

Minutes

RESIDENTS' SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

8 January 2026



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Meeting held at Committee Room 5

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Peter Smallwood (Chair), Ekta Gohil (Vice-Chair), Darran Davies, Jas Dhot, Kamal Preet Kaur (Labour Lead), Elizabeth Garelick and Jagjit Singh</p> <p>Officers Present: Matt Davis – Director – Strategic and Operational Finance Dan Kennedy (Corporate Director of Residents Services) Ceri Lamoureux – Head of Finance Steve Muldoon (Corporate Director of Finance) Bernard Ofori-Atta – Head of Finance Liz Penny - Democratic Services Officer Ian Thynne - Head of Environmental Specialists Richard Webb (Director Community Safety & Enforcement)</p> <p>Others Present: Kenny McCamlie – APCOA Contract Manager Kedar Maharjan – APCOA</p>
126.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE <i>(Agenda Item 1)</i></p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
127.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING <i>(Agenda Item 2)</i></p> <p>None.</p>
128.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING <i>(Agenda Item 3)</i></p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings dated 6 and 27 November 2025 be agreed as an accurate record.</p>
129.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THOSE MARKED PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE <i>(Agenda Item 4)</i></p> <p>It was confirmed that all items of business were marked Part I and would be considered in public.</p>
130.	<p>MONTHLY BUDGET AND SPEND REPORT <i>(Agenda Item 5)</i></p> <p>The Corporate Director for Residents' Services, Dan Kennedy, presented the Month 7 budget and spend report. Other officers in attendance to respond to Members' questions were Steve Muldoon - Corporate Director of Finance, Matt Davis - Director – Strategic and Operational Finance, Ceri Lamoureux - Head of Finance and Bernard</p>

Ofori-Atta - Head of Finance.

It was reported that the projected net overspend for services within the remit of the Residents' Services Select Committee stood at £7.8 million; a figure that had remained largely unchanged since Month 6. The pressures contributing to this position had been driven primarily by homelessness demand, which had been reported previously to the Committee.

It was explained that a number of proactive measures had been undertaken during the year. One notable initiative involved efforts to control temporary accommodation expenditure through the introduction of caps and other controls. This initiative had produced an estimated cost reduction of nearly £8 per unit, per night, amounting to just over £2 million in cost avoidance for the year. Despite this, the overall situation had remained exceptionally challenging, particularly in relation to securing accommodation in the private rented sector and accessing other forms of affordable or social housing. These challenges had been exacerbated by high levels of demand, including increased evictions from private rented homes, evictions by friends and family, and presentations from households fleeing domestic abuse.

Members were informed that a series of proposals had been set out in the subsequent agenda item to address these pressures, including growth proposals, budget rebasing and a range of further initiatives planned for the next year. These would include new efforts to secure private rented accommodation, continuation of the year's ambitious programme to acquire additional social rented properties, and partnership work with housing associations to increase supply. It was acknowledged that these efforts were operating in a highly challenging environment, consistent with the experience of other London boroughs and local authorities nationally. It was emphasised, however, that activity would continue and innovation would be pursued wherever possible.

It was also reported that the Housing Revenue Account was projecting a breakeven position and that reserves had been maintained at £15 million, which was considered positive. The Committee was advised that, of the £11.7 million savings target within its remit, £5.6 million (around half) had been banked and were on track to be delivered. A further £3.5 million (around 30%) had been classed as amber and were expected to be delivered, though possibly not fully within the current financial year. It was noted that some savings were deemed undeliverable and would be written out of the budget, with several identified as legacy targets no longer achievable.

Councillors referred to page 20 of the report, noting a £0.9 million shortfall in garden-waste subscription income as of Month 7. Clarification was requested on whether the shortfall had increased between Months 6 and 7 or whether the position had stabilised, allowing a more reliable full-year forecast.

In response, it was explained by officers that the position had largely stabilised. Income was reported at approximately £1.6 million, against the original £2.5 million target. Officers stated that, as the service had been a new subscription scheme introduced part-way through the year following consultation, income estimates had been based on the best available benchmarking from other boroughs. It was added that schemes of this nature tended to mature over two to four years, with steady growth expected before levelling off.

