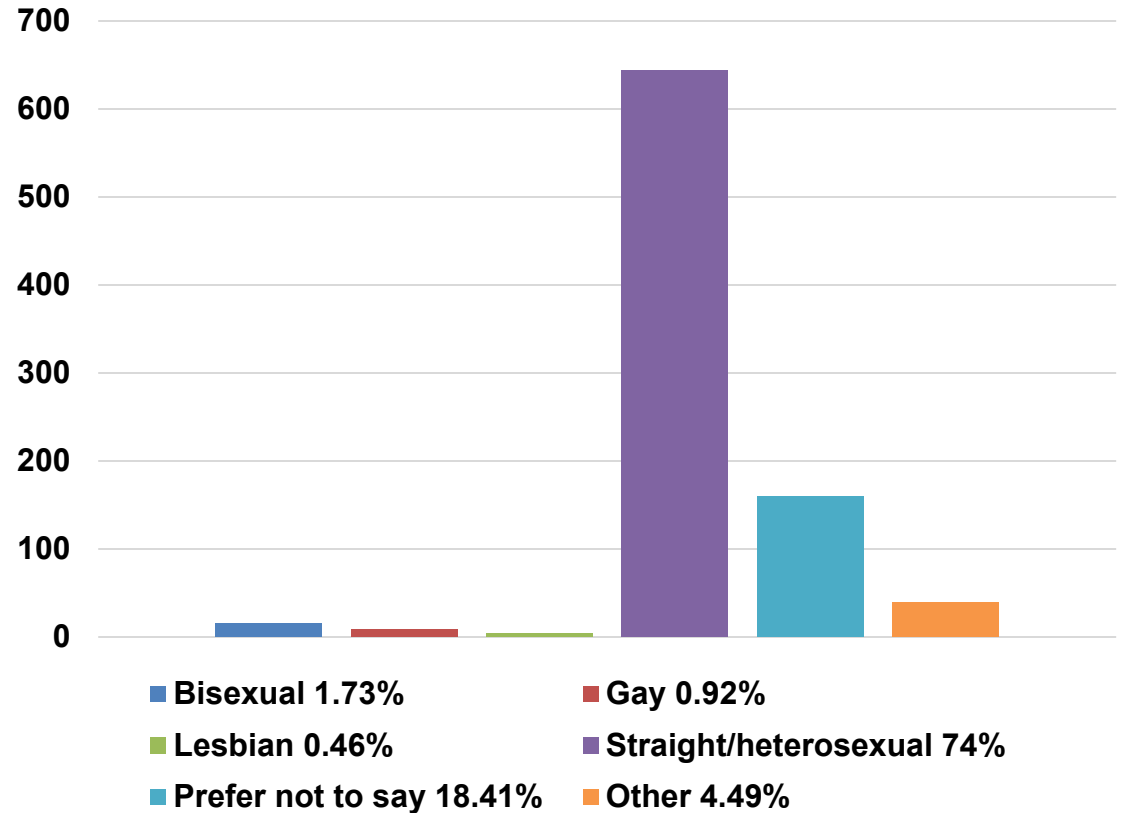


LBH Library Service Consultation

Postcode of where you live, work or study in the borough

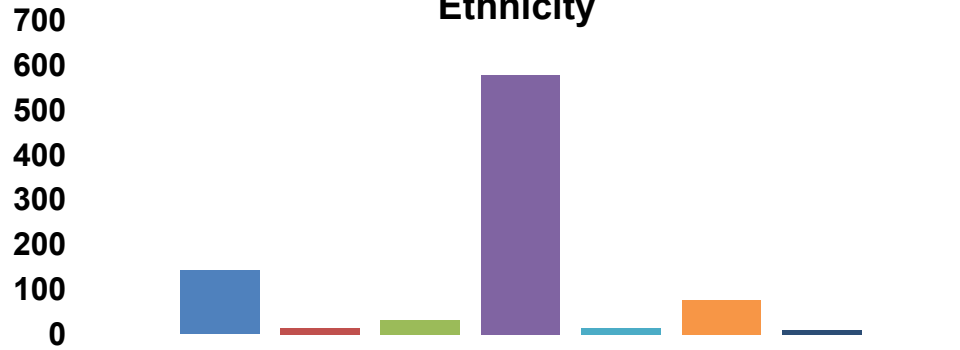


Sexual orientation



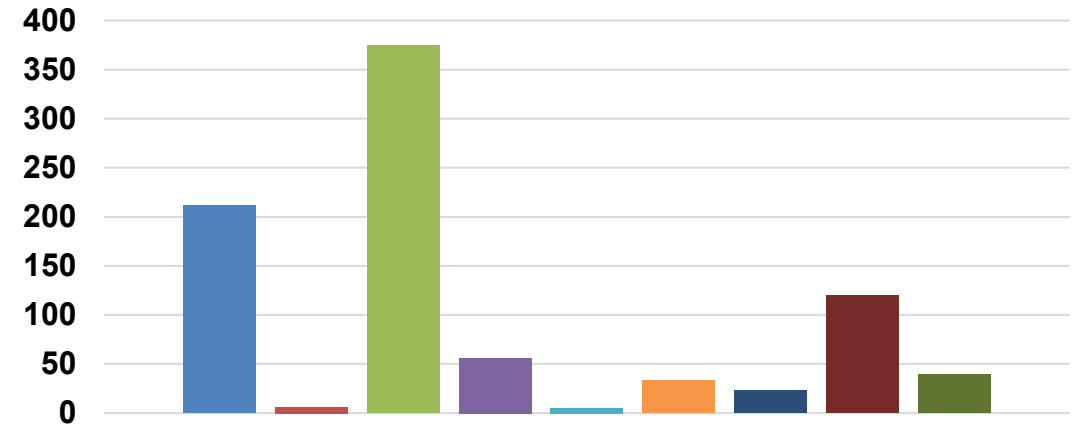
LBH Library Service Consultation

Ethnicity



- Asian or Asian British ethnic group or background (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese or any other Asian background) 16.46%
- Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African ethnic group or background (Caribbean, African, any other Black British, Caribbean or African background) 1.50%
- Mixed or multiple ethnic group or background (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, any other mixed or multiple background) 3.68%
- White group or background (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British Irish, Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Roma, any other Traveller background, any other White background) 66.86%
- Other ethnic group or background (Arab, any other ethnic group) 1.50%
- Prefer not to say 8.98%
- Did not specify 1.04%

Religion or belief

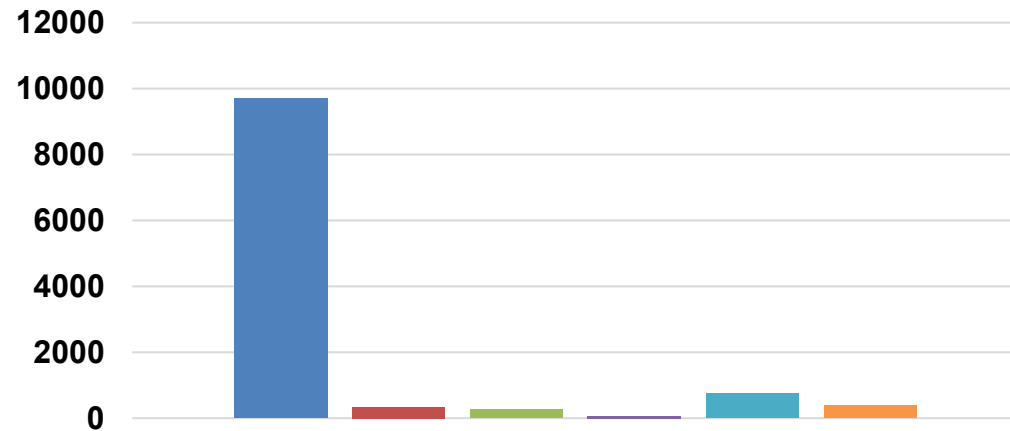


- No religion 24.40%
- Buddhist 0.69%
- Christian (Catholic, Church of England, Protestant, and all other Christian denominations) 43.15%
- Hindu 6.44%
- Jewish 0.58%
- Muslim 3.80%
- Sikh 2.65%
- Prefer not to say 13.81%
- Other 4.49%



ULEZ Consultation

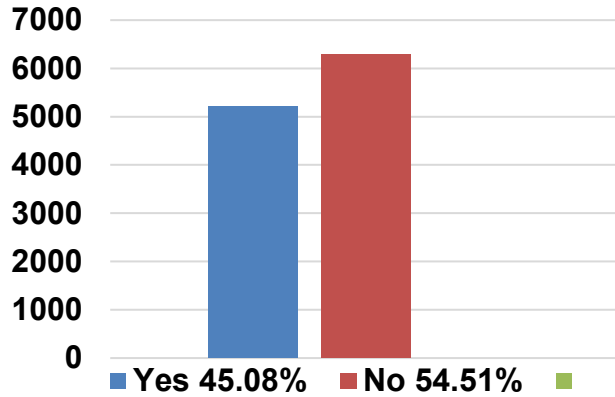
In what capacity are you responding to this survey?



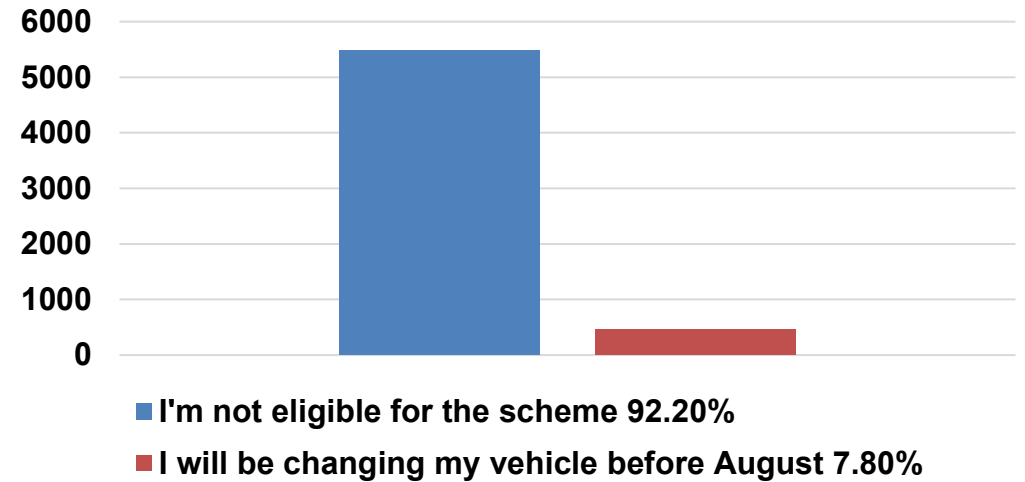
- As a local resident 84.04%
- On behalf of a local resident 2.95%
- As or on behalf of a local business 2.35%
- As or on behalf of a community or voluntary group 0.66%
- As someone who works or studies in the borough 6.59%
- Other 3.41%

ULEZ Consultation

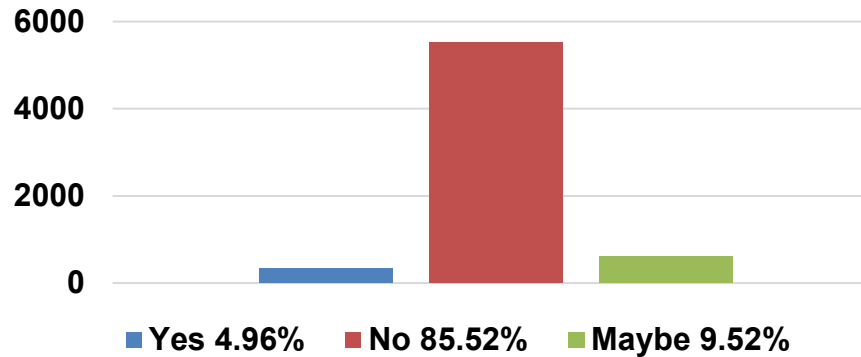
Is your vehicle ULEZ Compliant?



I answered No or Maybe because



Having reviewed the vehicle scrappage scheme details, will you be applying for a vehicle replacement grant?



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LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Eddie Lavery
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Residents' Services
Officer Contact(s)	Ian Thynne, Environmental Specialists
Papers with report	<u>Appendices circulated separately</u> Appendix A - Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Appendix B – Assessment statements Appendix C – Consultation Responses

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>The Council is designated a Lead Local Flood Authority by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (the Act). This is a statutory function that requires the Council to lead on flood risk matters, through collaboration with other providers and within communities. As part of this duty, Section 9 of the Act requires the Council to produce and maintain a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. 'The Strategy' sets out how the Council will manage flood risk at a local level.</p> <p>The Strategy has been through an extensive consultation and has been amended to take on board comments.</p>
<p>Putting our Residents First</p> <p>Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026</p>	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Live in a sustainable borough that is carbon neutral</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: A Green and Sustainable Borough</p>
Financial Cost	The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is a statutory requirement with specific requirements. It requires the management of flood risk related to officer time (funded within existing Revenue budgets) and project identification. Project delivery will be dependent on the securing of grant funding and therefore no additional Council funding is expected.
Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet considers the consultation responses and approves the adoption of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Reasons for recommendation

The Council is designated a Lead Local Flood Authority by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (the Act). This is a statutory function that requires the Council to lead on flood risk matters, through collaboration with other providers and within communities. As part of this duty, Section 9 of the Act requires the council to produce and maintain a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. 'The Strategy' sets out how the Council will manage flood risk at a local level.

It is a key tool in establishing the other relevant authorities, identifying sources of flood risk, and presenting strategic objectives and actions to managing risk. The strategy also provides information on flood prevention, reduction, preparation and response.

The current Strategy was given a 6-year timeframe to reflect the period required for the parent national flood risk strategy. The current Strategy is now due for review based on that timeframe. However, the statutory requirement is for the local Strategy to be maintained and consequently there is no specific statutory timeframe.

The Strategy presented to Cabinet is intended to be a 'living document' hosted on a webpage (available in PDF form if requested). It will be collated into sections so that selective changes can be made as and when necessary, as opposed to a holistic resource intensive review. Officers consider this allows for a more dynamic strategy that better serves residents and communities.

The Strategy will be subject to an annual status report to ensure it is kept up to date in accordance with legislation and importantly that the embedded Action Plan is consistent with current challenges.

The Strategy proposed to be adopted is set out in Appendix A.

Alternative options considered / risk management

As a statutory requirement, combined with the current time limited strategy, a do nothing option would not meet the legislative requirements.

Select Committee comments

The Residents' Services Select Committee considered the draft Strategy at their meeting on 13 February 2024 and whilst not submitting official comments, their discussion on the matter can be found [here in the minutes of the meeting](#).

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Hillingdon has over 30,000 residential properties currently at risk of flooding. There are over 180km of ordinary watercourses alongside several main rivers which drain predominantly impermeable clay soils. Extensively built urban areas contribute to considerable run-off which is served by an ageing drainage infrastructure. These factors alone create challenging circumstances to manage flood risk.
2. The challenge is further complicated by various bodies, known as Risk Management Authorities, being responsible for different sources of flooding. Whilst most flood risk is a result of excessive rainfall, the actual source of flooding, i.e. river, surface water or groundwater is highly complex. Solutions can generally only be delivered by those responsible for the source of flooding, but understanding the technical factors can be a complicated debate. For example, surface water flooding running without any attenuation into a main river may appear as river flooding, but the true source could be a failing drainage network; in turn a drainage authority may claim that their network is inundated by river flooding. Similarly, flooding from the highways may be because of the council's own systems or the Thames Water network that can also be located on the highways. Finding the exact problem can result in different authorities passing the problem around. After floods across the UK in 2007, Sir Michael Pitt's review found:

Many of the people affected by the events of summer 2007 did not know who to turn to and their problems were passed from one organisation to another.

3. The disparate nature of flood risk management continues to cause challenges to finding solutions to protect residents. Although significant progress has been made, the legislative requirements on the various authorities continues to create barriers in further progress.
4. To make matters worse, the climate is changing. Despite considerable effort, including by the council, to reduce carbon emissions to minimise and reduce long term effects, many aspects of climate change are already 'locked in'. Extreme weather events and rainfall being the most widely accepted change already being experienced.
5. Risk is a measurement of 'probability multiplied by consequence'. The factors set out above are all exacerbated by climate change meaning that the probability of flooding occurring has risen. It is also important to note that the consequences of flooding are not just related to those properties directly affected. Flooding of roads, of businesses and of utilities can impact those far beyond those who experience direct flooding. With an increasing population, more people are impacted by flooding. This results in an increase in the consequences from a flood event. With both the probability and consequences increasing, the risk is significantly raised.
6. With flooding comes a great deal of disruption but also has significant bearing on public resources, whether through emergency services' response or interventions to manage flood risk; the cost of managing flooding is also increasing.
7. As Lead Local Flood Authority, Hillingdon Council works to better understand the risk of flooding, investigate significant flood incidents, and implement measures to reduce the risk

of flooding. The aim to provide a better management of flood risk at a local level. The increasing risk requires a more creative approach to managing flooding and a greater level of collaboration.

8. With regards to that collaborative work, the Pitt Review (referenced above) advocated for local authorities to be the lead coordinator of flood risk management in the local area. This recommendation manifested itself in the designation of Lead Local Flood Authority status.
9. Part of this role is to set out a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy that provides the framework for effective local management of flood risk. The Strategy presented to Cabinet sets out how the Council will go about working with partners and communities to a) better understand flood risk, b) identify opportunities and projects for risk reduction and removal where possible and c) ensure communities are prepared for, and resilient to flooding.
10. The proposed strategy sets out 7 themes which is an increase from the 6 from the consultation draft to reflect the feedback received:

Theme	Objective
The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	Ensure that the purpose and scope of Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is understood
Sources of Flooding	Improve knowledge of the sources of flooding and associated risk within the London Borough of Hillingdon
Working with Statutory Partners	Improve the collaboration with statutory partners ensuring clarity about the roles and responsibilities and to improve the management and coordination of flood risk
Our Communities	Engage with communities to develop the awareness of flood risk in local areas and improve their resilience
Opportunities and Projects	Identify and implement opportunities and projects for flood risk management
New Development and Planning	Ensure that development within the London Borough of Hillingdon accounts for and mitigates flood risk
What You Can Do	Ensure residents are aware of their own responsibilities and what they can do to reduce flood risk

11. Against each objective there is a range of actions that are intended to ensure leadership is taken and create the framework for meeting the task of managing an increased risk of flooding in a changing climate.

12. Importantly, the Strategy is not just about what the Council will do but also about empowering communities to be better informed and prepared.

13. The Strategy is presented in report format. The final version will be available in report format but also disassembled into an online resource which will be a 'one stop shop' for flood risk information including what to do before, during and after a flood event. This model will allow the council to keep the Strategy under review so that it can be subject to smaller scale amendments as opposed to a resource intensive review after a set period of time. This makes the Strategy more dynamic and responsive to the changing climate; it will allow residents, through an annual review, to have more influence on the objectives, actions and ultimately the opportunities and projects contained within the Strategy.
14. This approach also responds to comments received through the consultation about how the document was 'too long'. The Strategy is all encompassing and consistent with those of other authorities, but it will be moved to an online tool which will become more resident friendly in its interface. For example, a resident wishing to understand what flood risk actions they can take can easily access the relevant section without accessing the whole document.
15. The Strategy was also accompanied by statutory screening requests for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment in line with statutory requirements. The finding of officers is that the Strategy does not meet the thresholds for triggering assessments under these regulations and this was confirmed by the Statutory Consultees.
16. The Strategy was prepared by Metis Consultants in consultation with various Council departments.

Financial Implications

The actions on the Council will take the form of officer time predominantly led by the Flood and Water Management function that makes up the Lead Local Flood Authority. The costs of officer time are included within Service Revenue budgets. Delivery of projects, as at present, are identified in collaboration with partners such as Thames Water, Environment Agency and Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee with funding provided by those organisations through bids and applications with no cost for the Council.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

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

The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy will greatly benefit residents by providing the framework to best manage flood risk for the protection of communities. It will also provide a valuable resource as to how to avoid flooding, prepare for a flood event and what to do if a property floods. The Strategy will ensure the Council fulfils its statutory function and reduces the risk to people and property.

Consultation carried out or required

The strategy was developed in consultation with various departments within the Council through a series of workshops. These included colleagues from Planning, Transportation, Highways,

Green Spaces, Emergency Planning, Communications, Housing and those responsible for managing the website.

A full consultation was undertaken from 22 January 2024 until 24 March 2024. The consultation was extended within this period to allow for greater opportunity for residents to respond.

The consultation took the form of a series of multiple choice questions in an online form with the opportunity for free text and commentary. There were approximately 80 responses to the online form with approximately 10 further written responses from statutory and non-statutory consultees.

The final proposed Strategy has been amended to reflect the input from residents. Some of the commentary received sought detailed information that is not yet available and will emerge through the implementation of the Action Plan.

Appendix B sets out the Strategic Environment Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment statement in relation to the Strategy review and consultation.

Appendix C contains a review of the relevant consultation responses (i.e. where changes were requested in the document) and officer's response and these are linked as background papers also below.

General recommendations about how the Council manages flood risk was also received and these are being considered separately. Furthermore, details of areas that residents would like prioritised for flood risk management interventions were also received and will be reviewed and considered through the implementation of the Action.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendation contained in this report.

Legal

Section 9 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 ("the Act") requires the Council as the lead local flood authority to maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for flood risk management in its area ("LFRMS"). Under section 7 of the Act, the LFRMS must be consistent with the national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy. Prior to adopting the LFRMS, the Council is required to consult with the public and in turn publish a summary of its LFRMS. The Council may issue guidance about the application of the LFRMS, however, must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

There are a set of well-established common law rules which set out the requirements of a lawful public consultation which are known as the Gunning principles. They were endorsed by the Supreme Court in the Moseley case. The principles can be summarised as follows:

- Consultation should occur when proposals are at a formative stage;
- Consultations should give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration;
- Consultations should allow adequate time for consideration and response; and
- The product of consultation should conscientiously be taken into account by the decision maker.

