



HILLINGDON  
LONDON



# Council

## To all Members of the Council

**Date:** THURSDAY, 26 FEBRUARY  
2026

**Time:** 7.30 PM

**Venue:** COUNCIL CHAMBER -  
CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH  
STREET, UXBRIDGE UB8  
1UW

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

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

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**Published:** Wednesday, 18 February  
2026

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Putting our residents first

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

# Useful information for residents and visitors

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



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# Agenda

## Prayers

To be said by the Reverend Tunde Balogun.

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes 1 - 22  
To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2026 (*attached*).
- 3 Declarations of Interest  
To note any declarations of interest in any matter before the Council
- 4 Mayor's Announcements
- 5 Report of the Head of Democratic Services 23 - 28
- 6 Confirmation of Article 4 Direction 29 - 32  
To consider the results of the statutory consultation and confirm the Article 4 Direction (*attached*)
- 7 Safer Hillingdon Partnership Community Safety Strategy 33 - 44  
To consider a recommendation from Cabinet (*attached*)
- 8 Six Month Performance Report 2025 / 2026 45 - 96  
To consider the latest six-month Performance report (*attached*)
- 9 General Fund Revenue Budget, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme 2026 / 2027 97 - 130  
To consider the recommendations of Cabinet which will be published, once agreed. The report to Cabinet is available at:

[London Borough of Hillingdon - Agenda for CABINET on Thursday, 19th February, 2026, 7.00 pm](#)

**Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 will apply to the recommendations of this item. Any Member who is more than two months in arrears with their Council Tax or has arrears of Council Tax must declare that fact and not vote on this item.**

Budget Conflict Resolution Procedures – Council is asked to consider the Cabinet’s proposals. It may adopt the proposals, submit objections to Cabinet

or invite the Cabinet to make amendments specified by Council. If Council votes to object to the Cabinet proposals or to invite Cabinet to make amendments, then the Conflict Resolution Procedure will come into operation.

The Council meeting will be adjourned while a special meeting of the Cabinet is held, after which the Council will resume and consider any revised proposals submitted by the Cabinet or the reasons why the Cabinet disagrees with Council's objections or proposed amendments. The budget would then be open for debate and amendment until a final decision is made.

**Members are asked to note that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, recorded votes will be taken at the annual budget setting meeting on any motion, amendment to motion or substantive motion regarding the General Fund Revenue Budget, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme.**



## Minutes

### COUNCIL

22 January 2026

Meeting held at Council Chamber - Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

Councillor Philip Corthorne (Mayor)  
Councillor Reeta Chamdal (Deputy Mayor)

	<p><b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Councillors: Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana</td> <td>Ian Edwards</td> <td>Douglas Mills</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kaushik Banerjee</td> <td>Scott Farley</td> <td>Richard Mills</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Labina Basit</td> <td>Janet Gardner</td> <td>June Nelson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Adam Bennett</td> <td>Elizabeth Garelick</td> <td>Barry Nelson-West</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kishan Bhatt</td> <td>Narinder Garg</td> <td>Susan O'Brien</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jonathan Bianco</td> <td>Tony Gill</td> <td>Jane Palmer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wayne Bridges</td> <td>Ekta Gohil</td> <td>Sital Punja</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tony Burles</td> <td>Mohammed Islam</td> <td>John Riley</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Keith Burrows</td> <td>Rita Judge (in part)</td> <td>Raju Sansarpuri</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roy Chamdal</td> <td>Kamal Preet Kaur</td> <td>Jagjit Singh</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Farhad Choubedar</td> <td>Kuldeep Lakhmana</td> <td>Peter Smallwood OBE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peter Curling</td> <td>Eddie Lavery</td> <td>Colleen Sullivan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Darran Davies</td> <td>Gursharan Mand</td> <td>Jan Sweeting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nick Denys</td> <td>Kelly Martin</td> <td>Steve Tuckwell</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jas Dhota</td> <td>Stuart Mathers</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Councillors: Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana	Ian Edwards	Douglas Mills	Kaushik Banerjee	Scott Farley	Richard Mills	Labina Basit	Janet Gardner	June Nelson	Adam Bennett	Elizabeth Garelick	Barry Nelson-West	Kishan Bhatt	Narinder Garg	Susan O'Brien	Jonathan Bianco	Tony Gill	Jane Palmer	Wayne Bridges	Ekta Gohil	Sital Punja	Tony Burles	Mohammed Islam	John Riley	Keith Burrows	Rita Judge (in part)	Raju Sansarpuri	Roy Chamdal	Kamal Preet Kaur	Jagjit Singh	Farhad Choubedar	Kuldeep Lakhmana	Peter Smallwood OBE	Peter Curling	Eddie Lavery	Colleen Sullivan	Darran Davies	Gursharan Mand	Jan Sweeting	Nick Denys	Kelly Martin	Steve Tuckwell	Jas Dhota	Stuart Mathers	
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	<p><b>OFFICERS PRESENT:</b> Tony Zaman, Steve Muldoon, Dan Kennedy, Sandra Taylor, Matthew Wallbridge, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock and Nikki O'Halloran</p>																																													
<p>40.</p>	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Goddard, Haggard, Higgins, Lewis, Makwana and Money.</p>																																													
<p>41.</p>	<p><b>MINUTES</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2025 be agreed as a correct record.</p>																																													
<p>42.</p>	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in matters coming before this meeting.</p>																																													
<p>43.</p>	<p><b>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Mayor advised that former Councillor and Past Mayor, Don Mitchell, had recently celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Mayor provided a summary of events and highlights undertaken since the last Council meeting.</p> <p>The Mayor encouraged those present to buy tickets for his Valentine's Quiz which would be held at Aren's in Ruislip on Thursday 12 February 2026 and a Cheese and</p>																																													

Wine evening being held in conjunction with Waitrose in the Council's Astra Suite on Wednesday 11 March 2026. A charity cricket match was also being organised in April and any Member wishing to play should contact the Mayor to express their interest.

44. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME** (*Agenda Item 5*)

**5.1 QUESTION FROM AHMAD RAFIQUE OF ABBEY CLOSE, HAYES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR BRIDGES:**

*“Given the ongoing and well-documented issues with persistent fly-tipping and delayed waste removal across several wards in Hillingdon, can the Cabinet member explain what specific actions are being taken to improve both enforcement and the timeliness of waste clearance? Residents are increasingly frustrated that reported fly-tips often remain in place for extended periods, attracting vermin, creating health hazards, attracting further dumping, and undermining confidence in the Council's environmental management.”*

Councillor Bridges advised that fly tipping was taken seriously by the Council and cleared efficiently, mostly within the 48-hour standard. However, it was recognised that there were times when these timescales might not be achieved such as if the waste was hazardous or if the waste needed to be searched for criminal evidence. A clear assessment process had been introduced and joint operations had been undertaken in relation to repeat offenders with a successful prosecution being announced today, resulting in a £1,000 fine. Front line capacity had been increased and the Love Clean Streets app would now make it easier for individuals to report instances of fly tipping.

**5.2 QUESTION FROM TERENCE MURRAY OF OTTERFIELD ROAD, WEST DRAYTON TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING AND GROWTH – COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:**

*“Can the Council clarify the status of the planning application at the Morrisons site in Yiewsley? Local residents believed that a planning application was approved by the Council, but the current MP for the area has released a video criticising Council Officers and saying that the Council is delaying signing off legal conditions to enable progress.”*

Councillor Tuckwell advised that planning permission had been approved by the London Borough of Hillingdon but could not be issued until the Mayor of London had completed the Stage 2 approval process. Once this had been completed, the Council would be able to sort out the Section 106 agreement. There had been a misrepresentation of facts concerning this application by the local MP as the Council was ready but the Mayor of London had been holding the process up.

**5.3 QUESTION FROM DANIEL O'NEILL OF ASHBURTON ROAD, RUISLIP TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:**

*“At the September 2025 Council meeting, the then Cabinet Member for Finance described Exceptional Financial Support as an "accounting adjustment", said that "there will not be a cash cost which falls upon local residents", and later explained in writing that it would be "amortised over a period of 20 years".*

	<p><i>“However, at the Residents' Services Select Committee in January 2026, the Corporate Director of Finance stated, "just to be clear, EFS ... is not free money ... it needs to be repaid" and that it "comes at a cost to the Council over the coming years".</i></p> <p><i>“Given that meeting those costs over the next 20 years will fall to be met from the Council's revenue budget and therefore affects the funding available for services, does the Cabinet Member accept that, in ordinary language, this represents a cash cost borne by residents through reduced spending power for services, and can he outline the expected annual cost to the Council's budget of repaying this support over that period?”</i></p> <p>The Mayor asked the question on behalf of Daniel O’Neill. Councillor Lavery advised that EFS was an accounting adjustment and that, in some cases, the money had been spent years ago delivering services to residents. Every pound was still charged back to the minimum revenue provision with interest if any borrowing was required. These were real audited revenue costs but not costs that added to the original burden as they were built into the Council’s financial plans. This accounting adjustment had protected services and had not been used to hide spending.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>At this point, the meeting was adjourned for a short time following a disturbance in the Council Chamber.</b></p>
45.	<p><b>REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</b> <i>(Agenda Item 6)</i></p> <p><b>i) URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS</b></p> <p>Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the urgency decisions detailed in the report be noted.</b></p> <p><b>ii) PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2026/27</b></p> <p>Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the programme of meetings for 2026/27, as set out in Annex A, be approved and the Head of Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chief Whip of the Majority Party, be authorised to make any amendments that may be required throughout the course of the year.</b></p>
46.	<p><b>STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY 2026-2031</b> <i>(Agenda Item 7)</i></p> <p>Councillor Bridges moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the revised Statement of Licensing Policy be adopted as a policy framework document.</b></p>
47.	<p><b>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME</b> <i>(Agenda Item 8)</i></p> <p>Councillor Tuckwell moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:</p>

	<p><b>RESOLVED: That:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the revised Local Development Scheme be adopted with effect from 22 January 2026.</li> <li>b) authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Sustainable Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing &amp; Growth to make minor and technical updates within the Local Development Scheme, if necessary.</li> </ul>
48.	<p><b>COUNCIL TAX BASE AND BUSINESS RATES FORECAST 2026/2027</b> (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Lavery moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the motion as set out of the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Having due regard to the Review of Working Age Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2026/27 at Appendix 2 of the report and the Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix 2a of the report, the following amendment to the Council’s local Council Tax Reduction Scheme to reform the scheme with effect from 1 April 2026 be approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Apply the standard £10.00 non-dependant deduction across all schemes including the vulnerable scheme (unless the non-dependant is a student when no deduction is taken);</li> <li>ii. Reduce the maximum award from 80% to 75% across the vulnerable scheme as part of our phasing in of aligning the vulnerable scheme with the standard scheme; and</li> <li>iii. Increase the non-dependant deduction from £10.00 to £12.00 per week;</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) the introduction a Council Tax Premium at an additional 100% on properties designated as second homes from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 be approved;</li> <li>c) the Council Tax Taxbase for 2026/27 be approved as 107,349 Band D equivalent properties, calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Taxbase) (England) Regulations 2012; and</li> <li>d) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Finance to submit the 2026/27 NNDR1 return by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Greater London Authority.</li> </ul>
49.	<p><b>MEMBERS' QUESTIONS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p><b>10.6 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MARTIN TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING &amp; GROWTH - COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:</b></p> <p><i>“Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on the recent article in the Evening Standard that Hillingdon Council are focusing on prioritising Hillingdon residents for housing, ahead of prioritising asylum seekers, which is a choice being made by other London Boroughs.”</i></p> <p>Councillor Tuckwell advised that demand still outstripped supply and Hillingdon would not take part in any scheme which prioritised asylum seekers over residents. The provision of support to asylum seekers was a national responsibility and, although</p>

Hillingdon was a tolerant and diverse Borough, Hillingdon's administration would continue to put the Borough's residents first, today and every day.

There was no supplementary question.

**10.11 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURLES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES AND PROPERTY – COUNCILLOR BIANCO:**

*“Could the Cabinet member please inform this Council of the total amount of unpaid debt on commercial leases of Council owned assets, and explain what robust measures are in place to ensure that these debts are not only pursued but actually collected, so that public assets are not left generating losses due to ineffective debt recovery?”*

Councillor Bianco advised that rent for most commercial leases had been invoiced on a quarterly basis in advance which resulted in peaks and troughs. Commercial rent arrears debt was low at around £1.3m in December 2025, a reduction of 27% between September and December and a reduction of 17% for the financial year.

However, as around 98% of the debt sat with 49 cases, officer effort was targeted where it would actually deliver results. £220k had been recovered from Stockley Park Golf Club, £220k had been recovered in historic NHS rents and £39k from Uxbridge market traders in the last few months. All tenants had been treated equally and with respect but this would not stop the Council from taking legal action. Historic unrecoverable sums were being transparently provisioned and written off rather than being quietly ignored and arrears were going down.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Burles asked if the rules were being applied equally when a recent My London article had advised that a former Conservative Councillor had accrued rent arrears but that the Council had decided not to recover the debt as it would be cheaper to sell the property.

Councillor Bianco advised that there was more to this story. The property in question had been an asset in a public space and that its sale would require a consultation which had now been set in motion. Preliminary marketing advice had been obtained but the outcome of the consultation was currently awaited.

Members were reminded that the release of confidential (Part II) information to the media was a serious breach of the Code of Conduct and, as it appeared that a confidential report about this matter had been passed to a journalist, the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer would undertake an investigation with a view to taking further action.

**10.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CURLING TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING & GROWTH - COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:**

*“In Hayes Town Ward, we have a number of large developments of mixed tenure, like, High Point Village and the Old Vinyl Factory, amongst others, where High and ever-increasing service charges can be crippling for leaseholders.*

*“Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that the Labour Government's delays in implementing the Leasehold and Freehold reform act 2024, is causing considerable pain for residents of Hillingdon, who have to suffer excessive service charges by their*

*landlords, especially in the on-going cost of living crisis?”*

Councillor Tuckwell recognised the challenge of rising service charge pressures during a cost of living crisis. The Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 was supposed to have protected householders but delays in its implementation had left leaseholders in an uncertain position. The administration would ensure that once the national reforms were implemented, residents were able to access any relief available.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Curling asked if the Cabinet Member would like to comment on the steps the Borough’s MPs were taking to press the Government to deliver the promised leasehold reforms.

Councillor Tuckwell was aware that David Simmonds MP had spoken at the dispatch box on this legislation and called for the Government to speed up its implementation. John McDonnell MP had had regular engagement with his residents so there had been cross party support for this legislation from two of the three local MPs to push for it to be implemented as soon as possible.

**10.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DAVIES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR BRIDGES:**

*“Could the Cabinet member please set out any measures being introduced to assist residents with the disposal of larger household items that do not fall within the scope of standard waste collection services?”*

Councillor Bridges advised that a new pop up community waste facility had been introduced to take place every two weeks at different sites across the Borough, with the first happening on 31 January 2026 in Charville. These events would be held on Saturdays and would be located in popular locations, rotating across the wards. Information on the future events could be found on the Council’s website and within the neighbourhoods in which they would be held.

There was no supplementary question.

**10.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MATHERS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:**

*“The Council’s Chief Finance Officer confirmed at the Corporate Infrastructure and Finance Select Committee on 6 January 2026 that accepting Exceptional Financial Support will cost residents around £10 million every year.*

*“Why has the Leader of the Council failed to make this clear in the budget consultation, and does he accept that residents have been denied full and honest disclosure about the true cost and long-term consequences of this Exceptional Financial Support bid?”*

Councillor Edwards advised that he did not accept that residents had been denied full and honest disclosure about the true cost and long term consequences of the Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) bid. Although the Council’s Chief Finance Officer (CFO) was capable and valued, they were not able to see into the future. The repayment costs depended on a number of variables which were not yet known. As such, no one would be able to state today with any degree of certainty what the cost of the repayment of EFS would be. However, the Council needed EFS as a result of

its sustained underfunding.

It was anticipated that about half of London councils would need EFS by 2029. The new Fair Funding Formula (FFF) reflected the assessment of financial need of local authorities to deliver statutory services and was based on data largely from 2023/24 but going back as far as 2021. The Government did not intend to fund these costs fully until 2028/2029 which meant that £65m of funds would be withheld whilst the FFF was phased in. As such, the Council had sought this £65m through EFS.

The Council had requested £20m of support to repay the deficit that had built up in relation to supporting asylum seekers, which was a national responsibility. The local authority would continue to challenge the repayment of this deficit and the FFF underfunding that would persist for at least another two years. The Government had agreed to pay £500k towards the support being provided to Chagossian arrivals.

The consultation on the budget report had included a section about the remaining gap and EFS, with potential repayment costs being set out therein. However, the actual cost of EFS would only become clear once the Council knew how much borrowing was required and when it would take place.

The Government now needed to determine how much EFS it believed Hillingdon needed and on what terms it would be provided. It appeared that the Council's request for £40m for 2024/25 to restore reserves might not be agreed but the Government might decide that a lower amount was sufficient. The requests for 2025/26 and 2026/27 had been based on worst case scenarios. It had been argued that £20m should be funded through grant (and not repayable) to pay for the high level of asylum seekers in the Borough. Whilst there was little hope of receiving the full FFF amounts immediately, it was possible that the terms attached to the EFS relating to the £65m might be more favourable than usual.

Costs would only arise from the amount that was actually borrowed and capital receipts could be used from asset sales to reduce the borrowing. For all of these reasons, it was not yet possible to state what the revenue costs of EFS would be. However, the CFO had been prudent in making provisions for the worst case scenario.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Mathers asked why the administration had downplayed the reality of the EFS debt.

Councillor Edwards advised that the situation had not been downplayed and that the administration had been transparent about EFS and open to discussion in the Chamber. Information about EFS had also been clearly set out in Cabinet reports.

#### **10.7 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BENNETT TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR BRIDGES:**

*“Could the Cabinet member please advise on the progress being made in rolling out food waste collection services to residents living in flats and apartments?”*

Councillor Bridges advised that plans for a major expansion of the service had been put in place to provide improved recycling facilities with more than 180 food waste units installed at over 140 blocks of flats. Building works to facilitate collection had been scheduled and preparation work had been completed in privately managed blocks and the rollout started on 19 January 2026 with food waste collection

extending to around 900 blocks (17k homes) by the end of February 2026. Services would also be extended to flats over shops with rollout starting in mid-February. Residents were being given clear information from the outset.

The programme had been fully funded through DEFRA's new burdens grant and had been supported by investment in new vehicles that would arrive in June 2026.

There was no supplementary question.

**10.13 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GARELICK TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:**

*"The Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation has publicly admitted - via a post on the Ruislip Facebook page - that the proposed parking charges for Ruislip Lido were wrong in the 2026/27 draft budget currently out for public consultation.*

*"Given that this draft budget was delivered late and already contains acknowledged errors, can the Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation tell this Council what confidence residents should have in the accuracy of the remainder of the budget, and what other mistakes they now expect to emerge before it is finalised?"*

Councillor Lavery advised that there had been a single error in the 99 page fees and charges document which would be corrected and which had not affected the budget.

There was no supplementary question.

**10.10 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DHOT TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING & GROWTH - COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:**

*"Can the Cabinet member please share an update on the new pothole technology repair machine that has been invested in by the Council, and how it has been used to date?"*

Councillor Tuckwell advised that roads were being fixed faster and with minimal disruptions. The new technology could not only deal with reactive patching but could also fix cracks. Hillingdon was one of only two London boroughs using this technology and it had been delivering real improvements and results.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Dhot asked how this new technology had helped the Highways team to improve safety and accessibility.

Councillor Tuckwell advised that there had been around £2m of improvements in Yeading on footway and carriageway resurfacing, drainage works and street lighting upgrades (nearly 5km of roads and pavements had been renewed, 12k streetlights upgraded and 1700 gulleys maintained or improved). It was this work that had placed Hillingdon amongst the best in London and the UK.

**10.15 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MAND TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:**

*"The Council's borrowing has exploded from £349million at 31 March 2024 to £518million by 31 March 2025. The December 2025 budget report (paragraph 11.12) confirms that a further £267million of borrowing is required to fund the General Fund Capital Programme, on top of the anticipated £150 million of Exceptional Financial*

*Support borrowing simply to pay for day-to-day spending until March 2027.*

*“Taken together, this administration is driving the Council towards £1 billion of debt yet still cannot produce a legally balanced budget. The Leader has been forced to go cap in hand to the Labour Government for Exceptional Financial Support, not for investment or regeneration, but purely to stop the Chief Finance Officer issuing a Section 114 bankruptcy notice.*

*“When Thurrock Council collapsed into effective bankruptcy, its debt had only just breached £1 billion.*

*“Given the strikingly similar debt levels, reliance on borrowing to fund revenue spending, and the need for emergency Government support, will the Leader of the Council explain what concrete action he as Leader of this Council is taking to prevent a Section 114 notice?”*

Councillor Edwards advised that debt management was sometimes overlooked but that the comparison with Thurrock was misleading as its debt had been driven by speculation. Hillingdon’s current debt was £588m (the Government had published this data) and included £256m of general fund and £332m of housing revenue debt, which reduced revenue costs to the Council by providing housing for residents. Housing Revenue Account borrowing had been covered by rental income and would only be a risk if the Council was unable to rent out its social housing properties.

Hillingdon’s total debt was lower than every neighbouring Labour council and, insofar as debt as a percentage of council income was concerned, had the 22<sup>nd</sup> lowest level of borrowing across London at 75%. Neighbouring boroughs exceeded 150% and the five London boroughs with the highest debt to income ratios had three to six times worse levels than Hillingdon and were all Labour-run. Hillingdon’s finances were well managed and prudent and continued to demonstrate sound financial management.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Mand asked if, as the financial crisis that the Council found itself in had unfolded under his watch, the Leader accepted that the ultimate responsibility rested with him and questioned why residents should have any confidence in his leadership.

Councillor Edwards advised that he, as Leader, had always accepted responsibility as the buck stopped with him. However, the Council was not responsible for the levels of funding that had been received. Services had not been slashed and the authority had not been overspending but it had been underfunded. Residents would have the opportunity to endorse the position that the Council had taken at the election in May.

**10.8 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR AHMAD-WALLANA TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR BRIDGES:**

*“With the opening of the new Platinum Jubilee Leisure Centre imminent, could the Cabinet member please outline any plans to promote its use and, in doing so, support local residents in leading healthy lifestyles?”*

Councillor Bridges advised that the new leisure centre would provide high quality facilities for residents including a climbing wall, roof top pitch and pool. An open weekend had been organised where residents would be able to try out the facilities at the leisure centre free of charge. A communications plan had also been developed

which would be reviewed and updated regularly.

There was no supplementary question.

**10.14 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR KAUR TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:**

*“As the 25/26 budget was based on using Capital Transformation to achieve a target of £34million in-year savings, can the Cabinet member please tell this Council what percentage of the £34million saving target was achieved by Capital Transformation and what was achieved by the Managed Vacancy Factor?”*

Councillor Lavery noted that an explanation had already been provided about how local government finances worked. Capital transformation did not deliver in-year revenue savings and related to the use of flexible capital receipts to cover and fund the costs of change and, as such, had covered 0% of the £34m savings target. £5.8m of capital receipts in 2025/26 had supported £9.6m of future savings and cost avoidance. The managed vacancy factor reflected normal staff vacancies across the Council and contributed around £1.1m of the £34m savings target (3%).

There was no supplementary question.

**10.5 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURROWS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR BRIDGES:**

*“Could the Cabinet member please provide an update on the current status and future plans for the borough’s archives and museum?”*

Councillor Bridges advised that the Borough’s archives and museum service had relocated to its new home at the Civic Centre on 17 December 2025 and formed part of the plan to bring services together. The service was open 9am-5pm from Monday to Saturday and 10am-1pm on a Sunday. Artefacts on display would be rotated every eighteen months and archives and collection materials could also be accessed through a search room (which was available by appointment) and a drop in service would be available for items on general display.

The Museums and Archive Team had been looking at digitising the collection so that it was available to a wider online audience for them to explore the Borough’s heritage. A full programme of events and outreach activities had been planned for 2026.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Burrows asked if the Cabinet Member was able to provide any clarity on the sale of the former Uxbridge Library site.

Councillor Bridges advised that an offer had been received from a well respected local institution for the sale and renovation of the former Uxbridge Library site. Further announcements would be made when it was appropriate to do so.

**10.9 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SWEETING TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:**

*“In his ‘Happy New Year’ message in the January edition of Hillingdon People, the Leader of the Council claimed that £40 million is being withheld from Hillingdon Council, implying that the Labour Government is deliberately denying him funding.*

*“It has long been clear that this is a three-year settlement, and it is up to this Council to operate within its financial capacity. Yet Conservative decisions - chronic overspending, missed savings targets, and exhausted reserves have left the Council in its current precarious position.*

*“Why has the Leader of this Council failed to acknowledge that Hillingdon has gained substantially from the Labour Government's Fair Funding Settlement, as set out in the Cabinet Report of 23rd December 2025, and has instead chosen to mislead residents about where the blame lies?”*

Councillor Edwards advised that the Council had not overspent, the Government had failed to provide funding for the statutory duties that the Council was required to provide. This underfunding had been compounded by an increase in demand and a population with an increased level of needs which had driven up the cost of Council services. The huge increase in Employers National Insurance contributions had also had an impact but the Government refused to fund the Council for this increase.

Unemployment had risen to almost 7% in London and had been concentrated amongst those in lower paid roles which then increased demand for Council services. There had been a sustained attack on private landlords which had driven some out of the area and meant that housing availability had reduced and rent and temporary accommodation costs had increased. Despite this, the Council continued to deliver exceptional value for money with the fourth lowest spend per resident in London. Hillingdon's spend on adult social care was the second lowest in London and the seventh lowest for children's services.

The administration had not lost control of the Council's spend. The new funding formula reflected the increased costs and recognised the local needs and demands on the Council that had existed last year and this year and going forward but the Government had still decided to phase the support in. This decision to phase in the funding formula was separate to the decision to return to a three-year funding settlement for local government. As such, the Government had made a decision to continue to underfund Hillingdon for the next two years. The Council would continue to press the Government on this issue.

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**AS THE 45 MINUTE TIME LIMIT FOR MEMBER QUESTIONS HAD BEEN REACHED, THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WOULD RECEIVE WRITTEN RESPONSES.**

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By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Sweeting stated that, for the first time in many years, the budget for 2026/27 included areas of growth due solely to the Fair Funding Settlement from the Labour Government and asked the Leader which areas of new growth he would be most proud to deliver.