Members asked how the identified shortfalls, including slippages and undeliverable savings, were being mitigated. It was stated that the report outlined the figures but not

the associated improvement plan, and further detail was requested on actions being taken, how replacements for undeliverable savings would be identified, and how mitigation would be monitored.

Officers responded that some savings targets would never be achievable and were therefore being rebased, as shown in the next agenda item. It was explained that a wide range of control measures had been introduced corporately, including spend controls requiring panel approval for expenditure over £500, strengthened contract compliance, and recruitment controls. These measures were described as significant mitigations. It was emphasised that, in demand-led statutory services, total elimination of pressures was not possible; instead, actions focused on reducing overall costs rather than preventing expenditure outright. Officers noted that further detail could be provided outside the meeting if required.

Councillors observed that detailed information would help the Committee scrutinise trends more effectively. Clarification was sought regarding the effect of recruitment controls on day-to-day operations, and concern was raised about references to redundancies. They asked what assessments had been undertaken regarding the impact of such actions on service delivery.

It was explained that all service changes were subject to scrutiny by senior officers, finance and HR, as well as the corporate management team. It was confirmed that the Council's priority was to maintain frontline services and statutory duties. Any proposed changes underwent an equalities impact assessment. Officers reported that recruitment-related adjustments were largely driven by redesigned ways of working and efficiencies, with an emphasis on collaborative working rather than reducing service provision.

The Committee requested an update on homelessness, including the number of households in emergency accommodation, the scale of pressure, associated costs, and whether any levelling-off was expected. In response, it was reported that approximately 1,800 households were in temporary accommodation, with around 800 placed in higher-cost nightly or spot-purchased provision. It was confirmed that the Council had negotiated firmly with providers and introduced caps, achieving reduced costs. The challenges were described as significant and largely outside the Council's control, including unexpected arrivals through Heathrow and sharply rising private-sector rents, with some families facing increases of £400–£500 per month. Officers stated that mitigation efforts included persuading landlords to retain tenants, identifying alternative accommodation, expanding acquisition programmes, and developing new models for housing supply. It was reported that more than 200 additional homes for social rent would be acquired during the year. The underlying issue was described as one of affordability, with many families either unable to enter or unable to remain in the private rented sector.

In response to their questions regarding the high overspend and final forecast variance and whether these were attributable to a lack of new housing supply and slow delivery of new homes, Members were advised that turnaround times for existing Council stock were generally strong and that further opportunities were being explored to maximise the use of available stock, including downsizing incentives. It was reported that significant investment was being made in new schemes such as Hayes Town Centre and Avondale. However, lead-in times for new developments and market stagnation—particularly the reluctance of developers to proceed with blocks of flats unless a full sell-through was achievable—were described as constraints. When asked whether

homelessness applications had continued to rise, officers reported a stable but high volume of 100–120 applications per week.

Members sought clarification about the sustainability of reducing revenue contributions to capital schemes in order to maintain HRA balances, referencing page 21 of the report. Officers responded that the arrangement was sustainable and formed part of the budget's design. It was stated that the revenue contribution acted as a balancing mechanism and that the changes involved relatively modest amounts within the wider financial framework.

Councillors referred to the cost of the waking-watch service and asked whether a phased exit plan existed, noting that the report lacked such detail. In response, it was confirmed that the report before the Committee represented a snapshot of the financial position rather than an in-depth thematic report and that more detailed reporting could be provided separately. It was explained that the waking-watch arrangement had been introduced to prevent residents in affected private accommodation from being required to leave their homes following a likely prohibition notice from the London Fire Brigade. Officers confirmed that the Council had incurred unavoidable costs but reported that the Council was now close to exiting the waking-watch arrangement, subject to final sign-off.

RESOLVED: That the Select Committee:

- 1. Noted the budget monitoring position as of October 2025 (Month 7) for the Council; and**
- 2. Noted the budget monitoring position as of October 2025 (Month 7) for the services within the remit of the Residents' Services Select Committee.**

131. CABINET BUDGET PROPOSALS 2026/27 (Agenda Item 6)

The Corporate Director of Finance, Steve Muldoon and the Corporate Director for Residents' Services, Dan Kennedy, presented the report. Other officers in attendance to respond to Members' questions were Matt Davis, Director – Strategic and Operational Finance, Ceri Lamoureux, Head of Finance and Bernard Ofori-Atta, Head of Finance.