There are a very significant number of judicial review cases which involve successful challenges to the lawfulness of a consultation undertaken by a public authority, so it is imperative that the Gunning principles are closely followed in this process.

Property

The Strategy requires the development of projects that will invariably impact Council owned land. However, the Strategy does not identify what these projects are or how they will be delivered. Projects impacting corporate property will therefore be developed further in accordance with correct involvement and sign off procedures.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Flood and Water Management Act:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

Specifically Section 9 of the Flood and Water Management Act for the Strategy:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/section/9>

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UPDATES TO THE COUNCIL’S CORPORATE COMPLAINTS POLICY

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Douglas Mills
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Corporate Services
Officer Contact(s)	Ian Anderson – Digital and Intelligence
Papers with report	Appendix A – Revised Corporate Complaints Policy

HEADLINES

Summary	This report to Cabinet seeks approvals to update the Council's Corporate complaints policy and procedure following changes requested by the Ombudsman.
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents A Digital-Enabled, Modern, Well-Run Council
Financial Cost	Compensation payments to complainants will be met from existing service area budgets.
Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet

- 1) Agree the updated Corporate Complaints Policy as set out in Appendix A.
- 2) Request Full Council considers updating the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee to formally recognise it as the “Member Responsible for Complaints” as per the Ombudsman’s updated Codes.

Reasons for recommendation

To comply with changes to guidance requested by The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). These are the independent statutory bodies that investigate complaints about the services the Council provides and failure to implement the changes would result in reputational damage, adverse decisions against this

Council, payment of compensation for failure to comply with complaint handling procedures and adverse publicity.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Council could choose not to implement all or some of the changes recommended in the Complaint Handling Codes but the changes required of us are relatively minor and in many cases to our benefit. The risk of not implement all or some elements of the codes are that there would be findings of maladministration for non-compliance by the Ombudsman.

Democratic compliance / previous authority

Cabinet is the body to authorise changes to key corporate policies and full Council the body to authorise any changes to the Terms of Reference of a Select Committee.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Complaints are part of every organisation in the world, and in local authorities the volumes and complexity of them are a result of the nature and volume of our public facing services. Key to this is how we improve the services we deliver for our residents, as well as ensuring that the information we give out gives clarity to what our service standards are and what you can expect from us. We are committed to continually improving our services, and using the information from the complaints we receive to do this, as well as learning how we communicate better and resolve queries first time.
2. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) carried out a consultation of their users in late 2023 in which they set out their proposed joint Complaint Handling Codes. The outcome of their consultation was published in February 2024 in which they issued new and revised Complaint Handling Codes, requesting that all Local Authorities/social housing landlords begin to comply with the guidance issued from 1 April 2024. The guidance is set out in the background papers to this report.
3. The main changes required of us are relatively minor and are straight forward for the Council to apply, namely:

a. reduce the number of formal complaint stages from 3 to 2;

Whilst we had a 3 Stage Corporate complaint procedure, in practice we have only used Stage 3 (Appeal to the Chief Executive) once in the past 5 years. The change recommended is helpful and ensures that where a complainant is dissatisfied with the response(s) they had received they can now raise the matter much earlier with the Ombudsman for independent review.

b. remove “Informal complaints” as a category and replace it with “Service Requests”;

The LGSCO and HOS have requested that all Local Authorities no longer use the informal complaint step in our complaint process but that this is replaced with “Service Request”. The removal of the “Informal complaints” stage and replacing it with “Service Request” will be challenging to implement. This is because officers are exceptional at resolving complaints informally by way of a telephone call, email, or face to face contact and by doing so keep the number of formal complaints down. The approach of the Ombudsman will result in more formal complaints being registered and this will require more structured responses to be sent which will take up more officer time. The view of the Ombudsmen is that a low number of formal complaints suggests that we are preventing residents from complaining. Whilst this is not the case, we will be applying the LGSCO definition of a Service Request, namely: “*Service requests are not complaints but may contain expressions of dissatisfaction. Organisations should have the opportunity to deal with a service request before a complaint is made*”. Which should help to limit the impact on services and the need to register formal complaints.

c. the timeline for acknowledging receipt of a complaint is now set at 5 working days from the date the complaint is received (previously 3 working days);

The timelines set for acknowledging receipt of a complaint is welcomed as it gives officers in the complaint team additional time to process complaints.

d. the timeline for response at Stage 1 at 10 working days (no change) and at Stage 2 as 20 working days (previously 10 working days); and

The timeline for responding to a Stage 1 complaint remains unchanged at 10 working days but the timeline set for Stage 2 complaints has been changed to 20 working days. These changes are welcomed as is the Ombudsman decision that the timeline set for responding to a Stage 1 and 2 complaints begins from the date of the acknowledgment. This will ensure that officers in the various departments will have the full quota of days to investigate and respond to complaints.

e. the Member Responsible for Complaints role is performed by the Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee.

The Ombudsman request that a ‘Member Responsible for Complaints’ (MRC) be appointed to undertake the role of scrutiny and oversight of the handling of complaints within this Council. The MRC can be a Cabinet Member or, for example, collectively through a Select Committee who are to be provided with regular updates on the volumes of complaints, categories, trends and outcomes of complaints. For many years it has been a well-established activity for the Council’s Select Committees to monitor and scrutinise the Council’s complaints performance annually, with the annual complaint’s report being most recently presented to the former Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee in 2023/24. Going forward, it is suggested that this role continues to be performed by a select committee, and in this case the successor Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee, subject to full Council approval and a change the Constitution in this regard.

4. The Complaint Handling Codes has very minor impact on the statutory Children and Adult Social Care complaint procedures namely that the timeline for acknowledging receipt of a complaint is now set at 5 working days (previously 3 working days).

Cabinet is requested to agree to an updated Corporate Complaints Policy incorporating these changes in paragraphs 1-3 above, as set out in Appendix A.

Learning from complaints

Learning from complaints is important to the Council. The receipt of any complaint provides Hillingdon with valuable feedback, an opportunity to learn from what has happened and make adjustments so that it does not happen again and by doing so improve the service we provide our residents. To this end, we have paid for a bespoke training course, run by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman expert, on investigating complaints, the processes to follow, appropriate redress to offer but also mechanisms they use to identify issues and make recommendations for change/service improvement. Officers found this course extremely helpful.

Since July 2023, we have been using the GOSS complaint portal to process and manage complaints. The new portal has provided us with the opportunity to better understand feedback we are receiving from our residents through the "Report It" data we receive, complaints, compliments and Members Enquiries. Through analysis we will be able, in the future, to better understand the specific issues that residents are raising through these mediums and identify trends which in turn will help us to address systemic problems at an early stage, without the need to escalate to the formal complaint stages or to Members. It is envisaged that this analysis could be used to identify gaps in staff knowledge, skills or processes and then develop training programs that could be tailored to meet a specific need.

Going forward, a Customer Experience Contact report covering both service request and complaint analysis will be developed, with the aim of identifying issues before they escalate into complaints and by doing so reduce the burden on our resources and a culture where service improvement is seen as the norm.

Financial Implications

Finance has reviewed this report and confirms there are no direct financial implications associated with the proposed changes to the complaints procedure.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

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

The Complaint Handling Code changes are there to ensure transparency, accessibility and a consistent complaint handling governance structure which ensures that our residents are at the heart of our service delivery. The changes will help to enhance our existing complaint handling culture and it clearly sets out what our residents can expect from us when they are dissatisfied with the service they have received. For our staff, it sets out clear procedures that they need to follow when processing, investigating and responding to complaints.

Consultation carried out or required

No consultations were carried out or required as the Council is implementing changes that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Service require of social landlords and Local Authorities.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and confirms there are no direct financial implications associated with the proposed changes to the complaints procedure.

Legal

Legal Services confirm that the legal implications are included in the body of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1) Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code
- 2) Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

These can be found on the Council's website here: [Complaints - Hillingdon Council](#)

Appendix A - Revised Corporate Complaints Policy & Procedure

1. Our complaint policy

Scope of our policy

This policy and procedure applies to all Council employees and to employees and organisations who deliver services on behalf of this Local Authority.

Introduction

The Council is committed to putting people at the centre of everything we do and aims to provide the best possible service to residents. However, sometimes things can go wrong and if you are not happy with the service you have received from the Council then please tell us so that we can, where possible, sort out the problem.

We will carry out enquiries fairly, deal with your complaint as quickly and effectively as we can while maintaining confidentiality and keeping you informed of progress. We want to reassure you that the service you get will not be affected if you raise concerns or make a complaint.

The policy and procedure:

- allows managers to address issues of unsatisfactory service and seek improvements in service delivery;
- ensures that customers are treated fairly and consistently;
- ensures that a proper and adequate investigation takes place before any action is taken;
- requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered in line with the Equality Act 2010 and appropriate training is provided for staff; and
- safeguards the integrity and good reputation of the Council.

Whenever you contact us, we will:

- be polite and treat you with respect;
- give you honest and clear advice;
- make it clear what we can and cannot do;
- listen to your views; and
- admit when things go wrong and do our best to put them right.

What we ask you to do:

- treat us politely and with respect; and
- tell us when things go wrong so that we can put them right.

What is a complaint?

In general terms a complaint can be considered as: *“an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the council, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.”*

How can people complain?

Complaints can be made quickly and easily 24 hours a day, seven days a week via our website at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaints.

If you need an adjustment to be made, please call the complaint team. It is somewhat difficult to investigate a complaint submitted anonymously but where we have sufficient information to allow an investigation to begin, we will do so. Where possible, we will also respect a complainant's reasonable request for anonymity.

Who can complain?

Anyone who uses our services and is dissatisfied with the standard of service we have provided or our lack of action. The Council will also accept complaints by an advocate on behalf of a resident, with appropriate consent. However, any complaint should be made within 12 months of the issue/incident complained of.

What can people complain about?

People can complain about any **services** that the Council provides or contracts out. However, please note that:

- although a complaint can be submitted against Council **policy**, please be aware that Council policy cannot be overturned through the complaint process as this can only be done through the statutory decision making procedure;
- we will not deal with issues through the complaint procedure where a claim has been made in a court such as a disrepair claim; and
- issues relating to employment or application for employment with the Council cannot be addressed through the complaint procedure.

Remedies for redress

The purpose of redress is to remedy the injustice or hardship suffered and where possible to return a complainant to the position they would have been before the situation went wrong.

Types of redress include:

- an apology;
- providing the service that should have been received at first;
- taking action or making a decision that should have been done before;
- reconsidering an incorrect decision;
- improving procedures so that similar problems do not occur again; and
- if after an investigation by Council staff or the Ombudsman, it is concluded that as a result of maladministration there is no practical action that would provide a full and appropriate remedy or if the complainant has sustained loss or suffering, financial compensation may be the most appropriate approach.

Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent complaints

If we consider that a complainant is unreasonable or unreasonably persistent, we will refer the matter to a senior manager, who will consider whether restrictions should be placed on their contact with the Council.

The Corporate Complaints Procedure

Our complaints procedure is designed to support the effective management of complaints and is set out below.

SERVICE REQUESTS

We will always try to resolve enquiries/concerns by way of 'service requests' by talking through problems with you, without the need to go through our formal complaints procedure. We will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days, aim to put things right and give you a timescale when we will respond to you, detailing the action we have or will be taking.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, we will tell you how to proceed within the formal complaint procedure, which is outlined below.

FORMAL STAGE 1

A complaint will be registered under Stage 1 of our formal complaint's procedure when:

- we cannot resolve the problem by way of a "Service Request"
- you tell us that you want to make a formal complaint
- we believe it is necessary to use the formal procedure to resolve or respond to the complaint

Complaints at Stage 1 will be investigated by a Head of Service or the appropriate manager, from the service you have complained about, who was not directly involved in the reason for your complaint.

Prior to that, we will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days of receipt and tell you who is looking into it. We aim to give you a response to your complaint at Stage 1 within

10 working days of our acknowledgment. If this is not possible, we will write to you and let you know if more time is needed and the estimated time it will take to provide a full response. If you are not happy with the response you receive, the full response will tell you:

- how to escalate your complaint to Stage 2; or
- that you may escalate your complaint direct from Stage 1 to the Housing Ombudsman Service or to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman if we feel that the decision cannot be overturned through the complaint process.

FORMAL STAGE 2 (Review)

You can ask us to review your complaint at Stage 2 if:

- you are unhappy with how your complaint was handled at Stage 1
- you are unhappy with the response you have received

In your appeal please do say why you are dissatisfied with the response and what further action you expect.

Complaints at Stage 2 will be investigated by a Director or Corporate Director, who will review how your complaint was dealt with originally to decide if:

- the complaint was investigated thoroughly and objectively
- the conclusions reached are based on evidence
- the response was reasonable, appropriate and tried to achieve a resolution

We will acknowledge your request for an investigation at Stage 2 of the Corporate complaints procedure within 5 working days of the escalation request being received and tell you who is looking into it. We will aim to give you a full response to your complaint at Stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged and if we cannot finish our investigation in time, we will let you know and tell you when you can expect our response.

If you are unhappy with the response you receive, the full response will tell you how to escalate your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for independent review.

TAKING YOUR COMPLAINT FURTHER

If your complaint is about Housing management matters, (but not Lettings/Housing allocations) your complaint will be considered by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

A. Housing Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman Service is set up by law to look at complaints about registered providers of social housing and their service is free, independent and impartial. The contact details of the Housing Ombudsman are:

Housing Ombudsman Service
P O Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ
Telephone 0300 111 3000
Email info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

B. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO)

If your complaint is about any other Council service, your complaint will be considered by the LGO. The contact details of the LGO are:

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
Telephone: 0300 061 0614
Website contact: www.lgo.org.uk/contact-us

YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE STRATEGY 2024-2029

Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Susan O'Brien
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
Officer Contact(s)	Nuzhat Ilyas – Youth Justice Service and AXIS
Papers with report	Hillingdon Youth Justice Service Draft Strategy 2024-2029

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>This report presents the draft Hillingdon Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029 which seeks to set out a clear vision and priorities for how youth justice services are delivered in the next five years.</p> <p>The report seeks approval to commence a 6-week formal public consultation process from 1st July 2024 to 11th August 2024, including feedback from the Select Committee.</p>
<p>Putting our Residents First</p> <p>Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026</p>	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Live active and healthy lives</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: Thriving, Healthy Households, Safe and Strong Communities</p>
Financial Cost	This strategy will come at no additional cost to the Council.
Relevant Select Committee	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet agrees the Draft Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029 for public consultation as a policy framework document.

Reasons for recommendation

The draft Youth Justice Service Strategy sets out a clear vision and priorities for how youth justice services are delivered in the next five years and forms a key element of the policy framework. Approval is sought from Cabinet to approve the draft strategy for consultation, to ensure that residents and partners have the opportunity to consider and comment on the priorities for service delivery.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Without a Strategy, the Council would not be able to make clear its priorities in relation to youth justice and assist in the development and performance management of work streams and provide a framework for our work with partner organisations.

Democratic compliance / previous authority

Along with the recent guidance from the Youth Justice Board, Democratic Services note that the Youth Justice Service Strategy [Youth Justice Plan] is one of the Council's policy framework documents as set out in Chapter 4 of the Council's Constitution. Consideration of this is, therefore, being undertaken in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules and these require the Cabinet to set out a timetable for the Strategy's adoption, to include a minimum 6-week consultation period, consideration by the relevant select committee and therefore also not subject to scrutiny call-in. The following timetable is being adhered to:

Draft strategy to Cabinet	27 June 2024 (not subject to call-in)
Consultation (six weeks)	Commence from 1 July 2024
Children, Families & Education Select Committee consultation	17 July 2024
Cabinet final draft	10 October 2024 (not subject to call-in)
Full Council adoption	28 November 2024

Select Committee comments

None at this stage, though the Committee have a statutory requirement to be consulted on this and influence the final Strategy before it is approved by the Full Council. It is currently scheduled to be considered by the Children, Families & Education Select Committee in July 2024.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services as per Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which stipulates that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan. The plan sets out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out.

2. Following updated guidance from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in 2023, all youth justice plans must be signed off by the full Council in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000. To align with other council strategies, officers propose the completion of a 5-year strategy with annual updates to the Select Committee and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, to comply with this guidance.
3. The proposed draft Youth Justice Service Strategy builds on the success of the Youth Justice Service and sets a clear vision of how services are delivered to our residents, and key priorities over the next five years to continue to be responsive and meet changing demands and requirements.
4. The vision for the Youth Justice Service is:

“We are committed to taking a child first approach to understanding the challenges faced by children and families including social deprivation, discrimination, trauma, unmet health needs, and will actively empower children and families to improve outcomes by providing opportunities for every child to succeed. We take a “justice for all” approach by supporting victims, protecting the public and engaging our communities to divert children from entering the criminal justice system.”
5. Hillingdon Council is committed to putting residents first and reflects this commitment across the council’s plans and services. Our youth justice priorities are directly aligned with this commitment, which will be set out in further detail within the draft strategy. The five priorities are:
 1. Prevention and Early Intervention - Addressing the root causes of offending behaviour and intervene at the earliest possible stage to prevent escalation and reduce the risk of future harm, ensuring the safety and security of our communities.
 2. Over-representation and disproportionality – Addressing disproportionality in youth justice is crucial for ensuring fairness, equity, and justice within our society to reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing support, thereby promoting trust in the system.
 3. Child-centred practice - Recognising children as active participants in their own lives and advocates for their rights, well-being, and development, creating nurturing environments where every child can thrive.
 4. Reducing re-offending - Providing rehabilitation, support, and positive development opportunities, we can break the cycle of offending and promote the reintegration of children into society.
 5. Victims and restorative justice - Giving victims a voice and an active role in the justice process, empowering them and helping them to regain a sense of control over their lives, providing them with an opportunity to heal and recover from the harm they have experienced.
6. The draft strategy is attached at appendix A. Subject to Cabinet approval a 6-week formal consultation process will begin on Monday 1st July 2024 and end Sunday 11th August 2024. A final draft with amendments following consultation will be presented to Cabinet on 10th October 2024 and subsequently Full Council on 28th November 2024.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the recommendations of this report.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

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

The draft Youth Justice Service Strategy sets out identifies key challenges and sets out priorities for the coming five years and has a direct bearing on the Council's vision of 'putting residents first.'

The Council will need to ensure that any policies or decisions in relation to youth justice take account of requirements under equalities and human rights legislation, including ensuring that policies and decisions do not discriminate against those with protected characteristics, and complying with the public sector equality duty.

Consultation carried out or required.

Informal consultation has already taken place within the Youth Justice Service Performance Board. Subject to Cabinet approval a 6-week formal consultation process will begin on Monday 1st July 2024 and end Sunday 11th August 2024. This will include:

- Publication of the draft Youth Justice Service Strategy alongside an online survey questionnaire (Written copies/large print will be available on request)
- Publication of a child friendly Youth Justice Service Strategy to maximise consultation from Hillingdon children.
- A variety of methods to promote completion of the survey will be used including: All staff email, Hillingdon People, and social media.
- We will be consulting with the Select Committee on 17th July 2024.
- We will be seeking consultation from the wider strategic partnership that contribute to the prevention of offending behaviour, as well as residents who access youth justice services in Hillingdon. This includes the use of focus groups with children and families.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

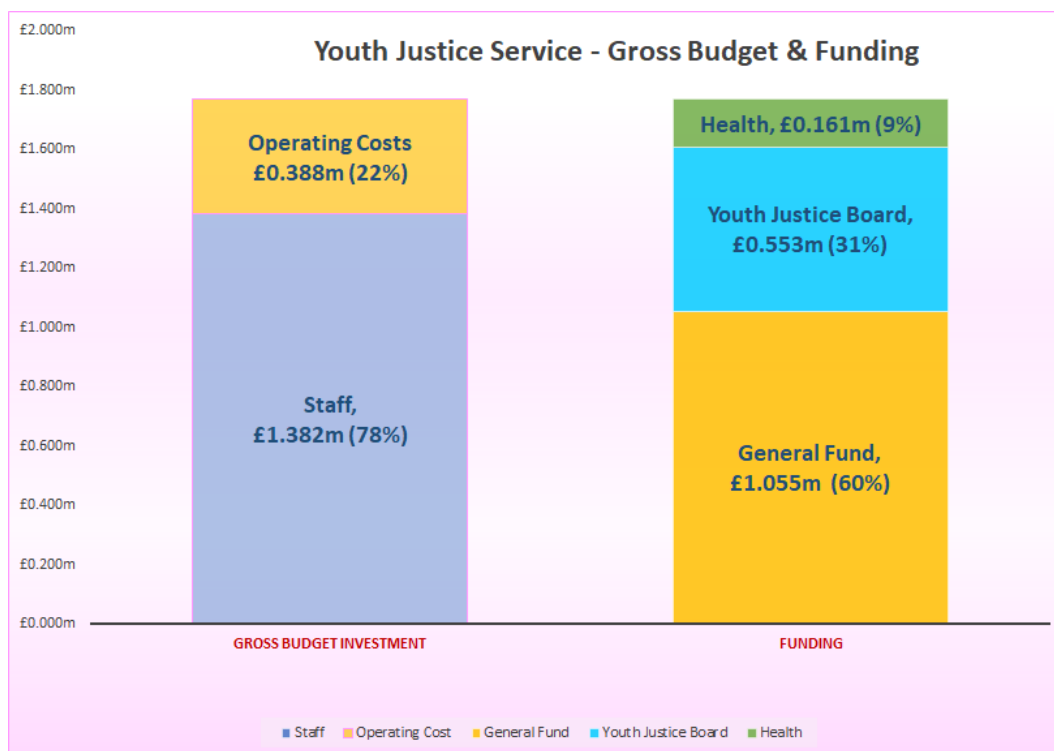
Corporate Finance

The Youth Justice Service currently employs 20 Staff (18.75 FTE) and spends £1.770m per annum which is funded by a combination of:

- General Fund – 1.055m (60%)
- YJ Board - £0.553m (31%)
- Health - £0.161m (9%)

The service had a small underspend of £0.181m in the Outturn for 2023/24 primarily on staff, accommodation and shortfall on grant which has been addressed in this financial year. The chart below highlights the breakdown of investment and funding. As highlighted in the Strategy paper

the service is very successfully managing demand despite the challenges post COVID and the current Cost of Living and financial instability.