**WRITTEN RESPONSE TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:**

*As I have repeated said, our underfunding will continue for a further 2 years with the government withholding £65m in grant funding to us that their new fair funding formula shows we need to pay for statutory services. So rather there being the opportunity for growth in services the squeeze will continue until 2028/29 when we finally receive the full settlement from the fair funding review.*

**10.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BANERJEE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING & GROWTH - COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:**

*“Can the Cabinet member please provide a summary of how the Council has undertaken gritting of roads within the Borough during the recent cold weather?”*

**WRITTEN RESPONSE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:**

*Keeping Hillingdon moving safely during cold weather is a top priority. Our Highways team began preparations back in July, and across the borough’s 450-mile road network we have more than 4,000 tonnes of grit available for use. Crews use hyper-local forecasts four times a day to decide where and when to treat roads. Black spots like hills and junctions are treated first, followed by main roads, bus routes, and resilience network roads.*

*To do this efficiently, the Council operates a fleet of eight gritting vehicles, ensuring the borough is covered quickly and effectively. Our crews work early in the morning before freezing conditions. Smaller roads and footways are treated depending on the forecast.*

*I went out myself with a gritting crew recently and saw firsthand the hard work and dedication involved. In addition to treating our road network – our Highways Team also respond to real time incidents. During the recent cold spell, our Highways Team dealt with 36 burst water mains, gritting around each one to stop ice forming and working closely with Affinity Water to get them fixed quickly. Thanks to their planning and long hours, residents have stayed safe and the borough kept moving.*

*Not all heroes wear capes - some wear a high-vis and make sure Hillingdon keeps moving.*

**10.12 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PUNJA TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:**

*“The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy—CIPFA—has now been asked by MHCLG to assess the in-principle decision to pursue Exceptional Financial Support.*

*“That is somewhat ironic, given that Councillor Edwards previously chose to award a single-tender contract to Grant Thornton, instead of CIPFA, to deliver this Council’s Financial Modernisation Programme which has now cost around £1.7million and failed to deliver on time and to budget.*

*“At the July Cabinet meeting, the Leader went further, proudly stating that this Conservative administration had uncovered £14.1million of accounting errors dating back to 2014 and therefore did not require independent scrutiny.*

*“Does the Leader of Council now accept the need for independent scrutiny from CIPFA, or was the reason that CIPFA were not appointed in the first place because he has something to fear from it?”*

**WRITTEN RESPONSE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:**

*We have engaged - and will continue to engage - constructively with central*

*government and with any professional or regulatory body that requires assurance that the London Borough of Hillingdon is acting responsibly and maintaining sound financial management, even in the context of prolonged and chronic underfunding.*

*Cllr Punja's question reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the respective roles of the organisations involved.*

*The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is a UK-based international professional body and standard-setter for public financial management. Its role is to set standards, provide independent scrutiny, and offer assurance. In that capacity, CIPFA was well suited to review our financial systems and processes. However, it is not an organisation designed to provide the operational capacity required to implement large-scale change.*

*That implementation support is precisely why Grant Thornton was engaged. Grant Thornton has been providing the additional expertise and capacity needed to deliver our Financial Modernisation Programme, and that support continues to be effective.*

*CIPFA is now undertaking its appropriate role on behalf of government: assessing our application for Exceptional Financial Support and evaluating our plans to return the Council's budget to balance once fair funding is fully implemented.*

*In parallel, Grant Thornton continues to support the Council in delivering the Financial Modernisation Programme, which I am pleased to confirm remains on track to be delivered on time and within budget.*

50. **MOTIONS** (Agenda Item 11)

**11.3 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL**

Councillor Tuckwell moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the following motion:

That this Council unequivocally condemns the proposed changes to national and London-wide planning legislation, which represent a direct threat to Green Belt land, Metropolitan Open Land, and the long-term sustainability and character of communities across the London Borough of Hillingdon.

These proposals amount to a centralising power grab that prioritises developer interests over residents, weakens local democratic control, and undermines decades of hard-won protections for open space and community infrastructure.

Council expresses grave concern at the following:

- The unprecedented threat to Metropolitan Open Land, opening the door to wholly inappropriate development on some of the borough's most cherished and irreplaceable open spaces, in direct contradiction to their intended purpose and historic protections.
- The introduction of a sweeping default position in favour of development, particularly around stations, which would expose large parts of Hillingdon to high-density, unsuitable development imposed without proper local consultation or accountability.
- Proposals for so-called emergency Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) relief in London, which would encourage overdevelopment while stripping away essential funding needed to support schools, healthcare, transport, and other vital local infrastructure.

- Proposed changes to the Mayor of London's call-in powers, which would allow City Hall to override the clearly expressed views of democratically elected local councillors, riding roughshod over local decision-making and silencing the voices of residents, making Hillingdon residents pay for the Mayor's failure to deliver housing in central London Zones 1& 2 where they are desperately required.

This Council believes these proposals fundamentally undermine local democracy, weaken environmental protections, and place intolerable pressure on already stretched communities and infrastructure. Whilst the Council will respond to the 225 questions in the usual manner It also requests the Leader of the Council to write urgently to the borough's three Members of Parliament, demanding that they publicly oppose these proposals, raise Hillingdon's objections forcefully in Parliament, and take all necessary steps to defend the borough's residents, communities, and green spaces from inappropriate and imposed development.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that Labour had been divided nationally and had been reaching for centralised control in a panic despite Hillingdon having delivered affordable homes in the right places. Environmental protections had never meant to be optional but the Labour Government had now decided to build on green belt land. Proposals for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) relief were about control, not partnership, and would make communities pay the price and sideline residents and Councillors.

The motion gave Members the option to either side with residents to defend the principle of a democratically accountable planning programme or side with a Government that put residents last. The proposals threatened to weaken the guardrail and risked normalising high density schemes – once the green belt land was gone, it was gone and the decision should lie with the local decision makers. Shifting decision making about the development of 1000m<sup>2</sup> of green belt land to the Mayor of London was not the answer – the areas would be better served by improved transport links and empowering communities to be more resilient.

There was no disagreement that the provision of housing and the shortage of homes that people could afford posed a challenge as house building in London had collapsed based on costs and demand volatility. The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 had been created to meet the housing targets but it was queried whether this legislation was the right way to meet that need. What was needed was a faster and more predictable planning regime (rather than sweeping powers) and a way to maintain local voices in the process. Members should stand together to prevent swathes of the Borough being built on.

Those speaking against the motion recognised that precious areas of green belt could come under threat when what was needed was a mass 1950's type council house building programme because building lots of high density flats that no one could afford was not the answer. This direction of travel had started during the coalition Government and policies had since become increasingly less robust.

It was suggested that the motion delivered false messages for political purposes, sewing discord and burying the real story. The legislation looked to deliver homes for Hillingdon's residents when there were thousands on the housing waiting list and sought to meet the urgent need in the best possible way. The pleas of local people had been ignored in the past when West Drayon and Hayes had transitioned from

suburban to urban and the post office was now going to be turned into one bedroom flats.

Conservative Members had previously made provision for the use of green belt land in exceptional circumstances so this appeared to be a political stunt to inflame fear with no credible alternative being offered up.

The motion was put to a recorded vote:

Those voting for: The Mayor (Councillor Corthorne), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Reeta Chamdal), Councillors Ahmad-Wallana, Banerjee, Bennett, Bhatt, Bianco, Bridges, Burrows, Roy Chamdal, Choubedar, Davies, Denys, Dhot, Edwards, Gohil, Lavery, Martin, D Mills, R Mills, O'Brien, Palmer, Riley, Smallwood, Sullivan and Tuckwell.

Those voting against: Councillors Burles, Garelick, Garg, Gill, Islam, Kaur, Lakhmana, Mand, Mathers, Nelson, Nelson-West, Punja, Sansarpuri, Singh and Sweeting.

Those abstaining: Councillors Basit, Curling, Farley and Gardner.

The motion was carried and it was:

**RESOLVED: That this Council unequivocally condemns the proposed changes to national and London-wide planning legislation, which represent a direct threat to Green Belt land, Metropolitan Open Land, and the long-term sustainability and character of communities across the London Borough of Hillingdon.**

**These proposals amount to a centralising power grab that prioritises developer interests over residents, weakens local democratic control, and undermines decades of hard-won protections for open space and community infrastructure.**

**Council expresses grave concern at the following:**

- **The unprecedented threat to Metropolitan Open Land, opening the door to wholly inappropriate development on some of the borough's most cherished and irreplaceable open spaces, in direct contradiction to their intended purpose and historic protections.**
- **The introduction of a sweeping default position in favour of development, particularly around stations, which would expose large parts of Hillingdon to high-density, unsuitable development imposed without proper local consultation or accountability.**
- **Proposals for so-called emergency Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) relief in London, which would encourage overdevelopment while stripping away essential funding needed to support schools, healthcare, transport, and other vital local infrastructure.**
- **Proposed changes to the Mayor of London's call-in powers, which would allow City Hall to override the clearly expressed views of democratically elected local councillors, riding roughshod over local decision-making and silencing the voices of residents, making Hillingdon residents pay for the Mayor's failure to deliver housing in central London Zones 1 & 2 where they are desperately required.**

**This Council believes these proposals fundamentally undermine local democracy, weaken environmental protections, and place intolerable pressure**

on already stretched communities and infrastructure. Whilst the Council will respond to the 225 questions in the usual manner It also requests the Leader of the Council to write urgently to the borough's three Members of Parliament, demanding that they publicly oppose these proposals, raise Hillingdon's objections forcefully in Parliament, and take all necessary steps to defend the borough's residents, communities, and green spaces from inappropriate and imposed development.

## 11.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MATHERS

Councillor Mathers moved, and Councillor Punja seconded, the following motion:

That this Council welcomes and expresses its gratitude to the Labour Government for stepping in to provide fairer local government funding, including an increase of £126.7 million for Hillingdon - addressing years of underfunding under the previous Conservative government - and enabling the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities, invest in transformative services, and focus on positive outcomes for residents rather than firefighting budget shortfalls.

That this Council recognises that this increased funding provides Hillingdon Council with the opportunity to deliver long-term, outcomes-focused improvements for residents, including:

- Greater stability and resilience for frontline services
- Enhanced capacity to protect vulnerable children and adults
- Investment in community safety, public health, and preventative services
- Reduced financial risk and stronger long-term sustainability for the Council

This Council notes that in the last settlement under the last Conservative government, core funding power was cut by 7% in real terms, leaving councils like Hillingdon under significant financial pressure.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- publicly thank the Labour Government for its fair funding settlement and
- call on the Conservative-led local administration to use this funding responsibly, focus on outcomes for residents rather than blaming them.

Those speaking in support of the motion stated that fairer local government funding would address the real time increase in costs around London and recognised the need that was there. It was suggested that the Council should praise the Government when its actions provided Hillingdon with benefits as well as criticise when there was a negative impact. Residents deserved honesty about the Council's finances and the motion did not pretend that fairer funding was a reward for overspending. It was suggested that the administration needed to use the Council's funds responsibly to provide longer term sustainability.

The motion thanked the Government for providing the Council with funding well into the future after a decade of accounting errors. Residents were not interested in blame shifting and just wanted good service delivery and the funding would provide stability for services and enable planning for the future. The £126.7m increase and three year funding settlement had provided the Council with stability, breathing space, predictability and sustainability.

The Labour Government's commitment to provide this funding would deliver growth in

Hillingdon and enable the Council to step out of the quicksand. However, even with this substantial settlement, Hillingdon would still need £150m so humility was needed. It was suggested that the Leader of the Council had advised the Leader of the Hayes Independent Party Group that he could not wait until the Labour Government had sorted out local government funding. **[Councillors Curling and Edwards raised a point of personal explanation (SO14 Rules of Debate 14.5(f)) that neither of them had any recollection of such a conversation.]**

The administration had prioritised austerity over savings and the country now had a Labour Government that valued local government with every pound received helping to improve residents' lives. The Government had recognised that Hillingdon deserved fairer funding and had come to the rescue.

Those speaking in favour of the motion did not want to see a massive increase in Business Rates or hikes in fees and charges. EFS would mean that services would need to be cut year on year so this funding would make a difference.

Those speaking against the motion noted that it appeared to be smoke and mirrors - Heathrow would appeal the proposed Business Rate hike so the figures contained within the motion were not what they seemed. The administration welcomed the increase in funding but not all of the £126.7m was Government funding as £28.7m was in relation to an assumed increase in Council Tax over the next three years. Furthermore, the Business Rate increase risk was not realistic as Heathrow would appeal and businesses would close as a result.

The funding settlement would force the Council to increase Council Tax by 4.99% each year for the next three years else Hillingdon would not receive the funding. The Conservative Group would continue to fight for fairer funding for residents as it was not being delivered.

The motion was put to a vote and lost.

### **11.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR GARDNER**

Councillor Gardner moved, and Councillor Curling seconded, the following motion:

That this Council recognises that a well-resourced and well-managed CCTV system can play an important role as one of the key factors in tackling crime and many forms of antisocial behaviour.

This Council notes that Hillingdon now has about 3000 CCTV cameras, surely making it one of the best-provided Boroughs in London and that there have been numerous examples of excellent work by the staff of the Control Room in catching criminals as a result of close working with the local police.

However, this Council regrets that for an extended period there have been only a few members of staff to monitor such a large number of cameras and that this is making it impossible to provide effective monitoring.

The situation is becoming increasingly unacceptable with frequent instances of only one member of staff on duty and occasions when residents have tried calling there is nobody present at all and therefore one has to assume that the CCTV room isn't covered 24/7, so, presumably, also calls from the police go unanswered.

This Council therefore calls on the Cabinet to review, as a matter of urgency, the level of funding needed to ensure the proper functioning of this service which is vital for the safety and security of the local community. Surely a well-staffed CCTV room will comply with Hillingdon's strategic objective of providing safe & strong communities and also being a digitally enabled modern council.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that, if the CCTV room had three or four officers covering 24/7, it was more likely that offenders such as fly tippers and burglars would be caught in the act. Currently, members of staff were working solo which meant that they were taken away from their duties when they were answering Members' telephone queries. Catching more people would result in more prosecutions and more revenue from fines.

A more proactive CCTV service would be welcomed where antisocial behaviour (ASB) could be reported directly to the police. Whilst it was acknowledged that some Councillors worked closely with their local policing teams, the police would be able to do more if they received additional support from CCTV.

Those speaking against the motion noted that residents were told that Hillingdon was a safe Borough and that community safety was a priority but the reality was that there were not enough staff. Staff were needed as CCTV cameras did not prevent crime on their own or liaise with the police or answer the telephone. There was no need to have thousands of cameras if there was no one to monitor them. Community safety was a core responsibility and the Cabinet needed to act quickly to ensure the safety of Hillingdon's streets and neighbourhoods.

Councillor Bridges moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the following amendment (additional words in ***bold italics*** and deleted words ~~crossed through~~):

That this Council recognises that a well-resourced and well-managed CCTV system can play an important role as one of the key factors in tackling crime and many forms of antisocial behaviour.

This Council notes that Hillingdon now has about 3000 CCTV cameras, surely making it one of the best-provided Boroughs in London and that there have been numerous examples of excellent work by the staff of the Control Room in catching criminals as a result of close working with the local police.

~~However, this Council regrets that for an extended period there have been only a few members of staff to monitor such a large number of cameras and that this is making it impossible to provide effective monitoring.~~

~~The situation is becoming increasingly unacceptable with frequent instances of only one member of staff on duty and occasions when residents have tried calling there is nobody present at all and therefore one has to assume that the CCTV room isn't covered 24/7, so, presumably, also calls from the police go unanswered.~~

~~This Council therefore calls on the Cabinet to review, as a matter of urgency, the level of funding needed to ensure the proper functioning of this service which is vital for the safety and security of the local community. Surely a well-staffed CCTV room will comply with Hillingdon's strategic objective of providing safe & strong communities and also being a digitally enabled modern council.~~

***Council therefore requests that the Residents Services Select Committee undertake a review of the CCTV service for Hillingdon to establish where any improvements can be recommended to further enhance the safety and security for Hillingdon residents.***

Those speaking in support of the amendment welcomed the suggestion that the Select Committee undertake a review of Hillingdon's CCTV service. CCTV cameras in the Borough were proactively monitored and staff provided footage for prosecutions / evidential purposes for things such as environmental crimes and insurance related matters (one member of staff during the day and two overnight).

In 2025, the CCTV control room had monitored 7,928 incidents and produced 791 evidential packages. Staff identified an additional 20-30 incidents including safeguarding concerns (e.g., rough sleeping) and liaised with the police 20-25 times each day. The control room relied on radios rather than the telephone and members of the public were not permitted to contact them directly. Rather than assuming that more staff were needed, it was better to look at how many might be needed and how artificial intelligence could be used to support them.

Resident community groups seemed happy to accept the proposal for the Select Committee to review CCTV provision and staff would be involved in identifying the best way forward.

Those speaking against the amendment stated that it diluted the original motion and took away its urgency. There was a clear gap between what the administration said and what happened on the ground. Members of the Residents' Services Select Committee had visited the CCTV control room which had skilled operators monitoring hundreds of cameras. However, if CCTV was supposed to keep residents safe, it was queried why Hillingdon still had ASB. Whilst the CCTV infrastructure had received investment, there had been no investment in the staff.

The amendment was put to the vote and agreed. The substantive motion was then put to the vote and it was:

**RESOLVED: That this Council recognises that a well-resourced and well-managed CCTV system can play an important role as one of the key factors in tackling crime and many forms of antisocial behaviour.**

**This Council notes that Hillingdon now has about 3000 CCTV cameras, surely making it one of the best-provided Boroughs in London and that there have been numerous examples of excellent work by the staff of the Control Room in catching criminals as a result of close working with the local police.**

**Council therefore requests that the Residents Services Select Committee undertake a review of the CCTV service for Hillingdon to establish where any improvements can be recommended to further enhance the safety and security for Hillingdon residents.**

#### **11.4 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR EDWARDS**

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Tuckwell seconded, the following motion:

That this Council expresses its deep concern at the decision by the Home

Office last month to restrict local authorities' access to data relating to the placement of asylum seekers in taxpayer-funded accommodation.

This decision is further evidence of the failure of the Government's asylum and immigration policy that is characterised by poor planning and a failure to work transparently or constructively with local government and that has cost Hillingdon taxpayers millions of pounds in unfunded demand pressures.

The Parliamentary Home Affairs Select Committee has reported that failure to share of data on asylum seekers with Local Authorities limits their ability to plan and respond to asylum seeker placements effectively. Where data on new arrivals, move-ons, or transfers isn't shared in a timely and detailed manner it makes it difficult for Councils to allocate resources in education, health, social care or homelessness prevention, since authorities cannot anticipate demand reliably.

The decision also damages trust in the Home Office, weakens accountability, and irresponsibly risks fuelling community tensions at a time when the Government should be focused on supporting local authorities, not sidelining them. Secrecy and centralised decision-making do nothing to fix a broken asylum system and instead place additional pressure on councils, frontline services, and local residents as well as potentially harming the welfare of asylum seekers.

This Council, therefore, calls on the Government and the Home Office to urgently reverse this decision, restore full transparency with local authorities and work in genuine partnership with councils to deliver a fair, effective and properly managed asylum system that commands public confidence.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that the Government's decision to stop sharing information had had tangible consequences in that the Council would be unable to discharge its responsibilities effectively if it was kept in the dark. It would also be harder to reassure local communities and to prepare properly if the Council had no information about the asylum seekers being placed in the Borough.

The Council had been required to manage complex issues and local residents had had legitimate concerns about using hotels for asylum accommodation. Concerns were being expressed by a range of people and organisations but the local authority was unable to provide answers to basic questions. This had been a difficult time with the Government placing asylum seekers in Hillingdon resulting in the risks and costs being shifted without consent or compensation.

This had been bad policy making and bad management and had created greater community tension. This approach did nothing to improve the asylum system. Residents deserved clarity and services needed better support.

Those speaking against the motion stated that this was another example of the Leader playing the blame game and came dangerously close to scapegoating. It fuelled community tensions by using asylum seekers as an excuse and, either the Leader of the Council had no idea of the true cost, or he was just not sharing this information.

The motion was put to the vote and it was:

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That this Council expresses its deep concern at the decision by the Home Office last month to restrict local authorities' access to data relating to the placement of asylum seekers in taxpayer-funded accommodation.</p> <p>This decision is further evidence of the failure of the Government's asylum and immigration policy that is characterised by poor planning and a failure to work transparently or constructively with local government and that has cost Hillingdon taxpayers millions of pounds in unfunded demand pressures.</p> <p>The Parliamentary Home Affairs Select Committee has reported that failure to share of data on asylum seekers with Local Authorities limits their ability to plan and respond to asylum seeker placements effectively. Where data on new arrivals, move-ons, or transfers isn't shared in a timely and detailed manner it makes it difficult for Councils to allocate resources in education, health, social care or homelessness prevention, since authorities cannot anticipate demand reliably.</p> <p>The decision also damages trust in the Home Office, weakens accountability, and irresponsibly risks fuelling community tensions at a time when the Government should be focused on supporting local authorities, not sidelining them. Secrecy and centralised decision-making do nothing to fix a broken asylum system and instead place additional pressure on councils, frontline services, and local residents as well as potentially harming the welfare of asylum seekers.</p> <p>This Council, therefore, calls on the Government and the Home Office to urgently reverse this decision, restore full transparency with local authorities and work in genuine partnership with councils to deliver a fair, effective and properly managed asylum system that commands public confidence.</p>
	<p><b>ANNEX A</b></p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.21 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Lloyd White, Head of Democratic Services on [democratic@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@hillington.gov.uk). Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

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## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

*Reporting Officer: Head of Democratic Services*

### i) MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2026/27

1. The Council is required to undertake an annual re-adoption of its Allowances Scheme and, in doing so, give due regard to the recommendations made by the report of the Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors in London.

**RECOMMENDATION: That the current Members' Allowances Scheme be revoked as of 31 March 2026 and the new Scheme for 2026/27 be approved, as shown in the Appendix, for implementation from 1 April 2026.**

#### Information

2. Before making or amending its allowances scheme, the Council is required, by virtue of Regulation 19, of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, to have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel. The Panel for London published their latest report in January 2024. The key findings of that report have been taken into account when making these recommendations. The full report can be viewed here:

<https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/who-we-are/about-us/financial-information/leadership-and-expenses/remuneration-councillors-london>

3. The Independent panel considered the key questions of:
  - a. how best to ensure that people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of skills are encouraged to serve as local councillors; and
  - b. how to ensure those who participate in and contribute to the democratic process should not suffer unreasonable financial disadvantage.
4. Within these broad considerations there can be no doubt that financial compensation or a system of allowances plays a crucial part in making it financially possible for local people to put themselves forward to take on the onerous responsibilities involved in being a councillor and indeed to continue to serve as one.
5. For this reason, the Panel consider it crucial that allowances for councillors across London are pitched at an appropriate level such that they make a major contribution in ensuring diverse and effective local representation. The recent review aimed to take a step back and ensure that the recommended allowances are pitched such that they serve this crucial purpose.
6. After considering the amount of time commitment and work involved in being a local Councillor, the Independent Panel recommend a Basic Allowance of **£15,960**. Currently the LBH Basic Allowance is £12,793.
7. Regarding SRA's, these are grouped in bands based on the allowance paid to the Leader of the Council. The Panel recommend an annual payment to a

Leader of a Council of **£78,052** (made up of the Basic Allowance above and a Leader's Allowance of **£62,092**).

8. Currently the annual payment to the Leader of the London Borough of Hillingdon is **£72,960.80** (made up of the Basic Allowance of £12,793 and the Leader's Allowance of **£60,167.80**)

### **London Borough of Hillingdon 2026/27 Proposal**

9. No increase is proposed for the level of Basic or Special Responsibility Allowances for 2026/27 – including those of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who are paid a similar allowance albeit, separate from the main Scheme of Allowances.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10. Provision has been made in the 2026/27 budget for Members' Allowances, although it is important to note this is based upon current posts being held by Members. Those who occupy more than one post only receive one SRA, normally the higher. It is, therefore, difficult to accurately estimate the true cost until after the Annual Council meeting in May when Members are confirmed into posts receiving a SRA.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11. Regulation 10 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires re-adoption of the scheme by 31 March 2026. Therefore, the current scheme needs to be revoked as of 31 March 2026 and a new scheme made. If it is not, any allowances paid to Members would not comply with the law and could, therefore, be challenged.

Background Papers: Report of the Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors in London, January 2024

**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2026/27****1. Introduction**

In accordance with Local Authorities (Members Allowances) England Regulations 2003 No. 1021 (as amended) the London Borough of Hillingdon makes the following scheme: -

**2. Basic Allowance**

For 2026/27 an allowance of **£12,793** will be payable to all Councillors and will be paid in equal monthly instalments. The basic allowance includes intra borough travel and subsistence costs.

**3. Special Responsibility Allowances**

Special responsibility allowances of the following amounts shall be paid in equal monthly instalments to Councillors holding the following responsibilities:

	(£)
1. Leader of the Council	60,167.80
2. Deputy Leader of the Council	50,683.77
3. Chief Whip of Largest Party	24,318.39
4. Cabinet Member	42,385.34
5. Chair of Select Committee	24,318.39
6. Chair of Planning Committee	24,318.39
7. Chair of Licensing Committee	24,318.39
8. Chair of Standards Committee	3,427.05
9. Standards Committee Independent Person	512.50 (per meeting required & attended)
10. Chair of Audit Committee*	8,000.00
11. Chair of Pensions Committee*	8,000.00
12. Champion	6,253.61
13. Council representative on Adoption and Permanency Panel	13,708.22
14. Cabinet Assistant	9,484.03
15. Leader of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Party	24,318.39
16. Chief Whip of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Party	6,253.61
17. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Party Lead on Select Committee	6,253.61

\* Where a non-Councillor is Chair or Vice Chair a co-optees' allowance is payable as set out in the Scheme under section 9.

**4. Limit on Payment of Special Responsibility Allowances**

Individual Councillors may not claim a special responsibility allowance for more than one position for which they qualify.

**5. Renunciation**

Councillors may elect to forego any of their entitlement to an allowance under the scheme by giving written notice to the Corporate Director of Finance.

## 6. Part-Year Entitlements

- (a) This paragraph regulates Councillors' entitlement to allowances where the scheme is amended during the year or where an individual ceases to be a Councillor or accepts or relinquishes a position of special responsibility.
- (b) If an amendment to this scheme is made during the year to which it refers and changes the amount which a Councillor may claim in basic allowances the annual entitlement shall be calculated using the following method: -

Annual entitlement to basic allowance	=	Days at unamended rate divided by 365	X	Annual payment at unamended rate	+	Days at amended rate divided by 365	X	Annual payment at amended rate
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- (c) Where the term of office of a Councillor begins or ends part way through the year the annual entitlement to basic allowance shall be calculated using the following method:

Annual entitlement to basic allowance	=	Days as a Councillor divided by 365	X	Annual rate of allowance
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- (d) Where this scheme is amended during the year to which it refers the annual entitlement to basic allowance of Councillors beginning or ending their term of office part way through the year shall be calculated using the following method:

Annual entitlement to basic allowance	=	Days as a Councillor during unamended scheme divided by 365	X	Annual payment at unamended rate	+	Days as a Councillor during amended scheme divided by 365	X	Annual payment at amended rate
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- (e) Where Councillors hold positions of special responsibility during part of the year their annual entitlement to special responsibility allowance shall be calculated using the following method:

Annual entitlement for special responsibility allowance	=	Days holding position of special responsibility during unamended scheme divided by 365	X	Annual payment at unamended rate	+	Days holding position of special responsibility during amended scheme divided by 365	X	Annual payment at amended rate
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## 7. Out of Borough Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

Councillors shall be entitled to claim for out of borough travelling allowances incurred in undertaking approved duties as agreed in advance by the Council.

The out of borough car mileage allowance for Councillors shall be paid at the same rate as those paid to officers for the Standard Mileage User Allowance.

The amounts paid for out of borough subsistence shall be in accordance with the maximum levels laid down from time to time by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, but claims may only be made for approved duties.

## **8. Dependent / Carers Allowance**

A dependent / carers allowance shall be payable at the National Minimum Wage for Adults hourly rate based on the following criteria:

- payments should be subject to a maximum weekly payment, equivalent to seven-and-a-half hours of care per week;
- the maximum rate should be set locally to reflect local costs, in accordance with social service departments levels;
- payment should be claimable in respect of children aged 15 or under or in respect of other dependants where there is medical or social work evidence that care is required;
- only one weekly payment should be claimable in respect of the household of each Member, except in special circumstances to be judged by the Council's Standards Committee;
- the allowance should be paid as a reimbursement of incurred expenditure against receipts;
- the allowance should not be payable to a member of the claimant's own household and;
- any dispute as to entitlement and any allegation of abuse should be referred to the Council's Standards Committee for adjudication.

## **9. Co-optees' Allowances**

Where a co-optee and non-Councillor is the Chair of the Audit Committee, an annual entitlement allowance of £8,000.00 may be paid. This will be paid on a pro-rata basis if the appointment of the co-optee begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year. Where a co-optee is an Independent Person on the Standards Committee an entitlement allowance of £500 per meeting required and attended may be paid. Where a co-optee is one of the three statutory education co-optees on the Executive Scrutiny Committee, an annual entitlement allowance of £445.80 may be paid. This will be paid on a pro-rata basis if the appointment of the co-optee begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year. These allowances will cover expenses, such as travel and subsistence, related to the duties of the postholder.

## **10. Claims and Payments**

- (a) All claims for out of borough travelling and subsistence and carers allowances must be submitted within two months of the date of the approved duty to which they relate, made on the standard form as used by officers and returned to the Head of Democratic Services.
- (b) Payments shall be made in respect of basic and special responsibility allowances subject to sub-paragraph (c) below in Instalments of one twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month direct to each Member's bank or building society account.
- (c) Where the payment of allowances in one-twelfth instalments would result in a Councillor receiving more than he or she is entitled to because of a part year effect (as defined in paragraph 9 above) the payment shall be restricted to the annual entitlement.

## **11. Withholding Members' Allowances**

Where there has been an adjudication, which suspends or partially suspends a Councillor from office following a breach of the Code of Conduct, the Council may withhold all allowances paid to that Councillor with immediate effect.

## **12. Records of Allowances and Publicity**

In accordance with the 2003 regulations a detailed record will be kept of the name of the recipient and the amount and nature of each payment made. This will be available for public inspection at all reasonable times or copies supplied following the payment of a reasonable fee.

As soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of the municipal year to which the scheme relates the total sum paid to each recipient in respect of basic allowances, special responsibility allowance, dependant carers allowance and out of borough travelling and subsistence allowance will be published on the Council's website and local newspaper.

## **13. Independent Remuneration Panel**

Hillingdon Council has had regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Panel for the Remuneration of Councillors in London in developing its Members' Allowances Scheme.

## **CONFIRMATION OF ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION TO REMOVE PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION)**

*Reporting Officer: Director of Planning & Sustainable Growth*

### **Summary**

1. On 11 December 2025, the Council utilised its powers under the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) to make an immediate Article 4 direction, to remove permitted development rights for the conversion of dwelling houses (Use Class C3) into Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) for up to six residents (Use Class C4) across the whole borough.
2. The purpose of this report is to confirm the introduction of the boroughwide immediate Article 4 Direction following the relevant notification and consultation.

**RECOMMENDATION: That the introduction of a boroughwide immediate Article 4 Direction under the Town and Country (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 to remove the permitted development right for the change the use from a building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class C3 (Dwellinghouse) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order to a use falling within Class C4 (House in Multiple Occupation) of that Order being development comprised within class L(b) of Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), be confirmed.**

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

3. Council on 27 November 2025 approved an immediate Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for conversions from dwellings to small HMOs (up to six occupiers) and the Direction was subsequently made on 11 December 2025.
4. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 requires the Council to notify the Secretary of State, to publicise the making of the immediate Article 4 Direction, and to invite representations concerning the Direction to be made to the Council during a minimum period of 21 days.
5. To meet these requirements, public notices were published in the West London Gazette and displayed at two locations in Uxbridge town centre, announcing a six-week consultation period ending on 22 January 2026 and inviting representations. Presentations were also made at two public consultation meetings on HMOs linked to the council's introduction of additional licensing to publicise and explain the proposed Article 4 Direction. The Council received no written representations in response to the consultation. Consequently, the Article 4 Direction is able to proceed as initially introduced.
6. The next step is for Council to confirm the Article 4 Direction, which must occur within six months of the making of the Direction, otherwise it will expire. Following confirmation of the Article 4 Direction, the Council must publicise this confirmation and must notify the Secretary of State. It should be noted that the Secretary of State has powers to intervene after the making of the direction to alter the geographical extent of the direction, amend or stop the direction from taking effect completely. However, this is rare in the case of Article 4 directions relating to HMOs.

## **Alternative options considered / risk management**

7. The Council has the option of not confirming the Article 4 direction and as a consequence it would expire on 11 June 2026.

## **What will be the effect of the recommendations?**

8. The recommendation will confirm the immediate Article 4 Direction removing permitted development rights for HMO conversions (of up to six people) permanently.
9. Within the first 12 months after the direction is introduced, property owners may be eligible for compensation if they have planning permission refused for a conversion which would otherwise be permitted development, if conditions are attached to planning permission which make the conversion more onerous than it would have been where it to have been undertaken under permitted development, or if they have incurred additional costs from the planning application process which would have not have been incurred were the development permitted development, such as the planning application fee. Compensation eligibility applies where the planning application was submitted within 12 months of the Article 4 Direction being introduced.

## **Consultation Carried Out or Required**

10. A consultation was conducted from 11 December 2025 to 22 January 2026, as set out earlier in this report. The relevant legislation requires a minimum 21-day consultation, which has been met. The Council received no written representations on the Article 4 Direction. This is not unexpected, as it took effect immediately, and comments have been directed informally to the Local Planning Authority, as owners and developers have had to engage with the planning process.

## **Financial Implications**

11. The estimated revenue cost of publicising the Article 4 Direction, including the placement of a public notice, is estimated at a maximum of £1,500, which will be funded by existing planning authority budgets.
12. There is the potential for landowners to claim compensation in the first 12 months after the Direction is introduced for abortive costs and loss or damage due to the withdrawal of permitted development rights. It is unknown how many applications are likely to be submitted and how many of these might be refused, which could result in compensation claims. The extent of any financial risk to the Council, cannot be accurately predicted and no financial resources have been budgeted to pay out on potential claims and their associated costs. It should equally be noted that, of the three Local Planning Authorities who introduced immediate Article 4 Directions relating to HMOs more than 12 months ago, no compensation claims have been received.
13. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in the required level of resources of the local planning authority, including the Planning Enforcement service and the Development Management service, which are not covered by planning application fees. An increase in workload is anticipated due to the need to process planning applications, issue certificates of lawful development and handle appeals. Senior managers in the Local Planning Authority will monitor the situation closely. It is anticipated that up to two additional planning enforcement officers could be required with an annual cost of approximately £130k, and a

request has been made for the 2026/27 budget. It is proposed that work volumes are closely monitored, and any requests for further resourcing would be progressed through the Council's existing MTFs process.

## Legal Implications

14. The legal effect of confirming the Article 4 Direction under Article 4 (1) of the GPDO is that deemed planning permission (permitted development rights) for the classes of developments specified in the direction are restricted. This in turn means that a planning application would need to be made to the Council in respect of the classes of development which are restricted.
15. Once an Article 4 direction comes into force it remains in force indefinitely, unless the direction is cancelled by a further direction pursuant to Article 4(4) and paragraph 1(13), Schedule 3 of the GPDO. It is noted that there is an existing Article 4 direction restricting Use Class C3 to Use Class C4 permitted development rights in the former Brunel and Uxbridge South wards. By confirming the borough wide Article 4 Direction, it would render the Brunel and Uxbridge directions unnecessary and therefore it should be cancelled.
16. Immediate Article 4 Directions pose a higher risk of compensation payable to landowners/developers than non-immediate Article 4 directions because immediate directions usually come into force without providing applicants with notice.
17. A claim may arise if a planning application is refused, which would otherwise be granted as permitted development under Class L of Part 3 of the GPDO or planning permission is granted and is subject to more restrictive conditions than would have otherwise been the case under permitted development. The same would apply to any other area, removing Class L rights for HMOs with immediate effect (or other PD rights) (section 108, TCPA 1990).
18. Section 108(2A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that compensation is only payable if an application for planning permission for certain development formerly permitted by the GPDO 2015 is made within 12 months of the Article 4 direction taking effect. No compensation for the withdrawal of certain permitted development rights is payable if the Council gives notice of the withdrawal between 12 months and 24 months in advance.
19. The claim for compensation can include abortive expenditure and other loss or damage directly attributable to the withdrawal of the permitted development right. This can include the difference in the value of the land if the development had been carried out and its value in its current state, as well as the cost of preparing the plans for the works (section 107, TCPA 1990). The financial implications are set out in more detail above.
20. The Council's decision to confirm an Article 4 direction can be subject to judicial review proceedings. If the proceedings are successful the Article 4 direction could be quashed. Any claim would need to be brought within 6 weeks of the date of the decision. This would in practice be six weeks from the date that the direction is confirmed.

Background Papers: None

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## SAFER HILLINGDON PARTNERSHIP COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

*Reporting Officer: Head of Democratic Services*

### SUMMARY

1. Cabinet on 19 February 2026 are being asked to consider for recommendation to Council, a new Community Safety Strategy:  
[London Borough of Hillingdon - Agenda for CABINET on Thursday, 19th February, 2026, 7.00 pm](#)
2. The proposed Strategy is attached as an appendix.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That, subject to the approval of Cabinet on 19 February 2026, the Safer Hillingdon Community Safety Strategy 2026-2029 be adopted as a policy framework document.

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3. The Cabinet considered the draft Hillingdon Community Safety Strategy 2026–2029 at its meeting on 23 October 2025, which had been developed by the Safer Hillingdon Partnership to meet the Council's statutory duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The proposed Strategy sets out a shared approach to reducing crime and disorder, addressing substance misuse, and tackling reoffending across the borough. It provides a clear set of partnership priorities informed by local evidence and engagement.
4. To support its development, an extensive programme of early and later consultation has been undertaken. An initial borough-wide survey in April 2025 sought views from residents and businesses on the issues they believed should be prioritised; this exercise received 779 responses and directly shaped the draft priorities. A further statutory six-week public consultation was carried out between 14 November and 29 December 2025. This consultation highlighted concerns around police visibility, anti-social behaviour, women's safety, CCTV coverage, and confidence in delivery. The draft Strategy was subsequently amended to reflect this feedback, including strengthened performance measures, commitments on environmental design, and enhanced partnership activity.
5. The Residents' Services Select Committee also reviewed the draft Strategy at its meeting on 6 November 2025. The Committee welcomed the ambition and partnership focus of the document and supported proposals such as the establishment of the Hillingdon Enforcement Safety Panel. Members recommended clearer targets, improved performance indicators, and close monitoring of the impact of police resourcing changes. Their comments were incorporated into the final version presented to Cabinet.
6. Cabinet on 19 February 2026 will consider the final Strategy and consider whether to recommend it to full Council for adoption. This is because the Strategy forms part of the Council's Policy Framework.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendation within this report, if the Community Safety Strategy is adopted it will be met from existing resources.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8. Legal Services confirm that the legal framework underpinning Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and their associated strategic planning duties is accurately set out within the body of the report. For completeness, Council should note the following key statutory requirements and legal considerations:

9. Sections 5 and 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Council is a “responsible authority” and therefore has a joint statutory duty to work in partnership with other responsible authorities to prevent and reduce crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, and re-offending within the borough. This duty must be discharged through a formally constituted Community Safety Partnership, which in Hillingdon operates as the Safer Hillingdon Partnership.

10. Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007

The Community Safety Partnership must formulate and implement a strategy as referenced as ‘Community Safety Strategy’ in this report.

The strategy must:

- Undertake an annual Strategic Assessment, identifying crime and disorder patterns, emerging risks, and causation factors; and
- Prepare, implement, and keep under review a Partnership Plan/Community Safety Strategy, setting out the partnership’s priorities and the actions required to address them.

11. Chapter 4 of the Council’s Constitution

The Strategy forms part of the Council’s Budget and Policy Framework within the Council’s Constitution. As a result, its adoption is reserved to Full Council, following the required consultation process and after Cabinet has considered consultation feedback and recommended approval.

12. The consultation undertaken must meet established public law principles of fairness, commonly known as the *Gunning principles*, which require that:

1. Consultation takes place at a formative stage;
2. Sufficient information is provided to allow consultees to give the proposals intelligent consideration;
3. Consultees are given adequate time to respond; and
4. Decision makers give conscientious consideration to the results of the consultation before final decisions are made.-makers

13. The Cabinet and Council report explains the consultation process undertaken and how the findings have informed the development of the final Strategy. On that basis, the consultation appears to meet the above requirements. In addition, the Council must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to consider how its decisions affect people with protected characteristics. The report to Cabinet confirms that equality considerations have been assessed and that no disproportionate impacts have been identified.

Background papers: None

# Hillingdon Community Safety Strategy 2026-2029

Appendix 1



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# Foreword

We are pleased to introduce this Safer Hillingdon Partnership strategy that sets out its priorities for 2026-2029. This strategy forms part of a suite of strategies that ensures Hillingdon residents can enjoy life and fulfil their potential.

The Safer Hillingdon Partnership brings together the London Borough of Hillingdon, the Metropolitan Police, National Probation Service, London Fire Brigade, the Integrated Care Board, the Safer Neighbourhood Board, and other stakeholders to collectively work together on local crime and disorder challenges.

This strategy is based upon the findings of a Strategic Needs Assessment and consultation with the public by means of a crime and disorder survey. This survey will be repeated annually to ensure we keep track of public opinion and their views of crime and disorder.

We know that community safety issues are changing and becoming more complex, influenced by regional, national, and international developments. We also recognise the emerging challenges of social media that influences all of us, with a need

for community safety to adapt in respect of such challenges as well as the opportunities presented by technological developments such as AI.

This strategy sets a direction but is designed to be agile and responsive. Its success is dependent upon the commitment and partnership that will maintain Hillingdon as one of London's safest boroughs.

**Cllr Wayne Bridges**  
Cabinet Member for  
Community and  
Environment



# Introduction to the Hillingdon Community Safety Strategy

Under The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 each statutory Community Safety Partnership is required to produce a Community Safety Strategy. This strategy outlines the Safer Hillingdon Partnership's (the Community Safety Partnership for Hillingdon) three-year plan on how we will work to ensure Hillingdon remains one of the safest boroughs in London.

The Safer Hillingdon Partnership is responsible for this strategy through a multi-agency approach and is accountable for its effective implementation. To ensure the priorities in this strategy are implemented, several workstreams will be established which will report back to the Safer Hillingdon Partnership.

The strategy will be supported by a comprehensive Community Safety Delivery Plan which is a performance framework, with dedicated workstreams aligned to each priority and progress monitored through quarterly reporting at the Safer Hillingdon Partnership board, where the overall delivery, governance, and oversight of the plan will be centrally managed. This ensures partners remain collectively accountable for driving forward activity and maintaining a clear line of sight on progress, risks, and performance. Our partnership model underpins all community safety priorities, enabling coordinated activity that ranges from targeted multi-agency operations and place-based interventions to effective, timely information sharing and

intelligence-led problem solving. This approach strengthens our capacity to respond to complex issues, supports early intervention, and ensures agencies are working in a unified, joined-up way.

The Delivery Plan will clearly set out actions, responsible leads, milestones, and timelines, ensuring that expectations are transparent and aligned with both operational deliverables and strategic ambitions. Performance measures will be closely linked to each priority and will draw on a balanced suite of qualitative insights and quantitative data, enabling a richer understanding of our impact. This includes statistical trends, hotspot analysis, partnership intelligence, community testimony, and lived experiences—all of which help capture both the measurable outcomes and the wider community context in which they sit.

Quarterly reviews through the Safer Hillingdon Partnership will ensure robust governance and continuous scrutiny, with partners able to challenge progress, escalate concerns, identify barriers, and agree remedial actions promptly. This governance cycle will support dynamic decision-making, encourage innovation, and enable us to adapt to emerging risks, shifting patterns of demand, or unforeseen challenges. The Delivery Plan will also act as a shared roadmap for all partners, reinforcing collaboration, aligning priorities, and ensuring resources are targeted where they will achieve the greatest impact.

Overall, this evidence-based, outcome-focused approach will provide the transparency, structure, and collective commitment needed to drive continuous improvement, support long-term resilience, and ensure the strategy delivers meaningful, sustained benefits for residents and communities across Hillingdon.

Working with our residents, communities, local businesses and all our stakeholders will be instrumental in keeping the people of Hillingdon safe from crime and repeat victimisation.

The strategy will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Safer Hillingdon Partnership in line with our governance processes.



## Our priorities

The priorities identified by the Partnership are subject to annual review and are listed below. There are inter-relationships between these priorities and all community safety challenges.

We will work closely with our Local Safeguarding Partnerships to address not only these priorities, but also tackle the factors that lead to children and adults being at risk and protect the most vulnerable.



### Safer Neighbourhoods

This priority looks at the types of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) most concerning to residents. We will tackle neighbourhood crime issues across the borough, as well as focusing on areas of greatest need, including localities with elevated levels of crime. We will problem solve longstanding issues and be agile to local crime demands, seeking to reduce crime, ASB and improve people's confidence and feelings of safety.



### Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

VAWG is having a huge impact on victims, their children, the economy, health services and the criminal justice system. We recognise VAWG is a complex issue with multiple underlying causes, including gender inequality, power imbalances, and entrenched cultural expectations.

The Safer Hillingdon Partnership will work collaboratively to pursue perpetrators of VAWG, support victims and survivors, raise public awareness of available services, and build confidence in accessing them. We will address the environmental and situational factors that contribute to women and girls not feeling safe in our borough. We will work to achieve the necessary cultural changes, as well as ensuring support to those at risk or who survive, and seek to change harmful attitudes of men and hold perpetrators to account.

Our definition includes domestic abuse, acknowledging that men can also be victims and recognising its complex and varied forms.



### Serious Violence

Serious violence, including knife crime, is complex in nature, with multiple linked drivers that include social media, county lines and gangs.

We recognise there is not a 'quick fix' to the challenge, but a necessity to drive long-term change through engagement with young people, securing changes in attitudes and views, whilst also robustly tackling those who perpetrate such acts.

We will collaborate with communities, places of education and partners to reduce serious violence and its damaging impact on community confidence and cohesion



### Preventing Harm and Safeguarding Communities

Self-Initiated Terrorism (S-IT) remains the primary terrorist threat in London, driven by both Islamist and extreme right-wing ideologies. Much of this activity involves online dissemination of extremist content, with a growing number of young people self-radicalising. We will strengthen early intervention, disrupt extremist activity, and provide tailored support for vulnerable individuals, including those with mental health conditions or neurodiverse needs.

A hate crime is defined as 'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability

and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender’.

Hate crime can have a profound impact on victims’ physical and mental wellbeing and instil fear across entire communities. Targeted individuals may feel unsafe, unwelcome, and vulnerable to further harm, while affected groups often face broader social and economic disadvantages. We are committed to preventing hate crime, supporting victims, and fostering safer, more inclusive communities.

Modern slavery is a hidden challenge in Hillingdon, taking forms such as sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, and criminal exploitation. While not unique to the borough, local concerns include ASB linked to the sex industry, exploitation of young people in gangs and serious violence, and the use of properties for criminal purposes, including cuckooing. We are committed to identifying and disrupting all forms of exploitation, protecting victims, and working in partnership to reduce associated harms.

## Hillingdon borough

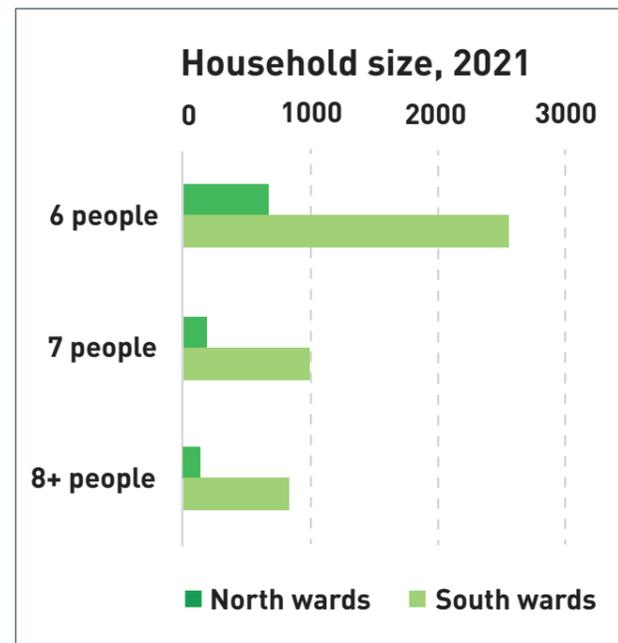
To determine priority areas of focus, the Partnership considers information from a variety of sources that are brought together in a Strategic Needs Assessment. This information includes the legislative framework within which we currently operate, and forthcoming legislation proposed by the government together with statistical information including demographic information on the population and crime data from the police. The below summarises some of the statistical information that has informed this strategy.

### Population Information

The current population of Hillingdon is 319,018, an increase of 2.6 per cent since 2022. Hillingdon has a younger population (aged 0-18) than London and England.

There are **higher levels of diversity in the south of the borough** with wards in the south seeing higher levels of residents from Asian, Black, and mixed heritage backgrounds.

Wards in the south of the borough **have higher levels of residents aged under 25** (Uxbridge and Colham and Cowley wards have higher rates due to university accommodation), and higher proportions of females aged under 25 years.



Whilst there are differences between the north and south of the borough there are also noticeable differences within the wards in these areas.

Wards in the south have higher levels of overcrowding, with up to 20 per cent of households having fewer bedrooms than required (one or two or less than needed). Wards in the south have higher proportions of households with six or more residents.



### Crime Levels

A Strategic Needs Assessment reports changes in reported crime levels that have been affected by boundary changes and crime recording systems changes. The below list shows the direction of reported crime in the year 2024 versus 2023, with the highest crime by volume at the top and lowest volume at the bottom.

- ▲ All victim-based crime
- ▲ Violence without injury
- ▼ Domestic abuse
- ▲ Other theft
- ▲ Shoplifting
- ▼ Violence with injury
- ▲ All crime non-victim based
- ▼ Theft from a vehicle
- ▲ Criminal damage
- ▲ Theft of / or unauthorised taking of a vehicle
- ▲ Theft from the person
- ▲ Burglary residential
- ▼ Public alarm or distress
- ▼ Domestic abuse – violence with injury
- ▲ Possession of drugs
- ▲ Theft person – mobile phone

- ▲ Robbery of personal property
- ▲ Sexual offences
- ▼ Hate crime
- ▼ Racist and religious crime
- ▲ Trafficking of drugs
- ▼ Racist crime



### The voice of Children and Young People (CYP)

CYP, through a variety of workshops and survey work expressed concern about knife crime, gangs, and social media.

They spoke openly about areas they feel unsafe, which also included public transport. They spoke about the need for cleaner environments, more CCTV, and knife bins.

They expressed a desire to improve trust with the police, social care, and teachers.



# Priority 1: Safer Neighbourhoods and Perception of Crime

Safer Neighbourhoods includes acquisitive crimes, such as theft-shoplifting and burglary, as well as ASB. These crimes tend to be high volume and may affect whole communities, but also negatively impact on individuals.

## 1. What we will achieve:

- Reduced incidents of ASB and acquisitive crime.
- Communities that feel safer, through use of CCTV and partnership alliances.
- A balanced, tiered approach to preventing neighbourhood crime by:
  - delivering universal prevention advice and awareness to the wider community
  - implementing targeted interventions for individuals at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators
  - providing intensive support for those at the highest risk.

## 2. To action this priority, we will:

<b>Whole-Population Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out public facing prevention and awareness activities.</li> <li>• Implement community-led safety initiatives to empower residents to take a more active role.</li> <li>• Build upon the active Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) scheme and develop alternative means of communication where NHW is not a preferred medium.</li> <li>• Address environmental factors contributing to crime, such as poor street lighting.</li> <li>• Make effective use of public space and mobile CCTV to prevent, deter and detect crime.</li> <li>• Address environmental factors, such as poor lighting, and environmental crime like fly-tipping and littering.</li> <li>• Ensure identified crime hotspots will be managed through the Hillingdon Enforcement and Safety Panel (HESP) and a monthly precision crime fighting meeting with police partners.</li> <li>• Collaborate with partners and Planning to develop long-term aspirations and visions for Hayes and Uxbridge Town Centre.</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Early Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot innovative technology solutions, such as AI-enhanced CCTV, for crime prevention and detection.</li> <li>• Make effective use of the borough Public Spaces Protection Order.</li> <li>• Adopt problem-solving approaches to CT in terms of focusing on victims, offenders, location and time.</li> <li>• Address the emerging challenges confronting, such as businesses at higher risk of theft-shoplifting through partnership prevention initiatives and tackling identified repeat offenders.</li> </ul>
<b>Intensive Support and Risk Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure clear pathways and support for the most vulnerable to crime and disorder.</li> <li>• Develop the success of the Daily Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation meetings to address the vulnerability and risk associated with complex/high demand ASB and crime problems including drug-related incidents.</li> <li>• Make use of injunctions and the powers conferred through legislation to partially and fully close individual premises and tower blocks.</li> <li>• Ensure the judicious use of legislation in relation to individuals, such as Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs).</li> </ul>
<b>Perpetrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, deter, and disrupt prolific offenders, ensuring there is an effective approach to Integrated Offender Management (IOM) via introduction of a Reduction of Re-offending Board.</li> <li>• Ensure that vulnerabilities and risk factors of offenders are understood (E.g. substance misuse), and that appropriate support is available/signposted.</li> </ul>
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve data-driven approaches to identify and address crime hotspots proactively.</li> <li>• Ensure the voice of the community is captured and informs priorities and activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the police and partners to deliver an effective Precision Crime Fighting meeting to robustly address emerging crime and ASB challenges.</li> </ul>

## 3. Outputs/Outcomes:

- Increase feelings of safety and reduce fear of crime among residents in relation to burglary.
- Strengthened trust and collaboration between communities, the police and partners.
- Reduction in crime rates and ASB.
- Reduction in repeat victimisation.



## Priority 2: Violence Against Women and Girls (including Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offending)

VAWG can be broken down into different strands that includes, Domestic Abuse (DA), Sexual Violence, Stalking, Harmful Practices of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), So-called 'honour'-based abuse, Femicide, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

### 1. What we will achieve

- Empower the local community and public to understand and respond to VAWG.
- Provide safe environments and spaces where women and girls feel supported and protected.
- Ensure services can recognise, risk assess and respond to early signs of abuse.
- Provision of accessible support for everyone experiencing abuse.
- Identification and disruption of repeat offenders.