As the legal commentary highlights, there is a duty to provide the service and it is clear in the current climate that the demands on the service will intensify over the next 5 years of the Strategy. While, at this stage there is no additional risk of financial pressure, there are a few potential risks going forward which the service will need to monitor including:

- Increase in Youth Offending particularly during the ongoing financial instability
- Potential pressure on remand accommodation costs
- Any reduction in funding, particularly grant funding which could critically undermine the effectiveness of the service and result in growth in offending and unintended rise in greater / more acute costs.

While these risks will closely monitored, the performance of the service over recent years including robust and effective management of its budget, provides a lot of assurance that the Strategy can be delivered effectively within the current budget.

Legal

Legal Services confirm that the Council is responsible for carrying out this function pursuant to section 38 and 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which requires each local authority to have youth justice services available in their area to the extent that is appropriate, and, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan. The guidance on Youth justice plans confirms that whilst the Act refers to an annual plan, it is recognised that planning over a longer period may be more effective. Therefore, Local partnerships may, if they choose, produce a plan over multiple years; in this case an annual

update, covering progress against priorities, a summary of performance, any changes in demographics and legislation, and any additional reporting requirements. The report confirms that an annual update will be provided.

As set out in the report, the Council will need to ensure that any policies or decisions in relation to youth justice take account of requirements under the equalities and human rights legislation, including ensuring that policies and decisions do not discriminate against those with protected characteristics, and comply with the Local Authority's public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010).

It is noted that a final draft with amendments following consultation will be presented to Cabinet on 10th October 2024 and subsequently Full Council on 28th November 2024. As such, Cabinet approval for consultation of the draft Youth Justice Service Strategy is recommended as set out in this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. [Hillingdon Family Hub Strategy 2023-2025](#)
2. [Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Strategic Plan 2024-27.odt \(live.com\)](#)
3. [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(Victims' Code\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
4. [Reducing criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers | London City Hall](#)



Draft Hillingdon Youth Justice Service 5-year Strategy

2024-2029

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Foreword

As we embark on this journey of shaping the future of youth justice services in Hillingdon over the next five years, it is with great enthusiasm and dedication that I present this strategy document. Our mission is clear: to create a safer, fairer, and more inclusive society for all children, where their rights, needs, and potential are recognised and respected. Over the years, our understanding of youth justice has evolved, driven by research, evidence, and the voices of children themselves. We have learned that effective youth justice services require a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach that addresses the underlying causes of offending behaviour and promotes positive development and rehabilitation through a Child First approach.

This strategy builds upon our achievements and experiences, while also charting a course for innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement. It reflects our commitment to embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work, ensuring that every child has access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

Central to our strategy is the principle of early intervention and prevention, recognising that addressing issues at the earliest possible stage can prevent escalation and reduce the risk of future harm. We will work closely with partners across sectors to identify and respond to the needs of children and their families and carers, providing tailored support and interventions that address the root causes of offending and children's safety and wellbeing.

Equally important is our commitment to restorative justice principles, which prioritise accountability, healing, and the repair of harm. We continue to involve children, victims, and communities in the resolution of conflicts and the restoration of relationships, promoting understanding, empathy, and reconciliation.

As we embark on this journey, we do so with humility and a recognition of the challenges that lie ahead as we continue to deliver services post the Covid-19 pandemic. We know that transforming youth justice services requires courage, perseverance, and a willingness to challenge the status quo. But we also know that the rewards are great – safer communities, brighter futures, and a more just society for all.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to the development of this strategy – our dedicated staff, partner agencies, children, families, and communities. Your insights, expertise, and commitment have been invaluable, and I am confident that together, we can achieve our shared vision of a youth justice system that works for everyone.

Together, let us build a future where every child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential, where second chances are not just offered but embraced, and where justice is not just served but served with compassion, dignity, and fairness.

[signed]

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

Introduction

Hillingdon council has a duty under S.38 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to provide youth justice services to children 10-18 years of age. The principle aim of the Youth Justice Service is to prevent offending by children, through early intervention, prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation. The draft Hillingdon Youth Justice Service (HYJS) strategy sets out its approach to work with children and families accessing youth justice services through early help and prevention and statutory intervention. This 5-year strategy will be developed in consultation with children, parents/carers and colleagues across the partnership and communities reflecting on and reviewing its performance over the last 5 years and considering a range of local and national drivers informing our youth justice work in Hillingdon.

“We are committed to taking a child first approach to understanding the challenges faced by children and families including social deprivation, discrimination, trauma, unmet health needs, and will actively empower children and families to improve outcomes by providing opportunities for every child to succeed. We take a “justice for all” approach by supporting victims, protecting the public and engaging our communities to divert children from entering the criminal justice system.”

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) Strategic Plan 2024-2027 states that “the YJB’s vision is for a youth justice system that treats children as children” and sets out its requirements for a Child First approach:

- Prioritising the best interests of children and recognising their needs and potential.
- Promoting children’s individual strengths and their capacities to develop pro-social identities.
- Encouraging children’s active participation, engagement, and wider social inclusion.
- Promoting a childhood removed from the justice system.

Across the youth justice partnership in Hillingdon the use of the word “child” has been widely adopted when discussing children who encounter the criminal justice system. Previous language such as young people or adolescents diluted the focus that those who come into contact with the youth justice system are children and should be supported as such. The work of HYJS and the partnership seeks to support engagement with children in multiple spheres from diversion through the delivery of school-based programmes such as Your Life You Choose, early intervention through active use of Triage interventions and in statutory interventions. Taking a locality, placed based approach by delivering services and interventions to children within their context. Wider work across the local authority, with the development of locality-based family hubs and spoke buildings provides well-resourced and safe places to meet children within the community. Children told us that they are more likely to engage with interventions in familiar surroundings and co ordinating locality delivery supports engagement with wider services. The model works on supporting children to access the right services, at the right time in the right place.

Our plan continues to be set within the context of ongoing public service reform, associated organisational change, financial restraints and responding to the challenges which continue post the Covid 19 pandemic. These circumstances present additional challenges to

organisations as they seek to deliver their core business whilst also contributing to strategic partnerships. However, the partnership approach to developing and implementing this Youth Justice Plan has been informed by a commitment not only to maintain our investment in the youth justice agenda but to enhance it through continued effective collaboration.

Our Priorities

Hillingdon Council is committed to putting residents first and reflects this commitment across the council's plans and services. Our youth justice priorities are directly aligned with this commitment, which will be set out in further detail in this document. The five priorities are:

1. Prevention and Early Intervention
2. Over-representation and disproportionality
3. Child-centred practice
4. Reducing re-offending
5. Victims and restorative justice

Context

Hillingdon is the second largest London borough, covering an area of 42 square miles over half of which is a mosaic of countryside including canals, rivers, parks and woodland, interspersed with historic towns and villages. It shares borders with Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Surrey, Hounslow, Ealing, and Harrow. Hillingdon is home to Heathrow airport, which is one of the main local employers, but also a significant entry point for children and young people being trafficked into the country.

- Hillingdon has a higher proportion of 0–19-year-olds than the London average with 26% and this proportion is expected to grow.
- There are approximately 120,700 children aged 0-17 residing in the borough which make up 39.69 % of population.
- 30,965 (25.65%) of these children are aged 10-17
- According to data from the End Child Poverty Coalition, which combines data from the HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there are approximately 25,347 children in Hillingdon living in poverty, which is approximately 21%.
- At the 31st March 2024 there were approximately 329 children looked after to Hillingdon.
- 35% of all residents that are from a black and global majority background. Hillingdon is an ethnically diverse borough with most black and global majority communities residing in the south of the borough.
- 62% of Hillingdon children aged 10-17 are from a black and global majority background (2021 Census)
- Our residents (aged 3+) speak at least 85 different languages - this is similar to most other London boroughs and other large cities in England & Wales.

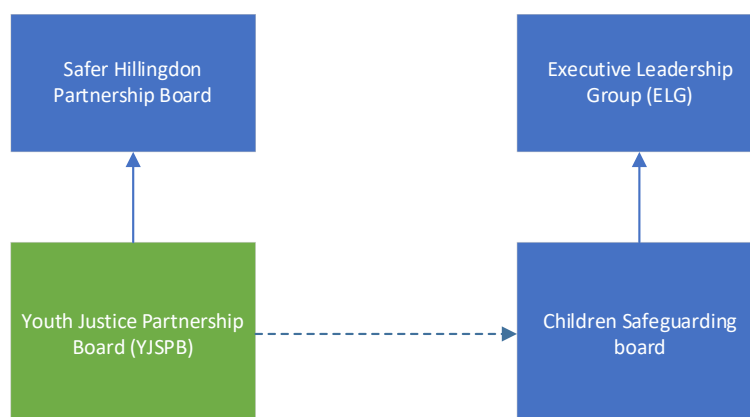
- The 2021 Census tells us that 77.9% of our residents (aged 3+) have English as their main language, followed by Punjabi (4.6%), Romanian (1.8%), Polish (1.7%) and Tamil (1.6%).
- In 2023-2024 3,503 children had an active Education Healthcare plan. This number has steadily increased at an average rate of approximately 11.6% over the last five years.

The YJS is located within the Children, Families and Education Directorate and as such the Assistant Director of Prevention and Youth Justice is part of the most senior management team in Children's Services. The effectiveness of the YJS collaborative work has been recognised in both our ILACS and SEND inspection outcomes. We have aligned the YJS with our Youth Offer and Early Help under one Assistant Director which supports our holistic planning for vulnerable adolescents. The full staffing structure and budget costs and contributions will be included within annual youth justice plans.

Governance, Leadership and partnerships

HYJS is funded centrally and through the grant contributions from the Youth Justice Board and statutory partner agencies, in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. All funds are used to deliver Youth Justice Services in Hillingdon.

The work of our HYJS is located within the broader context of our Safer Hillingdon Partnership (SHP) and the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board (SCPB). Both boards have operational and strategic representation from all partner agencies. HYJS is represented at the SHP and SCPB by the Corporate Director for Children, Families and Education. In achieving our ambitions and vision for our children, we continue to receive full political and corporate support and a level of financial investment which ensures that each year's budget setting considers both the needs of the service and the contingencies based on demographic growth and increasing levels of complexity. Our elected member for Children, Families and Education and the Chief Executive have an active interest and understanding of the youth justice agenda. They scrutinise children's services performance and practice updates in quarterly meetings with the Senior Management Team. Complex and high-risk issues have oversight at this level to ensure political, financial and strategic investment to keep children safe.



The YJSPB is co-chaired by the Corporate Director for Children, Families and Education and the Detective Chief Inspector for the West Area Borough Command Unit which demonstrates committed leadership. The YJSPB includes representatives from all of the key partner agencies and operates in line with the YJB Governance and Leadership guidance. The Corporate Director for Children, Families and Education is a member of every senior governance board in the borough and can exert influence and leverage support and resources to further the work of the YJSPB. Similarly, there is a direct understanding of other policy and strategy landscapes to inform the YJSPB plan and to inform others' strategies and plans to be observant of YJS concerns. These include all Council Political meetings, health governance which covers the borough, new ICB, all London DSC Group, West London DCS steering groups, West London Commissioning Alliance whilst maintaining instantaneous direct access to the most senior leadership across the borough and region.

From His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) inspection in 2021, it was noted by the inspectorate panel that we have a strong management board attendance, this has continued since with an average of 73% of senior partners attending. New Board members have an induction to understand the role of the service and explore the expectations and contributions they will be making to the service. Our governance and leadership arrangements are maturing and whilst we believe we have a clear local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised, and responsive service for all children, we recognise the need to ensure that vision is promoted and understood by all stakeholders. Our partnership relationships are strong at both strategic and operational levels. Local resourcing levels have been retained despite significant financial challenges for all the partners and the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery. Our Board members are active, own the youth justice agenda and recognise the contributions their own agency makes to the it. For example, the ICB rep on the Board initiated a review of the health need of the YJS cohort which resulted in the commissioning of dedicated SALT provision; whilst the Community Safety rep has advocated YJS work and secured MOPAC funding to support early identification and intervention of young people at risk of exploitation.

HMIP inspect youth justice services across England and Wales and form part of HYJS' governance arrangements. This is completed through independent inspection, thematic inspections and reports, recommendations, research and effective practice guidance.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales is responsible for monitoring and measuring our performance through the submission of national KPIs. The YJB undertakes oversight activity to meet its statutory duty to monitor the operation of the youth justice system. This function is undertaken in line with its independence from national and local government and all named statutory partners.

The oversight process follows an ongoing cycle of:

- monitoring YJS performance against the oversight fields outlined and assigning services to performance quadrants.
- identifying the scale and nature of support needs and/or areas of effective performance and evidence-based practice
- co-ordinating improvement (and where necessary formal intervention).

Performance data 2019-2024

Together with its partners Hillingdon YJS continues to realign resources to meet service demand and the requirements of the wider public sector reform agenda, which supports transformation of essential services in an evidenced based way to promote best practice.

The YJS informs and supports the Childrens' "High Fives"; Contextual Safeguarding, Neglect, where our children live, Targeted Help, Our people. These 5 key strands of operational and strategic activity drive improved outcomes for children in Hillingdon.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is responsible for monitoring a number of key performance indicators and each local authority and youth justice partnership must submit quarterly data against each. It is a condition of the YJB Grant that it is used to achieve a positive reduction across all performance indicators with data being published by the Ministry of Justice on a quarterly basis.

The following three performance indicators have been embedded within services and so data has been captured over the years, so we have been able to measure our performance over a longer period.

1. **Reduction in First Time Entrants (FTE):** children entering the criminal justice system for the first time receiving a disposal at court or a caution.
2. **Reduction in Re-offending:** monitoring of children who receive a substantiated outcome (not Triage) for a period of 12 months for any further offending and associated frequency.
3. **Reduction in the use of custody:** reduce the number of children who receive a custodial sentence.

Our HYJS and the partner agencies and professionals, who work with them, have an impressive track record of contributing to the realisation of our vision through effective preventative work, as well as out-of-court and post-court case work. Our performance against the first-time entrants' national performance indicator is consistently strong with the rate below both national and London averages. A focus on early intervention and prevention services across the partnership has contributed to this, including an effective working relationship between the police and the HYJS with regards to decision making and the delivery of robust assessments and interventions. Our custody rates have shown a gradual reduction over recent years but with complex cohorts of children and a national rise in knife crime this remains an area of priority focus. Performance with respect to re-offending should be considered within the context of a much smaller cohort, due to our success at reducing FTEs, containing individuals that often have more complex needs, higher levels of vulnerability and pose a greater risk to others. These young people have a range of challenges and unmet needs, which take longer to address and effect permanent changes in lifestyles and outcomes. As with the national picture we have an over-representation of Black and mixed raced boys in custody which is a priority of activity in this Youth Justice Strategy.

Since April 2023 it has been a requirement of youth justice services to report on the following new key performance indicators, with the first nationally published data expected in Spring 2025.

1. Suitable Accommodation
2. Education, training, and employment
3. Special educational needs and disabilities
4. Mental health care and emotional wellbeing
5. Substance misuse
6. Out of court disposals
7. Links to wider services
8. Management board attendance
9. Serious violence
10. Victims

Youth justice services have access to the youth justice application framework (YJAF) to view data submitted and compare to national data. Data from quarters 1-3 for 2023-2024 on YJAF tells us that Hillingdon is performing above national indicators in the proportion of children in suitable accommodation (an average of 96% in Hillingdon compared to 86% nationally).

The proportion of children in suitable education, training, and employment at the end of their order. Q1-3 showed 87% of school age children were in full time education at the end of their intervention, like the 86% seen at the end of 2022/23. For the non-school age children, 67% were in full-time education up from the 56% seen at the end of 2022/23. We also have a higher than the national average number of children identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and additional learning needs (ALN) with a formal plan. This is reflective of the links we have built with our partners in Education and SEND and continue to ensure that we collaborate with partners to ensure that it is child focused. It is a real strength of HYJS to have a Speech and Language therapist embedded within the service to ensure all children open to the YJS, AXIS and other prevention services such as Turnaround are offered speech and language assessment at the earliest opportunity, to ensure there us an understanding of the needs, collaboration with partners and interventions are personalised to maximise positive outcomes for each child.

HYJS have reported an average of 39% of children open to the YJS with a screened or identified need for an intervention to improve mental health or emotional wellbeing compared to 25.6% of the national average for quarters 1-3 for 23-24. The well-resourced Health Hub within the YJS combines the skills of a Liaison and Diversion worker, full time dedicated Speech and Language Therapist and Child and Adolescent Mental Health practitioner to ensure a coordinated approach to meeting the health needs of children entering the youth justice system to promote positive outcomes.

The total number of outcomes have decreased over the five years, from 246 in 2019-2020 to 100 in 2023-2024. It is positive that the number of court outcomes have decreased by 54% over the 5 years. We have also seen a 65% decrease of out of court disposals and a 77.5% decrease in Triage outcomes in the same period. The main cause of this is due to the increase

in Community Resolutions being given for low-level offences. It is positive that in the last year we have seen a 244% increase in the rate of engagement as compared to the previous year.

The most common offence in 2023-2024 was Violence against the person related, with 60 offences (29.13%). In 2021-22, Drugs had been the most common offence, but this has continued to decrease from 52 offences (28.42%) in 2021/22 to 12 offences (5.83%) in 2023/24. This is due to the continued decrease in triage offences, with drug possession offences being dealt with via Community Resolutions. Burglary, Robbery, and Theft and Handling offences accounted for 33.98% of all offences up from 25.23% in the previous year and 11.48% in 2021/22. For the second year in a row, "Burglary other than dwelling" was the single most common offence, representing 9.22% of all offences. It is important to note that all 19 of these offences were committed by 2 children. However, the next most common offence was "Possess knife blade / sharp pointed article in a public place" with 14 offences, committed by 14 different children.

Hillingdon monitors Serious Violence rates with the assistance of the YJB's "Serious Youth Violence Tool". The rate of serious violence increased in 2023 to 7.5, up from 5.3 in 2022 which has put us in line with our YJS Family. This is still lower than historic figures as outlined in the table below. The rate of serious violence offences has fallen in since its peak of 10.7 in 2021. Hillingdon's rate of serious violence offences has remained below the London rate. Robbery continues to be the most common SYV offence, accounting for 79% of offences in Q1-3 2023/24.

Rate of Serious Violence offences - Year ending December					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Hillingdon	4.5	10.5	10.7	5.3	7.5
London	17.5	13.8	12.4	10.4	10.5

--- Hillingdon YJS Priorities ---

Priority 1: Prevention and Early Intervention

Link to Council Priorities: A thriving economy, Safe and strong communities, Thriving healthy households.

This priority seeks to address the root causes of offending behaviour and explore the wider determinates of social inequalities, intervene at the earliest possible stage to prevent escalation and reduce the risk of future harm, ensuring the safety and security of our communities.

HYJS is situated within the Children directorate and falls under the umbrella of Prevention and Youth Justice. HYJS, and its partners has an impressive track record of contributing to the realisation of our vision through effective preventative work. This continues to be an area of focus over the next 5 years to further develop our prevention offer. Over the last 5 years, we have seen our First-time entrants (FTE) figures decrease during the COVID pandemic and rise again, however we remain below pre-pandemic levels.

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Number of first-time entrants	64	48	38	46	46

As mentioned previously and outlined in the table below, the total number of outcomes have decreased over the five years, from 246 in 2019-2020 to 100 in 2023-2024. It is positive that the number of court outcomes have decreased by 54% over the 5 years. We have also seen a 65% decrease of out of court disposals and a 77.5% decrease in Triage outcomes in the same period. The main cause of this is due to the increase in Community Resolutions being given for low-level offences.

Outcomes	2019-2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 – 2023	2023 – 2024
Court	124	76	47	57	57
Pre-Court	122	94	87	56	43
Of Which Triage	98	73	65	33	22
Total	246	170	134	113	100

In the year 2023-2024 we have seen a varied rate of engagement for children receiving a community resolution (CR) with an average rate of 31% of children consenting to receiving intervention with HYJS. This is an increase of 244% than the previous year where we had an average of 9% of children receiving an intervention.

Our AXIS service continues to offer understanding of the complexity, risk and safety and wellbeing concerns of local children in 'real time'. AXIS is instrumental in identifying children on the periphery of involvement in Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, children arrested for Possession with intent to supply, or those that are linked to suspected 'gang' involvement and serious youth violence. AXIS work with children referred on a

voluntary basis or will refer them to Children's Social Care where appropriate. AXIS also supports the wider partnership and local services' engagement with children and will provide headline data to inform how and where services are delivered in Hillingdon.

In December 2022, Hillingdon was provided funding (ending March 2025) from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to mobilise Project Turnaround, to intervene at an earlier stage to prevent children entering the criminal justice system under the Early Help framework. Turnaround has been a success in Hillingdon, and the data shows we have exceeded the MoJ quota of children who have voluntarily engaged with this project and have seen positive outcomes for this cohort for children.