### 2. To action this priority, we will:

<b>Whole-Population Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out public facing awareness activities, provide training to businesses and faith groups around all aspects of VAWG, to inform and challenge outdated and old-fashioned beliefs.</li> <li>• Work with all education providers, from primary schools through to higher education, to deliver training on healthy relationships, and VAWG including Domestic Abuse (DA).</li> <li>• Create and promote safe 'Safe Spaces' where women can discreetly seek help.</li> <li>• Ensure that parks and open spaces remain safe spaces for all to use.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of harmful practices (FGM, HBV), ensuring the partnership has a comprehensive understanding of its nature and impact.</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Early Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop early intervention services to offer support prior to when crisis intervention support is needed.</li> <li>• Work with all education providers, from primary schools through to higher education to develop training and support for staff and students to identify all VAWG and how to access support.</li> <li>• Providing active bystander training to ensure residents are confident in intervening in situations to prevent situations worsening.</li> </ul>
<b>Intensive Support and Risk Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide accessible support services for survivors of VAWG, including Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors.</li> <li>• Seek to increase support locally for sexual violence victim survivors.</li> <li>• Achieve DAHA accreditation.</li> <li>• Ensure that the DA Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference arrangement is an effective forum to reduce the risk for those experiencing domestic abuse.</li> </ul>
<b>Perpetrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify repeat perpetrators, hold them to account and disrupt their behaviour.</li> <li>• Ensure there is an effective approach to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) via a Reduction of Re-offending Board.</li> <li>• Provide support for perpetrators who want to change their behaviours and evaluation of this support to identify what works.</li> </ul>
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that Domestic Homicide Reviews/ Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews are completed, and learning informs service development.</li> <li>• Seek to ensure the voice of 'survivors' informs strategy and delivery in the future.</li> <li>• Deliver effective training to professionals across the partnership regarding VAWG and seeking to ensure DA training is mandatory.</li> <li>• Collaborate with communities and the voluntary sector to develop a coordinated community response to DA that would see locally based community support networks, formed such as one stop shops, assistance groups and more.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a survivor forum.</li> <li>• Ensure that all VAWG is subject to oversight and governance of the Domestic Abuse Steering Executive.</li> </ul>

### 3. Outputs/Outcomes:

- Prevention and early intervention in the identification of VAWG and DA
- Provision for survivors of domestic abuse and VAWG
- Pursuing perpetrators by delivering targeted interventions to reduce reoffending of the most prolific and high-risk offenders of DA.
- Partnership working to develop a coordinated community response and a culture of zero tolerance to gender-based violence.

## Priority 3: Reducing the Number of Violent Incidents in the Borough

This includes any form of violence or exploitation, including domestic abuse and sexual violence. It encompasses offences such as homicide, grievous bodily harm (GBH), actual bodily harm (ABH), rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, personal robbery, threats to kill, and damage to property committed during these offences.

### 1. What we will achieve:

- Reduce the number of victims of exploitation and violence.
- Children and young people safeguarded from harm, exploitation, and violence.
- Enhanced protective environments to support growth and development.

### 2. To action this priority, we will:

<b>Whole-Population Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to change societal attitudes and behaviours towards violence by ensuring communities and young people inform and support our plans and activity.</li> <li>• Collaborate with schools to deliver evidence-based approaches at primary and secondary schools.</li> <li>• Take problem-solving approaches to higher risk locations and seek to make public spaces feel safer through effective partnership, CCTV and environmental design.</li> <li>• Ensure professionals and communities have appropriate knowledge to enable them to respond to vulnerabilities (e.g. trauma informed practice, bystander training, stalking and harassment awareness, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Early Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure effective early identification and intervention for those at risk of involvement in violence and ensuring risk management plans are in place.</li> <li>• Work to keep young people in education and employment.</li> <li>• Deliver an effective 'outreach' programme that works with those at risk of violence and exploitation.</li> <li>• Ensure clear pathways to intervention are in place that inform professionals of how to 'recognise and respond' to risk.</li> <li>• Make changes to the local environment to make public spaces safer, utilising CCTV where able.</li> </ul>
<b>Intensive Support and Risk Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The systemised identification of high-risk cohorts and those who are repeat offenders.</li> <li>• Identification of needs and vulnerabilities of those cohorts.</li> <li>• Planning appropriate interventions for those cohorts.</li> <li>• Working as a partnership to reduce the risk of reoffending.</li> <li>• To reduce the incidence of violence through proactive tackling of the street drugs markets, cuckooing of vulnerable people's properties, and by disrupting 'gangs'/criminal networks.</li> </ul>
<b>Perpetrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify repeat perpetrators and those who present the highest risk, seek to understand their vulnerabilities to provide appropriate support, but disrupt their behaviour and hold them to account.</li> <li>• Provide support for perpetrators who want to change their behaviours and evaluation of this support to identify what works.</li> <li>• Where required in response to identified risks, ensure a whole systems partnership approach through 'serious harm prevention' meetings.</li> <li>• Identify, deter, and disrupt prolific offenders, ensuring there is an effective approach to Integrated Offender Management (IOM) via introduction of a Reduction of Re-offending Board.</li> </ul>
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all homicides and near misses are subject to swift learning exercises focusing on the commission of violent acts.</li> <li>• Seek to ensure the voice of 'young people' informs strategy and delivery in the future, supporting the development of forums such as the Hayes Youth Forum (HYF).</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a serious violence forum to oversee progress in respect of the serious violence strategy.</li> <li>• Collaborate with police and partners to deliver an effective Precision Crime Fighting meeting to robustly address emerging crime and ASB challenges</li> </ul>

### 3. Outputs/Outcomes:

- Reduction in violent incidents and exploitation in the borough.
- To create a robust response to prevent and deter the involvement in violence.
- Target and rehabilitate the perpetrators of violence.
- Reducing the number of people being drawn into drug activity in the borough.



# Priority 4: Preventing Harm and Safeguarding Communities

The main terrorist threat to the UK and London is Self-Initiated Terrorism (S-IT), which is unpredictable and often ideologically driven, especially by Islamist extremism. Right-wing extremism also contributes, fuelled by grievances like racism and anti-establishment views. Online radicalisation is rising, especially among youth with increasing counter terrorism (CT) cases involving individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or mental health issues.

Hate crime harms victims' wellbeing, spreads fear in communities, and makes targeted groups feel unsafe and unwelcome. It can also lead to wider social and economic impacts.

Modern Slavery (MS) is a hidden challenge in Hillingdon taking many forms such as sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour and criminal exploitation. It links to local issues like gang-related youth exploitation, sex industry ASB, and cuckooed addresses.

## 1. What we will achieve:

- Raise awareness, educate and inform to increase awareness of these issues.
- Raise the confidence of targeted groups to report hate crime.
- Ensure professionals can recognise and respond to warning signs to ensure early intervention is taken.

## 2. To action this priority, we will:

- Work through the Hillingdon Prevent Partnership who ensure we are delivering against the Prevent duty and identify priorities to address local risks and trends.
- Form a Hate Crime Forum for Hillingdon to help shape the partnership response.
- Ensure that allegations of crime or ASB which are motivated and/or aggravated by 'Hate' are prioritised.

<b>Whole-Population Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of Self-Initiated Terrorism and its unpredictable nature.</li> <li>• Promote digital literacy to help the public recognise and report extremist content online and cyber bullying.</li> <li>• Encourage community resilience against extremist ideologies.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the physical, mental, and emotional harm caused by hate crime.</li> <li>• Promote inclusivity and respect to reduce prejudice and discrimination.</li> <li>• Encourage community reporting and support for victims.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the various forms of Modern Slavery (MS): sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, and criminal exploitation.</li> <li>• Educate the public on how to spot signs of Modern Slavery and report concerns.</li> <li>• Promote community vigilance and zero tolerance for exploitation.</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Early Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify individuals at risk of radicalisation, especially youth engaging with extremist content online.</li> <li>• Provide support for those with vulnerabilities such as neurodiversity or mental health conditions.</li> <li>• Monitor and respond to early signs of ideological influence or grievance-based narratives.</li> <li>• Identify individuals and communities at heightened risk of hate crime.</li> <li>• Provide early support to those showing signs of vulnerability or distress.</li> <li>• Address local tensions that may escalate into hate incidents.</li> <li>• Identify individuals at risk, especially young people vulnerable to gang involvement and serious violence.</li> <li>• Address ASB linked to the sex industry and exploitation.</li> <li>• Intervene early in cases involving properties at risk of being cuckooed.</li> </ul>
<b>Intensive Support and Risk Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer tailored interventions for individuals showing signs of radicalisation.</li> <li>• Coordinate multi-agency case management for high-risk individuals.</li> <li>• Ensure mental health and social care services are integrated into CT efforts.</li> <li>• Offer trauma-informed care and mental health support to victims of hate crimes.</li> <li>• Ensure safety planning and protection for repeatedly targeted individuals or groups.</li> <li>• Coordinate multi-agency responses to high-risk cases.</li> <li>• Provide victim-centred support, including safe accommodation and trauma-informed care.</li> <li>• Disrupt exploitative networks and safeguard those affected.</li> </ul>

<b>Perpetrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and disrupt individuals involved in disseminating extremist propaganda.</li> <li>• Address both Islamist and extreme right-wing inspired threats.</li> <li>• Use legal tools to manage and prosecute those engaged in terrorist activity.</li> <li>• Investigate and prosecute hate crime offenders.</li> <li>• Challenge and disrupt hate-motivated behaviours early.</li> <li>• Use restorative approaches where appropriate to address harm and prevent reoffending.</li> <li>• Investigate and prosecute individuals and groups involved in Modern Slavery.</li> <li>• Disrupt criminal operations linked to forced labour, sexual exploitation, and cuckooing.</li> <li>• Use enforcement powers to deter and manage repeat offenders.</li> <li>• Identify, deter, and disrupt prolific offenders, ensuring there is an effective approach to Integrated Offender Management (IOM) via introduction of a Reduction of Re-offending Board.</li> </ul>
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse trends in CT casework to refine early intervention strategies.</li> <li>• Share learning across agencies to improve detection and response.</li> <li>• Invest in training for professionals on identifying and managing radicalisation risks.</li> <li>• Monitor hate crime trends and community impact.</li> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and victim support.</li> <li>• Share learning and best practices across agencies and communities.</li> <li>• Monitor trends and adapt strategies based on local intelligence and case data.</li> <li>• Provide ongoing training for frontline professionals.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed CT priorities in local safety and safeguarding strategies.</li> <li>• Ensure oversight through multi-agency panels and strategic boards.</li> <li>• Monitor outcomes and adapt approaches based on evidence and intelligence.</li> <li>• Embed hate crime as a priority in local safety and equality strategies.</li> <li>• Ensure oversight through multi-agency boards, community partnerships and strategic partnerships.</li> <li>• Track performance and outcomes to inform policy and practice.</li> <li>• Embed Modern Slavery as a priority in local safeguarding and community safety strategies.</li> <li>• Track outcomes and performance to inform policy and practice.</li> </ul>

## 3. Outputs/Outcomes:

- Raise awareness of radicalisation and emerging risks and how to raise concerns.
- Increased awareness of hate crime and increase public confidence to report hate crimes.
- Increased awareness and understanding of the issues of modern slavery and response to support those affected by modern slavery.
- Continued engagement and to hear the voices of faith and community-based groups.





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## SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025/26

*Reporting Officer: Ian Kavanagh, Head of Business Intelligence, Corporate Services*

### SUMMARY

1. Based on feedback from Cabinet this report will now be produced twice a year. The approach for the new six-monthly performance report is to monitor the value the Council provides by benchmarking our expenditure against key performance indicators for each directorate.
2. The full 6-month performance report is set out in the Appendix.

**RECOMMENDATION: That the Performance Report 2025/26, attached as an Appendix, be noted.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3. Performance management is a critical function in local government, enabling councils to use data-driven insights to improve outcomes for residents. It supports accountability—both internally and externally—by demonstrating how public services respond to local needs and ensure value for money.
4. The Council's performance framework is aligned with the Hillingdon Council Strategy and incorporates a suite of reports accessible to services, senior management, the Corporate Management Team, and Cabinet. This report draws on key performance benchmarking in relation to the expenditure of service areas. Where applicable, it includes the most recent data available, including pre-2024/25 benchmarks.
5. Notably, the report integrates financial benchmarking from the 2024-25 local authority revenue expenditure and financing outturn report.
6. Performance management is about using data to drive evidence-based decision making to challenge current ways of working and service delivery models. It is an important tool for local government to take responsibility for its own performance and for the public and national governments to hold local service providers to account, ensuring they respond to local needs and that public money is being spent wisely.
7. Performance management includes a range of processes and methods to identify shared goals and various measurements of progress towards these. Closely aligned to the concept of governance it ensures arrangements are in place so an authority's objectives can be achieved.
8. Within Hillingdon performance is aligned to the Council Strategy, where a suite of performance reports is available to services, senior management teams, our Corporate Management Team, and the Leader and Cabinet. Monthly reports are presented to CMT and action logs completed.
9. This report uses key performance indicators and benchmarking data to show performance and value on key services for Financial Year 2024/25 (or in some cases, the latest data available as well as pre-financial year 2024/25).

10. The 6-month performance report for 2025/26 presents a detailed and transparent benchmarking of how Hillingdon Council is performing across its core service areas, with a clear emphasis on putting residents first. The report reflects a council that is actively responding to significant challenges - rising demand, financial pressures, and evolving community needs—while maintaining a strong commitment to service quality, accountability, and resident wellbeing.
11. Hillingdon had the 4th lowest net expenditure in London per 100,000 residents. Heathrow Airport's presence within the borough creates unique operational and financial pressures that many other London authorities do not face. Despite years of government underfunding and these unique challenges, Hillingdon continues to be recognised as a well-run council, consistently delivering strong value for money and maintaining one of the lowest net expenditure levels in London.

### **Adult Social Care and Health (ASC&H)**

12. Hillingdon continues to deliver Adult Social Care in a financially sustainable and outcome-focused way. The borough has the 2nd lowest net expenditure on Adult Social Care among statistical neighbours, remaining below both the London and national averages. Despite this Hillingdon achieved a 'Good' Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating with an overall score of 73%. This score continues to see Hillingdon in the top quartile of inspected authorities.
13. Hillingdon's rate of people in residential and nursing placements was in line with the average of our statistical neighbours and London average. This is a positive indicator of our ability to support people in the least restrictive setting and to promote independence wherever possible with the success of our discharge-to-assess model, short-term intervention pathways, and community-based support services, which together help residents avoid unnecessary long-term care placements.
14. 58.4% of service users are satisfied with care (slightly below London average), but Quality of Life score is above London average. Hillingdon continues to deliver Adult Social Care services with a strong emphasis on personalisation, safety, and positive outcomes for both residents and carers. The borough's performance in key satisfaction measures reflects a service that is responsive, targeted, and committed to continuous improvement.
15. Hillingdon has the 5th lowest net expenditure on Public Health and Adult Obesity among neighbours but remains above London averages. Adult obesity (15.4%) is higher than England, London and NWL ICB, with highest prevalence in Hayes and Yiewsley. Hypertension prevalence has increased from 10% to 13.5%, reflecting the success of proactive case-finding, with 85% of diagnosed cases controlled—above target and national benchmarks.

### **Residents Services**

16. Hillingdon demonstrates strong value for money across Housing and Homelessness. Resident Services had the 8th lowest expenditure of London boroughs for housing general fund and homelessness expenditure. Hillingdon achieved a C2 (2nd highest) grade from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). Grading ranges from C1 to C4. Only

7 of 66 (10.6%) local authorities assessed achieved the C1 grade and most authorities (56%) received a C3 or C4 grade.

17. The proportion of households in Temporary Accommodation (12.5 per 1,000) remains far lower than high-pressure boroughs such as Ealing and Harrow, reflecting effective prevention and case management.
18. However, rough sleeping remains a significant challenge, with rates the highest among comparators. Heathrow Airport continues to drive inflow pressures, alongside recent Home Office evictions contributing to short-term spikes. The council is working closely with partners and the Home Office to support individuals leaving asylum accommodation and reduce repeat homelessness.
19. The Housing Landlord Service continues to perform strongly across safety and asset management. Gas safety compliance is 99.61%, tenant arrears are better than the London average, and Hillingdon's average re-let time of 30.6 days is the best among all comparators, more than 20 days faster than the London averages. While tenant satisfaction remains below the England average, Hillingdon performs strongly on key activity-based measures such as repairs timeliness.
20. The proportion of "dwellings vacant, but available to let" in Hillingdon is 87%, which is 16 percentage points higher than London (71%) and 35 percentage points higher than England (52%). Hillingdon has an ambitious housing delivery programme, buying new properties for letting. This means a higher-than-average volume of properties are being let at any one time, but it is important to note these continue to be re-let within a faster than average end to end re-let time.
21. Hillingdon's result on homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard is by far the highest at 30.90%, and over 14 percentage points higher than the next highest neighbours, Ealing (16.63%). Hillingdon's housing landlord service is investing over £108m to improve homes over the next five years and rapid progress is being made to reduce levels of non-decent homes. Programmes of work include window replacement, new gas boilers, new kitchens and new bathrooms, complementing home energy efficiency improvement works.
22. Highways and planning continue to support the borough's economic and environmental ambitions. Despite one of the lowest net expenditures on planning nationally, Hillingdon meets 100% of major planning application timescales and continues to outperform on highways maintenance and street works. EV charging availability remains below London averages, and work with regional partners is ongoing to expand charging infrastructure.

## **Children Services**

23. Children's Services continues to provide safe, responsive and inclusive support despite high-pressure operating conditions. Hillingdon has the 3rd lowest net expenditure for Children's Social Care, however achieved an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating in November 2023, the highest grade indicating a high quality, innovative service that consistently exceeds expectations where children achieve excellent outcomes. Only 15% of councils nationally are currently assessed at the highest standard.

24. Placement sufficiency remains a priority. Hillingdon has the lowest percentage of children in foster care (51%), which increases reliance on residential placements. Work is underway to stabilise provision and expand internal fostering capacity.
25. Placement sufficiency remains a priority. Hillingdon has the lowest percentage of children in foster care (51%), which increases reliance on residential placements. Work is underway to stabilise provision and expand internal fostering capacity.
26. Hillingdon's Youth Justice Service has the 3rd highest net expenditure when compared to our youth justice statistical neighbours, however we are lower than the London average. It is positive to see we have the 4th lowest rate of first-time entrants compared to our statistical neighbours and lower than the London and national averages.
27. Hillingdon had the 4th lowest net expenditure for education and early years when compared to our statistical neighbours. This is reflected in the demand data for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as we have the 4th lowest rate of children on an Educational Health Care (EHC) plan and the 2nd lowest rate of education health care needs assessments (EHCNA) requests.

## **Finance**

28. Council tax collection costs are the 2nd lowest among neighbours, although in-year collection (96.49%) remains mid-range, and arrears brought forward are the 4th highest, impacting cashflow and recoverability. Hillingdon has significantly higher levels of locally funded council tax discounts, reflecting policy decisions that differ from comparators.
29. Housing benefit administration costs are above the London average, but Hillingdon delivers sector-leading processing times, ranking fastest for changes of circumstances and among the top performers for new claims, despite high levels of demand.

## **Alternative options considered / risk management**

30. None, as it is good business practice to report performance to decision-makers.

## **Select Committee comments**

31. All 4 select committees have considered this report to enable the monitoring of the performance of services within their respective remits. This ensures the Council can discharge its overview and scrutiny responsibilities effectively. The report was presented at the following meetings:
  - Residents Services Select Committee, 8 January
  - Health & Social Care Select Committee, 20 January
  - Children, Families & Education Select Committee, 7 January
  - Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee, 6 January

## **Resident Service's Select Committee comments**

32. The Residents' Services Select Committee has considered the Performance Report covering services within its remit and welcomes the opportunity to review performance across a wide and complex portfolio.

33. The Committee notes positively the Council's overall performance position, including its standing as one of the lowest-spending boroughs in London on a per-resident basis, while continuing to deliver a broad range of statutory and demand-led services. Members recognise this as clear evidence of a sustained focus on value for money and effective service management in a challenging operating environment.
34. The Committee welcomes the continued strong performance in housing landlord services and repairs, alongside high levels of tenant satisfaction. Members note the clarification provided on the distinction between repair performance and the decent homes standard, and welcome the significant investment already approved to address non-decency. The Committee notes the clear improvement trajectory set out and the reassurance that regulators have raised no concerns regarding the Council's approach or progress.
35. In relation to housing delivery, the Committee notes the continued delivery of new council homes and welcomes the commitment to provide greater clarity on the net position once Right to Buy losses are accounted for, recognising the importance of transparent and accurate reporting.
36. The Committee recognises that homelessness and temporary accommodation continue to place significant pressure on services, largely driven by external factors including national policy decisions, market conditions and Heathrow-related demand. Members welcome the proactive and pragmatic approach being taken to manage these pressures through prevention activity, cost controls and efforts to increase housing supply and move-on options.
37. The Committee also welcomed the inclusion of performance information relating to environmental services, including waste and recycling. Members support further examination of recycling contamination levels, recognising the value of using data to target improvements and support residents to engage more effectively with services.
38. Members further noted the recent national recognition of Hillingdon's highways performance, with the Council ranked highly by government for local road condition and pothole management. The Committee welcomed this as an example of strong operational delivery and effective asset management, achieved despite ongoing financial pressures.
39. Overall, the Committee considers that the Performance Report provides a balanced and transparent assessment of service delivery across Residents' Services. Members recognise the sustained efforts being made by officers to maintain high standards and manage increasing demand within a constrained financial context.

### **Children, Families & Education Select Committee comments**

40. The Children, Families and Education Select Committee welcomes the Bi-Annual Performance Report. It is positive that performance information is now being reported through transparent, clearly presented data dashboards which monitor and assess progress within Children's Services.
41. Overall, the report shows that Children's Services continues to deliver safe, inclusive, and responsive support for children and families in Hillingdon, despite operating in a complex and high-demand environment shaped by national pressures and the borough's role as a port authority.

42. With the 3rd lowest net expenditure for Children's Social Care, Hillingdon continues to provide an 'Outstanding' service demonstrating the local authority's commitment to delivering a high quality, innovative service that consistently exceeds expectations where children achieve excellent outcomes.
43. The data does highlight two priority areas – placement sufficiency, particularly around high-cost residential settings and reoffending rates within the Youth Justice service. It is therefore important that close monitoring of these areas continues to remain a priority.

### **Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee comments**

44. The Committee acknowledged the Six-Month Performance Monitoring Report and expressed appreciation for the work that had gone into producing it. Members welcomed the clear focus on how data is collected, interpreted and used in practice, noting that this approach helps strengthen understanding and decision-making across services. The Committee also valued the commitment to providing updates every six months, commenting that reporting pattern strikes a good balance between regular oversight and meaningful progress.

### **Health and Social Care Select Committee Select Committee comments**

45. Members recognise that Hillingdon benchmarks well in terms of a good quality services but are concerned that only 35% of service users are satisfied (which is at odds with the responses that say that service users' quality of life is good). They would like to see further investigation into why this figure is so low and undertake local engagement with residents.
46. Hillingdon's cost per head per 100k population provides a service that is value for money with Hillingdon having the fourth lowest net spend in London. Given this achievement, Members would like the reports considered at their meetings to include information about what actions and initiatives have worked and helped to achieve this as well as what has been learnt / not learnt from this work. For example, it would be useful to know what action is being taken to address high levels of obesity in places like Yiewsley and Hayes, the impact of this action and how it compares to the London average.
47. The Committee maintains that it is really important that the Council celebrates its successes and addresses issues when things are not going so well. Members welcome the addition of a set of indicators which can be followed through the year and reported to the Committee with the narrative.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

48. There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendation within this report.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

49. There are no direct legal Implications that arise out of the recommendations set out in this report.

Background Papers: none

# Hillingdon Council

Six-month performance report  
First half 2025/2026 (April to October)



# Approach

The aim of this performance report is to assess the value the council provides by benchmarking our expenditure against key performance indicators across each directorate. The analysis is based entirely on publicly available data to ensure a fair, transparent, and repeatable comparison with other local authorities. As with all published datasets, the figures are only as accurate as the information submitted by each authority.

Because this report relies on published national datasets, it uses the most recent information available. For most measures, this is the 2024/25 financial year, although a small number of datasets cover slightly different periods. These variations are due to the time required for data cleansing and standardisation by both local authorities and the relevant national publishing bodies (e.g. DLUHC, DfE).

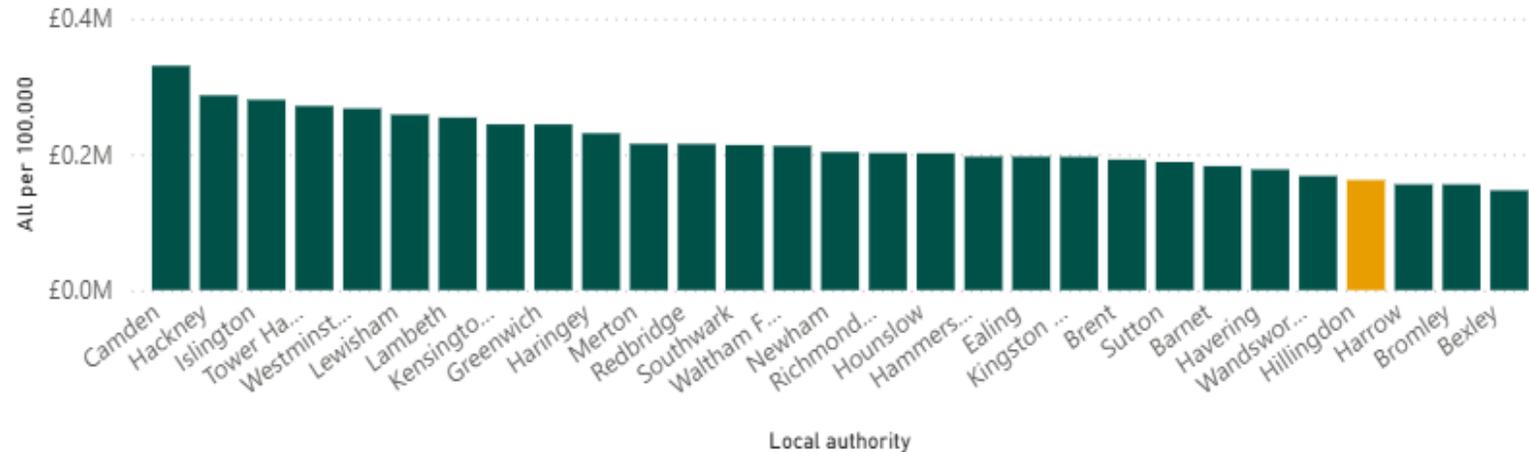
The report incorporates financial benchmarking from the 2024/25 Local Authority Revenue Expenditure and Financing Outturn to demonstrate how effectively Hillingdon deploys its resources to deliver positive outcomes for residents. To allow meaningful comparisons, expenditure figures have been standardised using published population data relevant to each service area—for example, using the 0–18 population when analysing Children’s Services.

Where available, comparisons are made against statistical neighbour groups, recognising that different services have different socio-demographic comparators, such as Youth Justice having a different statistical neighbour set from Adult Social Care . Where statistical neighbour sets are not published, nearest neighbours have been used instead.

# Executive Summary

- ❖ Hillingdon had the 4th lowest net expenditure in London per 100,000 residents.
- ❖ Heathrow Airport's presence within the borough creates unique operational and financial pressures that many other London authorities do not face.
- ❖ Despite years of government underfunding and these unique challenges, Hillingdon continues to be recognised as a well-run council, consistently delivering strong value for money and maintaining one of the lowest net expenditure levels in London.

Council net expenditure per 100,000 population



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- Adult Social Care had the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest expenditure of London boroughs per 100,000 residents.
- Achieved a 'Good' Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating with an overall score of 73%. This score continues to see Hillingdon in the top quartile of inspected authorities.
- Assessed across 5 key areas: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.



- ❖ Resident Services had the 8<sup>th</sup> lowest expenditure of London boroughs for housing general fund and homelessness expenditure per 100,000 residents.
- ❖ Achieved a C2 (2<sup>nd</sup> highest) grade from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).
- ❖ Grading ranges from C1 to C4. Only 7 of 66 (10.6%) local authorities assessed achieved the C1 grade and most authorities (56%) received a C3 or C4 grade.

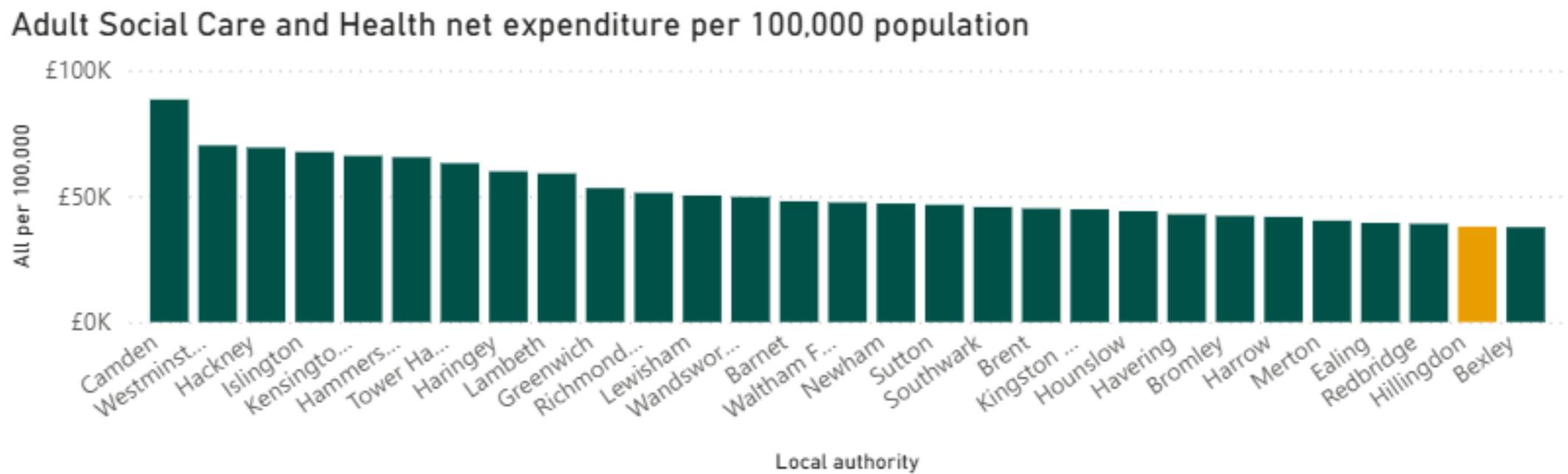


- Children's social care had the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest expenditure of London boroughs per 100,000 children.
- Achieved an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating in November 2023, the highest grade indicating a high quality, innovative service that consistently exceeds expectations where children achieve excellent outcomes.
- Only 15% of Councils Nationally are currently assessed at the highest standard.

Sandra Taylor  
Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health



# Adult Social Care and Health Summary



Hillingdon has the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest net expenditure across all London councils for Adult Social Care and health, but despite this services were judged to be 'good' with an overall score of 73% in the last Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection.

This score continues to see Hillingdon in the top quartile of inspected authorities. Authorities are assessed across 5 key areas: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

# Adult Social Care and Health – Adult Social Care Demand

Comparators	Adult Social Care net expenditure	In Home Care	In Residential or Nursing placements	Hours of support given
Barnet	42499	467	241	8496
London	40965	407	241	6271
Sutton	40872	446	241	6485
Waltham Forest	39877	547	223	7285
Brent	38117	454	214	6958
Enfield	37727	370	264	7310
Kingston upon Thames	37684	349	245	5305
Hounslow	37068	399	177	5592
Harrow	37049	445	232	4963
Bromley	36571	359	282	4551
Merton	34414	261	204	3480
Redbridge	33196	423	229	7578
Bexley	32992	425	241	6571
Hillingdon	32418	316	242	4517
Ealing	31547			
Enfield		275	264	5386

## Understanding the data:

- **Adult Social Care net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000.
- **In home care<sup>4</sup>** – Shows the number of residents receiving home care as at 30/06/24, as a rate per 100,000 population.
- **In residential or nursing placement<sup>3</sup>** - Shows the number of residents in residential or nursing placements as at 31/09/24, as a rate per 100,000 population.
- **Hours of support given<sup>4</sup>**- Shows the number of weekly hours of home care given as at 31/09/24, as a rate per 100,000 population.

# Adult Social Care and Health – Adult Social Care Demand

Hillingdon has the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest net expenditure on Adult Social Care among its statistical neighbours and remains below both London and national averages. It also reports the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest number of home care clients and hours.

Hillingdon delivers Adult Social Care with a strong emphasis on value for money and effective demand management, ensuring high quality care in a financially sustainable way. Our home care provision is proportionate and well-managed, targeting support efficiently to help residents maintain independence while directing resources where they are most needed.

Hillingdon's rate of people in residential and nursing placements was in line with the average of our statistical neighbours and London average at 242 people per 100,000 compared to the average of 241.

This is a positive indicator of our ability to support people in the least restrictive setting and to promote independence wherever possible with the success of our discharge-to-assess model, short-term intervention pathways, and community-based support services, which together help residents avoid unnecessary long-term care placements.

# Adult Social Care and Health – Adult Social Care Satisfaction

Comparator	Adult Social Care net expenditure	Social support for Carer net expenditure	ASC Complaints	Overall satisfaction of service users	Overall satisfaction of carers with social services	Older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation	Older people offered reablement services following discharge from hospital	Carers who receive self-directed support
England	43087	256	4.74	65.4%	37%	83.8%	3.0%	89.7%
Barnet	42499	0	6.17	60.9%	29%	93.2%	3.9%	100.0%
London	40965	180	6.20	60.4%	33%	87.9%	4.3%	88.2%
Sutton	40872	-63	6.06	61.8%	35%	85.4%	6.3%	100.0%
Waltham Forest	39877	300	5.72	64.7%	46%	88.6%	5.7%	100.0%
Brent	38117	29	5.67	54.0%	31%	73.5%	2.2%	100.0%
Havering	37727	198	2.53	61.3%	29%	90.2%	4.9%	100.0%
Kingston upon Thames	37684	233		59.6%	42%	86.4%	3.4%	100.0%
Hounslow	37068	-183	6.35	62.1%	29%	89.0%	1.8%	16.4%
Harrow	37049	390	13.67	55.6%	22%	85.2%	2.9%	100.0%
Bromley	36571	0	6.86	60.3%	29%	95.2%	8.6%	66.7%
Merton	34414	346	7.32	58.9%	29%	88.5%	4.2%	100.0%
Redbridge	33196	369	6.85	64.5%	37%	92.2%	3.5%	100.0%
Bexley	32992	53	3.90	60.1%	38%	81.7%	4.4%	100.0%
Hillingdon	32418	128	5.16	58.4%	36%	89.9%	2.4%	100.0%
Ealing	31547	7	7.00	59.2%	28%	94.7%	2.6%	93.5%
Enfield			5.50	65.2%	36%	85.3%	1.9%	100.0%

Understanding the data:

- **Adult Social Care net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000.
- **Social support of carer net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000.
- **ASC complaints<sup>6</sup>** – 2024/25 complaints received as a rate per 100,000 population.
- **Overall satisfaction of service users<sup>2</sup>** - as per Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) 23-24.
- **Overall satisfaction of carers with social services<sup>2</sup>** – percentage, as per ASCOF 23-24.
- **Older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation<sup>2</sup>** – percentage as per ASCOF 23-24.
- **Older people offered reablement services following discharge from hospital<sup>2</sup>** – percentage, as per ASCOF 23-24.
- **Carers who receive self directed support<sup>2</sup>** – percentage, as per ASCOF 23-24.

# Adult Social Care and Health – Adult Social Care Satisfaction

Hillingdon had the 6<sup>th</sup> lowest net expenditure for its social support to carers when compared to our statistical neighbours. Hillingdon's overall satisfaction is the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest out of our statistical neighbours for service users and 6<sup>th</sup> highest for carer satisfaction, using the latest published 2023/24 survey results. Hillingdon is 6<sup>th</sup> highest for those still at home 91 days after a hospital discharge and 4<sup>th</sup> lowest for the percentage of people offered reablement support after a hospital discharge. This shows how Hillingdon's discharge arrangement does not direct everyone to the reablement route but instead offers a short discharge to assess service options to support an early discharge while the council can assess the correct level of care for the resident. By targeting reablement support toward those who are most likely to benefit, this can secure better outcomes for residents. Hillingdon is also one of the councils operating with 100% self-directed support, meaning that people have choice and control over how their care and support needs are met..

Hillingdon continues to deliver Adult Social Care services with a strong emphasis on personalisation, safety, and positive outcomes for both residents and carers. The borough's performance in key satisfaction measures reflects a service that is responsive, targeted, and committed to continuous improvement.

# Adult Social Care and Health – Adult Social Care Satisfaction

The 2023/24 Adult Social Care Survey, conducted between 8 January and 8 March 2024, gathered feedback from residents receiving care in the community, supported living, and residential or nursing settings. The survey achieved a return rate of 25.4%, with responses used to benchmark satisfaction and inform service development.

- **Satisfaction with care and support:** 58.4% of respondents reported being ‘extremely’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the care and support they receive. While slightly below the London average (60.5%), this reflects a stable and improving trend.
- **Quality of life score:** Hillingdon achieved a score of 19.1 out of 24, above the London average of 18.4. This composite score reflects residents’ views on dignity, safety, nutrition, social participation, and control over daily life.
- **Safety and independence:** Hillingdon ranks 6th highest among statistical neighbours for the proportion of older people still at home 91 days after discharge, demonstrating the effectiveness of our discharge-to-assess model and short-term support pathways.
- **Reablement offer:** While Hillingdon is 4th lowest for the proportion of residents offered reablement, this reflects a targeted and outcome-focused approach. By prioritising those most likely to benefit, this ensure resources are used effectively and residents receive tailored support.
- **Carer support:** The borough continues to perform strongly in carer engagement, with 100% of carers receiving self-directed support, placing Hillingdon among the leading councils nationally for personalised care planning.

The survey also highlighted areas for further development, including social contact and loneliness. These insights are being actively addressed through the borough’s Carers Strategy and wider wellbeing initiatives.

## Reablement Service – Key performance highlights (2023/24)

- **Residents Supported:** Over 650 residents received reablement support across the first three quarters.
- **Independence outcomes:** 63% required no further care 90 days post-intervention.
- **Cost avoidance:** Achieved a total cost avoidance of £2.67 million, significantly exceeding the annual target of £500,000.

# Adult Social Care and Health - Public Health

Comparators	Public Health net expenditure	Adult obesity net expenditure	Comparators	Hypertension prevalence	Obesity prevalence - adults
Ealing	7801	67	North Connect PCN	16.0%	13.5%
Waltham Forest	7563	50	England	15.2%	13.9%
Kingston upon Thames	7063	69	Colne Union PCN	14.9%	19.2%
Hounslow	6937	114	Celadine Health & Metrocare PCN	14.5%	12.4%
England	5987	52	Long Lane First Care Group PCN	13.8%	17.0%
Merton	5836	18	Hillingdon	13.5%	15.4%
Redbridge	5803	85	South East London ICB	12.1%	12.5%
Sutton	5655	49	Hh Collaborative PCN	11.6%	16.8%
Brorley	5546	32	Synergy PCN	11.6%	14.3%
Barnet	5444	22	Unallocated (2 GPs)	11.5%	11.7%
Hillingdon	5434	48	South West London ICB	11.3%	10.4%
Havering	5024	21	London	11.3%	11.9%
Harrow	4694	50	North West London ICB	11.2%	11.6%
Bexley	4650	96	North Central London ICB	10.9%	10.4%
Brent	4650	96	North East London ICB	10.9%	13.8%
London	2268	20			

## Understanding the data:

- **Public Health net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000.
- **Adult obesity net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000.
- **Hypertension prevalence<sup>5</sup>** – percentage of all ages with hypertension, registered with a GP in 2024/25.
- **Obesity prevalence – adults<sup>5</sup>** – percentage of adults aged 18+ , registered with a GP, with obesity in 2024/25.

# Adult Social Care and Health - Public Health

Hillingdon's Health and Wellbeing Board identified five priorities for 2025-28:

1. Start Well: Improve early years outcomes, reduce child obesity, and promote readiness for school and life.
2. Live Well: Prevent and/or delay the onset of long-term conditions, particularly hypertension, improve mental wellbeing, and enhance access to early intervention and support for carers.
3. Age Well: Implement 'at scale' proactive frailty management, and better end-of-life care that enables people with multi-morbidity to maintain independence for as long as possible in order to avoid non-elective presentations, admission to long-term care and to promote early discharge.
4. Healthy Places: Tackle housing, environment, employment, and social isolation.
5. Equity and Inclusion: Target resources and interventions where inequalities are greatest using Core20PLUS5: specifically, Hayes, Yiewsley, and West Drayton.

For years 1 and 2 the focus priorities are 'live well', 'age well' and 'equity and inclusion'. Chronic conditions are rising - 48% of adults have one or more long-term conditions (LTCs), with hypertension, obesity, anxiety, depression, and diabetes the most common. Hillingdon's adult population has grown 16% in seven years, with a rapidly ageing population; the 65+ group represents 14% of the population but accounts for 40% of health and social care usage.

# Adult Social Care and Health - Public Health

Hillingdon had the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest net expenditure on both public health and adult obesity when compared to our nearest neighbours, but this was significantly more than the London average.

Obesity is a global and complex public health concern. It is associated with reduced life expectancy and is a risk factor for a range of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, at least 12 types of cancer, respiratory disease and can also impact on mental health. The risk and severity of these diseases increases with a higher body mass index (BMI). The proportion of adults in England living with obesity has seen large increases in the last four decades. Hillingdon's prevalence (15.4%) is higher than England (13.9%), London (11.9%) and North West London Integrated Care Board (ICB) (11.6%) rates. At GP practice level, the highest prevalence rates (20%+) can be seen in the south of the borough, specifically in Hayes and Yiewsley. The latest data on childhood obesity is due to be released in late 2025.

The current prevalence rate for hypertension in Hillingdon is 13.5% against a target of 16% by March 2026; it is estimated that about 30% of the population nationally have hypertension. Hillingdon's prevalence has improved from 10% since the start of roll out of the Hypertension Anticipatory Care Programme in neighbourhoods. The percentage (of the 13.5%) with their blood pressure under control is 85% - which is above target. Prevalence rates will increase as the programme progressively rolls out. At GP practice level, three out of five of the highest rates are in surgeries in the north of the borough.

Hillingdon's prevalence of hypertension is lower than England (15.2%), but significantly higher than London (11.3%) and North-West London ICB (11.2%).

# Data Sources

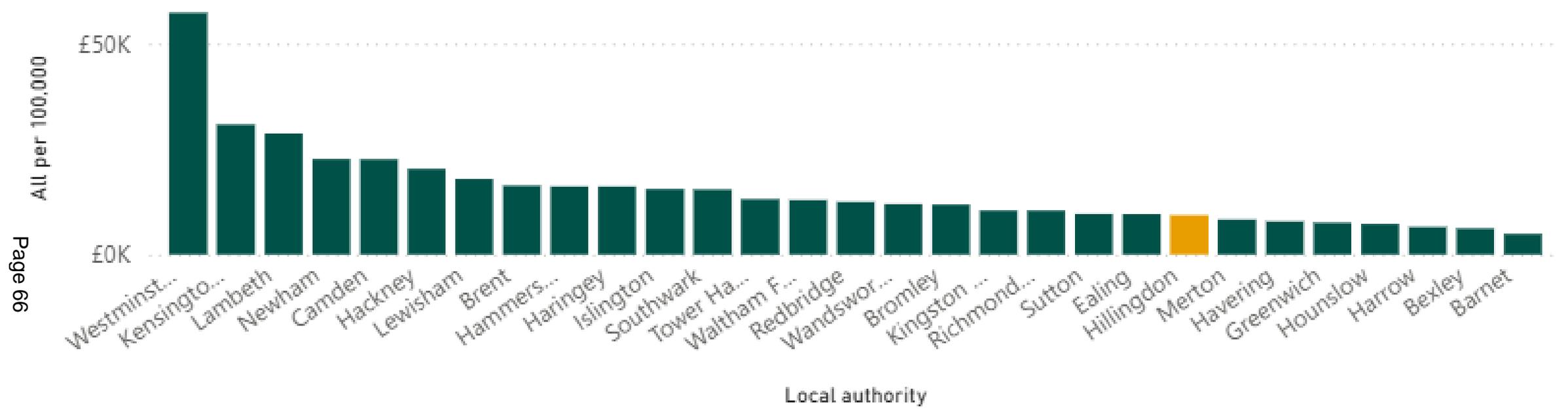
## Data Sources:

1. LA revenue expenditure and financing: 2024 - 2025
2. ASCOF 2023 – 2024
3. ADASS Bed based return 2024
4. ADASS Home Care return 2024
5. Disease Prevalence, Quality Outcomes Framework, NHS Digital
6. Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

Daniel Kennedy  
Corporate Director of Residents Services



## General Housing Fund and Homelessness net expenditure per 100,000 population



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Hillingdon has the 8<sup>th</sup> lowest net expenditure across all London councils for general housing and homelessness, indicating a higher level of cost-efficient service delivery.

In addition, Hillingdon's Council Housing Service was awarded the second highest consumer grading of C2 by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in July 2025. Grading ranges from C1 to C4. Only 7 of 66 (10.6%) local authorities assessed achieved the C1 grade and most authorities (56%) received a C3 or C4 grade.

# Residents Services – Temporary Accommodation (TA) and Homelessness

Comparators	Housing Services net expenditure	Homelessness Net expenditure	Households in TA	Households in TA with children	People sleeping rough	New people sleeping rough
London	14908	11822	19.71	13.03	24.40	35%
Waltham Forest	13005	10599	14.64	10.23	18.20	22%
Bromley	11920	8494	12.82	6.92	6.30	38%
Sutton	9697	6011	12.42	8.74	0.90	50%
Ealing	9657	6917	26.05	19.19	21.50	24%
Hillingdon	9395	6250	12.50	7.77	28.60	49%
England	9355	3707	5.28	3.35	14.90	31%
Merton	8362	4734	8.16	5.75	2.30	40%
Havering	7916	7444	12.03	8.40	4.70	38%
Hounslow	7297	5779	5.69	2.94	17.40	52%
Harrow	6576	5073	15.02	11.00	3.30	78%
Bexley	6232	3206	4.28	3.69	8.20	38%
Barnet	4916	5003	17.20	9.46	6.20	28%

Understanding the data:

- **Housing Services net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000.
- **Homelessness net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000.
- **Households in TA<sup>3</sup>** – shows the number of households in temporary accommodation on 31 December 2024, per 1,000 households.
- **Households in TA with children<sup>3</sup>** - shows households in TA with children on 31 December 2024, per 1,000 households.
- **People sleeping rough<sup>3</sup>** - shows the number of rough sleepers in June 2025, rate per 100,000 people.
- **New people sleeping rough<sup>3</sup>** – shows the percentage of new rough sleepers in June 2025.

# Residents Services – Temporary accommodation (TA) and Homelessness

Hillingdon's net housing services expenditure is £9,395,000 per 100,000 people, which is significantly lower than the London average of £14,908,000 and close to the England average of £9,355,000 demonstrating cost-efficient service delivery. Homelessness net expenditure in Hillingdon is £6,250,000 per 100,000 people which is significantly lower than the London average of £11,822,000 and below many neighbouring boroughs, indicating tighter and more efficient homelessness spending.

The proportion of households in temporary accommodation (TA) in Hillingdon is 12.50 per 1,000 households, which is substantially lower than boroughs such as Ealing (26.05) and Harrow (15.02), and closely aligned with Bromley (12.82), suggesting lower reliance on TA than other high-pressure councils. Households in TA with children stands at 7.77 per 1,000 households, again well below London's average of 13.03 and below neighbouring high-demand boroughs like Ealing (19.19), demonstrating better outcomes for families. However, the number of people sleeping rough in Hillingdon is 28.60 per 1,000 households, which is the highest in this comparator group and more than double the England average of 14.90, highlighting a significant concern around street homelessness. The percentage of new people sleeping rough in Hillingdon is 49%, which is above the London average of 35% and indicates that a high proportion of rough sleeping cases are first-time incidents, suggesting rising prevention challenges. Hillingdon has a long history of higher levels of rough sleeping compared to many London boroughs, in part because Heathrow Airport attracts rough sleepers. Proactive working with Heathrow Airport Limited and partner organisations is helping to keep rough sleeping numbers lower, with appropriate engagement and move-on support. During the last year, monitoring suggests higher rates of evictions by the Home Office from their accommodation has contributed to an increase in rough sleeping on a short-term basis. The Council is working closely with the Home Office and partner organisations to provide advice to those leaving Home Office accommodation about their housing options and move-on pathways.

# Residents Services – Housing Landlord Service

Benchmarking Group	Homes with valid gas safety certificate	'True' current tenant arrears	Dwellings vacant but available to let	Average re-let time in days (standard re-lets)	Satisfaction with overall service landlord provides
London	99.93%	4.41%	71%	52.85	59%
England	99.89%	2.60%	52%	44.44	73%
London and ALMO	99.89%	6.66%	56%	57.96	
Hillingdon	99.61%	3.91%	87%	30.64	59%

Page 6

## Understanding the data:

- **Homes with valid gas safety certificate<sup>2</sup>** – shows the 2024/25 percentage of properties with a valid landlord gas safety record.
- **'True' current tenant arrears<sup>2</sup>** – shows the 2024/25 unpaid accommodation rent and service charges owed by tenants living in benchmarked stock types adjusted for pending benefits payments.
- **Dwellings vacant but available to let<sup>2</sup>** – shows the 2024/25 snapshot of the total number of units that were vacant but available for lettings.
- **Average re-let time in days<sup>2</sup>** – shows the 2024/25 average time in days it takes for void properties to be let.
- **Satisfaction with overall service landlord provides<sup>2</sup>** – shows the 2024/25 perception of satisfaction for residents.

# Residents Services – Housing Landlord Service

Gas safety compliance in Hillingdon is 99.61%, which remains very high but is 0.32 percentage points lower than the London average (99.93%) and 0.28 points lower than the England average (99.89%). Hillingdon's Landlord Service is proactively working with tenants to ensure timely access to properties to complete safety checks. Current tenant arrears in Hillingdon stand at 3.91%, which is 0.5 percentage points better than the London average (4.41%) and 2.75 points better than London and Arms-length Management Organisation (ALMO) (6.66%), although still 1.31 points higher than the England average (2.60%). The proportion of dwellings vacant, but available to let in Hillingdon is 87%, which is 16 percentage points higher than London (71%), 31 percentage points higher than London & ALMO (56%), and 35 percentage points higher than England (52%). Hillingdon has an ambitious housing delivery programme, buying new properties for letting. This means a higher-than-average volume of properties are being let at any one time, but it is important to note these continue to be re-let within a faster than average end to end re-let time.

Hillingdon's average re-let time is 30.64 days, which is 22 days faster than the England average (44.44 days), more than 22 days faster than London (52.85 days), and 27 days faster than the London & ALMO group (57.96 days) which makes Hillingdon the best performer ranking 1<sup>st</sup> compared to the benchmarking group. Tenant satisfaction in Hillingdon is 59%, which matches the London average (59%) but remains 14 percentage points below the England average (73%), indicating further work is required to understand and improve resident experience. An active tenant engagement programme is underway to involve tenants in the scrutiny and running of the service to strength satisfaction scores.

# Residents Services – Tenancy Satisfaction (Housing Landlord Service)

Comparators	Satisfaction with Repairs	Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	Satisfaction that the home is well maintained	Homes that do not meet Decent Homes Standard	Emergency responsive repairs completed within landlord's target timescale	Non-emergency responsive repairs completed within landlord's target timescale
Hounslow	69.70%	68.51%	69.97%	8.62%	99.75%	71.99%
Hillingdon	68.33%	66.99%	64.72%	30.90%	93.36%	77.21%
Barnet	64.48%	54.59%	55.19%	2.38%	81.95%	60.82%
London	63.86%	61.76%	61.08%	8.62%	91.35%	78.19%
Sutton	63.29%	59.95%	57.17%	1.29%	100.00%	92.30%
Ealing	62.57%	61.82%	58.80%	16.63%	73.13%	83.42%
Havering	58.10%	49.32%	55.00%	3.91%	97.21%	93.93%
Harrow	56.75%	55.56%	51.90%	6.89%	96.17%	88.88%
Waltham Forest	55.11%	50.21%	53.39%	16.56%	95.55%	73.52%
Kingston	53.47%	51.69%	58.87%	9.06%	87.86%	78.72%

## Understanding the data:

- Indicators are part of the Tenants Satisfaction Measures statutory return (TSM) and shows figures as of 2023/24.

# Residents Services – Tenancy Satisfaction (Housing Landlord Service)

Hillingdon scores above average for several of the metrics on the Tenancy Satisfaction Measures, such as satisfaction with repairs. Hillingdon is 68.33%, which is above the London average of 63.86%, and one of the strongest results in this comparator group ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> highest. Hillingdon is also 2<sup>nd</sup> highest for satisfaction with the time taken to complete the most recent repair (66.99%), which is over five percentage points higher than the London average of 61.76%, demonstrating strong response times. Satisfaction that the home is well maintained is 64.72%, which is more than three points higher than the London average (61.08%), reflecting a positive perception of housing quality and ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> highest amongst the comparator group.

Emergency repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale are at 93.36%, which is better than the London average of 91.35% however non-emergency repairs completed within target timescales are at 77.21%, which is slightly below the London average of 78.19% ranking 7<sup>th</sup> highest amongst the comparator group, suggesting slower completion of routine repairs than some peers.

Hillingdon is making significant investment to improve the quality of council homes, with more than £108m committed during the next five years, and rapid progress is already underway to reduce the number of non-decent homes. Although Hillingdon's current proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard is 30.90%—around 14 percentage points higher than the next highest neighbour, Ealing (16.63%)—this is being addressed through major programmes of work including window replacement, new gas boilers, new kitchens and bathrooms, and wider home energy efficiency improvements. Significant and rapid progress is being made to reduce the number of non-decent homes in Hillingdon.