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
MoJ Quota	9	26	27
Number of children engaged with Turnaround	9	32	XXX

The Metropolitan Police's Pan-London Project Engage, funded by the VRU (Violence Reduction Unit) was set up in January 2024 to engage with children in police custody, capturing the teachable, reachable moment to build a positive relationship to understand the causes of their offending and identify bespoke interventions and services best placed to divert children from the criminal justice system. The Engage team fosters good relationships with partners, including community and voluntary groups to support children in their own communities and provide opportunities through social inclusion to divert them from criminality.

Our focus under this priority is to embed long term early help systems to enable multi-agency intervention at the earliest opportunity, to divert children from the criminal justice system, build resilience, and promote positive outcomes. This means effective intervention to be targeted towards children and families at risk of experiencing adversity through a myriad of issues including poverty, social exclusion, familial violence, mental health, disability, substance misuse and school exclusions. We believe residents should be able to access the right help at the right time. The Family hub strategy¹ will support this through having integrated services across the disciplines of Maternity, Health, Education, Social Care, and the Voluntary Sector under the principles of Early Help and Intervention, to provide accessible services to families, situated within their own communities, at their point of need. The offer will link support for the whole family where there are children and young people up to the age of 19 (25 for those with SEND), acknowledging the impact of the right support and care, in the right place, at the right time on the future lives of children.

Success measures:

- Ensure assessments support early identification of risks and vulnerabilities.

¹ [Hillingdon Family Hub Strategy 2023-2025](#)

- Continued prevention service to support children at risk of entering the criminal justice system after MoJ Turnaround funding ceases.
- Stronger partnerships with colleagues across the partnership to identify children most at risk at the earliest opportunity.
- Reduced FTE rates.
- A reduction in suspensions and permanent exclusions in schools

Priority 2: Over-representation and Disproportionality

Linked to Hillingdon Council Priority: Safe and strong communities, Thriving healthy households.

Addressing disproportionality in youth justice is crucial for ensuring fairness, equity, and justice within our society. Disproportionality refers to the overrepresentation of certain groups, particularly from Black, Asian, and other global majority backgrounds, within the youth justice system. It is imperative to recognise and rectify these disparities to create a system that treats all children equally, regardless of their background. By addressing disproportionality, we can reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing support, thereby promoting trust in the system.

The population of Hillingdon has changed significantly over the last decade as outlined in the 2021 census data:

- White British made up 50% of the 10-17yr old population in Hillingdon in 2011, this dropped to 31% in 2021.
- Asian children made up 24% of the pop. in 2011, this increased to 34% in 2021.
- Black African children made up 6% of the pop. in 2011, this is increased to 9% in 2021.
- Any other ethnic group saw the largest % increase of 174%.

In Hillingdon, black children accounted for 27% of stop and searches compared to 13% of the population in the year 2023-2024. However, 81% of these stop and searches had an outcome of NFA (no further action). There has been a large decrease in the number of children on Bail and those released under investigation in November 2023 (76) compared to February 2024 (19). Black children made up 42% of children bailed/released under investigation in November 2023 but now account for 21% due to an increased focus in this area to reduce the number of children subject to a release under investigation. Our data tells us that Black and Mixed children are less likely to plead guilty; in 2023-2024 8% of black and mixed heritage children were found guilty compared to 3% of White children.

In Hillingdon, black and mixed children are more likely to experience adverse childhood experiences, such as poverty, neglect, and parental conflict, in the early years of their lives. Black and mixed heritage children account for 18% of children on a CP plan in Hillingdon.

Black children in Hillingdon are 1.4x more likely to be severely obese compared to other ethnicities. 33% of Hillingdon's current looked after children are of Black or Mixed ethnicity. Black looked after children were less likely to have their health assessment up to date, 72% compared to 95% for White children. They were less likely to have immunisations up to date, 66% compared to 83% for White children. White children had the lowest amount of tooth decay in 5-year-olds.

In terms of education outcomes, 29% of exclusions and 33% of suspensions were from Black & Mixed Ethnicities in the 22/23 Academic Year. Boys (52%) were significantly more likely to

not have achieved at least the expected standard in Early Learning Goals by age 5 compared to Girls (70%), with Other ethnic boys (48%) and Black Boys (50%) with the lowest %.

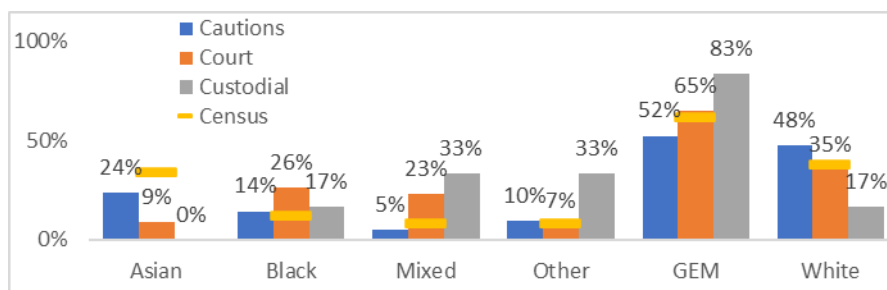
Illustrated below is the Hillingdon YJS data regarding outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

Ethnicity	2019-2020	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023	2023 – 2024
White	44.83%	50.36%	55.56%	49.45%	45.05%
Black	24.71%	17.53%	14.81%	18.68%	19.78%
Asian	15.52%	16.06%	12.04%	6.59%	13.19%
Mixed	13.79%	10.95%	12.96%	16.48%	14.29%
Other	1.15%	5.11%	4.63%	8.79%	7.69%

Black and Asian ethnic children saw an increase in both the number and proportion of children compared to the previous year. White and Mixed Ethnicities decreased in both the number and proportion of clients compared to the previous year. The data pre and post pandemic tells us that fewer Black and Asian children received an outcome during the COVID period compared to their white counterparts that received a higher proportion of outcomes however we see an opposite trend for both sets of children coming out of the pandemic.

Outcomes

Black children have consistently been over-represented in Court and Custodial outcomes, although this has been decreasing in recent years. However, the disproportionality in court and custodial outcomes for mixed race children has been increasing in the last 5 years. Asian children are under-represented at every stage of the Youth Justice service.



*GEM, Global Ethnic Majority

The strategic partnership is actively working on developing a disproportionality plan and has asked “How do we, as a partnership address disproportionality experienced by children in Hillingdon within a Youth Justice context?”. This plan will focus on identifying the root causes of disproportionality and implementing targeted interventions to address them effectively. By working together to tackle this issue, we can create a youth justice system that is fair, equitable, and supportive for all children.

Success measures:

- The production of a disproportionality action plan by the strategic management board in consultation with children, families, community groups and other stakeholders.

- Increased training across partnerships to recognise and address bias and discrimination and develop an understanding of cultural humility.
- Increased provisions and interventions for children with protected characteristics.
- Reduction of overrepresentation of certain groups, particularly from Black, and mixed heritage children within the youth justice system.
- Increased trust in the justice system among children, families and communities affected by disproportionality.
- Collaborate with community organisations, stakeholders, and affected communities to address disproportionality effectively.
- Develop and implement targeted initiatives and approaches to address the root causes effectively.
- Monitor the progress and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions regularly.

Priority 3: Child-Centred Practice

Linked to Hillingdon Council Priority: Safe and strong communities, Thriving healthy households.

Child-centred practice focuses on the holistic needs of young people and their families, promoting their health, well-being, and positive development. By placing children at the centre, we aim to create thriving, healthy households where every young person can reach their full potential. It recognises children as active participants in their own lives and advocates for their rights, well-being, and development, creating nurturing environments where every child can thrive.

HYJS recognises the importance of listening to the voice of the child and using it to inform service delivery. Children actively participate in staff interviews and have had the opportunity to pose their own questions to candidates and have supported the successful recruitment of three YJS Officers in the past year.

In 2023-2024 HYJS board members received training from children open to the youth justice system called Walking in Our Shoes: YJS Edition whereby children shared their experiences of the criminal justice system, facilitated activities to provide an insight to board members on the service they receive from professionals in Hillingdon and wider partners, and presented the voices of other children open to HYJS. As a result, board members were able to consider the approaches used in HYJS, considering 'what works' in terms of the impact service delivery has on children. They also reflected on the importance of early intervention and prevention across the wider partnership, and considered how they would embed in their respective services. Following this it has been a commitment to have the voice of the child as a standing agenda item at all board meetings. This has allowed children's experiences to be brought to the board to develop understanding of the child's journey through the criminal justice system and where any challenges/barriers are addressed to ensure there is a child first approach across the partnership.

HYJS prides itself on the collaboration with partners and has recently been awarded the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Lead Quality Mark with Child First Commendation by Microlink PC. This quality mark highlights the strong partnership working across local authority and health services in Hillingdon. In 2023-2024 HYJS provided bespoke speech, language, and communication training to colleagues in the Metropolitan police working in our local police custody suite, Polar Park. As a result, we have found reduced numbers of children being detained in custody, and increased use of Caution plus 3 interviews. As a result of ongoing work with the custody suite, they have embedded a child-centred approach to custody. Children have access to distraction kits, custody video-books as well as access to child-friendly leaflets outlining the custody process, and possible outcomes. Custody staff have also received speech and language training which has supported custody staff to ensure that they are meeting the speech and language needs of children in police custody.

The well-resourced health hub within the YJS combines the skills of a Liaison and Diversion worker, Speech and Language therapist and Child and Adolescent Mental Health practitioner

to ensure a co-ordinated approach to meeting the health needs of children entering the youth justice system to promote positive outcomes.

The YJS Education and Employment Officer ensures all children open to HYJS have their education, training and employment (ETE) needs adequately assessed and the appropriate provision is provided both in the community and in custody with the support of partner agencies. This includes Under 16 education and post 16 provision. In the last five years we have experienced a reduction of ETE providers and face barriers in achieving ETE places for children. However, there are good partnerships with colleagues in with Education and SEND which supports a collaborative approach in keeping children in education, and re-engaging those children who are NEET or missing from education. HYJS is an accredited centre with AQA and provides children with the opportunity to acquire AQA qualifications as a stepping stone to further ETE pathways.

HYJS have developed the intervention 'My Support Plan' which is utilised to support practitioners get to know the children they are working with, understand their life experiences and how it forms part of their identity. The support plan focusses on diversity to understand the child beyond their offence. This is designed as the initial piece of work in the intervention to begin to build rapport, get to know the child and create SMART targets, which has been evidenced in case file audits and has received positive feedback from children and families.

HYJS believe children have the right to be heard and participate in decisions that affect them. Capturing feedback from children and families provides valuable insights into their experiences, perspectives and understanding of the criminal justice process. One of the ambitions of the YJB strategic plan 2024-2027² is to influence and develop policy and practice of child first across the youth justice system, which includes improving the court experience and outcomes of children. We capture children's experience of court proceedings to ensure that they are fair, transparent, and based on accurate information. It allows for a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of the situation, reducing the risk of misinterpretation or bias.

Children and families are also involved in every step of their involvement with HYJS. Their participation in agreeing interventions and reviewing their progress leads to better outcomes in terms of their well-being, behaviour, and compliance with court orders. When children feel listened to and respected, they are more likely to engage positively with interventions and take responsibility for their actions. Co-production and participation from children and families also helps professionals identify risks or protective factors and inform decisions aimed at addressing their needs and preventing further harm.

Our focus under this priority is to further develop our child first approach and support active participation and engagement of children and families to encourage co-production of intervention plans and resources.

Success measures:

² [Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Strategic Plan 2024-27.odt \(live.com\)](#)

- A commitment to continue to commission training/deliver tailored workshops to further develop practitioner's understanding of child centred practice.
- Speech and language training to be delivered to wider partnerships such as magistrates, and refresher training to be delivered to local police custody suite and YJS staff.
- Increased evidence of participation with children to inform service delivery.
- Achieving strengthened relationships with colleges and mainstream schools in Hillingdon.
- Improved pre-emptive action across the partnership to prevent suspensions and exclusions and widen opportunities for vulnerable learners.
- An increase in the availability of ETE providers for our children.
- Better collation of children's feedback regarding their experiences in police custody, court and HYJS.

Priority 4: Reducing Re-offending.

Linked to Hillingdon Council Priority: Safe and strong communities, Thriving healthy households.

Hillingdon Youth Justice Service prioritises the best interest of children and focuses on understanding children's identity, using trauma informed relationship-based practice when working with children to divert and prevent children from offending and re-offending. This includes addressing our re-offending rates and ensuring we have the right process in place to support children's desistance against further offending. Our commitment to reducing re-offending is key to creating safe and strong communities. By providing rehabilitation, support, and positive development opportunities, we can break the cycle of offending and promote the reintegration of children into society.

The **Proven rate of reoffending** data for the period 2021/22, published by the Ministry of Justice, demonstrated a decrease in reoffending (40.5% to 37.5%) when compared to the previous financial year. However, when we compared this to our local data, we saw a large discrepancy. Our local data showed a reoffending rate of 26.6%, however due to the limitations in both the local and published data sets, we estimate our true reoffending rate to be 32.8% which is slightly above the National (32.1%) and London average (33.4%). The published data indicates an increase in the **frequency of reoffending** with an average of 2.93 further offences compared to 2.13 for the previous year. This increase was also shown in our local data. It is important to note that the 2020/21 cohort was partly tracked through the COVID lockdown periods of 2020, and this is likely to affect the 2020/21 reoffending data.

The result of having a small cohort of children entering the youth justice system is that it only takes a small increase in offending to significantly impact the percentage change. The reduction of the cohorts demonstrates the positive impact of early intervention programmes, effective triage and diversion. Those children who do re-offend, although reduced in number, are often those with the most complex needs. The YJS continues to use the YJB re-offending tracker tool, deep dive audits, quality assurance frameworks and a focus on the whole family approach to better understand this cohort and support improved outcomes.

In 2023/24, 22 children were triaged out of the criminal justice system in comparison to the 46 cases entering the system and receiving a formal disposal for the first time. In the previous year, of the 43 triages received, 6 (14%) went on to reoffend within the next 12 months. Additionally, 24 children received a community resolution in 2023/24, with 14 of these proceeding to an intervention. In the previous year, of the 37 clients who received a community resolution, 6 (16.2%) reoffended within 12 months. 0 of the 2 children who engaged with the community resolution reoffended.

HYJS acknowledge the following factors that have contributed to the reduction of re-offending in Hillingdon:

- Stable accommodation including care placements.
- Early resettlement planning
- Access to education, training, and employment
- Collaboration between the partnership

HYJS are committed to a strengths-based, constructive resettlement approach and ensure that our resettlement work is based on the "5 C's" – Constructive, Co-created, Customised, Consistent and Co-ordinated. HYJS has a dedicated experienced champion who leads on resettlement to ensure practice and delivery continues to evolve. Continuous partnerships with health and education services supports the transition from custody to the community. The review of all custody cases at the Hillingdon Access to Resource Panel ensures joint strategic oversight in planning and resource allocation.

The latest data on the Use of Custody shows that the number of children in Hillingdon receiving a custodial sentence in 2022/23 decreased to 7, compared to 8 for the previous year. The rate per 1,000 of the 10-17 population use of custody data for Hillingdon in this period was 0.22. Children sentenced to custody often represent the highest risk, and the imposition of a custodial sentence by the court are in response to the offences committed. Data analysis indicates that children in Hillingdon from the Global Ethnic Majority are 3 times more likely to receive a custodial sentence. However, please note due to their being such a small cohort of custodial outcomes, small changes in the data will have large impacts in these figures. The Hillingdon YJSPB are committed to understand and taking action to address overrepresentation with a robust Disproportionality action plan and associated partnership activity.

At the end of 2023/24 there was 1 child remanded into Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA), compared to 3 children at the end of 2022/23. There were 10 remands started in 2023/24, with an average time open of 36 days. This is both a decline in the number of remands and length open when compared to the previous year, which had 14 remands starting for an average length of 63 days. Like our custody data, Black and Mixed-Race children are disproportionately over-represented, accounting for 69% of the remands starting in 2023/24.

HYJS recognised a need for improved transitions work with Probation, which has been a priority for 2023-2024. We continue to deliver our transitions work without a seconded probation officer which could have significantly impacted on transitions; however, we have worked to ensure alternative interim arrangements have been established whilst a longer-term solution is secured. At HYJS we aim to ensure all transition plan are personalised and have had the added benefit of welcoming a pilot project in AXIS focusing on the transition ages (18-24) where other support services will drop, leaving young people at risk of gang affiliation and risk of further serious violence. We recognise that transitioning to adulthood is a journey not an event, and every young person will experience this journey differently. Having this focus requires practitioners to think beyond child/adult silos and consider the needs of each individual, and how they can be protected. We aim to build on the support and resources already available across the partnership to ensure all children are effectively supported into adulthood.

Success measures:

- A continued reduction of our re-offending rates.

- Increased resources to address critical transition periods e.g. leaving custody, transition to adulthood.
- HYJS to continue to strengthen relationships with the youth custody service and custodial establishments to ensure children are receiving the right services in custody.
- HYJS to continue to review the effectiveness of interventions.

Priority 5: Victims and Restorative Justice

Linked to Hillingdon Council Priority: Safe and strong communities, Thriving healthy households.

Victim and restorative justice focus on the needs of the victim, providing them with an opportunity to heal and recover from the harm they have experienced. It gives victims a voice and an active role in the justice process, empowering them and helping them to regain a sense of control over their lives. Restorative justice holds children accountable for their actions in a meaningful way, promoting a deeper understanding of the impact of their behaviour. Hillingdon Youth Justice Service (HYJS) strives to provide high quality services to victims in line with The Victim's Code³. The Victim's Code sets out the 12 minimum standards that must be provided to victims of crime by organisations in England and Wales.

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023-2024
Number of victims reached/contacted	33	20	21
% of victims consenting to RJ	33%	50%	90%

In the year 2023-2024 HYJS successfully contacted 21 victims, a slight increase from 20 the previous year. Of the victims that wanted to engage with restorative justice, 71% (15) requested a letter of apology and 29% (4) agreed to a face-to-face restorative justice conference. Whilst the number of victims reached has reduced, we have increased our engagement rates with victims which is positive.

49 children completed a Restorative Justice screening in 2023-2024. A health screening and Speech and Language assessment is completed with all children prior to their Restorative Justice screening to ensure that the process is delivered in a bespoke and meaningful way (e.g., the delivery of RJ and victim awareness work with autistic children is carefully considered). As a result, 30 children agreed to engage in restorative justice and feedback from children and families regarding this process, and the victim empathy sessions has been positive.

All victims are offered home visits unless they are corporate victims or reside out of the Hillingdon borough. The home visits consist of victims speaking about the impact of the crime, discussing RJ and choosing the reparation project/s the child will complete to help repair the harm caused. HYJS have an extensive reparation leaflet which includes fifteen projects that cater to children's diversity and communication needs. All victims are asked if they require additional support and if so, a referral is made to Victim Support who provide practical, emotional and advocacy support.

³ [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(Victims' Code\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672223/victims-code-2022.pdf)

If a victim does not want to receive further support from Victim Support, the RJ team will complete a victim safety plan with them to address any risk posed. This plan can also be shared with police if the victim agrees.

The victim safety plan includes:

- Scenarios/places where the victim feels safe and unsafe.
- Safe Words.
- Trusted adults and services they can contact.
- Emergency contacts.
- External services that can provide support.

Victims are provided with an effective and inclusive approach to addressing harm and resolving conflicts within our communities. They promote healing, accountability, and reconciliation, leading to safer, more resilient, and more cohesive communities. Feedback received from victims illustrates how powerful restorative justice is, and the impact it has had on them:

“You’re very helpful. I was nervous and anxious before the conference, but the conference went well. I came out feeling better in myself because it had been spoken about.” Victim

“From a parent’s perspective, you included my daughter and gave her a voice. You could have just listened to what I said, because she’s a child and I’m the parent but you didn’t, you gave her a voice in the process. Going into that conference, I didn’t realise how much it affected me. By sitting in the conference, I could let it go; it felt done and dusted. It felt like there was justice within the conference. You are in a vulnerable situation and once you walk out of the conference, they are left with the thoughts and feelings that you have shared. You are no longer the only one walking around with those thoughts and feelings.” Victim’s parent.

In addition to the direct work with victims, our Victims and Restorative Justice offer extends to supporting our partners address conflict and harm in a more positive way. In the year 2023-2024 we have provided restorative justice training to all schools across Hillingdon and have received positive feedback for those that attended.

The London Reducing Criminalisation of looked after children and care leavers protocol⁴ was published in March 2021 and sets out the roles and responsibilities of all agencies involved in the care of looked after children and care leavers, in reducing unnecessary criminalisation. The joint working with the Corporate Parenting team has led to increased restorative justice (RJ) support to social workers and residential care homes/semi-independent placements. In addition to delivering RJ training in schools, HYJS has also delivered RJ training to our care homes which is aimed to support front line staff in managing behaviours and incidents in a positive way and helps to reduce incidents in the home. Following the training HYJS has begun facilitating quarterly forums for staff to reflect and share their experiences of RJ approaches.

Success measures:

- HYJS to maintain a high engagement rate for victims.
- HYJS to streamline the collation of data, including qualitative data on the impact and effectiveness of restorative justice practices.
- HYJS to continue to provide restorative justice support to wider services in the partnership.
- Reparation activity to evidence a clear link to offences, where children are making amends to victims.
- HYJS to review existing victim awareness and victim empathy interventions to improve confidence amongst YJS Officers and utilise the support of the RJ Co-Ordinator if needed.
- HYJS to promote best practice to build on the knowledge of YJS Officers understanding of victim safety.

⁴ [Reducing criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers | London City Hall](#)

Conclusion

This youth justice strategy is firmly anchored in a "child-first" approach, placing the well-being and development of Hillingdon children and victims at the heart of all initiatives. Through a strategic focus on Prevention and Early Intervention, we aim to identify and mitigate the root causes of child involvement in the justice system, intervening proactively to divert them from offending. Central to our approach is the commitment to equity and fairness, striving to eliminate systemic biases that unfairly impact certain groups within our community, ensuring every child receives equitable treatment and opportunities.