# Residents Services – Highways and Planning

Comparators	Highways and Transport net expenditure	Planning and development services net expenditure	Major planning applications decided in time	Minor planning applications decided in time	EV charging devices
Hounslow	8409	1565	100%	96%	221.4
Bromley	4574	1322	100%	69%	63.7
Harrow	3459	1595	83%	84%	32.2
Sutton	3144	1995	100%	86%	116.6
Waltham Forest	2965	1292	100%	79%	436.4
Kingston upon Thames	2840	2888	92%	77%	238.9
England	2740	4347			123.8
Barnet	2635	2331	100%	95%	203.5
Bexley	2529	823	100%	98%	94.4
Havering	2428	1732	80%	92%	43.1
Hillingdon	2159	29	100%	89%	79.8
Brent	1311	2046	100%	94%	341.7
London	1038	2716	96%	88%	275.4
Redbridge	707	2066	100%	84%	121.3
Merton	586	-1058	83%	83%	404.7
Enfield			83%	70%	86.5
Ealing	-1997	948	100%	94%	226.0

## Understanding the data:

- **Highways and transport net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000.
- **Planning and development services net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000.
- **Major planning applications decided in time<sup>5</sup>** - shows the percentage decided in time for Q1 2025/26.
- **Minor planning applications decided in time<sup>5</sup>** – shows the percentage decided in time for Q1 2025/26.
- **EV charging devices<sup>6</sup>** - shows publicly available electric vehicle charging devices at all speeds per 100,000 people in July 2025

# Residents Services – Highways and Planning

Hillingdon's highways and transport net expenditure is £2,159,000 per 100,000 people, which is the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest among the comparator group but double the London average of £1,038,00. Hillingdon's net expenditure on planning and development services was the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest at only £29,000 per 100,000 people, only higher than Merton who had a negative net expenditure of £1,058,000 per 100,000. Hillingdon secures additional discretionary income from the planning process.

Even with low net expenditure, Hillingdon's major planning applications were all decided within timescales (100%), compared to the London average of 96%. Minor application timeliness was slightly lower at 89% but still above the London average (88%).

Hillingdon's public electric vehicle charging devices was the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest of all comparators at 79.8 devices per 100,000 people. The London average was significantly higher at 275.4 devices per 100,000 people. Hillingdon is working in partnership with other London boroughs to increase access to charging devices in appropriate locations.

# Residents Services Data Sources

## Data Sources:

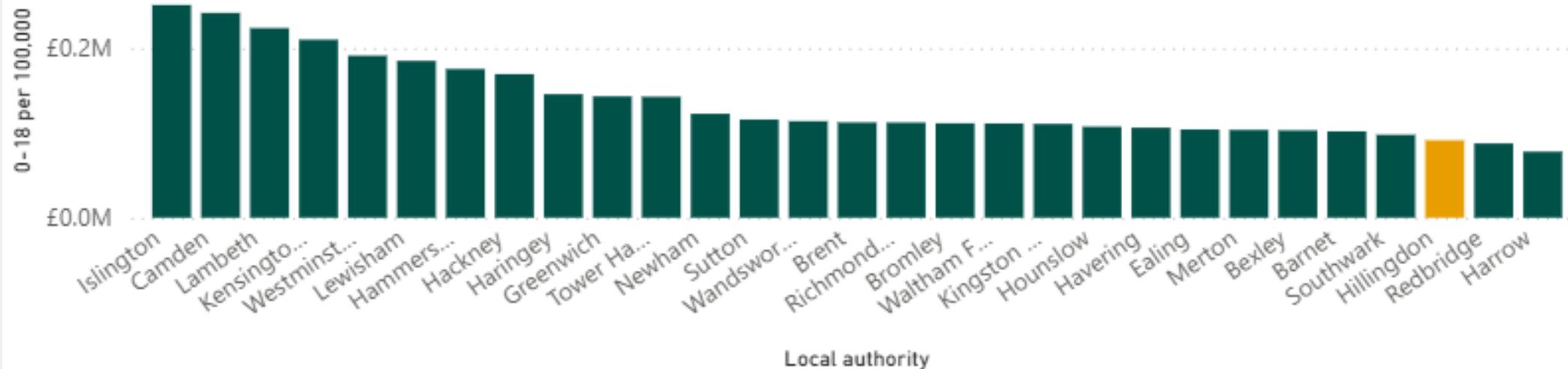
1. LA revenue expenditure and financing: 2024 - 2025
2. Housemark 2024/25
3. MHCLG Stat. Homelessness tables 2024/25
4. Housemark 2023/24
5. LG Inform 2025/26 Q1
6. Department for Transport 2024/25

Julie Kelly  
Corporate Director of Children's Services



# Children's Services Summary

Children's Social Care net expenditure per 100,000 children



Hillingdon has the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest net expenditure across all London councils for children's social care per 100,000 children, but despite this achieved an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating at the last inspection in November 2023.

Achieving the highest grade indicates a high quality, innovative service that consistently exceeds expectations where children achieve excellent outcomes. Only 15% of Councils nationally are currently assessed at the highest standard.

# Children, Families and Education – Children’s Social Care (Demand and Safeguarding)

Comparators	Children Social Care net expenditure	Safeguarding CYP services net expenditure	Referrals	Completed Assessments	Assessment Timeliness	s47 enquiries	Re-registrations for CPP	Open CPP
Reading	152892	29323	791.7	729.5	62%	288.2	30.0%	62.0
Coventry	138394	41266	559.7	596.4	84%	316.5	27.2%	63.5
Southampton	133614	29002	614.2	633.1	88%	262.0	29.3%	54.8
London	127345	33312	556.4	542.7	86%	195.3	21.2%	40.5
England	120316	26482	518.3	536.0	84%	187.1	24.7%	41.6
Waltham Forest	111208	27338	719.8	640.2	98%	225.3	19.4%	36.1
Peterborough	110878	29496	662.7	560.8	83%	173.3	22.6%	49.5
Hounslow	107353	17815	382.1	508.6	96%	149.7	15.8%	37.0
Ealing	104107	23401	529.3	522.2	86%	138.9	21.5%	38.0
Hillingdon	91258	19923	520.4	527.4	92%	167.1	24.5%	34.0
Redbridge	87598	37567	505.0	501.5	93%	176.5	13.9%	32.0
Harrow	77882	26181	413.7	464.3	65%	202.2	18.8%	48.6
Slough			749.4	797.3		275.4	19.7%	43.5

Understanding the data:

- **Children’s Social Care net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 0-18-year-olds.
- **Safeguarding Children and Young People’s Services (CYP) net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 0-18-year-olds.
- **Referrals<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the number of children referred to social care in 2023-24 per 100,000 0-17-year-olds.
- **Completed Assessments<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the number of children completing a social care assessment in 2023-24 per 100,000 0-17-year-olds.
- **Assessment Timeliness<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the percentage of assessments completed in 45 working days in 2023-24.

- **S47 enquiries<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the number of s47 (Child protection enquiries) in 2023-24 per 100,000 0-17-year-olds.
- **Re-registrations for child protection plans (CPP)<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the percentage of child protection plans starting in 2023-24 that had a previous CPP in the last 12 months.
- **Open CPP<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the number of open CPPs per 100,000 10-17-year-olds at the end of the year 2023-24.

# Children, Families and Education – Children’s Social Care (Demand and Safeguarding)

Hillingdon had the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest net expenditure for children’s social care when compared to our children’s statistical neighbours and are lower than the London and national average. Hillingdon also has the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest net expenditure for safeguarding children and young people’s services compared to statistical neighbours. Hillingdon’s low cost is reflected in the demand indicators, as Hillingdon falls in the lowest third for assessments completed, section 47 enquiries and open child protection plans. However, Hillingdon’s referral rate is more in line with the average at 520 referrals per 100,000 0-17-year-olds, which is slightly above the national average of 518 but below the London average of 556.

Hillingdon’s assessment timeliness was the 4<sup>th</sup> highest among neighbours at 92%, well above the London (86%) and national (84%) averages. The re-registrations for child protection plans was 24.5%, the 4<sup>th</sup> highest when compared to the statistical neighbours, slightly below the national (24.7%) average and above London (21.2%). Lower numbers result in higher percentage swings, deep dive into re-registrations take place to consider any learning.

# Children, Families and Education – Children’s Social Care (Care experienced)

Comparators	Children Social Care net expenditure	CLA net expenditure	CLA UASC net expenditure	LAC in foster placements	Open LAC at year end	UASC at year end	19-21yr old care leavers in touch	19-21yr old care leavers in suitable accommodation	19-21yr old care leavers in EET
Harrow	77882	25705		70%	29	15%	97.00%	91%	66%
Waltham Forest	111208	49687	3768	74%	50	9%	93.00%	89%	59%
London	127345	56520	2318	69%	51	12%	93.00%	89%	58%
Redbridge	87598	35370	4071	71%	40	23%	91.00%	88%	58%
Coventry	138394	64363		73%	84	10%	93.00%	86%	57%
Ealing	104107	48615		65%	37	11%	96.00%	95%	57%
Hounslow	107353	55328		61%	42	18%	91.00%	90%	56%
England	120316	64898	2314	67%	70	9%	92.00%	88%	54%
Hillingdon	91258	47937	6367	51%	43	26%	85.00%	89%	54%
Peterborough	110878	45728		70%	75	10%	88.00%	80%	46%
Slough				60%	45	13%	75.00%	89%	44%
Southampton	133614	72843	2958	71%	97	8%	86.00%	79%	44%
Reading	152892	69046	2952	66%	70	11%	85.00%	81%	43%

## Understanding the data:

- **Children’s Social Care net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 0-18-year-olds.
- **Children looked after (CLA) net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** – Shows the 2024-25 expenditure on looked after children. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 0-18-year-olds.
- **CLA unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 0-18-year-olds.

- **LAC in foster placements<sup>2</sup>** – Shows the percentage of looked after children in foster placements at the end of 2023-24.
- **Open LAC at year end<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the number of looked after children open at the end of 2023-24 per 100,000 0-17-year-olds.
- **UASC at year end<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the percentage of looked after children who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children at the end of the year 2023-24.
- **19-21-year-old care leavers in touch<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the percentage of care leavers the service are in touch with whose 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> birthday fell in the year 2023-24.
- **19-21-year-old care leavers in suitable accommodation<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the percentage of care leavers who are in suitable accommodation around their 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in the year 2023-24.
- **19-21-year-old care leavers in EET<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the percentage of care leavers who are in education, employment or training around their 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in the year 2023-24.

# Children, Families and Education – Children’s Social Care (Care experienced)

Hillingdon had the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest net expenditure for children’s social care when compared to our children’s statistical neighbours, and the 4<sup>th</sup> highest net expenditure on looked after children. Hillingdon is lower than the London and national average for both figures. However, Hillingdon has by far the largest spend on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) at £6,367,000 per 100,000 0-18-year-olds – 56% more than the next highest statutory neighbour Redbridge (£4,071,000). Hillingdon has the highest percentage of looked after children who are UASC, at 26% compared to Redbridge’s 24% and the London and national averages at 12% and 9%, respectively. While UASC costs are significant this is fully grant funded.

Hillingdon had the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest rate of looked after children (43) at the end of 2023-24, lower than both the London (51) and national (70) averages. However, Hillingdon had the lowest percentage of children in foster placements at 51%, significantly lower than the London (69%) and national (67%) averages. This may be contributing to higher reliance on residential placements, with associated cost and stability implications.

Increasing the number and percentage of children cared for by foster carers is a key priority for the service area. Hillingdon has increased the number of fostering household by 14 with a further 14 expected by the end of this financial year.

Hillingdon’s performance for 19 to 21-year-olds care leavers is mixed. Hillingdon has a high percentage (89%) of care leavers in suitable accommodation, in line with the London (89%) and national (88%) averages. Hillingdon was in touch with 85% of care leavers. This is the joint 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest percentage when compared to our statistical neighbours and below London (93%) and national (92%) averages. Hillingdon’s education, employment and training rate for care leavers was 54%, in line with the national (54%) rate but below the London (58%) average.

# Children, Families and Education – Youth Justice

YJS Family	Youth Justice Net Expenditure	Use of Custody	First Time Entrants	Reoffending Rate	Reoffending Frequency
London	7636	0.13	200.0	30.4%	3.31
Brent	6419	0.06	210.0	27.5%	2.60
Hounslow	5806	0.10	178.0	34.7%	4.68
Hillingdon	5719	0.09	138.0	37.7%	2.73
Ealing	5043	0.05	151.0	20.7%	2.58
National	4651	0.10	157.0	31.9%	4.30
Merton	4614	0.05	96.0	38.8%	3.84
Sutton	4573	0.04	55.0	20.0%	2.50
Coventry	4450	0.03	151.0	34.6%	5.17
Redbridge	4299	0.18	161.0	42.1%	3.86
Barnet	3635	0.02	177.0	30.5%	3.92
Harrow	3244	0.18	110.0	29.6%	2.50
Reading		0.00	161.0	28.1%	2.63

## Understanding the data:

- **Youth Justice net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 11-18-year-olds.
- **Use of custody<sup>3</sup>** - Published figure from Youth Justice Board (YJB) 2024-25. Shows the number of children receiving a custodial sentence in 2024-25 per 1,000 10-17-year-olds.
- **First time entrants<sup>3</sup>** - Shows the number of children who receive a youth caution or court conviction for the first time in 2024-25 per 100,000 10-17-year-olds.
- **Reoffending rate<sup>3</sup>** - Shows the percentage of children who reoffend within 12 months of a previous offence. Latest data is for July 22 - June 23 due to cohort being tracked for 12 months.
- **Reoffending frequency rate<sup>3</sup>** - Shows the average number of reoffences per reoffender within the 12 months of a previous offence. Latest data is for July 22 - June 23 due to cohort being tracked for 12 months.

Hillingdon has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest net expenditure when compared to our youth justice statistical neighbours, however Hillingdon is lower than the London average. It is positive to see Hillingdon has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest rate of first-time entrants compared to the statistical neighbours and lower than the London and national averages. Hillingdon's rates of custody are higher than most statistical neighbours but below London and national average. Hillingdon has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest reoffending rate, but the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest reoffending frequency, meaning children who enter the youth justice system are more likely to commit another offence, but are likely to commit fewer further offences.

Often children commit a subsequent offence before being directed to youth justice services, where Hillingdon's youth justice service can then intervene and successfully reduce the rate and number of offences.

# Children, Families and Education – SEND and Education

Comparators	Education net expenditure	Early years net expenditure	EHCP Active Caseload	Requests proceeding to assessment	EHCNA requests	Eligible 3&4yr olds for 15 hours funding	NEET 16 & 17yr olds
Ealing	485396	171739	320	70.8%	66	87.73%	1.0%
Redbridge	470980	165861	300	71.2%	62	94.02%	2.3%
Southampton	437298	226060	293	69.3%	60	84.00%	4.9%
London	415485	185910	338	67.1%	74	85.75%	1.9%
Hounslow	399564	172544	347	58.5%	72	85.29%	1.7%
Waltham Forest	396241	155472	415	64.1%	90	84.26%	1.0%
National	344568	198604	358	65.4%	86	93.12%	3.4%
Reading	343931	206035	311	55.5%	82	96.00%	3.4%
Hillingdon	320566	165091	310	50.4%	61	87.32%	2.5%
Harrow	319783	112001	312	78.4%	62	84.06%	1.3%
Coventry	285925	164835	255	55.9%	84	86.00%	3.6%
Peterborough	249226	202001	380	59.3%	90	92.00%	5.4%

## Understanding the data:

- **Education net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 0-18-year-olds.
- **Early years net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 0-4-year-olds.
- **EHCP active caseload<sup>4</sup>** - Shows the rate of open education, health and care plan on census day in January 2025, per 100,000 0-25-year-olds.
- **Requests proceeding to assessment<sup>4</sup>** - Shows the percentage of requests to SEND that proceeded to an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment in the 2024-25 census year.
- **EHCNA requests<sup>4</sup>** - Shows the rate of Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment requests in the 2024-25 census year, per 100,000 0-25-year-olds.
- **Eligible 3 and 4-year-olds for 15 hours funding<sup>5</sup>** - Shows the percentage of 3 and 4-year-olds who are eligible for up to 15 hours of free childcare funding in 2025.
- **NEET 16 and 17-year-olds<sup>6</sup>** - Shows the percentage of 16 and 17-year-olds who are not in education, training or employment in 2025.

# Children, Families and Education – SEND and Education

Hillingdon had the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest net expenditure for education and early years when compared to our statistical neighbours. Hillingdon are lower than the London and national average. This is reflected in the demand data for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as Hillingdon has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest rate of children on an Educational Health Care (EHC) plan and the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest rate of education health care needs assessments (EHCNA) requests compared to the statistical neighbours. Additionally, Hillingdon has the lowest percentage of requests proceeding to assessment. However, this may suggest a tendency to reject valid requests and should be considered alongside data on appeals and complaints.

Hillingdon's not in education or training (NEET) figure for 16 and 17-year-olds is 2.5%, which is the 6<sup>th</sup> highest compared to our statistical neighbours but below the national average of 3.4%. There has been a robust focus on NEET which has driven down the number of children whose destinations are 'not known' which subsequently raised the percentage of NEET. This however enables targeted intervention.

Early years higher costs were attributable to the subsidised nursery provision that is no longer part of our delivery model.

The service is aware that Key Stage 5 opportunities and outcomes need improving and have prioritised this area, recent output being a digital Post 16 Prospectus.

# Children, Families and Education - Data Sources

## Data Sources:

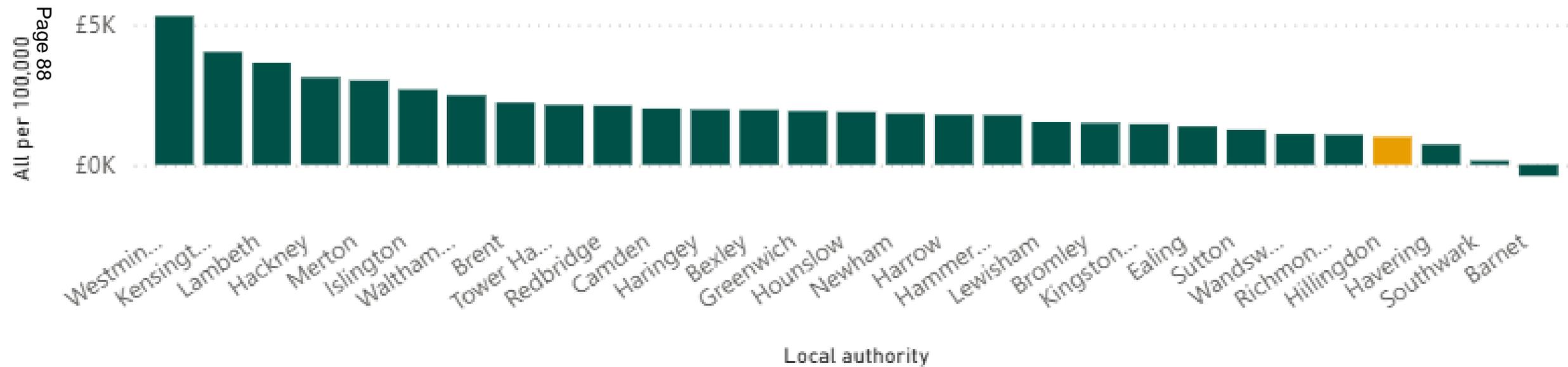
1. LA revenue expenditure and financing: 2024- 2025
2. ChAT tool published data for 2023-24
3. YDS Published Data
4. SEN2 2025
5. DfE, Education provision for children u5
6. DfE

Steve Muldoon  
Corporate Director of Finance



Hillingdon has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest net expenditure across all London councils for housing benefit and council tax administration and council tax collection.

## Housing Benefit and Council Tax administration and Council tax collection net expenditure per 100,000 population



All per 100,000

Local authority

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# Finance – Council Tax

Comparators	Council Tax collection net expenditure	Council Tax discounts locally funded	Council Tax support administration	Council Tax in year collection rates	Arrears brought forward from previous years as a % of collectable debit	Number of chargeable dwellings
England	439	131	456	95.88%	14.30%	
London	166	15	87	94.80%	21.29%	
Waltham Forest	953		460	95.04%	19.61%	109243
Hounslow	898	-2	991	97.17%	16.95%	109194
Bexley	886			95.05%	25.25%	100016
Kingston Upon Thames	860	30		97.89%	5.51%	68382
Merton	636	18	275	96.04%	9.78%	86759
Sutton	494			98.14%	9.47%	85324
Havering	420			96.05%	14.21%	107467
Ealing	388			96.85%	12.98%	145856
Bromley	337		622	96.93%	11.56%	140569
Harrow	333		59	96.49%	10.45%	95271
Hillingdon	35	379	242	96.31%	18.97%	115553
Barnet	-307			94.01%	22.89%	156560

## Understanding the data:

- **Council Tax net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 people.
- **Council Tax discounts locally funded, net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 people.
- **Council Tax support administration net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 people.
- **Council Tax in year collection rates<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the percentage of 2024-25 council tax collected in year.
- **Arrears brought forward from previous years as a % of collectable debit<sup>2</sup>** – Shows arrears brought forward in previous years as a percentage of collectable debit in 2024-25.
- **Number of chargeable dwellings<sup>3</sup>** - Shows the total number of chargeable dwellings for council tax on 6 October 2025.

Hillingdon had the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest net expenditure rate for council tax collection when compared to its nearest neighbours and remains below both the London and national averages. Council tax support administration costs are also the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest among nearest neighbours, although slightly above the London average. This level of efficiency is particularly notable given that Hillingdon has the fourth highest number of chargeable dwellings.

For those nearest neighbours that reported locally funded council tax discounts, Hillingdon stands out significantly, with £379,000 per 100,000 people. The next closest authority is Kingston upon Thames at £30,000 per 100,000, highlighting a substantial difference in approach.

Although Hillingdon collected 96.49% of council tax in-year, ranking 7<sup>th</sup> lowest among its peers, it had the lowest estimated amount of council tax receipts collected in the year at £557.83 per 1,000 people however This is in part reflective of the low average council tax in Hillingdon. This compares to a London average of £627.97 per 1,000.

Comparison between authorities relating to arrears will be impacted by individual authority approach to writing old debt off or carrying it forward to ultimately correct. The Council is currently reviewing old debt for potential write-off – this will reduce the percentage of old debt being brought forward

# Finance – Non-domestic Rates

Comparators	NDR collection net expenditure	NDR in year collection rates	Est. NDR receipts collected in year	Arrears brought forward from previous years as a % of collectable debit
England	61	97.32%	444.16	8.97%
London	20	97.14%	899.76	10.96%
Havering	185	98.79%	283.50	3.87%
Waltham Forest	168	95.61%	212.40	21.26%
Merton	112	97.88%	444.68	4.83%
Barnet	76	94.20%	238.36	18.24%
Kings Hill	51	98.01%	434.63	10.07%
Ealing	50	95.36%	415.10	13.29%
Bromley	49	97.10%	247.37	5.37%
Hillingdon	35	97.37%	1,169.25	7.52%
Hounslow	-40	95.70%	690.55	10.58%
Sutton	-90	98.86%	303.61	5.32%
Harrow		92.97%	161.19	21.71%
Bexley		97.07%	355.38	7.67%

## Understanding the data:

- **NDR collection net expenditure<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure on non-domestic rate collection. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 people.
- **NDR in year collection rates<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the percentage of 2024-25 non-domestic rates collected in year.
- **Est. NDR receipts collected in year<sup>2</sup>** - Shows the estimated 2024-25 receipts collected in year per 1,000 population.
- **Arrears brought forward from previous years as a % of collectable debit<sup>2</sup>** – Shows arrears brought forward in previous years as a percentage of collectable debit in 2024-25.

# Finance – Non-domestic Rates

Hillingdon had the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest net expenditure rate for non-domestic rate collection when compared to its nearest neighbours, although it is slightly above the London average. This is a positive position when considered alongside in-year collection performance, as Hillingdon achieved the 5<sup>th</sup> highest collection rate at 97.37%.

Hillingdon recorded by far the highest estimated non-domestic rate receipts collected in the year at £1,169.25 per 1,000 people. This figure is largely driven by the significant contribution from Heathrow Airport, which has a major impact on the borough's business rates income. In terms of arrears, Hillingdon had the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest percentage of arrears brought forward from previous years when compared to the 2024–25 collectable debit, although the scale of Heathrow's contribution also influences this measure. Although Heathrow significantly boosts Hillingdon's business rate collection, it creates a concentration risk by making the borough heavily reliant on a single source of income. Any changes to Heathrow's valuation or operations could have a disproportionate impact on overall revenue stability.

# Finance – Housing Benefits

Comparators	Housing benefits administration	Average processing days (New HB claims)	Average processing days (Changes in HB circumstances)	New HB Claims	Changes in HB Claims
England	805	20.72	6.05	6.10	93.60
London	278	22.66	5.50	6.00	119.60
Merton	2111	35.17	17.83	5.20	70.20
Harrow	1393	21.93	6.24	5.60	96.10
Bexley	1082	15.24	11.04	2.90	58.20
Waltham Forest	1073	19.96	4.02	6.90	105.10
Ealing	988	26.66	5.43	8.90	122.80
Sutton	756	17.68	8.53	5.70	93.90
Hillingdon	728	19.81	3.60	6.60	141.00
Kingston Upon Thames	600	21.38	6.14	5.00	89.90
Bromley	534	21.49	6.44	6.20	110.30
Havering	304	30.87	5.08	3.20	71.70
Barnet	-88	20.65	4.22	6.80	142.90
Hounslow		18.32	3.63	7.90	134.00

## Understanding the data:

- **Housing benefit administration<sup>1</sup>** - Shows the 2024-25 expenditure on housing benefit administration. Value is in £000s, per 100,000 people.
- **Average processing days (New HB claims)<sup>4</sup>** - Shows the average days to process new housing benefits claims, with target of 28 days in 2024-25.
- **Average processing days (Changes in HB circumstances)<sup>4</sup>** – As above but for changes in housing benefit circumstances, with target of 28 days in 2024-25.
- **New HB Claims<sup>4</sup>** – Shows the total number of new housing benefit claims in 2024-25, per 1,000 population.
- **Changes in HB Claims<sup>4</sup>** – Shows the total number of changes in housing benefit claims in 2024-25, per 1,000 population.

# Finance – Housing Benefits

Hillingdon had the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest net expenditure rate for housing benefit administration when compared to its nearest neighbours at £728,000 per 100,000 people, although this is significantly above the London average of £278,000 per 100,000. Despite this higher cost relative to London, Hillingdon delivered exceptional performance in processing housing benefit claims, ranking as the fastest for processing existing claims and 4<sup>th</sup> highest for new claims when compared to statistical neighbours. This efficiency is achieved despite high demand, with the borough having the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of requests for changes to existing claims and the 5<sup>th</sup> highest for new claims when compared to statistical neighbours. EST NDR is driven by businesses we have the likes of Heathrow which is why we are much higher

While performance outcomes are excellent, future strategy should consider whether similar results can be sustained with improved cost control, particularly given ongoing demand pressures.

## Data Sources:

1. LA revenue expenditure and financing: 2024- 2025
2. Collection rates and receipts of council tax and non-domestic rates: Local Authority level data for 2024-25 - MHCLG
3. [Council Taxbase 2025 in England - GOV.UK](#)
4. DWP Housing Benefit (HB) Speed of Processing 2024-25

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## GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET, HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026 / 2027

*Reporting Officer: Head of Democratic Services*

### **Council Tax Resolution 2026/27 – Cabinet Proposals**

#### **Summary**

1. The purpose of this report is to enable the Council to calculate and approve the Council Tax Requirement for 2026/27, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.
2. Cabinet on 19 February will be considering proposals to Council on Hillingdon's General Fund Revenue Budget, Housing Revenue Account Budget, Fees & Charges, Capital Programme, Treasury Management Strategy and London Borough of Hillingdon's Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27. Cabinet will recommend a budget to Council in line with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules as set out in the Council's Constitution.
3. The recommendations of Cabinet will be published, once agreed. In the meantime, the report to Cabinet is available online at:

[London Borough of Hillingdon - Agenda for CABINET on Thursday, 19th February, 2026, 7.00 pm](#)

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4. Financial Implications will be contained within the report to Cabinet.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5. Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 will apply to the recommendations of this item. Any Member who is more than two months in arrears with their Council Tax must declare that fact and not vote on this item.
6. Members are asked to note that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, recorded votes will be taken at the annual budget setting meeting on any motion, amendment to motion or substantive motion regarding the General Fund Revenue Budget, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme.
7. Other legal implications will be contained within the report to Cabinet.