By implementing child-centred practices, we ensure that the needs and rights of children are at the forefront of our approach, fostering the right environments conducive to their holistic development and empower children to make positive choices. Additionally, our focus on victims and restorative justice reflects our recognition of the importance of accountability, empathy, and healing for all parties affected by crime, promoting reconciliation and resolution within our communities.

This strategy seeks to foster long-term positive outcomes for our residents, cultivating safer, more inclusive environments where children can thrive and contribute meaningfully to society. By staying true to these principles and remaining adaptive to evolving needs, we are confident in our ability to effect positive change and build a brighter future for generations to come.

COUNCIL BUDGET - 2023/24 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN

Cabinet Member	Councillor Martin Goddard
Cabinet Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Finance
Officer Contact	Andy Evans, Corporate Director of Finance
Papers with report	None

HEADLINES

Summary

This report provides the Council's outturn financial position and performance against the 2023/24 revenue budget and Capital Programme.

A net in-year underspend of £2k is reported against General Fund revenue budget normal activities as of March 2024 (Month 12), with no movement on the position at Month 11. As a result, total reserves are projected to be £35,181k at 31 March 2024, being unallocated reserves of £26,848k and earmarked Reserves of £8,333k. A further £8,000k of unutilised Capital Receipts are also being carried forward.

While exceptional inflationary pressures were included and funded through the Council's budget strategy, such pressures emerged above the budgeted provision, with a £3,622k release from the specific Earmarked Reserves being required to meet this pressure. Headline Inflation rates remain at historically high levels, albeit that latest data indicates a reduction from 3.4% to 3.2% in the final month of the year.

The Collection Fund is closed with a surplus of £4,221k due to lower than anticipated appeals against the 2023 Business Rates revised list. This surplus has not been reflected in this outturn position with £3,651k allocated to support the Council's 2024/25 budget and £570k supporting 2025/26, representing an improvement of £135k from Month 11.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) outturn position presents a deficit to be carried forward to 2024/25 of £47,492k, an adverse movement of £10,505k due to a review of placements at school level identifying further packages of support. The ongoing pressures in the cost of High Needs placements, which are largely being driven by inflationary factors which are not adequately reflected in the funding which the Council is receiving from the Department of Education (DfE).

No material variances are being declared across the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) or Capital Programme, with in-year pressures on increased revenue expenditure in the HRA being offset by favourable movements in capital financing costs.

Putting our Residents First	This report supports the Council Strategy and objective of: <i>Strong financial management</i> . Achieving Value for Money is an important element of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
Financial Cost	N/A
Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure
Relevant Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet:

1. Note the budget monitoring position and treasury management update as at March 2024 (Month 12), noting the actions proposed by officers as outlined in Part A of this report.
2. Approve the financial recommendations set out in Part B of this report.

Reasons for recommendation

1. The reason for **Recommendation 1** is to ensure that the Council achieves its budgetary objectives, providing Cabinet with the update on performance at Month 12 against budgets approved by Council on 23 February 2023 contained within **Part A** of this report. An update on the Council's Treasury Management activities is included within this section of the report.
2. **Recommendation 2** seeks approval for the range of financial recommendations set out within **Part B** of this report, which may include acceptance of grant funding, revisions to fees & charges and ratification of decisions taken under special urgency provisions.

Alternative options considered / risk management

3. There are no other options proposed for consideration.

Select Committee comments

4. None at this stage.

PART A: MONTHLY BUDGET MONITORING

SUMMARY

GENERAL FUND REVENUE

5. A marginal underspend of £2k is reported against General Fund revenue budget normal activities at outturn, i.e., March 2024 (Month 12), with no movement from Month 11, with a range of pressures emerging at outturn, with these pressures being funded through the Council's Earmarked Reserves. This results in unallocated General Balances totalling £26,848k at 31 March 2024, in line with MTFE expectations.
6. Over and above the specific variances being managed within the monitoring position, a number of emerging pressures have been funded through Earmarked Reserves – use of Earmarked Reserves totalled £9,524k at Month 9, rising to £11,727k by outturn. In particular the timing of the delivery of savings, increasing pressures on demand-led services and continuing inflationary pressures against a background of static Central Government grant funding led to an adverse movement seen across the final quarter of the financial year.
 - i. Within this position, £17,015k of the £22,762k savings planned for 2023/24 were banked by 31 March 2024, leaving £5,747k or 25% of the programme to be secured from 2024/25 onwards. It is projected that these sums will either ultimately be delivered in full or replaced by alternative measures, with in-year budget pressures linked to slippage having been managed as part of the wider monitoring position during 2023/24, including through maintaining higher numbers of vacant posts.
 - ii. Pressures have been identified against demand-led service budgets, although these have been funded by demand-risk reserves held by the Council for this purpose. In particular, there are pressures related to volatility within Looked After Children, SEND transport and Adult Social Care placements, together with increasing approaches from residents seeking support with homelessness and reduced income from planning fees derived from a reduced number of major developments, as a result of challenging economic conditions.
 - iii. The 2023/24 budget incorporated budgetary provision of £21,691k to absorb inflationary pressures, with a further £3,622k additional funding being required in line with projections through the year, largely to meet the costs of a higher than anticipated staff pay award. Specific provision has been made within the Council's Earmarked Reserves to meet such costs.
7. The final outturn position reports an underspend of £2k against the Council's General Fund (after mitigations and use of Earmarked Reserves) with the Council managing a high inflation environment and increased demand for front line services. Given the current challenging economic environment, a number of pressures emerged over the course of the year, with the Council funding these from Earmarked Reserves and a review of the balance sheet to ensure available funds are being deployed to best effect. This balance sheet review covers application of any unallocated third-party contributions or grants, provisions for doubtful debts

and risk items, and historic overprovision of Minimum Revenue Provision – this delivered £9,443k of one-off in-year financial benefit.

8. The Council holds Earmarked Reserves to manage risks and fund cyclical and project-based activities, with £20,060k being held at the beginning of 2023/24. The reported outturn position relies upon release of £11,727k of this balance, with £4,550k having been factored into the 2023/24 budget, £3,622k relating to inflationary pressures (including the approved pay award) and £3,555k other calls – primarily driven by demand for services. This results in a closing balance of £8,333k, with an adverse movement from Month 11 having been driven by a late reduction in forecast income from the West London Waste Authority and ongoing demand pressures in areas such as Homelessness. The closing balance remains available to support the Council's ongoing financial resilience and to fund project and cyclical based work in 2024/25 and beyond.
9. Within the Collection Fund, a surplus of £4,221k is reported at outturn, with the surplus being derived from a favourable position within Business Rates of £5,776k from an increase in the Council's rating list above the budgeted position approved by Council in February 2023, offset by a slower than budgeted growth in Council Tax, which is attributable to the ongoing slowing down in construction industry activity. This position is further compounded by an adverse position reported against Council Tax Support, as demand has been impacted by cost-of-living pressures, although this has now started to decline again in line with budgeted assumptions. In aggregate, these pressures lead to a reported collection deficit of £1,555k on Council Tax.
10. These in-year pressures on Council Tax are being mitigated through the overachievement of Business Rates income, resulting in a net £4,221k favourable movement against the approved budget. Variances against the Collection Fund do not directly impact upon the 2023/24 monitoring position, but instead the variance up to Month 9 was factored into the Council's budget proposals for the forthcoming year presented to Cabinet in February 2024 as part of the final budget proposals, with movement from Month 10 to this outturn position not impacting until 2025/26 with resulting impacts on MTEFF forecasts. The positive variance of £3,651k up to Month 9 therefore reduced the Council's saving requirement for the 2024/25 budget, with the favourable movement since Month 9 of £570k impacting on 2025/26.
11. Taken in the round, the General Fund outturn position reflects the structural challenges facing the local government sector more generally as funding levels do not fully meet the combination of inflationary and demand-led pressures impacting upon the Council. The 2023/24 budget incorporated £22,762k savings to meet this challenge, with 75% of this sum having been secured in full and in-year mitigations, including higher than budgeted levels of vacant posts, having been developed to offset the remaining 25% or £5,747k. Over the course of 2023/24, inflation and demand have continued to grow, driving additional pressures of which £16,620k have been funded in-year through a combination of one-off measures; £7,177k unplanned releases from Earmarked Reserves and £9,442k of headroom generated through the Balance Sheet Review. This approach results in remaining Earmarked Reserves falling to £8,333k at 31 March 2024.

12. The Council therefore enters the 2024/25 financial year with General Balances and Earmarked Reserves exceeding the £32,000k minimum level established at the time of budget setting in February 2024 at £35,181k, but £2,203k lower than anticipated at the time. In addition, £4,221k surpluses within the Collection Fund are available to support future service expenditure and £8,000k Capital Receipts have been retained to meet future financing requirements, albeit the latter cannot be directly applied to revenue budget pressures. The 2024/25 budget is predicated on securing £15,752k further savings, mitigating the underlying pressures experienced during 2023/24, while also containing any further growth in demanded budgets without recourse to the one-off financing options that were able to be deployed in 2023/24.

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL

13. At outturn a £64,457k underspend is reported on the 2023/24 General Fund Capital Programme of £130,920k, representing a movement of £26,491k from Month 11, with the forecast outturn variance over the life of the 2023/24 to 2027/28 programme continuing to be estimated to breakeven. This is primarily driven by a minor timing update across a handful of large programme budgets, including the SEND Placement Expansion and Decarbonisation Programmes. General Fund Capital Receipts of £11,696k were achieved for 2023/24 and are projected to achieve the income target of £93,617k for the five years to 2027/28. Overall, Prudential Borrowing required to support the 2023/24 to 2027/28 General Fund capital programme is forecast to be on budget at £75,848k.
14. During 2023/24, the Council successfully secured £15,438k of disposal receipts, which when added to the opening balance of £4,258k, provides funding of £19,696k to fund transformation work across the Council. In the outturn position presented in this report, £11,696k of this balance has been used to support work that transforms the Council and supports delivery of £36,915k of savings to 2025/26.

SCHOOLS BUDGET

15. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) outturn position being reported for Month 12 is an in-year overspend of £23,325k when compared to the budgeted position, representing an adverse movement of £10,505k from month 11, with the adverse movement materialising following the finalisation of the SEND data quality review in collaboration with Schools Forum and review of SEN placements at each school. The overspend reported at Month 12 continues to be driven by High Needs placement demand and cost pressures. This position reflects ongoing pressures in the cost of High Needs placements, which is largely being driven by inflationary factors which are not reflected in the funding which the Council is receiving from the DfE.
16. The Council's Safety Valve Funding position is currently under discussion with the DfE and pending the outcome of those discussions, the DfE has chosen to suspend its commitment for further agreed funding of the deficit position. The projected deficit has therefore been adjusted to reflect the suspension meaning the cumulative deficit carried forward to 2024/25 is reported at £47,492k. The Council remains in dialogue with the DfE and committed to delivering the DSG management plan.

17. The issue of mounting DSG deficits remains a national issue, with projections for a £4bn deficit across the country forming a key strand to lobbying by sector bodies such as the LGA and London Councils.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

18. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is declaring a breakeven position at Month 12, with inflationary pressures on operating costs being mitigated by capital expenditure slippage and available headroom in financing costs. The 2023/24 closing HRA General Balance closed at £15,101k, exceeding the £15,000k target level established for 2023/24. The use of reserves is funding investment in new housing stock. An in-year underspend of £492k is reported against the £84,460k 2023/24 HRA Capital Programme at outturn, with this being a projected cost underspend across the 5-year capital budgets, with this position representing a minor £37k adverse forecast movement from Month 11.

FURTHER INFORMATION

General Fund Revenue Budget

19. A marginal £2k underspend is reported across the General Fund at outturn, representing no movement from Month 11, with the following section of this report providing an overview of emerging variances and management action in place to deliver this position. As a result, General Fund Balances are £26,848k at 31 March 2024, and therefore remain within the recommended range for 2023/24 of £22,000k to £41,000k as approved by Cabinet and Council in February 2023.

Table 1: General Fund Overview

Service	Month 12		Variance (As at Month 12) £'000	Variance (As at Month 11) £'000	Movement from Month 11 £'000
	Approved Budget	Outturn			
	£'000	£'000			
Service Operating Budgets	267,843	267,841	(2)	(2)	0
General Contingency	500	500	0	0	0
Unallocated Budget Items	(5,065)	(5,065)	0	0	0
Subtotal Expenditure	263,278	263,276	(2)	(2)	0
Corporate Funding	(263,278)	(263,278)	0	0	0
Total Net Expenditure	0	(2)	(2)	(2)	0
Balances b/fwd	(26,846)	(26,846)			
Balances c/fwd 31 March 2024	(26,846)	(26,848)			

20. The Council's budget contains a number of areas subject to demographic pressures and higher levels of volatility which are closely monitored and discussed in the Budget Strategy & MTFP under the "demand-led growth" banner, with pressures emerging throughout the year across both Adult Social Care Placements and SEND Transport, with further pressures having emerged later in the year across homelessness support and Looked After Children, with these areas funded from the release of provisions and reserves from the Council's Balance Sheet to manage this volatility.
21. Within the Council's payroll budget there is a Managed Vacancy Factor across the board of 3.5%, or £4,362k, to reflect natural levels of turnover and resulting structural underspend in the workforce budgets. The higher vacancy rate experienced during 2022/23 continued into 2023/24 year and therefore resulted in an underspend over and above the Managed Vacancy Factor, which is contributing to the management of local pressures within the final outturn position.
22. The Council budgeted for a pay award in 2023/24 of 4%, however, due to the exceptional inflationary environment, the approved pay offer exceeded this sum and equates to approximately 5.7% with £2,622k requiring funding to meet this additional uplift in the Council's workforce expenditure, therefore, included in the outturn position is the use of the Council's identified earmarked reserve for exceptional inflationary pressures to fund this pressure.

23. Provision for use of Earmarked Reserves has been included in this position, with £1,732k support for local priority initiatives, £1,535k release of grant funding to cover brought forward COVID-19 pressures in the Collection Fund, £1,000k further drawdown for inflationary pressures above the budgeted amount, and £8,160k to fund demand pressures and other costs. Windfall income from the West London Waste Authority's Energy from Waste operations has allowed £700k to be allocated to Earmarked Reserves, resulting in a net drawdown of £11,727k to leave a closing balance of £8,333k at 31 March 2024.
24. This represents an adverse movement of £1,822k on Month 11 which relates to £589k adverse movement at outturn from additional demand around Homelessness and other demand-led services, a further £800k relates to a reduction in the West London Waste Authority energy rebate from an update on the West London Waste Authority's budget position, the remaining movement predominantly relates to the use of ringfenced reserves as a result of movements in the position that relate to these ringfenced activities. The reported surplus against the Collection Fund of £4,221k offers an element of offsetting against the use of reserves in 2023/24 when £3,651k of these are realised in the 2024/25 financial year, with a further £570k being available in 2025/26.

Progress on Savings

25. The savings requirement for 2023/24 is £21,197k, which together with £1,565k brought forward from 2022/23, gives an overall total of £22,762k to be managed in the current financial year. The savings being reported as undelivered in 2022/23 (£1,565k) were attributable to the Council managing measures required to contain and offset inflationary pressures as well the ongoing legacy issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This value has been added to the budgeted savings agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget.

Table 2: Savings Tracker

Cabinet Member Portfolio	Blue Banked £'000	Green Delivery in progress £'000	Amber I Early stages of delivery £'000	Amber II Potential problems in delivery £'000	Red Serious problems in delivery £'000	Total £'000
Cabinet Member for Property, Highways & Transport	(1,374)	0	(100)	0	(383)	(1,857)
Cabinet Member for Finance	(117)	0	0	0	0	(117)
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services	(1,189)	(195)	0	0	(100)	(1,484)
Cabinet Member for Residents' Services	(9,801)	(535)	0	0	(2,189)	(12,525)
Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education	(839)	(150)	(130)	(315)	0	(1,434)
Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care	(2,395)	0	0	0	0	(2,395)
Cross-Cutting	(1,300)	0	(500)	(1,150)	0	(2,950)
Total 2023/24 Savings Programme	(17,015) 75.0%	(880) 4.0%	(730) 3.0%	(1,465) 6.0%	(2,672) 12.0%	(22,762) 100.0%
Month on Month Movement	(6,448) 28.3%	6,412) -28.2%	414) -1.8%	2,294) -10.1%	(2,672) 11.8%	0) 0.0%

26. As of Month 12, £17,015k (75%) of the savings programme has already been banked, with a further £880k (4%) being reported as delivery in progress and £2,195k (9%) in the early stages of delivery which are ultimately expected to be delivered in full. Where challenges are reported with the delivering of savings (Amber II), these primarily relate to the phasing of delivery and are ultimately expected to either be delivered in full or replaced with alternative proposals.
27. Where savings have not been delivered in full during 2023/24, the associated pressures have been factored into the outturn position presented in this report. It is expected that the full £22,762k will ultimately be delivered in full or replaced with alternative measures in the event of any ongoing shortfall. With 75% of the savings banked, this position therefore means that £5,747k will be rolled forward into 2024/25 and tracked in the new financial year.
28. The Council is permitted to finance the costs associated with the delivery of this savings programme through Capital Receipts, with both one-off implementation costs and the support for service transformation being funded from this resource. The outturn position includes £11,696k for such costs, with all such costs subject to a specific funding strategy, with full details set out in Appendix A1, with these costs being funded by a combination of disposal receipts achieved in year and an unutilised balance from 2022/23.

Service Operating Budgets

29. Service Operating Budgets represent the majority of the Council's investment in day-to-day services for residents. With the Council continuing to operate in a high inflation environment driven by global and national influences, these budgets were supplemented with £21,691k of

funding to meet forecast inflationary pressures and £12,753k for demographic and other drivers impacting on demand for services going into the 2023/24.

30. Table 3 represents the position reported against normal activities for the Service Operating Budgets, the salient risks and variances within this position are summarised in the following paragraphs.

Table 3: Service Operating Budgets

Cabinet Member Portfolio		Approved Budget	Outturn	Variance (As at Month 12)	Variance (As at Month 11)	Movement from Month 11
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Property, Highways & Transport	Expenditure	19,553	19,387	(166)	(166)	0
	Income	(9,883)	(10,455)	(572)	(572)	0
	Subtotal	9,670	8,932	(738)	(738)	0
Finance	Expenditure	139,846	139,846	0	0	0
	Income	(106,069)	(106,775)	(706)	(706)	0
	Subtotal	33,778	33,071	(706)	(706)	0
Corporate Services	Expenditure	28,169	28,189	20	20	0
	Income	(2,045)	(2,233)	(189)	(189)	0
	Subtotal	26,124	25,956	(168)	(168)	0
Residents' Services	Expenditure	73,200	75,225	2,025	2,025	0
	Income	(47,382)	(46,283)	1,100	1,100	0
	Subtotal	25,818	28,942	3,125	3,125	0
Children, Families & Education	Expenditure	98,977	99,558	581	581	0
	Income	(24,434)	(25,869)	(1,435)	(1,435)	0
	Subtotal	74,544	73,689	(854)	(854)	0
Health & Social Care	Expenditure	152,537	153,545	1,008	1,008	0
	Income	(54,500)	(56,168)	(1,669)	(1,669)	0
	Subtotal	98,037	97,377	(660)	(660)	0
Total Service Operating Budgets		267,970	267,970	267,968	(2)	0

31. As can be seen from the table above, Service Operating Budgets are reporting a marginal underspend of £2k which is the cumulative effect of a number of variances which are briefly outlined below by Cabinet Portfolio, with no movement being reported from Month 11 on these budgets, with the adverse movement from additional demand pressures at outturn being funded by release of earmarked reserves:

- i. **Property, Highways & Transport** – An underspend of £738k is reported. The overall variance in this area is driven by that connection between the properties service and the capital programme, plus a favourable variance reported against the Council's Business Rates liability following an update to from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

- ii. **Finance** – A net underspend of £706k is reported at outturn, with this position being driven by a reduction in the Council’s energy requirements, this is being compounded by a number of small overachievements against income targets, with additional grant funding being provided to support Homes for Ukraine provided in the borough and a favourable variance against investment income as a result of high interest rates. The subjective movements in this portfolio at Month 11 relate to increased staffing expenditure offset by increased recharges to the pension fund from staffing time spent supporting this area.
- iii. **Corporate Services** – a net underspend of £168k is reported, with the underspend being driven by a number of small variances, predominantly across three service areas including Digital, Data & Technology, Legal Services and Democratic Services, with the staffing position delivering this underspend across the various services within the Corporate Services portfolio, with this position compounded by additional grant funding to support Ukrainian refugees.
- iv. **Residents’ Services** – an overspend of £3,125k is presented for this portfolio, the variance in this portfolio is being driven by three key areas:
 - i. Firstly, the saving programme within the Green Spaces is being impacted by external factors, including exceptional inflationary pressures, leading to approximately a third of the reported pressure.
 - ii. Secondly a third of the pressure is being driven by the Community Safety & Enforcement service, with these pressures being driven by a combination of issues at Heathrow, including Brexit related changes and a cessation of Government funding, as well as pressures against parking income as recovery rates from the pandemic continue to track below budgeted predictions.
 - iii. Finally, pressures within the Planning Service are driving a large quantity of the remaining pressure as a result of income pressures against fees and charges reflecting adverse economic conditions, as well as expenditure pressures from staffing costs and the use of external consultants to carry out planning activities.

Within this portfolio there are two areas that fall within the Council's Demand-Led Growth section of the budget strategy as a result of the impacts of demographics and volatility, with these two areas being Homelessness Prevention and Waste Disposal. Homelessness Prevention continued to experience a substantial uplift in demand throughout 2023/24, with a gross pressure of £2,986k being funded from earmarked reserves. Waste Disposal costs at outturn were in line with budget and the Demand-Led Growth bid included in the budget proposals in February 2023.

- v. **Children, Families & Education** – an underspend of £854k is being reported at Month 12, with education functions including SEND and Adult Education largely breaking even at outturn, with additional expenditure being incurred to support Children in Need alongside the running of the Early Years Centres, offset by a

reduction in the cost of service delivery for Looked After Children and measures put in place to contain staffing expenditure delivering a further benefit for the portfolio.

Within this portfolio, there are three services that are reported in the Council's budget strategy under Demand-Led Growth: Children's Placements, Asylum Funding and SEND Transport. Throughout 2023/24 the service saw the usual inherent volatility in demand for Looked after Children and Asylum services, with Looked After Children reporting an adverse variance, which in part is linked to a lack of General Needs Housing to move 18+ clients into more appropriate settings, with this pressure being funded from Earmarked Reserves. SEND Transport is reporting a pressure due to higher numbers than anticipated of pupils requiring transport, with this pressure previously being offset by re-routing efficiencies, however, these are being eroded due to push back on the revised routes, leading to the reported pressure in this area, with the pressure being funded from a combination of earmarked reserves and a release of Balance Sheet provisions.

- vi. **Health & Social Care** – an underspend of £660k is reported for this portfolio, with staffing underspends after Social Care activities being driven by recruitment difficulties for the sector impacting both at a local level and nationally. The reported overachievement of income is spread across services within the remit of this portfolio with no material variances, with the largest being additional grant income.

Within this portfolio, Adult Social Care Placements is the only area that falls within the Demand-Led Growth section of the Council's budget strategy, with the outturn position reporting continued demographics and inflation pressures with the adverse variance proposed being funded from a combination of earmarked reserves and a further release of Balance Sheet provisions.

Collection Fund

- 32. A surplus of £4,221k is reported within the Collection Fund at Month 12. Within the Collection Fund, an adverse position is reported within Council Tax of £1,555k, offset by a favourable position within Business Rates of £5,776k. This position is driven by 3 key factors:
 - i. The pressure in Council Tax is predominantly driven by a reduction in the growth of the taxbase as construction continues to slow down, due to inflationary pressures in the sector, with the outturn slippage equating to 1,271 Band D properties.
 - ii. This position is then compounded by an adverse position within Council Tax Support due to a short period of increased demand driven by the cost-of-living crisis, with demand returning to a declining rate, with the short-term increase accounting for a pressure of 575 Band D properties.
 - iii. The favourable position within Business Rates is being driven by the final position confirming the Council has secured the increased revenue from the national revaluation of commercial property, with a favourable movement of £311k being driven by a number of small movements.

33. Any deficits within the Collection Fund impact on the Council's future year budgets, with the position reported up to Month 9 impacting on the 2024/25 saving requirement, leading to £3,651k being included in the Council's refresh of the budget strategy presented to Cabinet in February 2024, with any further updates between Month 10 and this outturn position impacting on 2025/26, with this sum equating to £570k at outturn. This position therefore reduced the Council's gross saving requirement by £3,651k for 2024/25, with £570k to be factored in the next update to the Council's Budget Strategy for 2025/26.

General Fund Capital Programme

34. As at Month 12 the General Fund reporting an in-year underspend of £64,857k, an increase of £26,491k from Month 11 with the 5-year programme forecast remaining in line with budgeted expectations. At Month 12, capital receipts have been secured to cover the transformation expenditure and to hold on the balance sheet the £8,000k that was due to be utilised to reduce the Schools Budget deficit whilst the Council's Safety Valve contributions agreement are currently suspended by the Department for Education (DfE). Key movements within the overall £26,491k include a number of minor timing updates across a handful of large programme budgets, including the SEND Placement Expansion and Decarbonisation Programmes.

Capital Programme Overview

35. Table 5 below sets out the final outturn on General Fund capital projects. Forecasts for future years include capital projects and programmes of work approved by Cabinet and Council in February 2023. Outturn variances against budget for the 2023/24 financial year are analysed between cost and rephasing, in the case of the latter, budget will only be rolled forward for use in future financial years with the explicit approval of Cabinet. As of Month 12, a total favourable variance of £64,858k is being reported, with £7,865k being a cost variance and £56,992k being proposed against the rephasing variance.

Table 5: General Fund Capital Programme Summary

	Approved Budget 2023/24	Outturn 2023/24	Cost Variance 2023/24	Project Re-phasing 2023/24	Total Project Budget 2023-2028	Total Project Forecast 2023-2028	Total Project Variance 2023-2028	5-year Movement
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cabinet Member Portfolio								
Finance	13,779	11,911	0	(1,868)	22,724	22,724	0	0
Residents	3,887	1,807	188	(2,268)	9,219	9,219	0	0
Corporate Services	2,373	882	(200)	(1,291)	5,105	5,105	0	0
Children, Families and Education	24,296	11,938	(676)	(11,682)	25,499	25,499	0	0
Health and Social Care	2,850	2,760	(90)	0	14,250	14,250	0	0
Property, Highways and Transport	73,034	36,766	(2,721)	(33,549)	217,284	217,284	0	0
Contingency	10,701	0	0	(10,701)	26,701	26,701	0	0
Total Capital Programme	130,920	66,063	(3,499)	(61,359)	320,782	320,782	0	0
Major Projects	81,673	42,377	(9)	(39,288)	170,523	170,523	0	0
Programme of Works	38,546	23,687	(3,490)	(11,370)	123,558	123,558	0	0
General Contingency	10,701	0	0	(10,701)	26,701	26,701	0	0
Total Capital Programme	130,920	66,063	(3,499)	(61,359)	320,782	320,782	0	0
Movement	1,322	(25,169)	(7,865)	(18,626)	0	0	0	0

36. **Finance:** At outturn, the use of Capitalisation powers to fund Transformation Capitalisation has been fully funded from capital receipts, with the DSG Safety Valve agreement commitments currently being suspended by the DfE and proposed for rephasing. A review of the electric vehicle charging structure is underway to ensure there is sufficient capacity for the rollout of electric fleet, with the rollout of electric fleet is expected to start in the new financial year.
37. **Residents:** The Residents portfolio includes a proposed rephasing variance of £2,268k at Month 12. The Town Centre improvements and Shopping Parade investments account for the proposed rephasing in major projects, with rephasing also proposed within Programme of Works for Chrysalis and Green Spaces s106 projects, with some initiatives due deliver in 2024/25 and ultimately deliver in line with the budget plan. Other Capital Programme activity within this portfolio includes expenditure on the Council's green spaces, environmental and recreational initiatives, and the playground replacement programme reporting a cost variance of £188k at outturn.
38. **Corporate Services:** The Corporate Technology and Innovation programme budget of £2,373k includes rephasing of £333k from 2022/23 and was increased by a £300k release from the general capital contingency budget and is reporting an outturn underspend of

£1,491k, with £1,291k being proposed to be rephased into 2024/25. Projects this year include telephone improvements and the Laptop and Desktop Refresh programme, which is expected to roll out new hardware in the new financial year. The Older Peoples Initiative is driving the 2023/24 cost underspend.

39. **Children, Families & Education:** The Schools SEND programme is underway with several projects set to provide additional special needs places. Work is progressing on site at Wood End Primary, and complete at Ruislip and Charville Primary. The pre-construction service agreement for the Harefield Academy site to be used as a satellite school to be managed by Meadow High School has changed to a demolition and rebuild scheme. This programme has experienced slight delays and is the reason for much of the reduction in spend at outturn, with this 2023/24 underspend being proposed to be rephased in full. Revised cost estimates remain significantly above confirmed DfE grant funding.
40. The Youth Provision budget is reporting an underspend of £1,029k, with work commencing at the back end of 2023/24, leading to £353k of this budget being proposed for rephasing to support the continuation of this project with this update alongside the £11,330k for the Schools SEND Programme taking the total proposed rephasing to £11,682k for the portfolio.
41. **Health and Social Care:** The capitalisation of social care equipment is reported to largely be in line with budget at outturn. The Disabled Facilities Grant adaptations includes rephasing from 2022/23 of £279k with this area declaring a £90k cost underspend.
42. **Property, Highways & Transport:** The single largest project within this portfolio is the new West Drayton Leisure Centre, with the Capital Programme approved budget for this project being a total investment of over £36m over 3 years. Construction works were halted when the contractor entered administration at the beginning of September 2023. In the interim, the Council continued with weather-tight works to keep the structure safe. Approval to appointment an interim contractor to undertake mechanical and electrical work is expected shortly along with proposals for delivering the project through to completion, now expected to be in May 2025. The budget was reprofiled during the refresh of the Council's budget strategy approved by Cabinet and Council in February 2024/25, reprofiling the budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26. Further rephasing of £2,278k is proposed at Month 12 from the 2023/24 budget into the new financial year.
43. Planning for the Hillingdon Water Sports Facility has been submitted and a decision is expected imminently. Procurement of a contractor was progressing through a Pre-Construction Services Agreement route; however, the process has had to be restarted as the contractor has entered into administration. Whilst some enabling works took place in 2023/24 as planned, the main works contract will now commence next year. Rephasing of £10,843k was proposed and approved at Month 6, with little movement at outturn 2023/24.
44. Northwood Hills Library Buyback is reporting a proposed rephasing of £2,390k. Planning, designs and surveys for the New Years Green Lane proposed extension, started later than planned and rephasing of £782k is proposed. Design and survey work has commenced on Uxbridge Cemetery Gatehouse and Botwell Leisure Centre adaptations, however works are will now be commenced in the new financial year with rephasing of £476k and £250k

proposed respectively. The Battle of Britain Underground Bunker is expected to complete in early 2024/25, with rephasing of £380k being proposed.

45. The Carbon Zero Initiatives programme budget stands at £15,119k and is partially funded from a grant of £13,751k from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy which has been fully earmarked for the Park Farm Solar Farm and the installation of PV panels at the Civic Centre, Winston Churchill Hall, Hillingdon Sports and Leisure Centre, and Highgrove swimming pool. The outturn position proposes rephasing of £8,796k to complete these works in 2024/25.
46. The Transport for London (TfL) programme confirmed grant award is £2,527k, and is based on the 2023/24 Local Implementation Plan award and is significantly lower than pre-pandemic funding levels, with the outturn position confirming this grant funding will be fully utilised over the life of the programme.
47. The Civic Centre transformation project has commenced with a number of workstreams already underway. The main works contractor for the refurbishment was appointed in June and work started in September on the pilot phase, which is now complete. The contractor for the remaining quadrants was awarded in January and work commenced immediately. The project is making good progress and is forecast to come in on budget over the life of the programme, with a review of the timing of cashflows leading to a reported underspend of £9,976k, with this amount being proposed for rephasing into later years to provide funding to see the project through to completion.
48. The Schools Building Condition Works programme has been agreed and is reporting a cost underspend of £2,199k at Month 12.

Capital Financing - General Fund

Table 6: Capital Financing

	Approved Budget 2023/24 £'000	Outturn 2023/24 £'000	Cost Variance £'000	Phasing Variance £'000	Total Financing Budget 2023-2028 £'000	Total Financing Forecast 2023-2028 £'000	Total Variance £'000	5-year Movement
Source of Finance								
Capital Receipts	28,734	11,696	0	(17,038)	93,617	93,617	0	0
CIL	2,463	2,562	0	99	18,963	18,963	0	0
Prudential Borrowing	43,102	21,554	(3,498)	(18,050)	75,848	75,848	0	0
Total Council Resources	74,299	35,812	(3,498)	(34,989)	188,428	188,428	0	0
Grants & Contributions	56,621	30,251	0	(26,370)	132,354	132,354	0	0
Capital Programme	130,920	66,063	(3,498)	(61,359)	320,782	320,782	0	0
Movement	1,322	(25,169)	(7,865)	(18,626)	0	0	0	0

49. The MTFF disposals programme 2023-28 forecasts total capital receipts of £93,617k and includes £39,888k of further specific capital receipts to be identified. In 2023/24 capital receipts are £11,696k resulting in slippage of £17,038k. Progress is being made identifying and progressing potential asset disposals with £20,756k remaining to be identified. These receipts will form a key strand to financing the Council's DSG Safety Valve on the basis that the current funding suspension is ultimately delivered and broader transformation programme, and therefore this activity remains a key corporate priority.

Schools Budget

50. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn shows an overspend of £25.6m which is on the High Needs Block. This includes an increase of £10.5m compared to the position previously reported. It followed on from finalisation of the data quality review in collaboration with Schools Forum and review of SEN placements with each of the schools.
51. The review found a gap in SEN EHCP commitments totalling over £10.5m for placements not in the system and made up of:
- i. Historic or prior years commitments totalling £6.3m.
 - ii. In-Year commitments totalling £4.2m.

Funding Block	Outturn		Variance		
	Reported Budget	Actual	Variance	Variance (As at Month 11)	Change from Month 11
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Dedicated Schools Grant Income	(348,931)	(348,931)	0	0	0
Schools Block	266,069	266,069	0	0	0
Early Years Block	26,511	26,511	0	0	0
Central Schools Services Block	2,938	2,938	0	0	0
High Needs Block	55,693	79,018	23,325	12,820	10,505
Total Funding Blocks	2,280	25,605	23,325	12,820	10,505
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2023	21,887	21,887	0	0	0
Total Deficit at 31 March 2024 before Funding	24,167	47,492	23,325	12,820	10,505

Dedicated Schools Grant Income (nil variance)

52. There was no material difference in the amount of DSG received by the LA from the DfE compared to the final DSG allocation due.

Schools Block (nil variance)

53. The Schools Block includes all funding paid directly to mainstream schools as part of their delegated budget share, including the funding recouped by the ESFA and paid to mainstream academies.
54. There is also a growth contingency fund which is funded from the Schools Block. Schools that are expanding, in agreement with the local authority, to meet basic need pupil population growth, receive additional funding to provide financial recompense throughout the relevant financial year to cover the cost of this agreed and planned growth.

Early Years Block (nil variance)

55. Two-year-old funding was adjusted in July to reflect the number of children accessing the entitlement based on the January 2022 census. The 3 and 4-year-old funding for both the universal and the additional free entitlement was also adjusted in July following the January 2022 census.

Central School Services Block (nil variance)

56. The published DSG budget allocations confirmed a 20% decrease in the Central School Services Block provided for historic commitments. For FY 2023-24 this resulted in a £135k reduction in funding. This reduction in funding only increases the pressure on the services being funded by the central school services block.

High Needs Block Pressures – (£25.6m overspend)

57. The overspend reflects ongoing pressures in the cost of High Needs placements, largely driven by inflationary factors which are not reflected in the funding from the DfE.
58. Across Local Authorities the scale of mounting DSG deficits has clearly emerged as a national issue, with projections for a £4bn deficit across the country forming a key strand to lobbying by sector bodies such as the LGA and London Councils. As highlighted above the High Needs position reflects ongoing pressures in the cost of placements, driven by inflationary factors which are not reflected in the funding.
59. Top-up costs present a key pressure showing a 30% increase in year-on-year expenditure because of the work around data cleansing and improvements in the payment processes highlighted above.
60. The LA also spent an additional £3m on contingency DSG payments including an increase in the cost of threshold payments as well as additional payments to schools with over place numbers.

61. Inflationary pressures across the sector have continued to increase and are impacting on the costs of High Needs placements within each type of school setting. Overall, the SEN service experienced a combined demand and inflationary increase of over 18% compared to 2022/23 after adjusting for the prior year cost identified by the review.
62. Measures are in place to reduce the number of high cost Out of Borough Independent placements which present the largest unit cost within the High Needs Block, costing 58% more on average than In Borough Independent placements. These structural improvements will take time to deliver as there is a significant time lag between implementing new policies and the benefits being released.
63. The challenge of mounting DSG deficits is a national issue with London Councils estimating that deficits would rise across London to almost £300m during 2023-24. The number of students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and those requiring SEN support has risen substantially over the past year and is expected to continue to rise through to 2025-26 with no imminent changes in either statutory responsibilities or the funding regime expected in the near future.

Safety Valve

64. The Council submitted an updated DSG Management Plan to the DfE in December 2023 as part of the DfE's Safety Valve programme. Discussions with the DfE and DHLUC around the Business Case and Delivery Plan are ongoing and are specifically focussed on exploring the cost benefits of a shorter- or longer-term agreement and alternative funding approaches.
65. While the authority is progressing the discussions with the DfE and DHLUC, Finance is updating the Financial Model, and the service is progressing with delivery of the Safety Valve targets and savings.

Maintained School Balances & Budgets

66. Maintained schools ended the 2023/24 financial year with a cumulative closing surplus balance of £11.7m (£11.3m revenue and £0.4m capital). This was a £1.1m decrease from the previous year total. A review of the balances at the end of the 2023/24 financial year identified eight schools which ended the year with a deficit revenue balance of which 5 had licensed deficits. These schools all had applied for a licensed deficit at the start of the year having carried forward cumulative deficits from 2022/23. However, two of these schools were able to reduce the cumulative deficit with an in-year surplus.
67. The table below summarises school revenue balances as a percentage of total revenue income. Analysis of the data in the table indicates that overall, the number of schools with balances over the recommended 8% (or 5% for secondary schools) is currently 40% compared to 48% in 2022/23.

Sector	Number of Schools in Deficit	Number with Balances < 5%	Number with Balance > 5% and < 8%	Number with Balances > 8% and < 20%	Number with Balances > 20%
Nursery	0	0	0	0	1
Primary	7	12	9	14	3
Secondary	1	1	0	0	0
Special	0	0	0	1	1
Total	8	13	9	15	5

68. The 2024/25 budgets for maintained schools will continue to be reviewed, with schools RAG-rated based on their balances position. Schools that are either in deficit or have managed to set a balanced budget but with very low balances, meaning that any significant unplanned change in expenditure could result in the school being in a deficit position are rated red. Officers are closely monitoring these schools to ensure that everything possible is being done to address the situation.

Housing Revenue Account

69. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is reporting a breakeven position against the budget strategy, with inflationary risk driving additional expenditure within the service. The 2023/24 closing HRA General Balance is reported to be £15,101k, in line with the Council's budget strategy and marginally higher than the £15,000k target level. The table below presents key variances by service area, with a reduced requirement on capital financing offsetting additional investment being undertaken through the revenue account in year.

Table 8: Housing Revenue Account

Service	Month 12		Variance (+ adv / - fav)		
	Budget	Outturn	Variance (As at Month 12)	Variance (As at Month 11)	Movement from Month 11
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Rent & Other Income	(74,788)	(74,653)	133	133	0
Net Income	(74,788)	(74,653)	133	133	0
Operational Assets	11,940	13,626	1,725	1,725	0
Director of Housing	10,210	10,217	33	33	0
Other Service Areas	775	736	(39)	(39)	0
Contribution to Shared Services	11,741	12,094	353	353	0
HRA Operating Costs	34,666	36,673	2,072	2,072	0
Capital Programme Financing	25,258	23,732	(1,526)	(1,526)	0
Interest and Investment Income	14,949	14,333	(681)	(681)	0
Capital Programme Financing	40,207	38,065	(2,207)	(2,207)	0
(Surplus) / Deficit	85	85	0	0	0
General Balance 01/04/2023	(15,186)	(15,186)	0	0	0
General Balance 31/03/2024	(15,101)	(15,101)	0	0	0

70. At outturn, rental income and other income is reporting an under-recovery position of £133k, as reported at Month 11. The outturn position has remained steady and the expected handover of buyback acquisitions to the lettings team has been skewed towards the end of the financial year and the first part of next year leading to a pressure on income.

71. The number of RTB applications received in 2023/24 was 127 compared to 133 in 2022/23. There has been 49 RTB completions in 2023/24 compared to 58 in 2022/23. The RTB applications and completions in 2023/24 were in line with budgeted expectations.

72. The HRA Operating Costs Budget is £34,666k and at outturn is reporting an overspend by £2,072k. In line with experience elsewhere in the Council, significant inflationary pressures impacted on the outturn position with a view to the impact of uplifts going into 2024/25. Within this position, several variances are reported:

- i. Operation Assets budget is £11,940k and includes services for repairs and maintenance, void repairs, compliance and inspections. The outturn position is a net overspend of £1,725k, attributable predominantly from disrepair claims in 2023/24.

- ii. The Director of Housing budget is £10,210k and includes tenancy management and tenants' services. The outturn position is a net overspend position of £33k and is therefore largely in line with the budget expectation.
 - iii. The Other Service Areas budget is £775k and includes the Careline contract, HRA specific ICT costs and the revenue regeneration costs with final spend also being in line with the budget, with this area reporting an underspend of £39k for 2023/24.
 - iv. The Contribution to Shared Services budget is £11,741k and is reporting an overspend of £353k. The budgets include development and risk contingency, overheads and corporate and democratic core, and bad debt provision. With arrears increasing in 2023/24 additional resource has been seconded to the income recovery team due to the increased caseload.
73. The 2023/24 savings target is £690k and is included in the above position, with £284k covered by one-off benefits and is yet to be fully identified going into the new financial year.
74. As at Month 12 the capital programme financing budget of £40,207k is reporting an underspend of £2,207k. This budget includes the HRA's depreciation and revenue contributions to fund the HRA capital programme (£25,258k), with the position also including £14,949k for repayments of loans and interest on borrowing, an underspend against budget of £681k due to £30,531m rephasing on the Hayes Estate Regeneration Programme resulting in lower-than-expected borrowing costs this year.

HRA Capital Expenditure

75. The HRA capital programme is set out in the table below. The 2023/24 revised budget is £84,460k, a movement of £33,678k following the rephasing approved at Month 6. The Month 12 update is presenting a proposed rephasing total of £22,791k. A small cost variance of £492k is being reported, representing a £37k adverse movement from Month 11. The five-year projections are forecast to deliver the £492k cost underspend reported for 2023/24.