Background Papers: None

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## GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET, HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026 / 2027

*Reporting Officer: Head of Democratic Services*

### **Council Tax Resolution 2026/27 – Cabinet Proposals**

#### **Summary**

1. The purpose of this report is to enable the Council to calculate and approve the Council Tax Requirement for 2026/27, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as subsequently amended. In addition, the Act requires Council to determine whether any Council Tax increase is excessive (that is, in excess of 4.99%) which would require a referendum to be held.
2. In considering this budget all Members should take into consideration the comments of the Corporate Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer). This is set out in Appendix 1 of this report under the heading of Chief Finance Officer's Section 25 Statement 2026/27.
3. The background paper to this report sets out the Cabinet's proposals to Council on Hillingdon's General Fund revenue budget, Housing Revenue Account budget, Capital Programme, amendments to the approved schedule of Fees & Charges, Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and Pay Policy Statement. In addition, this report also considers reasons for, and implications arising from these proposals. The proposals result in a Band D Council Tax for Hillingdon of £1,534.95, which represents a 4.99% uplift on the Council's element of Council Tax at the 2025/26 level.
4. The report to Cabinet is available on request to the Head of Democratic Services or online at:  
  
[London Borough of Hillingdon - Agenda for CABINET on Thursday, 19th February, 2026, 7.00 pm](#)
5. The Greater London Authority (GLA) budget proposals add £510.51 to the amount payable by Hillingdon's Council Tax payers, which includes a 4.10% increase in the GLA portion of Council Tax compared to 2025/26 (based on Band D).
6. Based on the Cabinet's proposals, and the GLA precept, the total Band D Council Tax for 2026/27 will be £2,045.46.
7. Members are asked to note that the following recommendations to Council are subject to final confirmation by MHCLG that it will provide support to manage the Council's financial pressures via the Exceptional Financial Support process through an in-principle capitalisation support decision.

**8. CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

- 1 The General Fund revenue budget proposals made by Cabinet for 2026/27 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy be approved, having taken the Select Committees' comments, public consultation responses and Equality Impact Assessments conscientiously into account as set out in Appendices C, D and E of the background paper, resulting in a Council Tax requirement for 2026/27 of £164,775,348;**
- 2 Council note that at its meeting on 22 January 2026 the Council calculated the amount of 107,349 as its Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27. This was calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as its Council Tax Base for the year (*Item T in the formula in Section 31B (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992*);**
- 3 The Hillingdon element of Council Tax be set at £1,534.95 for a Band D property. Taking into account the precept levied by the Greater London Authority, this results in an overall Band D Council Tax of £2,045.46 for the borough;**
- 4 The following amounts have been calculated by the Council for the year 2026/27, in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the Act):**
  - a) £786,851,076** being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) (a) to (f) of the Act. (*Gross Expenditure including the amount required for additions to working balances*)
  - b) (£622,055,728)** being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act. (*Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure*)
  - c) £164,775,348** being the amount by which the aggregate at 4 (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4 (b) above. This is calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (*Item R under Section 31B of the Act*)
  - d) £1,534.95** being the amount at 4 (c) above divided by Item T (2 above). This is, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. (*Council Tax at Band D for the Council*)

The London Borough of Hillingdon Council Tax (£'s)		
1,023.30	Band A	4.99% Percentage Change
1,193.85	Band B	4.99% Percentage Change
1,364.40	Band C	4.99% Percentage Change
1,534.95	Band D	4.99% Percentage Change
1,876.05	Band E	4.99% Percentage Change
2,217.15	Band F	4.99% Percentage Change
2,558.25	Band G	4.99% Percentage Change
3,069.90	Band H	4.99% Percentage Change

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 4 (d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation B and D. This is calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;

- 5 Council note that for the year 2026/27 the Greater London Authority and its functional bodies have stated the following amounts in precepts. These have been issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

The Greater London Authority Council Tax Precept (£'s)		
340.34	Band A	4.10% Percentage Change
397.06	Band B	4.10% Percentage Change
453.79	Band C	4.11% Percentage Change
510.51	Band D	4.10% Percentage Change
623.96	Band E	4.11% Percentage Change
737.40	Band F	4.10% Percentage Change
850.85	Band G	4.10% Percentage Change
1,021.02	Band H	4.10% Percentage Change

- 6 The Council has calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 4 (d) and 5 above. The Council in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the Council Tax for the year 2026/27 for each category of dwelling below:

<b>Total Council Tax 2026/27 (£'s)</b>		
1,363.64	Band A	<i>4.77% Percentage Change</i>
1,590.91	Band B	<i>4.77% Percentage Change</i>
1,818.19	Band C	<i>4.77% Percentage Change</i>
2,045.46	Band D	<i>4.77% Percentage Change</i>
2,500.01	Band E	<i>4.77% Percentage Change</i>
2,954.55	Band F	<i>4.77% Percentage Change</i>
3,409.10	Band G	<i>4.77% Percentage Change</i>
4,090.92	Band H	<i>4.77% Percentage Change</i>

- 7 **The Council Tax Discount for Older People be retained for 2026/27 with a 1.37% discount on Hillingdon's element of the Council Tax for those who joined the scheme on or after 1 April 2020, 3.12% for those who joined the scheme before or on 31 March 2019 and 6.66% for those who joined before or on 31 March 2018, with the scheme closed to new applicants from 1 April 2021;**
- 8 **The use of up to £62.0m in Exceptional Financial Support to balance the 2026/27 budget.**
- 9 **The General Fund Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2030/31 as set out in Appendices A9 to A11 of the background report to Cabinet be approved;**
- 10 **The Housing Revenue Account revenue budget proposals for 2026/27, and the HRA Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2030/31 as set out in Appendix B of the background report be approved;**
- 11 **A rent increase of 4.8% (being CPI +1%) from 1 April 2026 in line with the maximum increase for social rent set by the national rent policy, whilst noting that the Council continues to set rents for re-lets (both new tenants and transfers) up to formula target rent, be approved;**
- 12 **That tenant service charges be varied in line with estimated actual costs for 2026/27, from 1 April 2026 (noting the estimated charges set out in Appendix H2 of the background paper);**
- 13 **A budgeted drawdown from DSG Reserves in 2026/27 of £8.2m be approved;**
- 14 **The proposed amendments to Fees and Charges, which form part of the overall budget, as set out in Appendix H1 of the background report to Cabinet be approved;**
- 15 **The Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2025/26 to 2030/31 as set out in Appendix G of the background report to Cabinet be approved;**
- 16 **The Reserves Policy as set out in paragraphs 50 to 60 of the background report to Cabinet be approved;**

- 17 **The London Borough of Hillingdon Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 as set out in Appendix I of the background report to Cabinet be approved;**
- 18 **Council note the Flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy to deliver efficiency savings, including utilisation for redundancy costs, as set out in paragraphs 39 to 45 and in Appendix F of the background report to Cabinet, and the use of £2.733m of capital receipts for this purpose.**
- 19 **Council note the Corporate Director of Finance’s comments regarding his responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2003 as set out in his Section 25 Statement to accompany the Budget Report recommended by Cabinet, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report;**
- 20 **Council (as set out in Schedule G of the Constitution - Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules) resolves that Cabinet may utilise the general reserves or balances during financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29, including any virement between the General Fund budget, Housing Revenue Account budgets or Capital budgets during the MTFs financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29, in respect of those functions which have been reserved to the Cabinet;**
- 21 **Council confirm that the Council’s relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2026/27 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992 and therefore a referendum will not be triggered.**

### **Greater London Authority Precept**

9. As one of thirty-three billing authorities across the capital, the London Borough of Hillingdon collects Council Tax on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA) which is paid over in full as the annual precept. While the Council has no control over the level of this precept or the resulting GLA share of Council Tax payable by residents of the borough, current regulations require that billing authorities calculate the total amount of Council Tax payable as part of the budget setting resolution. The level at which the GLA sets the precept for the forthcoming year does not impact upon the Council’s own budgets or the Hillingdon share of Council Tax.
10. The GLA precept this year is set to increase by £20.13 per annum. Of this increase, £15 will be applied for policing, with non-police services increasing by £5.13. The GLA have therefore increased their precept by £20.13, or 4.1%, to cover rising costs associated with these areas. This takes the GLA precept to £510.51 for a Band D property.

### **Council Tax Referendums**

11. Schedule 5 of the Localism Act 2011 inserted into the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Chapter 4ZA of Part 1 makes provision for a Council Tax referendum to be held if an authority increases its relevant basic amount of Council Tax in

excess of principles determined by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Section 41 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 amended Chapter 4ZA of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 by imposing new obligations on the Council. These include a requirement that as soon as is reasonably practicable after determining that it is required to hold a referendum in relation to its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for the financial year, the Council must notify that fact in writing to anybody that has issued a levy or a special levy to it for the financial year.

12. The Secretary of State has determined the principles for the year 2026/27 under section 52ZC (1) of the Local Government Act 1992 that a Council Tax increase will be excessive if the authority's relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2025/26 is 5% or greater than its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25. This 5% threshold for excessive increases includes the 2% additional flexibility available to local authorities with responsibility for providing Adult Social Care.
13. The relevant basic amount of Council Tax as calculated is the same as the Band D Council Tax for Hillingdon and if the proposals within this report are approved there will be a 4.99% increase in the Council Tax level between 2025/26 and 2026/27 and is therefore not excessive.

### **Financial Implications**

14. This is a financial report, and the comments of Corporate Finance are contained throughout.

### **Legal Implications**

15. As is mentioned in the body of the report, the Local Government Finance Act 1992 has been amended by both the Localism Act 2011 and section 41 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. For this year local authorities are required to hold a referendum if there is an increase in the relevant basic amount of Council Tax of 5% or greater than its relevant amount of Council Tax for 2026/27.
16. The Cabinet's proposals for the 2026/27 Council Tax requirement, as set out in this report, do not require a referendum to be held and therefore the notification requirements as set out in Section 41 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act do not apply.
17. Finally, Members must have regard to Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. This provides that a Member who has not paid an amount due in respect of Council Tax for at least two months after it becomes payable, may not vote on matters concerning the level of Council Tax or the administration of it. Therefore, any Council Members who are more than two months in arrears with their Council Tax payments must make a declaration to this effect at the beginning of the Council meeting.

Background Documents - none

## **Section 25 Statement – Robustness of Estimates, Adequacy of Reserves and Chief Finance Officer’s Statutory Opinion**

1. In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, I am required, as the Council’s Chief Finance Officer, to report to the authority on
  - the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of calculating the budget; and
  - the adequacy of the proposed level of financial reserves.
2. This statement sets out my statutory assessment of the Council’s proposed budget for 2026/27, within the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. In preparing this opinion, I have considered the Council’s governance arrangements, financial management framework, risk management processes, the outcome of budget challenge sessions and assurance activity, and the most up-to-date information available at the time of drafting. Members are required to have due regard to this statement when considering and determining the Council’s budget and council tax for the forthcoming financial year.
3. This is a professional and independent assessment. It does not replace Members’ responsibility to determine the budget; rather, it is intended to ensure that decisions are taken with a clear understanding of the financial risks, uncertainties and dependencies inherent within the Council’s financial position.

### **Basis of the Chief Finance Officer’s Opinion**

4. The Council enters 2026/27 having experienced a period of weakened financial resilience. The scale of recent financial pressures, including demand volatility, under-delivery of savings, and erosion of reserves, means that the 2026/27 budget is being set within a context of continued material risk.
5. My assessment of both the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of reserves for 2026/27 is therefore contingent upon a number of critical assumptions and mitigating actions. In particular, this opinion is predicated on:
  - the confirmation by Government of Exceptional Financial Support for both 2025/26 and 2026/27, on terms sufficient to address the remaining forecast deficits and to enable the Council to stabilise and

begin to rebuild its reserves to a level that is commensurate with its financial risk profile; and

- the delivery, to the scale and to the required timescales, of the savings and income proposals already incorporated within the 2026/27 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy, in particular those that are assessed as higher value, higher risk or more complex to implement;
- a step change in the Council's track record of savings delivery, including strengthened grip and governance, clearer accountability, earlier in-year corrective action where slippage emerges, and sustained senior leadership oversight;
- the continued operation of robust in-year financial management, monitoring and escalation arrangements to identify and respond to emerging pressures at the earliest opportunity.

6. The Council's current financial position means that the successful implementation of the above assumptions is critical to the achievement of a balanced and sustainable financial position. Should these assumptions not be realised, the Council would need to consider further corrective action within the financial year. The implications of these dependencies, and the principal risks that could affect their achievement, are set out in the sections that follow.

### **Wider Statutory Framework**

7. The requirement for the Chief Finance Officer to report to the authority on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget and the adequacy of the proposed level of reserves is set out in Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003. The purpose of this statutory report is to ensure that elected Members are fully informed of the financial risks, uncertainties and dependencies inherent within the budget proposals prior to taking decisions on the Council's budget and council tax.
8. Members are required by statute to have regard to the advice contained within this Section 25 statement when considering and approving the budget. This does not remove the discretion of the Council to set a budget different from that advised by the Chief Finance Officer; however, where this is the case, Members should be clear about the financial risks and consequences of doing so, and about the actions that would be required should those risks materialise.

9. The Chief Finance Officer also has separate and distinct statutory responsibilities under the **Local Government Finance Act 1988**, including the duty to make a report to the authority under Section 114 where it appears that the expenditure of the Council is likely to exceed the resources available to it. Nothing in this statement constitutes a Section 114 report; however, it is prepared within the context of the Council's overall statutory framework and the requirement to maintain a balanced and sustainable financial position.

### **Summary Position**

10. The Council is setting its 2026/27 budget following a period of materially weakened financial resilience. Over recent years, a combination of structural funding pressures, demand and socio-economic volatility, under-delivery of savings and erosion of reserves reduced the Council's financial flexibility to critically low levels. The Internal Audit opinion for 2024/25 was "No Assurance", external audit opinions have been disclaimed for three consecutive years, and the Council has required Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) to stabilise its position.
11. Significant corrective action is now underway. The Governance Review Improvement Plan and the Finance Modernisation Programme are strengthening financial controls, accountability and oversight. The 2026/27 budget incorporates substantial rebasing of previously underfunded cost pressures, strengthened inflation assumptions in high-risk services, clearer savings ownership and a reinstated £10m contingency. Flexible use of capital receipts has been materially reduced, and governance over savings and forecasting has been tightened. The proposed reserve level, assuming confirmation of EFS, restores some limited resilience from the critically low position at March 2025.
12. Notwithstanding this progress, the Council remains in a recovery phase. The control environment is demonstrably stronger but not yet fully mature. The effectiveness of recently implemented governance measures must be demonstrated over a sustained period. The 2026/27 budget is therefore being set within a context of continued material risk, particularly in demand-led services such as temporary accommodation, and is dependent upon disciplined delivery of approved savings.
13. Having considered all relevant factors, I am satisfied that, for 2026/27, the estimates used in setting the budget are as robust as can reasonably be achieved given the information available and the strengthened governance now in place. I am also satisfied that, subject to confirmation of EFS, the

proposed level of reserves is adequate for the purpose of setting a balanced budget for the year.

14. These conclusions apply to the 2026/27 financial year only. The Medium Term Financial Strategy identifies a significant residual funding gap in 2027/28 and 2028/29, and further structural action will be required to secure long-term sustainability. Continued improvement in savings delivery, demand management and financial governance will be essential to maintaining and strengthening the Council's financial resilience

### **How the Council arrived at the current financial position**

15. The Council's financial resilience has weakened materially over the period from 2022/23 to 2025/26. This did not arise from a single decision or event, but from the cumulative effect of structural funding pressures, ambitious savings assumptions, demand volatility, erosion of reserves, and weaknesses in financial systems and control.
16. Understanding how the Council reached this position is important not for attributing responsibility, but to inform the corrective actions now underway and to ensure that similar weaknesses are not repeated.

### **Long-term structural underfunding and income base**

17. For a sustained period, the Council has operated within funding settlements that did not fully reflect the scale and complexity of local demand pressures. When funding was last reviewed in 2013/14, the Council's funding was damped by £4.825m, whereby the required funding as assessed based on needs was not allocated in full and was not subsequently reset until the recent Fair Funding Review (FFR). Over the years, this shortfall implicitly grew to the extent of funding that has now been assessed in the FFR and settlement. While it is now acknowledged that the Council was relatively underfunded, the benefit of that recognition is being phased over three years rather than received immediately.
18. In addition, Hillingdon's local tax base has historically been comparatively low. Council tax increases in previous years were, on occasion, frozen or set below the referendum limit permitted by Government. While those decisions reflected affordability considerations and local priorities at the time, they limited the growth of the Council's tax yield relative to authorities that applied increases at or nearer the permitted threshold. Because the national funding methodology assumes a broadly standardised level of local tax when calculating relative resources, authorities that levy below

that notional level retain correspondingly lower locally generated income. As a result, the Council entered the recent period of heightened demand and inflationary pressure with a comparatively lower recurring income base than some peer authorities.

19. In the years preceding this settlement, service demand growth – particularly within social care and homelessness – outpaced underlying core funding increases. This created an underlying structural gap between cost pressures and recurring income. Temporary accommodation costs, in particular, have been subject to volatility driven by market conditions and wider economic pressures beyond the Council's direct control.
20. The local economic context has also influenced the Council's expenditure profile. The impact of Heathrow being within the borough means that Hillingdon as a port authority faces an abnormal pressure from the arrival of asylum seekers and the repatriation of British nationals from overseas on the demand for care and housing which is not fully recompensed through grant income. While not determinative in isolation, these wider contextual factors all contributed to pressures on both revenue and demand-led services.
21. The cumulative effect was that budgets increasingly relied upon efficiency delivery, income growth and transformation at a pace that was challenging to sustain over consecutive years.

#### Savings weaknesses

22. In response to these pressures, the Council adopted substantial savings programmes. For 2025/26 alone, savings totalling £38.8m (including £4.8m carried forward from 2024/25) were required to deliver the budget. While the scale of ambition reflected the magnitude of the financial challenge, the deliverability of certain proposals was not always underpinned by sufficiently detailed implementation planning or robust contingency arrangements.
23. In some cases, there was evidence of optimism bias in the assumptions underpinning savings delivery. Proposals were incorporated on the expectation that transformation would be achieved within-year, change would occur at pace, or that external market factors would remain favourable. Stretch targets on income were applied in some cases that could not be met. Where these assumptions did not materialise, the financial impact crystallised as in-year overspends.

24. Ownership and accountability for individual savings proposals were not sufficiently clear in all cases. This contributed to slippage, and in some cases undelivered savings were rolled forward into subsequent financial years, sometimes more than once, compounding delivery risk.
25. The cumulative effect was that the Council's base budget became progressively misaligned with actual service delivery and cost drivers. This has necessitated significant rebasing within the 2026/27 budget to reflect the true underlying cost of services, particularly in temporary accommodation and social care. The rebasing process is intended to ensure that 2026/27 does not commence with structurally understated budgets.

#### Use and erosion of reserves

26. As recurring pressures exceeded planned savings delivery, the Council balanced successive budgets through the use of reserves and other one-off measures. While reserves exist to manage timing differences and unforeseen pressures, reliance upon them to balance recurring gaps progressively weakens financial resilience.
27. Over recent years, General Fund and unfenced earmarked reserves declined materially, with the General Fund Reserve reaching £1.45m at March 2025. This level is very significantly below what would normally be regarded as prudent for a council of Hillingdon's size and risk profile.
28. The CIPFA Resilience Index, based on 2024/25 outturn data, placed the Council at the high-risk end of comparator authorities in respect of reserves, notwithstanding that borrowing levels relative to income are comparatively under control. This combination of low reserves but a manageable debt profile indicates that the Council's vulnerability has primarily resulted from having to absorb repeated overspends rather than being the result of excessive borrowing which has been the case for some Councils in financial distress.
29. The erosion of reserves has reduced flexibility and limited the Council's resilience in the face of in-year variances. It has ultimately led to the reliance on EFS as a stabilisation mechanism.

#### Data, Systems and Financial Control Weakness

30. Financial resilience was further affected by weaknesses in financial systems and control during this period. The implementation of Oracle did

not deliver the level of management information and transparency required for effective budget management and accountability. Reporting capability and forecast visibility have been hampered, reducing the ability of budget managers and finance officers to identify the full extent of emerging pressures at the time of budget setting. Growth and demand modelling has been weak or non-existent in some cases and has had to be built up, challenged and refined during the 2026/27 MTFS process.

31. Working paper quality and the financial statements preparation process have been found wanting and did not meet external audit expectations or deliver on time under the national backstop regime. As a result, the Council has received disclaimed external audit opinions for three consecutive financial years, together with 7 statutory recommendations. While this outcome in part reflects a national context of audit backlog and structural audit market pressures, it also indicates the need for improvement in underlying financial processes and documentation. The closure of the 2024/25 accounts has required external support to deliver and show improvement, but this ultimately needs to be taken fully in-house with sufficient capacity and expertise to be able to produce the accounts on time and to the standards required.
32. In parallel, the 2024/25 Internal Audit annual report set out multiple weaknesses in elements of the Council's control environment, citing concerns with asset management, budget monitoring, rent arrears and contract management, which all have a bearing on the financial context. This represented a clear signal that improvements were required across the organisation in governance discipline, financial oversight and risk management.
33. An additional consequence of these system and control weaknesses was a reduced ability historically to see the full projected outturn trajectory at the time budgets were compiled and approved. Where emerging pressures were only fully understood after the budget had been approved, the following year was already on a path to an overspend.
34. Taken together, these factors created a position in which the Council's financial strength was materially weakened entering 2025/26. Structural funding pressures, ambitious savings targets, reliance on reserves and control weaknesses combined to reduce resilience. The corrective actions now underway – an improved funding settlement, strengthened governance, rebasing of budgets, enhanced spend controls, improved savings ownership, and rebuilding of reserves – are designed to stabilise the position and place the Council on a more sustainable footing.

## Current Governance and Control Environment

35. The Council entered 2024/25 with material weaknesses in elements of its governance, financial control and oversight framework. These weaknesses have been acknowledged openly by senior leadership and Members. During 2025/26, a structured programme of recovery and reform has been implemented through the Governance Review Improvement Plan (GRIP) and the Finance Modernisation Programme (FMP).
36. The control environment is demonstrably stronger than at this point last year. However, it is not yet sufficiently embedded or consistently operating to conclude that the underlying weaknesses have been fully addressed. The Council remains in a stabilisation and recovery phase.

### Internal Audit, External Audit and Section 24 Recommendations

37. The Head of Internal Audit's Annual Opinion for 2024/25 concluded that No Assurance could be provided over the Council's internal control, risk management and governance arrangements. This conclusion reflected:
- A significant increase in Limited and No Assurance reviews (52% of assurance reviews)
  - Weaknesses in asset management, contract management oversight and budget monitoring
  - Poor data quality and inconsistent oversight arrangements
  - Reduced senior capacity as attention focused on transformation and savings delivery
  - Governance fragmentation at directorate level
38. Internal Audit also assessed the Council's risk maturity as "Risk Aware", indicating that risks are recognised but not yet embedded in a fully proactive control environment. In response, the Governance Review Improvement Plan (GRIP) was established in March 2025 as a corporate response to identified weaknesses. The GRIP is structured around three workstreams and is being reported regularly to the Audit Committee:
- Financial governance
  - Directorate governance
  - Constitutional and democratic governance
39. On 24 July 2025 the Council's External Auditors issued a Value for Money Update and statutory recommendations under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. These recommendations were considered and

formally accepted by Full Council in September 2025. The Section 24 recommendations focused on:

- Financial governance and oversight
- Budget setting and savings realism
- Financial management capacity
- Monitoring and accountability
- Medium-term sustainability planning

40. The Council resolved that the actions contained within both the Finance Modernisation Programme (FMP) and the Governance Review Improvement Plan (GRIP) would address these recommendations, with Audit Committee mandated to monitor delivery.

41. In addition, the Council's accounts have been disclaimed for three consecutive financial years under the national backstop audit regime. Whilst the backstop regime is a national issue affecting multiple authorities, local factors reported by the External Auditors have included:

- Insufficient working paper quality and audit readiness
- Weak reconciliation processes
- Oracle system limitations
- Capacity constraints within finance

42. Significant work has been undertaken over recent months to improve audit readiness, documentation standards and closedown planning. However, the restoration of fully assured accounts will require continued demonstrable improvement and the External Auditors have judged that it will likely take the Council at least three further complete audit cycles to get back to a clean audit opinion.

43. As requested by full Council at its meeting in September 2025, progress on the Section 24 recommendations is formally being reported to the Audit Committee at each meeting. The recommendations have been wrapped into the GRIP programme to ensure completeness and coherence of the activity undertaken, and so combine issues raised by external and internal auditors alike. Some of the improvements made during 2025/26 include the following:

- Implementation of enhanced spend control processes
- Clarification of the Council's current financial position to inform the budget setting process

- Better understanding of the issues that led to the Council's budget variances
  - Ongoing work to address issues with Oracle
  - An independent review into the Council's governance processes and a review of the Constitution
  - Increased focus on data quality through consistent and more detailed dashboard reporting
44. Whilst these actions represent meaningful progress, it will require sustained implementation and behavioural change over multiple cycles before assurance levels can be expected to improve materially. The Audit Committee will report back to full Council in September 2026 on the progress made.

#### Financial Governance and Controls

45. Through the Finance Modernisation Programme and the Governance Review Improvement Plan, a series of strengthened financial controls have been introduced and embedded during 2025/26. These measures are designed to restore discipline, improve visibility of risk and ensure that financial decisions are subject to appropriate challenge before commitments are made.
46. Enhanced spend controls have been implemented across the organisation. All invoice-related expenditure is now subject to a templated request and structured review process, with strengthened non-pay challenge processes operating at service manager, corporate director and statutory officer level. Corporate oversight of purchase card usage has also been reinforced to ensure compliance with financial regulations and to provide clearer audit trails. These changes are providing improved visibility over expenditure and ensure early intervention where spending does not align with corporate expectations of what is necessary spend.
47. Recruitment and staffing controls have similarly been tightened. Recruitment and staffing panels continue to operate with strengthened scrutiny of new appointments, secondments, pay adjustments and temporary staffing arrangements. Establishment changes are therefore now subject to clearer corporate review to ensure that decisions align with approved budgets and objectives. Given the scale of workforce expenditure within the Council's cost base, these measures are critical to maintaining financial stability.