Table 9: HRA Capital Expenditure

	Revised Budget 2023/24	Outturn 2023/24	Cost Variance 2023/24	Project Re-Phasing 2023/24	Total Project Budget 2023-28	Total Project Forecast 2023-28	Total Project Variance 2023-28	Movement 2023-28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
HRA Capital Programme								
Major Projects	56,683	37,552	(492)	(18,639)	315,529	315,037	(492)	0
Works to Stock programme	22,437	16,867	(1,419)	(4,152)	132,813	132,813	0	0
Green Homes Initiatives	3,000	4,144	1,144	0	33,141	33,141	0	0
Major Adaptations to Property	2,340	2,615	275	0	13,317	13,317	0	0
Total HRA Capital	84,460	61,177	(492)	(22,791)	494,800	494,776	(492)	0
Movement	0	(11,249)	37	(11,286)	0	0	0	0

76. As reported at Month 11 there is a small favourable cost variance of £492k on Major Projects. The Council acquired a property from a Registered Provider providing accommodation to vulnerable adults. The HRA will provide landlord services and Adults will continue to provide care. Cost variances across the Works to Stock, Green Homes Initiatives and Major Adaptations net to nil.
77. At outturn, a minor £1,049k of further slippage is reported on the Hayes Estates Regeneration scheme, piling work is now complete and progress is weather dependent. The rephasing of expenditure from the current financial year reflects the latest project programming from the developer. As a result of this revised profiling, vacant possession of Wellings House is not needed now until December 2024 and the block is being utilised for temporary accommodation until then, and all leaseholder interest vested to the Council as planned on 31 October 2023. The compulsory purchase negotiations on the remaining phases will complete as planned by the 31 March 2025 with expenditure forecasts aligned accordingly. Handover of Hayes Town Centre Phase 1 is expected around September 2025.
78. The annual acquisitions cap for 1-4-1 receipts funded buybacks has increased from 20 units to 37, due to the commencement on site for the Maple and Poplar North Block redevelopment. Over the summer the Council was successful in securing GLA and DLUCH grant to purchase 27 properties. Total new supply in 2023/24 from purchase and repair acquisitions was 41 units. The MTFP set aside funding for 100 new units, on the basis that external grant funding would be secured towards financing the new supply together with the 1-4-1 replacement RTB receipts. The Council share of the new GLA grant funded schemes being funded from the HRA Unallocated Acquisition budget. As at 31 March 2024 55 properties have been identified and approved for capital release, of which 41 have been acquired.
79. Construction works have progressing on site at Petworth Gardens, Sullivan Crescent and Rowan Road, to provide a total of ten 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom houses. The outturn position at Month 12 is £1,748k rephasing on Sullivan Crescent. Petworth Gardens is expected to be ready for occupation by the summer. The development at Maple and Poplar of 34 2-bedroom flats is units is expected to be complete by Summer 2024. Delays have been incurred connecting utilities to the plant room, which is required before the homes can be let, rephasing

of £2,424k is proposed as at Month 12. The proposed acquisition of 24 one and two-bedroom flats at Newport Road for temporary accommodation will not take place as planned, as reported at Month 11. Fire safety and compliance issues were identified, and remedial works required to ensure full compliance with latest standards was too intrusive and expensive to undertake. The £8,400k budget will be reallocated to future acquisition and development schemes.

HRA Capital Financing

80. The below table sets out the HRA Capital Financing at Month 12:

Table 10: HRA Capital Financing

	Approved Budget 2023/24 £'000	Outturn 2023/24 £'000	Cost Variance £'000	Phasing Variance £'000	Total Financing Budget 2023-2028 £'000	Total Financing Forecast 2023-2028 £'000	Total Variance £'000	Move-ment
Source of Finance								
Capital Receipts	8,122	6,467		(1,655)	38,109	38,109	0	0
Revenue Contributions	21,597	23,112		1,515	122,761	124,334	1,573	3,099
Prudential Borrowing	38,415	27,464	(492)	(10,459)	232,918	231,485	(1,396)	(3,062)
Total Council Resources	68,134	57,043	(492)	(10,599)	393,788	393,928	177	37
Grants & Contributions	16,326	4,134	0	(12,192)	101,517	100,848	(669)	0
Capital Programme	84,460	61,177	(492)	(22,791)	495,305	494,776	(492)	37
Movement	0	11,249	(37)	11,286	0	0	(37)	

81. Since the approval of rephasing after Month 6, £16,126k has been released from the Unallocated Acquisition and Development budget to fund additional buybacks and development schemes. The unallocated budget assumes an even split between GLA grant and RTB receipt funded schemes, however the recent releases are weighted towards RTB receipt schemes which capital receipt and grants and contribution mix. The revenue contribution rephasing relating the reported HRA position which requires a reduction in the revenue contribution capital this year to achieve a balanced position.

Treasury Management Update as at 29 February 2024

82. This report summaries the Council's treasury management activities during 2023/24 and presents details of capital financing, borrowing, debt management and investment transactions alongside an outturn position.

Borrowing 2023-24

83. Although internal borrowing continued to be utilised during the year, external borrowing was also required during 2023/24 to ensure liquidity was maintained. The total loan portfolio increased by £32.5m as set out in the table below, leaving a balance at year-end of £356.17m (GF £158.60m, HRA £197.57m).

84. New loans of £50m were taken under the HRA to take advantage of the concessionary PWLB rate for HRA capital financing, of which £20m were short term (12 months) and another £20m were only two years duration. £10m was taken over a longer duration. There was no new long term General Fund borrowing with borrowing throughout the period consisting of £64m temporary local authority loans, offset by £70m which matured resulting in a net £6m reduction in temporary loans.

85. Over the year the Council's loan portfolio had an average interest rate of 3.31% (2.60% 2023/24) reflecting increases in market rates. Interest paid over the year totalled £10.26m (GF £4.87m, HRA £5.39m), an increase of £1.46m from 2023/24.

The Borrowing Requirement and Debt Management

	Balance on 31/3/2023 £m	New Borrowing £m	Debt Maturing £m	Balance on 31/3/2024 £m	Year-End Average Rate %
GF Loans					
PWLB Fixed Rate	82.60	-	(8.00)	74.60	2.37
Market Fixed Rate	15.00	-	-	15.00	4.28
Temporary LA Borrowing	75.00	64.00	(70.00)	69.00	5.27
Total GF Loans	172.60	64.00	(78.00)	158.60	
HRA Loans					
PWLB Fixed Rate	118.07	50.00	(3.50)	164.57	3.54
Market Fixed Rate	33.00	-	-	33.00	4.03
Total HRA Loans	151.07	50.00	(3.50)	197.57	
Total Loans	323.67	114.00	(81.50)	356.17	3.79
Other Long Term Liabilities	0.10		(0.07)	0.03	
Total External Debt	323.77			356.20	
CFR	420.6			456.9	

86. The Council's underlying need to borrow is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) which, as at 31/3/2024, was £456.9m (31/3/2023 £420.6m). The Council's underlying future external borrowing requirement, i.e. the difference between the CFR and total actual external borrowing, is £100.7m at the end of the financial year, an increase of £3.9m in year. The CFR increased by £36.3m and external borrowing by £32.4m. The difference between

the total CFR and external borrowing levels represents the level of internal borrowing, primarily supported by the Council's own reserves and working capital.

87. As at 31 March 2024, the Council held £239.17m of PWLB debt (£74.60m General Fund and £164.57m HRA) containing a broad range of loan types including both Maturity and EIP loans with fixed rates and with varying maturities. In addition, the Council has £48m of market loans (£15m General Fund and £33m HRA), with no new market loans taken or repaid in year. These consist of £12m fixed-rate loans and £36m LOBO loans. During the year one long term market lender approached the Council about the early repayment of their LOBO loans with no premium to the Council, however after financial assessment early repayment was not considered best value for money as they are likely to be called at their next option date. Current rates for the aforementioned loans are below those in the prevailing market.
88. Interest rates have seen substantial rises over the last two years, although these rises have now begun to plateau. Gilt yields fell in late 2023, reaching April 2023 lows in December 2023 before rebounding to an extent in the first three months of 2024. Gilt yields have remained volatile, seeing upward pressure from perceived sticker inflation at times and downward pressure from falling inflation and a struggling economy at other times.
89. On 31st December 2023, the PWLB certainty rates for maturity loans were 4.74% for 10 year loans, 5.18% for 20-year loans and 5.01% for 50-year loans. Their equivalents on 31st March 2023 were 4.33%, 4.70% and 4.41% respectively.
90. The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has generally risen with Base Rate over the year. Interest rates peaked at around 7% towards the later part of March 2024 as many authorities required cash at the same time. These rates are expected to fall back to more normal market levels from April 2024.
91. As at 31st March 2024, the Council's loan portfolio had an average rate 3.79% with the General Fund Loans average rate of 3.81% and HRA average rate of 3.78%. During the year there was £11.5m of naturally maturing longer term PWLB debt and £70m of local authority temporary borrowing maturities.

Borrowing Update

92. CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement, and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Authority. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes.
93. The Council does not plan to borrow to invest primarily for commercial return and so is unaffected by the changes to the Prudential Code. However, the Council holds a £4.7m historic portfolio in commercial investment properties that were purchased prior to the change in the CIPFA Prudential Code. The Council is not actively seeking to increase this type of investment exposure. These assets are not held for normal operational activity but held under long-term commercial leases.

94. A new PWLB HRA rate which is 0.4% below the certainty rate was made available from 15th June 2023. This rate will now be available to June 2025. The discounted rate is to support local authorities borrowing for the Housing Revenue Account and for refinancing existing HRA loans. In 2023/24 £50m new PWLB borrowing accessed this discounted rate, to support financing the HRA capital programme which contains significant budgeted prudential borrowing for new housing developments and the Hayes regeneration programme.

Investment Activity

95. The investment income return for the year on day-to-day operational treasury balances excluding strategic pooled funds was 4.92% (2.13% 2023/24), resulting in income for 2023/24 of £3,378k. The table below shows day-to-day operational treasury balances investment balances on 31st March 2024 excluding strategic pooled funds. The weighted average balance of these investments over the year was £68.63m.

Investments	Average Balance over 2023/24 £m	Balance on 31/03/2024 £m	Balance on 31/03/2023 £m
Day to Day Operational			
Current Account	0.70	4.10	0.50
Call Accounts	0.00	0.00	0.00
Money Market Funds	25.28	0.00	0.00
Short Term Deposits	42.65	28.50	46.70
Total Day to Day Operational	68.63	32.60	47.20
Average Rate % Received	4.92%		2.13%
Strategic Pooled Funds	15.00	15.00	15.00
Average Rate % Received	4.15%		3.43%
Total Investments	83.63	47.60	62.20

96. In keeping with CLG's Guidance on Investments, during 2023/24 short-term money was placed in instant access Money Market Funds and short-term deposits with the DMADF and occasionally local authorities to ensure liquidity was maintained. Rates payable on these activities were comparable with other medium-term duration deposit options and so there was no opportunity cost in keeping cash liquid, which resulted in an average return on Investments of 4.92%. Current rates being offered on DMADF deposits and Money Market Funds are broadly similar at around 5.2% as at end of the financial year.
97. Security of capital remained the Council's chief investment objective and this was maintained by following the Council's counterparty policy as set out in its Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023/24. Investments during the year included deposits with the Debt Management Office and Cornwall Council as well as investments in AAA-rated Money Market Funds and Pooled Funds. In addition, instant access balances were held with UK Banks within the Council's counterparty limits. All bank placements held a minimum or higher credit rating of A- for UK counterparties.
98. Counterparty credit quality was assessed and monitored with reference to credit ratings (Council's minimum long-term counterparty rating of A- across all three rating agencies, Fitch, Standard & Poor's and Moody's). However, reliance does not rest solely with these agencies and are augmented by use of market/economic information, media updates and intelligence

from the Council's Treasury Advisors. With the introduction of the Banking Reform Act in January 2015 the Council aims to minimise its exposure to bail-in risk by utilising bail-in exempt instruments and institutions whenever possible. However, funds need to be held in instant access facilities to managed daily cashflow. Therefore, it is therefore not possible to protect Council funds from bail-in risk. At the end of March, 13% of the Council's day-to-day operational treasury investments (the Natwest current account) had exposure to bail-in risk compared to a March benchmark average of 61% in the Local Authority sector (latest benchmark provided quarterly by the Council's treasury advisors Arlingclose).

99. Having begun the financial year at 4.25%, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased Bank Rate to 5.25% in August 2023 with a 3-way split in the Committee's voting as the UK economy appeared resilient in the face of the dual headwinds of higher inflation and interest rates. Bank Rate was maintained at 5.25% through to March 2024. The vote at the March was 8-1 in favour of maintaining rates at this level, with the single dissenter preferring to cut rates immediately by 0.25%. Although financial markets shifted their interest rate expectations downwards with expectations of a cut in June 2024, the MPC's focus remained on assessing how long interest rates would need to be restrictive in order to control inflation over the medium term.
100. In addition to the day-to-day operational treasury deposits, in April 2018 £15m was placed in three long-dated strategic pooled funds (£5m in each), the Council continued to have holdings in these funds as part of the investment portfolio throughout 2023/24. The strategic pooled funds have a long-term investment horizon with dividends being distributed periodically. In 2023/24 dividends received from these strategic pooled funds totalled £623k (£514k in 2022/23). This is an average return of 4.15% for the year.
101. Rising market interest rates in recent years have reduced the fair value of bonds held within these strategic pooled funds, and previously up to 31st March 2023, an adverse movement of £1,507k had been reported. This has improved with a gain of £438k in 2023/24 and the fair value as at 31st March 2024 is now a loss of £1,069k.
102. The DLUHC IFRS 9 pooled investment fund statutory override for English authorities for fair value gains and losses on pooled investment funds is due to expire with effect from 1st April 2025. Under the regulations, gains and losses resulting from unrealised fair value movements relating to treasury pooled investment funds, that otherwise must be recognised in profit or loss under IFRS 9, are not charges to the revenue account, and must be taken into an unusable reserve account.
103. This override may not be extended beyond 2024/25 meaning that the decrease in fair value is a potential risk as it would require to be a charge to revenue in the accounts from 2025/26, however it is an unrealised loss and is expected to recover over the medium term. The nature of this financial instrument means the fair value may rise and fall with short-term security and liquidity being less of a consideration. The key objectives instead being regular revenue income of above £400k a year and long-term price stability. The Council would only seek to sell when market conditions were favourable, and holdings were at or above original investment values.

104. All investments made during the year complied with the Council's agreed Treasury Management Strategy, Treasury Indicators, Treasury Management Practices and prescribed limits. Maturing investments were repaid to the Council in full and in a timely manner.

Compliance

105. The Council can confirm that it complied with the Treasury Indicators for 2023/24, set in February 2023 as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy. The levels of debt were measured on an ongoing basis during the year for compliance with the Authorised Limit of £639m and the Operational Boundary of £609m, the former being somewhat higher to allow for fluctuations in cash-flow. The Council maintained its total external borrowing and other long-term liabilities within both limits.

Maturity Structure of borrowing:

	Upper limit %	Lower limit %	Actual Borrowing as at 31/3/2024 (£m)	Percentage of total as at 31/3/2024
Under 12 months	50	0	100.50	28.22%
12 months and within 24 months	50	0	41.50	11.65%
24 months and within 5 years	50	0	59.50	16.71%
5 years and within 10 years	100	0	51.83	14.55%
10 years and within 20 years	100	0	62.24	17.47%
20 years and within 30 years	100	0	5.00	1.40%
30 years and within 40 years	100	0	23.60	6.63%
40 years and within 50 years	100	0	8.00	2.25%
50 years and above	100	0	4.00	1.12%
			356.17	

(The above table includes loans at nominal value, excluding accrued interest and premium. It also includes LOBO's at their first Call Option date.)

106. For 2023/24 the Treasury Indicator which limits principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days was set at £35m. As at the end of 2023/24 the £15m held in Strategic Pooled Funds fall into this category of investments.

107. Non-treasury related Prudential Indicators are included in Appendix A2.

Appendix A1 - Transformation Capitalisation Schedule

Portfolio	Saving	2023/24 B/Fwd Saving	2023/24 Savings	2024/25 Savings	2025/26 Savings	Total Saving	Transformation Expenditure
Children, Families & Education	BID Review of the future of the Library Service	0	350	150	0	500	228
	BID Review of Early Years Operating Model	0	130	0	0	130	143
	Stronger Families Programme	0	150	300	0	450	71
	BID Review of Children's Services	150	0	0	0	150	42
	GLL Contract	0	1,300	0	0	1,300	3
Children, Families & Education Total		150	1,930	450	0	2,530	487
Corporate Services	Digital Saving	0	0	500	2,000	2,500	347
	Structure and Operating model	0	200	0	0	200	278
	Business Services	0	200	0	0	200	259
	Review Management Structures	0	446	0	0	446	257
	Review of VSLP	0	100	100	100	300	122
	Democratic Services	0	105	0	0	105	90
	BID Review of Green Spaces	247	0	0	0	247	78
	BID Review of the Future of the Golf Offer	0	100	0	0	100	71
	Business Performance	0	170	0	0	170	50
	Human Resources	0	206	150	0	356	43
	BID Review of Museums & Theatres	0	0	260	0	260	20
	Highways Grass Cutting	0	45	0	0	45	7
	CCTV Operating model	0	160	0	0	160	3
Corporate Services Total		247	1,732	1,010	2,100	5,089	1,625
Finance	Future of Financial Systems	0	0	300	300	600	1,440
	Revenues & Benefits Operating Model	0	100	120	0	220	297
Finance Total		0	100	420	300	820	1,737
Health & Social Care	Health & Strategic Partnerships	0	65	0	0	65	45
	Community & Voluntary Grants	0	830	175	0	1,005	26
	Increase In-House Care Home Provision	0	0	550	0	550	25
	SEND Transport Demand Management	0	229	306	11	546	12
Health & Social Care Total		0	1,124	1,031	11	2,166	108
Property, Highways & Transport	Review of Civic Centre Operating Costs	0	325	975	0	1,300	79
	Street Lighting Capitalisation	0	210	0	0	210	3
	Highways capitalisation	0	150	0	0	150	3
	Highways & Transport staffing	0	150	0	0	150	1
Property, Highways & Transport Total		0	835	975	0	1,810	86

Portfolio	Saving	2023/24 B/Fwd Saving	2023/24 Savings	2024/25 Savings	2025/26 Savings	Total Saving	Transformation Expenditure
Residents' Services	Parking Services	0	45	0	0	45	240
	Community Safety	0	72	0	0	72	223
	Homelessness Prevention	0	300	0	0	300	107
	BID Review of Green Spaces	247	0	0	0	247	61
	Project & Events team	0	70	0	0	70	48
	Re-routing of waste collection	0	250	0	0	250	26
	Compost Bins / Food Bins / Bottle Banks	0	84	0	0	84	20
	Household recycling centre	0	100	100	0	200	6
	Free recycling bags	0	200	0	0	200	6
	Schools waste	0	70	0	0	70	6
	Graffiti Team	0	85	0	0	85	6
	Waste Demographic Review	0	75	100	100	275	6
	Residents' Services Total		247	1,351	200	100	1,898
Cross-Cutting Savings*	Demand Management	0	0	1,000	0	1,000	374
	Community Hubs Strategy	0	500	1,000	1,000	2,500	30
Cross-Cutting Savings Total		0	500	2,000	1,000	3,500	404
Cross-Cutting Support**		0	0	0	0	0	2,864
DSG Safety Valve Support***		0	0	0	0	0	3,630
Other Savings		921	13,625	3,472	1,084	19,102	0
Grand Total		1,565	21,197	9,558	4,595	36,915	11,696

*These are savings that span across all of the Council's portfolios

**This covers overarching support to the Council's saving programme

***£10,978k of savings in relation to agreeing the Safety Valve Agreement for the DSG as set out in February 2022 Cabinet

Appendix A2 - Non Treasury Prudential Indicators 2023/24

2023/24 Estimates were reported in Appendix D Capital and Investment Strategies report (February 2024 Cabinet)

Estimated and Actual Capital Expenditure

	2023/24 Estimated £m	2023/24 Outturn £m
General Fund	129.1	66.0
HRA	98.4	61.2
Total	227.5	127.2

Estimated and Actual Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

	2023/24 Estimated £m	2023/24 Outturn £m
Financing Costs	15.6	12.8
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream	6%	5%

Net revenue stream is the General Fund budget requirement, which is funded through Council Tax Business Rates and Government Grants.

Capital Financing Requirement

	2023/24 Estimated £m	2023/24 Outturn £m
General Fund	275.2	274.8
HRA	179.2	182.1
Total	454.4	456.9

Actual External Debt

As at 31/03/2024	£m
Borrowing	356.17
Other Long-term Liabilities	0.03
Total	356.20

Appendix A3: General Fund Capital Programme

Prior Year Cost £'000	Project	2023/24 Revised Budget £'000	2023/24 Outturn £'000	2023/24 Cost Variance £'000	2023/24 Re-phasing £'000	Total Project Budget 2023-2028 £'000	Total Project Forecast 2023-2028 £'000	Total Project Variance 2023-2028 £'000	Council Resources £'000	Government Grants £'000	Other Cont'ns £'000
34,503	Property, Highways and Transport	48,781	21,179	(9)	(27,593)	128,365	128,365	0	(84,576)	(43,789)	0
11,410	New West Drayton Leisure Centre	8,521	6,243	0	(2,278)	25,259	25,259	0	(25,259)	0	0
2,109	Hillingdon Water Sports Facility	1,095	1,263	0	168	24,391	24,391	0	0	(24,391)	0
145	Carbon Zero Initiatives	15,119	6,323	0	(8,796)	24,855	24,855	0	(10,102)	(14,753)	0
97	Civic Centre Transformation	13,403	3,427	0	(9,976)	19,903	19,903	0	(19,903)	0	0
10,142	Housing Company Financing	0	0	0	0	14,858	14,858	0	(14,858)	0	0
2145	Cranford Park Heritage Lottery Project	1,885	1,641	0	(244)	1,885	1,885	0	(723)	(1,162)	0
0	Northwood Hills Library Buyback	2,392	2	0	(2,390)	2,392	2,392	0	(2,392)	0	0
2,858	Uxbridge Mortuary Extension	456	318	0	(138)	456	456	0	(456)	0	0
4	Charville Lane - Children Specialist House	1,385	274	0	(1,111)	4,615	4,615	0	(1,513)	(3,102)	0
0	Otterfield Road Library Buyback	0	0	0	0	1,974	1,974	0	(1,974)	0	0
401	Battle of Britain Underground Bunker	1,180	800	0	(380)	1,230	1,230	0	(1,230)	0	0
34	New Years Green Lane Extension	816	34	0	(782)	966	966	0	(766)	(200)	0
221	Asha Day Centre Refurbishment	371	346	0	(25)	391	391	0	(391)	0	0
47	Motor Vehicle Workshop	150	5	0	(145)	470	470	0	(470)	0	0
9	Parking Improvements	350	124	0	(226)	491	491	0	(491)	0	0
0	Uxbridge Cemetery Gatehouse	500	24	0	(476)	500	500	0	(500)	0	0
0	Botwell Leisure Centre Football Pitch	101	101	0	(0)	200	200	0	(200)	0	0
2,070	Yiewsley/West Drayton Community Centre	44	1	0	(43)	44	44	0	(44)	0	0
2,608	Cedars & Grainges Car Park Improvement Works	53	51	(2)	(0)	63	63	0	(63)	0	0
203	Battle of Britain Visitors Centre Enhancements	58	54	(4)	0	58	58	0	(58)	0	0

Prior Year Cost	Project	2023/24 Revised Budget	2023/24 Outturn	2023/24 Cost Variance	2023/24 Re-phasing	Total Project Budget 2023-2028	Total Project Forecast 2023-2028	Total Project Variance 2023-2028	Council Resources	Government Grants	Other Cont'ns
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
0	Appropriation of Townfield to General Fund	100	0	0	(100)	100	100	0	(100)	0	0
163	Tennis Courts Upgrades	107	104	(3)	0	107	107	0	74	(181)	0
0	South Ruislip Early Years & Children's Centre Remodelling	150	0	0	(150)	700	700	0	(700)	0	0
0	Harefield Family Hub New Build	150	0	0	(150)	2,000	2,000	0	(2,000)	0	0
0	Botwell Leisure Centre Adaptations	250	0	0	(250)	250	250	0	(250)	0	0
0	Flood Alleviation - Bessingby Park	145	42	0	(103)	207	207	0	(207)	0	0
7,069	Finance	11,000	11,697	0	697	18,000	18,000	0	(18,000)	0	0
0	DSG Capitalisation Support	8,000	0	0	(8,000)	12,000	12,000	0	(12,000)	0	0
7,069	Transformation Capitalisation Fund	3,000	11,697	0	8,697	6,000	6,000	0	(6,000)	0	0
10,690	Residents' Services	1,927	865	0	(1,062)	2,459	2,459	0	(1,372)	(1,087)	0
808	Shopping Parades Initiative	1,709	702	0	(1,007)	2,241	2,241	0	(1,154)	(1,087)	0
9,882	Hayes Town Centre Improvements	218	163	0	(55)	218	218	0	(218)	0	0
34,629	Children, Families and Education	19,965	8,635	0	(11,330)	21,699	21,699	0	(2,780)	(18,919)	0
28,120	Schools SRP / SEND	12,378	8,593	0	(3,785)	14,112	14,112	0	0	(14,112)	0
0	Additional Temporary Classrooms	2,780	0	0	(2,780)	2,780	2,780	0	(2,780)	0	0
6,509	Secondary Schools Expansions	4,807	43	0	(4,764)	4,807	4,807	0	0	(4,807)	0
87,054	Total Major Projects	81,673	42,376	(9)	(39,288)	170,523	170,523	0	(106,728)	(63,795)	0
	Property, Highways and Transport	24,253	15,586	(2,712)	(5,954)	88,919	88,919	0	(40,226)	(48,134)	(559)
N/A	Highways Structural Works	7,000	6,781	0	(219)	31,000	31,000	0	(25,000)	(6,000)	0
N/A	School Building Condition Works	4,740	2,541	0	(2,199)	19,820	19,820	0	0	(19,820)	0
N/A	Disabled Facilities Grant	3,159	986	0	(2,173)	11,743	11,743	0	0	(11,743)	0
N/A	Transport for London	1,558	1,558	0	0	8,939	8,939	0	0	(8,939)	0
N/A	Property Works Programme	3,054	990	(2,064)	0	6,188	6,188	0	(5,932)	(256)	0

Prior Year Cost	Project	2023/24 Revised Budget	2023/24 Outturn	2023/24 Cost Variance	2023/24 Re-phasing	Total Project Budget 2023-2028	Total Project Forecast 2023-2028	Total Project Variance 2023-2028	Council Resources	Government Grants	Other Cont'ns
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
N/A	Street Lighting Replacement	925	925	0	0	4,625	4,625	0	(4,625)	0	0
N/A	Leisure Centre Refurbishment	900	678	0	(222)	1,300	1,300	0	(1,300)	0	0
N/A	Highways Bridges and Structures	300	296	(4)	0	1,500	1,500	0	(1,500)	0	0
N/A	CCTV Programme	165	174	9	0	872	872	0	(872)	0	0
N/A	Road Safety	268	87	(181)	0	748	748	0	(748)	0	0
N/A	Environmental and Recreational Initiatives - Pollution Screening	500	16	0	(484)	500	500	0	0	(500)	0
N/A	Environmental and Recreational Initiatives - Green Spaces	262	98	(159)	(5)	262	262	0	(159)	(103)	0
N/A	HS2 Road Safety Fund	436	98	0	(338)	436	436	0	0	(436)	0
N/A	HS2 Amenity Fund	296	84	0	(212)	296	296	0	0	(296)	0
N/A	Bowls Clubs Programme	90	27	0	(63)	90	90	0	(90)	0	0
N/A	Emergency Active Travel	41	0	0	(41)	41	41	0	0	(41)	0
N/A	Highways Section 106 Projects	559	246	(313)	0	559	559	0	0	0	(559)
	Finance	2,779	213	0	(2,566)	4,724	4,724	0	(4,724)	0	0
N/A	Purchase of Vehicles	2,779	213	0	(2,566)	4,724	4,724	0	(4,724)	0	0
	Corporate Services	2,373	883	(200)	(1,291)	5,105	5,105	0	(5,105)	0	0
N/A	Corporate Technology and Innovation	2,173	883	0	(1,291)	4,105	4,105	0	(4,105)	0	0
N/A	Older Peoples Initiative	200	0	(200)	0	1,000	1,000	0	(1,000)	0	0
	Residents' Services	1,960	942	188	(1,206)	6,760	6,760	0	(3,984)	(2,408)	(368)
N/A	Chrysalis Programme	1,177	449	0	(728)	5,177	5,177	0	(3,177)	(2,000)	0
N/A	Playground Replacement Programme	305	260	(45)	0	1,105	1,105	0	(807)	(298)	0
N/A	Green Spaces Section 106 Projects	478	0	0	(478)	478	478	0	0	(110)	(368)
N/A	Green Spaces	0	233	233	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Children, Families and Education	4,331	3,303	(676)	(353)	6,671	6,671	0	(375)	(3,425)	0
N/A	Devolved Capital to Schools	3,256	3,256	0	0	4,796	4,796	0	0	(1,925)	0

N/A	Youth Provision	1,075	46	(676)	(353)	1,875	1,875	0	(375)	(1,500)	0
	Health and Social Care	2,850	2,760	(90)	0	14,250	14,250	0	0	(14,250)	0
N/A	Telecare Line Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N/A	Equipment Capitalisation - Social Care	2,850	2,760	(90)	0	14,250	14,250	0	0	(14,250)	0
N/A	Total Programme of Works	38,546	23,687	(3,490)	(11,370)	126,429	126,429	0	(54,414)	(68,217)	(927)

Prior Year Cost	Project	2023/24 Revised Budget	2023/24 Outturn	2023/24 Cost Variance	2023/24 Re-phasing	Total Project Budget 2023-2028	Total Project Forecast 2023-2028	Total Project Variance 2023-2028	Council Resources	Government Grants	Other Cont'ns
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Development & Risk Contingency											
N/A	General Contingency	10,701	0	0	(10,701)	26,701	26,701	0	(26,701)	0	0
87,054	Total GF Capital Programme	130,920	66,063	(3,499)	(61,359)	323,653	323,653	0	(187,843)	(132,012)	(927)

Appendix A4: HRA Capital Programme

Prior Year Cost £'000	Project	Units	2023/24 Revised Budget £'000	2023/24 Outturn £'000	2023/24 Cost Variance £'000	2023/24 Re-phasing Variance £'000	Total Project Budget 2023-2028 £'000	Total Project Forecast 2023-2028 £'000	Total Project Variance 2023-2028 £'000
	Major Projects								
	Property Highways and Transport								
0	Chippendale Waye/Carpenters Court	12	2,162	849	0	(1,313)	2,373	2,373	0
0	Acquisition of 74 Chapel Lane	1	579	23	(529)	(27)	579	50	(529)
1,590	Packet Boat House Buybacks	2	177	172	(5)	0	177	172	(5)
0	Right to Buy Back Fund	20	60	67	7	0	60	67	7
366	Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme	21	45	80	35	0	45	80	35
	Purchase and Repair Housing Stock	100	17,965	17,342	0	(623)	45,965	45,965	0
3,364	Maple and Poplar	34	7,215	4,791	0	(2,424)	8,165	8,165	0
86	34-44 Sullivan Crescent	6	1,661	520	0	(1,141)	1,881	1,881	0
1,489	Nelson Road	6	98	66	0	(32)	98	98	0
57	Petworth Gardens	4	1,745	1,430	0	(315)	2,095	2,095	0
680	113-127 Moorfield Road	6	110	30	0	(80)	110	110	0
0	Rowan Road	1	512	220	0	(292)	512	512	0
0	Newport Road Flats	24	8,400	(2)	0	(8,402)	8,400	8,400	0
0	Yiewsley Housing Sites		1,072	809	0	(263)	1,072	1,072	0
0	Haydon Drive		505	64	0	(441)	0	0	0
0	New Build – Stock Acquisitions (budget £2,525k)		0	867	0	867	0	0	0
154	Loft Extensions		1,370	534	0	(836)	1,370	1,370	0
2,884	Hayes Estate Regeneration	370	6,826	6,296	0	(530)	126,599	126,599	0
3,680	Hayes Estate Regeneration Leaseholder Buybacks		3,913	3,394	0	(519)	22,722	22,722	0
0	Acquisitions and Internal Developments	249	2,268	0	0	(2,268)	93,306	93,306	0
103,655	Total Major Projects	856	56,683	37,552	(492)	(18,639)	315,529	315,037	(492)

Prior Year Cost £'000	Project	Units	2023/24 Revised Budget £'000	2023/24 Outturn £'000	2023/24 Cost Variance £'000	2023/24 Re-phasing Variance £'000	Total Project Budget 2023-2028 £'000	Total Project Forecast 2023-2028 £'000	Total Project Variance 2023-2028 £'000
	HRA Programme of Works								
	Property Highways and Transport								
N/A	Works To Stock		22,437	16,866	(1,419)	(4,152)	132,813	132,813	0
N/A	Green Homes Grant		3,000	4,144	1,144	0	33,141	33,141	0
N/A	Major Adaptations		2,340	2,615	275	0	13,317	13,317	0
0	Total Programme of Works		27,777	23,625	0	(4,152)	179,271	179,271	0
	Total HRA Capital Programme		84,460	61,177	(492)	(22,791)	494,800	494,308	(492)

PART B: FINANCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet:

- a. Approve acceptance of £350k grant funding from National Trading Standards for costs associated with the delivery of additional enforcement work at Heathrow targeting the importation of non-compliant and unsafe vapes and e-cigarettes.
- b. Approve acceptance of Port Health Transition Fund grant of £209,161 to cover the period 1st April to 31st July 2024.
- c. Approve acceptance of the Household Support Scheme grant funding of £2,069k for the period 1st April 2024 to 30 September 2024 inclusive and the proposed scheme as set out in the statement at Annex A.
- d. Approve the acceptance of £107k grant funding from the Lawn Tennis Association Parks Tennis Renovation Grant for the renovation of the tennis courts at Moorhall Recreation Ground.
- e. Agree the request to continue existing operational arrangements with Caterplus and Powerday, whilst new contracts are agreed and formal governance approved.
- f. Note the interim consultants appointed where the value is above £50k in Annex B.

Reasons for recommendation

108. Grant funding has been offered by National Trading Standards for the period January 2024 to March 2025, with **recommendation 2a** proposing acceptance of this funding, which if approved, will be utilised to cover the costs of additional staffing resources and destruction/disposal contracts required at Heathrow relating to “Operation Joseph”, an initiative aimed at intercepting the importation of illegal vapes and e-cigarettes.
109. **Recommendation 2b** seeks Cabinet acceptance of Grant funding from Defra for the period April-July 2024 which will be utilised to cover the costs of environmental health and veterinary resources required at the Heathrow Imported Food Office associated with the implementation of the “Target Operating Model” (new port health authority requirements for EU imports) and supporting agencies managing biosecurity risks at the border.
110. **Recommendation 2c** seeks Cabinet acceptance of the Household Support Grant funding which covers the first six months of the 2024/25 financial year and the Council’s proposed scheme for allocating this funding to those residents most in need of financial assistance. The schedule at Annex A gives more detail on how the scheme will operate and fulfils the requirement of the grant funding to publish an eligibility statement for the scheme.
111. Grant funding has been offered by the Lawn Tennis Association for the period April to the 1st September 2024, with **recommendation 2d** proposing acceptance of this funding, which if approved will be utilised to cover the costs of the renovation of the tennis courts at Moorhall Recreation Ground. This will build on the Green Spaces programme to complete the refurbishments of the Council’s tennis sites and encourage further participation in tennis for residents of all ages.
112. The Council is already seeing the benefits of strengthened expenditure controls following the successful roll out of the new Oracle Cloud platform from May 2024, with recurrent spending

in two areas – removal of rubble and detritus from Harlington Road depot by Powerday, and catering services in Social Care establishments provided by Caterplus – tracking at a level where Cabinet approval of spending is required under Standing Orders. **Recommendation 2e** seeks agreement from Cabinet to maintain existing operational arrangements in the interim, with formal arrangements to be put in place following future Cabinet meetings. Both situations have been discussed with the relevant portfolio holders.

113. In order to manage resourcing across the council it is sometime necessary to recruit interim consultants – to support on specific time limited projects, where specialist skills are required or where a recruitment processes is not yet complete. The attached list (Annex B) details the current interims where they exceed the value of £50k, with **recommendation 2f** asking that Cabinet note this, as required under Procurement Standing Orders for transparency in such contractual spend.

Annex A - Hillingdon Household Support Fund Statement 2024 (April 2024 to September 2024)

Each local authority is required to have an eligibility statement / framework published for their local Household Support scheme. The following has been drafted to reflect the proposals set out in this paper.

Purpose of the Scheme

Hillingdon Council is Putting Residents First using government funding to help support residents most in need by providing additional financial assistance to help meet the cost of food, energy, water bills and other essentials.

Eligibility

In line with prescribed national guidance from the Department for Work and Pensions, the Hillingdon Household Support Fund scheme will meet the following requirements for Households within Hillingdon:

Eligible Households

- Low-income households who would otherwise struggle to buy food, pay essential utility bills, or meet other essential living costs.

Eligible expenditure

- The funding will primarily be used to support vulnerable households with the increased costs of living, with a particular focus on domestic energy costs, food, and other essentials.
- The Fund may be used to provide supplementary advice services to award recipients, including debt, benefit and/or employment advice.

The Hillingdon Scheme

In line with the prescribed eligibility requirements, the scheme for Hillingdon will be available for low-income residents as follows:

- Households eligible for benefit related free school meals, attending a Hillingdon School
- Children of pre-school age living within Hillingdon and the household are in receipt of one of the following qualifying benefits:
 - Income Support
 - Income based - Job Seeker's Allowance
 - Income related – Employment and Support Allowance
 - Guaranteed Pension Credit
 - Universal Credit without earning.
- Children attending an independent Special Educational Needs school, living within Hillingdon, or receiving and registered as Home Educated and the household are in receipt of one of the following qualifying benefits.
 - Income Support

- Income based - Job Seeker's Allowance
- Income related – Employment and Support Allowance
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Universal Credit without earning.
- Working age adults, and pensioners who apply or who are referred by Hillingdon Social Care teams or a partner service, e.g. CAB, DASH, Age UK, in need of assistance essential items, considered on a case-by-case basis.

How this support will be implemented and accessed

To ensure this support reaches those who need it most, it is proposed families in receipt of benefit related free school meals will be contacted directly if they are eligible to receive assistance toward meals or financial help to cover utilities costs. These households will receive assistance via the established free school meals system and / or will be emailed/written to directly advising them on how to access their e-vouchers. There will also be an application process available to any resident or someone acting on their behalf, e.g., CAB, Age UK, DASH, Social Care and Hillingdon Housing teams to apply for assistance from the Household Support Fund in Hillingdon.

Payments

Payments to eligible households will be made using the most secure methods of payment. This will include using the Edenred system where possible, e-vouchers or making payments direct into individual bank accounts.

For children eligible for free school meals, a payment of £15 per child per week for an eight-week period will be made, paid to families in stages (1-week Easter holiday, 1- week May half term, 6 - week summer holiday period, 2 payments of £45, week beginning 22nd July 5th August and 12th August 2024.)

For other payment requests or additional payment requests, these will be considered on a case-by-case basis in line with the prescribed eligibility criteria as set out above.

Duration of the Scheme

In line with guidance from the Department for Work and Pensions, the Hillingdon Household Support Fund Scheme will operate from 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 inclusive.

Reviewing the Scheme

The Council will keep the scheme under review and may make changes to the scheme as is required to ensure the needs of Hillingdon residents continue to be met.

Preventing Fraud

Residents may face prosecution if they have manipulated or falsified their position in order to obtain these payments.

Annex B – Interim Consultant Spend over £50k

Company	Deliverables	Total spend
Landmark Bids	Various support, but main project was Hayes Regeneration (now handed over) followed by Civic Centre works and more recently West Ruislip Golf Facility. Not full time and also working outside of LBH on projects for other clients.	£197,485
Maxwell Oliver	A number of projects across place directorate, supporting directors and Heads of Service to fast track a number of current 2025/26 projects. This role is 3 days a week linked to clearly defined start and end projects.	£129,040
Sarah Jane Baker Ltd	Adult Social Care Commissioning Support / Lead	£117,150
David R Saunders Ltd	Primarily to lead on achieving acquisitions by negotiations to de-risk the project by providing early VP in accordance with the Acquisition Strategy and project programme.	£104,630
SRG Management	Enhanced project support for Adult Social Care CQC Inspection	£97,740
Housing People Network	Developing shared ownership policies, resident engagement, decant options and support in housing services etc	£67,600
John Galvin Ltd	Various Finance project related activity in support of transformation programme	£54,150

PUBLIC PREVIEW:

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED LATER IN PRIVATE

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

HEADLINES

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

Reasons for recommendation

Why are certain reports considered in private?

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

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

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

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

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

Alternative options considered

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

Legal comments

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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

ITEM 11 - BECK THEATRE - EXTENSION OF MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

Relevant Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Residents' Services
Relevant Ward(s)	Wood End / Borough-wide
Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services

Information

The Beck Theatre in Hayes End delivers an annual programme of professional theatrical productions, as well as contributing to the Borough's broader cultural offer. Post-Covid, the Beck Theatre has developed itself as a significant cultural venue, hosting around 300 events annually and attracting approximately 115,000 visitors. It contributes an estimated £3m to the local economy.

Cabinet will consider future contractual arrangements with the operator of the Theatre.

ITEM 12 - ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE INFRASTRUCTURE & HOSTING OF KEY BUSINESS APPLICATIONS

Relevant Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Corporate Services
Relevant Ward(s)	N/A
Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure

Information

Cabinet will consider continuing the contractual arrangements for Infrastructure as a Service to host critical applications and Enterprise Architecture Infrastructure, and will also appoint a Cloud Solution Provider in this regard.

Such infrastructure is used to host all line-of-business application software systems, improving performance and availability of many critical systems, including Planning, GIS, Social Care, Housing/Document Management, Legal, Education, and Finance/Procurement.

This has also expanded to include Single-Sign-On functionality for multiple third-party hosted systems, Remote Site Connectivity, Business Intelligence Reporting Services, and Security Monitoring, Analytics, and Remediation.

Going forward, this will support improvements in service delivery for residents and enable faster delivery of digital and service transformation projects.

ITEM 13 - CONTRACTS FOR VEHICLE HIRE IN SUPPORT OF THE COUNCIL'S FLEET OPERATION

Relevant Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Property, Highways and Transport
Relevant Ward(s)	N/A
Relevant Select Committee	Corporate Resources & Infrastructure

Information

The Council requires ongoing vehicle hire to support its fleet of approximately 295 assets in delivering frontline services, including refuse collection, street cleansing, highways, green spaces, housing repairs, and passenger transport. The need for hire vehicles arises predominantly to support additional service provision or in response to vehicle failure.

Cabinet will consider contracts for the hire of such vehicles to ensure value-for-money.

STRICTLY NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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

Agenda Item 11

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

Agenda Item 12

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Agenda Item 13

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