48. In areas of significant demand-led pressure, particularly homelessness and social care, further governance enhancements have been introduced. Weekly Temporary Accommodation placement review panels now operate to provide oversight of high-cost decisions and to ensure that value-for-money considerations are applied consistently and appropriately. High-cost social care placements have been subject to structured review for some time already, with defined escalation routes for exceptional cases. These controls are intended to strengthen cost containment in the areas presenting the greatest financial volatility and pressure.
49. Improvements have also been made to forecasting and savings governance. A savings reporting process has been operating for several months now to ensure service areas are reporting on the progress against savings. The MTFS process has introduced a more disciplined approach and together with monitoring reviews is enabling the Council to remove optimism bias from savings assumptions. All proposed 2026/27 savings have been subject to review by senior officers, Corporate Directors and Cabinet Members, and high-value or high-risk savings proposals are required to be supported by detailed implementation plans that set out milestones, dependencies and risk mitigations. Corporate Directors fully own all of the proposals that have been put forward.
50. The flexible use of capital receipts (FCR) assumptions have been reviewed and any permanent staffing costs previously covered have been built back into base budgets. The implementation costs of savings proposals have been identified and only direct incremental costs will be covered by FCR, bringing the budgeted use of FCR down from £17m in 2025/26 to £3m in 2026/27. These changes are designed to ensure that the savings incorporated within the budget are realistic, deliverable and transparently monitored.
51. Collectively, these measures represent a substantive tightening of financial governance compared to prior years. However, many of these controls have been introduced within the current financial year and have yet to operate over a full budget cycle. Their effectiveness will depend not only on design but on sustained application, consistent managerial discipline and cultural embedding across the organisation.

#### Systems, Infrastructure and Financial Management Capability

52. The Council's financial resilience has been affected not only by funding and demand pressures, but also by limitations in systems, reporting capability and financial management processes. The May 2024 implementation of

Oracle did not deliver the level of clarity and accessibility required to support strong budget holder accountability. Weaknesses in reporting and reconciliation processes absorbed capacity of finance staff, reduced confidence in data and limited visibility and understanding of the financial performance and position during in-year budget monitoring, with ramifications for budget setting and year-end closedown and audit procedures.

53. A structured refresh of financial processes is now underway through the Finance Modernisation Programme. This includes strengthening reporting within Oracle, enhancing the reliability and usability of the system and the management information it produces. The objective is to ensure that budget managers have timely, accurate and intelligible data on which to base decisions.
54. Work is also progressing to implement a properly functioning Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) environment. This is intended to improve forecasting discipline, ownership and accountability of forecasts by budget managers and one coherent, consistent forecast from the service level through to the consolidated top-level forecast.
55. Financial closedown and audit readiness processes are being strengthened in response to the factors contributing to recent disclaimed external audit opinions. Improved documentation standards, clearer audit trails and more structured reconciliation processes are being embedded. More work is still to be done to reduce the reliance on external support to produce an improved quality set of accounts and to ensure the capacity and capability of the department are appropriate.
56. Capital governance arrangements are in the process of being reinforced, but is still a work in progress. A formal structured approach to capital project business case development and governance needs to be designed and put in place but will be addressed in 2026.
57. All of these measures represent important structural improvements. However, sustained effectiveness will depend on consistent application, strengthened professional capability and the embedding of financial discipline across the organisation. This is neither an easy or a quick fix and will depend on consistent application and enforcement from senior management to ensure improvements are embedded and a culture of financial governance and responsibility across the organisation takes hold. The direction of travel being taken is the right one, but many of the improvements and controls are still in their infancy or not fully in place and

so the control environment is not yet at a mature state. This will require continued focus and effort over the coming year. The implication for the 2026/27 budget and MTFS is that there are still potential weaknesses which may have a bearing on the control environment and reporting mechanisms, hence on the attention, focus, grip and capacity of staff to deliver all of the improvements required in the coming year, which will be important in underpinning the long-term financial resilience of the Council.

### **Robustness of the 2026/27 Estimates**

58. The 2026/27 budget has been prepared in materially different circumstances from prior years. It incorporates a significant rebasing of expenditure, strengthened inflation assumptions in high-risk areas, improved savings governance and reinstates a contingency provision in the base budget.

#### **Inflation**

59. Inflation assumptions have been reviewed comprehensively across pay, contracts, placements, temporary accommodation, energy and transport. Particular prudence has been applied in high-volatility areas. In both children's and adults' placements, and in temporary accommodation, inflation assumptions reflect recent trend experience and market conditions.
60. CPI inflation from April 2025 through to December 2025 has averaged 3.6% although this has dropped back in November and December. The Bank of England forecasts 3% by Q1 2026 and to near 2% from Q2 2026 onwards. Past forecasts have not always materialised, especially where predicting a return to near 2% inflation.
61. The Council has therefore taken the approach of a 3% increase in respect of staffing related costs and upwards of 2.8% on non-staffing costs, while adult social care has been applied at 4.8%. These levels ought to provide sufficient cover on average for increases over the coming year, subject to a successful reduction in CPI as forecast. Rates assumed in the MTFS drop down to 2.0% thereafter but will be revisited as part of next year's process.

#### **Budget Rebasing and Demand Growth**

62. Demand-led services continue to represent the most material source of financial risk. The 2026/27 budget reflects substantial rebasing of expenditure to align budgets with observed cost pressures and overspends during 2025/26. Where services have experienced significant overspends

due to non-delivery of savings or demand growth and inflation in excess of budget, those pressures have been incorporated into the 2026/27 base budget. This is intended to avoid the problems experienced in the past whereby cost pressures were only partially reflected at the point of budget setting, leading to an immediate budget pressure in the new year.

63. Temporary accommodation remains the single largest area of volatility. The 2026/27 budget reflects updated assumptions regarding placement numbers and unit costs, with further refinement to 2026/27 assumptions taking place since the consultation budget was proposed. Projections of temporary accommodation pressures have now been incorporated into years two and three of the MTFs. The service has been successful at restraining the impact of inflation during 2025/26 through implementing new rate caps and considers that this will continue to have an impact next year. However, a tightening is anticipated in the rental market due to the Renters Rights Act which will push up inflation and come through fully in 2027/28, for which a 5% increase has been assumed.
64. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that temporary accommodation demand does not correlate reliably with demographic growth or other available indicators. Economic conditions, private sector rental market dynamics, asylum flows, and national policy changes all materially influence local demand. As such, forecasting in this area will continue to carry inherent uncertainty despite improved modelling and greater review and attention from officers.

#### Robustness of Savings Proposals

65. The savings incorporated within the 2026/27 budget have been subject to more rigorous challenge than in prior years. The scale of savings is reduced by comparison to 2026/27 but remains significant, and delivery risk is therefore one of the most critical determinants of the achievability of the 2026/27 budget.
66. The proposals put forward in the December consultation budget were subject to a number of rounds of officer and star chamber review to assess the realistic achievability of the proposals. This involved officers and members and covered both savings and demand growth modelling. Scale, phasing, deliverability, resourcing and potential barriers were all discussed in the process. These reviews took place over a period of months from September through to December. The impact of Temporary

Accommodation was removed from the December MTFS on the basis that this still needed further work to build confidence for inclusion.

67. Since publication of the December consultation budget, a further period of review and reflection has been undertaken by officers. This has resulted in:
- Reassessment of phasing;
  - Explicit identification of implementation costs;
  - Adjustment or removal of proposals where deliverability risk was assessed as too high;
  - Identification of additional pressures where challenge determined that earlier assumptions had been understated, or additional growth requirements reflected.
68. This iterative review process has increased both growth provision and pressure recognition in certain areas but has improved realism and credibility. The final budget therefore differs in a number of respects from the December consultation position, reflecting ongoing scrutiny and removal of optimism bias. These changes are set out in Appendix A7 of the February Budget and MTFS report to full Council.
69. In addition, savings proposals assessed as higher value, higher risk or more complex are now required to be supported by detailed delivery plans. The delivery plan template is designed to capture and clarify milestones, dependencies and accountability. Corporate Directors have explicit ownership of delivery within their areas, with all savings proposed having been signed off by the responsible Corporate Director as part of the process.
70. This strengthened process materially improves the robustness of the collection of savings compared to prior years. However, it must also be recognised that the Council's recent track record in savings delivery has been inconsistent. Achieving a step change in delivery success will be essential.

#### Contingency

71. A £10m contingency has been reinstated within the base budget for 2026/27. This provides capacity to manage in-year volatility (e.g. for unforeseen external factors, delays to savings, or to exploit an invest to save opportunity) without immediate recourse to drawing down on the reserve that is just being rebuilt, and to soften the need for urgent reactive savings measures which are usually hard to identify and implement at short

notice. The justification for holding a meaningful contingency is borne out by recent experience and is a key pillar in ensuring budget robustness.

### Business Rates

72. Business rates income for 2026/27 has been modelled on the basis of safety net protection at 100%, limiting downside risk in the event of appeal volatility or collection shortfall. This provides protection within the coming financial year.
73. However, under the new business rates reforms, the safety net protection reduces in 2027/28 and 2028/29. The Council may therefore face greater exposure to volatility in those years. In addition, steep increases in rates liabilities for certain businesses under revaluation changes may increase appeals and collection risk. These factors do not undermine the robustness of the 2026/27 estimate but represent a potentially material risk in the outer years of the MTFS. It is likely that the CCA (check, challenge, appeal) process on valuation will take significant time and for more complex businesses such as Heathrow the process may take longer than the current MTFS 3-year profile. This will need to be revisited in future MTFS iterations.

### Dedicated Schools Grant deficit

74. The confirmation of 90% grant support towards the accumulated DSG deficit materially reduces risk in 2026/27 and provides greater forward visibility. This is a positive development compared to the position reflected hitherto. Nonetheless, the structural High Needs deficit remains significant and the number of schools operating in deficit is increasing, with school reserve balances reducing. Ongoing oversight, continued delivery of High Needs management initiatives and clear monitoring arrangements will remain essential.
75. For the purposes of 2026/27, the DSG assumptions are considered reasonable based on the most recent government announcements and local modelling. By the time the statutory override ends (which will impact in 2028/29), the 10% allocation to the Council will need to be absorbed. This is not currently reflected in the MTFS due to the lateness of the announcement and the work required to model and understand the impact of this. However, the grant to be received in autumn 2026, anticipated to be in the region of £69m of the projected £75.5m deficit, will bring offsetting benefits by means of reduced borrowing costs which by 2027/28 could amount to c£3m/year and largely offset the anticipated impact of the

residual deficit in 2028/29. If a similar rate of grant followed in 2027/28 and 2028/29, the Council will need to cover £7-8m of residual deficit.

### Housing Revenue Account

76. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is ring-fenced and legally separate from the General Fund. In forming my Section 25 opinion, I have separately considered the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of reserves within the HRA.
77. For 2026/27, the Council will apply the permitted rent increase of CPI plus 1%, in line with the Government's rent policy. This approach supports the medium-term sustainability of the HRA business plan and partially offsets the cumulative income reductions arising from the four-year 1% rent reduction implemented in earlier years. The adopted assumption is consistent with national policy and provides a reasonable income base from which to sustain investment in housing stock and compliance with statutory and regulatory standards, including the Decent Homes requirements.
78. The principal revenue risk within the HRA relates to rent collection performance. As with other areas of income collection in the Council, wider cost-of-living pressures continue to present a risk of arrears growth. Strengthened monitoring of housing rent debt, improved visibility of arrears and focused recovery processes are being put in place to mitigate this exposure. The income assumptions for 2026/27 are considered reasonable based on known collection experience.
79. The HRA capital programme remains substantial and has been subject to a detailed review of the projects and overall affordability. There is substantial investment in housing stock planned in order to meet and maintain Decent Homes standards, which will help manage reactive repairs levels. Consideration has been given to the level of borrowing required to support the programme and the long-term sustainability of debt charges within the 30-year HRA business plan. Borrowing levels have been managed to maintain debt at or below an internal boundary of approximately five times annual HRA income. In order to remain within this constraint, certain schemes have been reprofiled or deprioritised. On this basis, and assuming delivery within approved cost parameters, the capital programme is considered affordable within current projections.

## Key Financial Risks and Sensitivities

80. Notwithstanding the strengthened assumptions underpinning the 2026/27 budget, a number of residual risks remain:
- Temporary accommodation demand growth, which remains volatile and influenced by external factors beyond the Council's direct control.
  - Savings delivery risk, particularly in higher-value and transformation-based proposals, which necessitates an improvement compared to past delivery success rates
  - Council tax, business rates, rent and other income collection performance, which may all come under pressure as households and businesses continue to experience cost-of-living impacts.
  - Reduced business rates safety net protection in 2027/28 and 2028/29, increasing exposure to appeals and valuation volatility.
  - Placement market inflation, particularly in social care.
  - Improved governance around the capital programme, to include a robust business case process to drive more rigorous assessment of proposed schemes before they are progressed.
81. The robustness of the 2026/27 estimates must therefore be understood within a framework of high focus, vigilant in-year monitoring and early corrective intervention. Strengthened forecasting discipline and escalation will be essential to identifying, escalating and mitigating these risks.
82. While inherent uncertainty remains, particularly in demand-led services, I am satisfied that for 2026/27 the estimates are as robust as can reasonably be achieved given current information, governance arrangements and the scale of external volatility. This judgement applies to 2026/27 only. Confidence in the robustness of estimates for the outer years will depend upon sustained savings delivery, effective demand management and continued embedding of strengthened financial governance, and will require yet more work over the coming months to identify further savings and confirm inflation and growth pressures to close the budget gap.

## **Adequacy of Reserves and Reserves Strategy**

83. In forming my opinion on the adequacy of reserves, I have considered their level, composition and planned use against the scale of financial risk facing the Council, the volatility inherent within demand-led services, the degree of uncertainty within the budget, and the Council's ability to absorb financial shocks.

84. Reserves are fundamental to financial resilience. They provide a buffer against unplanned pressures, manage timing differences, and support the implementation of transformational change. They are not a substitute for sustainable recurring income and cannot be relied upon to support ongoing expenditure; once utilised, they must either be replenished or the underlying position corrected.
85. The 2026/27 budget removes the structural dependency on drawing down reserves to achieve in-year balance, aside from known timing differences.

#### Historic position and rate of decline

86. The Council's reserves position has materially deteriorated over recent years. The decline commenced in 2022/23 and accelerated thereafter, although the impact on the general fund balance was not fully evident until 2024/25.
87. Since March 2022, over a four-year period, general fund and unfenced earmarked reserves (excluding Schools, Public Health and PFI reserves) have reduced at an average annual rate of £26.5m. Adjusting for c.£11m of Covid-19 balances held in March 2022, the underlying average annual reduction is £23.7m. Applying the £36m projected 2025/26 overspend to the general fund (but not EFS) demonstrates the pace at which reserves have been eroded.

**Table: Annual progression in useable, unfenced reserves**

Year Ended	General Fund	Earmarked Reserves (*)	Total	Annual Change
31.3.22	26,712	47,740	74,452	
31.3.23	26,839	15,969	42,808	(31,644)
31.3.24	26,845	1,941	28,786	(14,022)
31.3.25	1,450	3,167	4,617	(24,169)
31.3.26	(34,550)	3,167	(31,383)	(36,000)

\* Excluding Schools, Public Health and PFI ringfenced reserves

88. This decline reflects sustained financial pressures, demand growth outstripping provision, a more challenging socio-economic context, and under-delivery against planned savings, in some cases exceeding the contingency held in the base budget. Recent budgets have also relied on planned drawdowns of reserves to balance residual gaps. For 2025/26, £4.2m of reserves were assumed to be available; however, finalisation of

the 2024/25 audited accounts confirmed that reserves were insufficient to support that assumption.

89. In closing the 2024/25 accounts, it was necessary to draw down unfenced earmarked reserves to preserve a general fund balance of £1.45m at 31 March 2025. Against nearest statistical neighbours, the most recent CIPFA Resilience Index data (based on 2024/25 outturn) places the Council at the high-risk end of the range, reflecting the lowest level of reserves within its comparator group.
90. During 2025/26, as the full extent of prior year pressures became clear and enhanced challenge was applied to forecasting, the projected deficit moved from £18.3m at Month 4 to £36.0m at Month 6 – in excess of what had previously been regarded as a prudent minimum level of reserves. Without intervention, this would have resulted in negative balances.

#### Composition and flexibility of current reserves

91. In addition to assessing the robustness of the estimates, I am required to form a view on the adequacy of the Council's proposed level of reserves. This assessment is intrinsically linked to the scale of financial risk described in the preceding sections. Reserves are a key mechanism for absorbing financial shocks, managing timing differences and protecting against unforeseen and materially adverse movements in income or expenditure. Reserves cannot substitute for structural balance; once utilised, they must either be replenished or the underlying cost base corrected. Their adequacy must therefore be considered in light of both current volatility and medium-term sustainability.
92. Earmarked reserves are held for specific purposes and provide important targeted mitigation, but offer limited flexibility to manage general financial risk. The extensive drawdown undertaken in closing 2024/25 has reduced unfenced earmarked reserves to very low levels, leaving minimal provision for risks ordinarily covered through such balances, including insurance liabilities, local plan costs, provider market volatility and business rates risk.
93. These balances will need to be reviewed and rebuilt as part of the 2025/26 closure process. They are not currently provided for within the base budget and would therefore require support through the proposed EFS contingency. Assuming confirmation of EFS, the projected position entering 2026/27 would comprise £41.5m of general fund reserves and £11.6m of unfenced earmarked reserves. However, this earmarked balance would include:

- £4.4m relating to technical NNDR timing differences;
- £2m in unapplied grant balances;
- £1m reflecting a paper loss on treasury investments;
- a developing provision towards local plan costs; and
- £1m insurance reserve.

94. There is little practical scope to repurpose these balances for unforeseen risks. The general fund reserve therefore remains the principal source of financial resilience.

#### Housing Revenue Account Reserves

95. The HRA reserve is maintained at £15m, consistent with prior financial plans. The 2026/27 revenue budget projects a surplus position sufficient to support capital investment and, where appropriate, debt repayment, without recourse to reserve drawdown. Maintaining a stable reserve position provides resilience against potential volatility in rent income, inflation in repairs and maintenance contracts, or regulatory compliance pressures. Having regard to the scale of the HRA, its income base and associated risks, the current reserve level is considered adequate.

96. Taking this together with the HRA assumptions and factors reference earlier in this report, I am satisfied that the estimates underlying the 2026/27 HRA budget are robust and that the proposed level of HRA reserves is adequate for the purposes of setting a balanced HRA budget. The HRA does not present a material financial risk to the wider financial position of the authority, provided that borrowing, capital delivery and income collection continue to be managed within the parameters set out above

#### Role of Exceptional Financial Support in rebuilding reserves

97. EFS is central to stabilising the Council's reserves strategy. The 2025/26 request addresses the projected £36m overspend and enables the rebuilding of £40m of general fund and contingency reserves. Some of the earmarked reserves drawn down to finalise the 2024/25 will also need to be rebuilt and funded through EFS.

98. In determining an appropriate reserve level, I have assessed the Council's overall risk profile, including:

- exposure to demand-led services;
- savings delivery and transformation risk;

- macroeconomic volatility including inflation and interest rates; and
  - the Council's recent track record of forecast variation.
99. On this basis, a target range of £30m to £50m of uncommitted usable reserves is considered appropriate. A planned level of £41.5m for 2026/27 sits within the middle of this range, providing sufficient headroom while avoiding excessive reliance on EFS as the sole mechanism for rebuilding resilience.
100. It is important to note, however, that recent experience demonstrates how rapidly reserves can be eroded where planning assumptions prove over-optimistic or savings delivery falters. Two consecutive years of underperformance have previously depleted balances at a significant rate. This level of reserves therefore represents recovery rather than strength. There will need to be discipline in delivery to ensure that the reserve is protected from a resumption of drawdowns and structural problems.
101. The reliance on Exceptional Financial Support has implications for the Council's Capital Financing Requirement and borrowing trajectory. In preparing the 2026/27 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy, I have had regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code and the requirement that capital expenditure and borrowing remain affordable, prudent and sustainable. The projected MRP and interest costs arising from capitalised support are incorporated within the MTFs and are assessed as affordable within the current revenue projections. The use of EFS is intended to be time-limited and forms part of a wider recovery strategy. Continued compliance with the Prudential Code will depend upon delivery of a balanced medium-term financial plan and avoidance of further structural capitalisation beyond that currently modelled.

#### Reserves Adequacy – Conclusion

102. Taking all factors together, and assuming confirmation of Exceptional Financial Support, the proposed level of reserves for 2026/27 is adequate for the purposes of setting the budget.
103. This conclusion is conditional on:
- Delivery of approved savings;
  - Continued strengthened financial governance;
  - Effective in-year monitoring;
  - No material adverse demand or inflation shock beyond modelled sensitivities.

104. The proposed reserve level restores some resilience from the critically low position at March 2025. However, it does not provide excess headroom. Sustained improvement in financial discipline and structural balance will be required to ensure that reserves are protected and strengthened over the medium term.
105. This assessment of adequacy, like the assessment of robustness of estimates, applies to 2026/27. The later years of the MTFS remain subject to further detailed challenge and will require significant actions and bold policy decisions to secure enduring financial sustainability and resilience, and thereby be able to safeguard the reserves from a recurrence of past depletion.

### **Closing the budget gap across the MTFS period**

106. Despite the improved funding settlement, the Council faces a residual gap in both 2027/28 and 2028/29. By the final year of the MTFS, the projected shortfall remains £44.5m, even after the full benefit of the phased funding reform has been incorporated. This scale of gap is material and requires early, sustained and structural action. Work to identify and appraise options must commence at the start of 2026/27 to maximise the time available for consultation, implementation and delivery of the financial benefits.
107. The most significant driver of the medium-term gap is the continued growth in demand and inflationary cost pressures within temporary accommodation. As set out earlier, this represents the single largest area of financial volatility within the revenue budget. The degree to which demand growth can be stabilised and unit costs controlled will materially influence the trajectory of the MTFS. Effective mitigation in this area has the potential to reduce the rate of cost growth, while failure to do so would compound pressure in later years.
108. The financing consequences of EFS are also built into the forecast. The combined impact of Minimum Revenue Provision and interest is projected to reach £12.4m per annum by 2028/29. This represents a structural call on the revenue budget. Any reduction in the reliance on EFS, either through in-year underspends or through capital receipts that can be applied to offset the capitalised deficit, would directly reduce this recurring burden.
109. Given the scale of the remaining gap, all available income and expenditure levers must be considered.

110. The current Band D Council Tax level of £1,952.38 (£1,462.00 being the Council's own element) in 2025/26 remains significantly below both the national average of £2,280 (£2,236 excluding parish precepts) and outer London comparators, and the Council's own element is approximately 14% lower than the CIPFA statistical nearest neighbour average of 16 London councils. The budget assumes a 4.99% increase for Hillingdon in 2026/27, resulting in a Band D charge of £1,534.95. Each additional 1% increase generates approximately £1.57m on an ongoing basis and compounds over time. Authorities in receipt of EFS frequently seek increases above the referendum limit, and this is an option that warrants careful consideration in the context of Hillingdon's comparatively low base and medium-term pressures.
111. A review of local discounts and concessions is also warranted. The Council's older persons' discount is unique nationally and results in approximately £1m per annum in foregone income. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme, while an important support mechanism for low-income households, also includes elderly claimants. The cumulative affordability and policy implications of these arrangements should be reviewed alongside the wider budget strategy.
112. Parking concessions, including the Hillingdon First card and 30 minutes' free parking, represent further areas where policy choices have financial implications. Many authorities have moved towards more targeted approaches where free parking is used strategically in specific locations rather than applied universally. Given the scale of the MTFS challenge, this area should be reassessed on a cost-benefit basis.
113. A comprehensive review of all traded services is required to ensure that operating costs are fully recovered and that non-statutory activity is not being subsidised. Independent benchmarking analysis indicates that the Council ranks low or very low against comparable outer London authorities in a range of fees, charges and sales income categories. While the proposed increases within the 2026/27 budget will narrow some of this gap, a structured benchmarking exercise during 2026/27 will be necessary to identify the full opportunity and inform future decisions.
114. A number of income-generating assets have experienced limited capital reinvestment over recent years. The sustainability of income streams from theatres, car parks and elements of the operational estate may depend on targeted investment to maintain attractiveness, efficiency and yield. A strategic review of asset conditions and maintenance requirements should

therefore run in parallel with wider estate rationalisation and disposal considerations, ensuring that revenue consequences are fully understood.

115. The remaining £44.5m gap is substantial and cannot be addressed through incremental savings alone. It will require a combination of structural cost control, tight demand management, income maximisation, policy review and disciplined capital and asset strategies. Early option development during 2026/27 is essential to allow sufficient time for consultation, delivery and financial benefit.
116. The Council retains options and a range of potential levers, but the scale of the challenge requires realism, prioritisation and a willingness to consider decisions that may previously have been deferred. Sustained delivery discipline will be critical if the MTFs gap is to be closed without renewed reliance on one-off measures or further erosion of financial resilience.

## **Summary**

117. In discharging my responsibilities under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, I have considered the detailed savings and pressures proposals for 2026/27 and the MTFs, the scale and nature of the financial risks facing the Council, the governance and financial management arrangements currently in place, the reinstated contingency provision, the proposed level and composition of reserves, and the reliance on EFS as part of the Council's stabilisation strategy.
118. The 2026/27 budget has been prepared in materially more robust circumstances than in recent years. Structural pressures identified during 2025/26 have been rebased into the 2026/27 position. Savings proposals have been subject to enhanced challenge and are supported by clearer ownership and planning. Inflation assumptions in volatile service areas have been strengthened and a £10m contingency has been reinstated. Governance, forecasting discipline and corporate oversight continue to be tightened in response to both internal and external audit findings.
119. It is also necessary to acknowledge that the Council will start 2026/27 from a period of materially weakened financial resilience: the Internal Audit opinion for 2024/25"; the disclaimed external audit opinions and statutory recommendations; reserves reduced to critically low levels at March 2025 and a need for EFS to stabilise the position. Corrective action is well underway through the Governance Review Improvement Plan and the Finance Modernisation Programme. While progress is evident, the control environment should properly be described as strengthened and improving

but not yet fully mature. Consistent application of the revised framework over a sustained period of time will be required to restore full assurance confidence.

120. Having considered all relevant factors, I am satisfied that, for the financial year 2026/27, the estimates used in setting the budget are as robust as can reasonably be achieved, given the information available at the time of preparation, the inherent volatility in demand-led services, particularly temporary accommodation, and the strengthened governance and forecasting arrangements now in operation. This judgement is contingent upon confirmation by Government of EFS in line with current modelling, full and timely delivery of approved savings proposals, and continued disciplined in-year financial monitoring with early corrective action where required. It also assumes that no material adverse demand or inflation shock occurs beyond that which has been reasonably modelled within current sensitivities.
121. In respect of reserves, and assuming confirmation of EFS, the proposed General Fund reserve level for 2026/27 is adequate for the purposes of setting a balanced budget. The projected level of reserves sits within a reasonable range when assessed against the Council's current risk profile and service volatility. However, reserves remain relatively shallow in historical context and are vulnerable to renewed erosion should savings delivery weaken or demand volatility accelerate. The protection and gradual strengthening of reserves must remain a central component of the Council's financial strategy.
122. It is important to emphasise that these conclusions apply to the 2026/27 financial year. The outer years of the MTFS continue to present material structural challenges and are not a finished or complete position. Securing sustainable balance in 2027/28 and 2028/29 will require sustained delivery of savings, disciplined demand management, careful use of policy levers, and continued embedding of strengthened governance and financial control. There is likely to be a need therefore to seek EFS in order to balance the 2027/28 given that fair funding will not land in full until 2028/29.
123. Subject to the conditions set out above, I am satisfied that the Council can set a lawful and balanced budget for 2026/27 in accordance with its statutory duties. The durability of this position will depend upon consistent execution of the agreed strategy and the maintenance of financial discipline throughout the medium term.

**Steve Muldoon, 17 February 2026**