It was explained that the overall Council budget had been reviewed by the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee earlier in the week, with a more detailed discussion available via the meeting recording. The Corporate Director of Finance outlined the wider financial context, noting that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, published in December 2025, reflected a highly challenging environment driven by rising demand, market pressures in social care and temporary accommodation, and inflation outpacing funding levels.

It was noted that Government funding for Hillingdon had increased but would be phased in over three years. Council reserves had been significantly depleted in recent years, reducing financial resilience. As a result, the Council required budget growth to meet unavoidable pressures and had identified a number of difficult savings proposals. To balance the 2024/25 budget legally, the Council was seeking Exceptional Financial Support (EFS), which required central Government approval and repayment.

Members heard that all savings proposals were owned by senior officers, had been through internal challenge sessions, and were intended to be realistic rather than

aspirational. Further detailed work was still required, particularly on high-risk or high-value proposals, and ongoing improvements to demand modelling and savings monitoring would continue.

It was noted that the meeting would focus on the proposals within the Residents' Services Select Committee's remit, including assumptions, savings, growth proposals, risks, and service impacts. The output would be the Committee's feedback and recommendations to Cabinet, to be considered alongside responses to the six-week public consultation. Final budget decisions were scheduled for Cabinet on 19 February and full Council on 26 February 2026.

It was noted that a net budget increase of approximately £15.8 million had been proposed within the remit of Residents' Services. This increase was composed of nearly £30 million in growth alongside £14 million in savings. It was explained that the majority of the growth had been driven by demand pressures, particularly in relation to homelessness, as well as the need to address legacy income targets and other longstanding budget pressures. An example was provided in which the budget for tree inspection and maintenance had been proposed for an uplift of £130,000 to ensure statutory duties continued to be met as tree numbers expanded across the Borough.

Members were informed that the efficiencies and savings proposals had been presented as arising from a range of service areas, with an emphasis placed on doing things differently. It was highlighted that greater collaboration across services, deployment of digital technology, expansion of self-service options, and process improvements designed to achieve tasks correctly at first attempt were being prioritised. Joint working both within Residents' Services and across the wider Council was expected to generate reductions in expenditure.

With reference to the proposed 10% increase in discretionary fees and services, Members sought clarification as to how the increase supported continued value for money for residents, whether the Council would remain benchmarked among the lowest-cost boroughs in London, and whether comparative information from neighbouring authorities could be provided. It was stated by officers that the Council had continued to be recognised as a value-for-money, high-quality service provider, supported by strong benchmarking across adult social care, children's social care and housing services. It was confirmed that the Council's fees and charges had historically remained positioned at the lower end relative to other London and West London boroughs. Officers noted that the proposed increase of the waste subscription charge to £77 would still leave the Council's costs lower than neighbouring authorities operating fortnightly collections, while Hillingdon continued to offer weekly collections. It was confirmed that additional benchmarking data could be made available outside the meeting.

A question was raised by Members concerning how the increase in fees might affect take-up of services, with reference to a previous decline in green waste subscriptions. It was asked what the implications would be should insufficient numbers of residents use those services and what measures had been considered. In response, Members were informed that all proposals had undergone significant testing, including assumptions around expected income. Where increased fees carried uncertainty, income projections had been cautiously reduced to account for potential reductions in demand for discretionary services. A further question was posed as to whether such reductions could prevent the Council from achieving planned savings. Officers were confident that income levels set out in the budget would be achieved. It was stated that

where new services carried greater uncertainty, income projections had been intentionally lowered. Reference was also made to corporate contingency funds maintained to mitigate non-delivery of savings or unexpected cost pressures.

Housing budget proposals were then queried. Councillors referred to the planned £8.5m savings and asked whether this represented continuation of current initiatives or acceleration of existing work, noting the scale of the existing pressures. Officers explained that a wide programme of initiatives was under way, particularly aimed at increasing access to private rental sector accommodation. It was reported that active discussions were ongoing with agents and landlords to increase supply, prevent homeless households from entering temporary accommodation, and to expedite move-on pathways. Various models were described, including temporary placements that could convert into private-rented tenancies, thereby discharging homelessness duties. It was explained that negotiations for multi-year arrangements were being explored to secure lower pricing from landlords and agents. It was further stated that a portion of the £8.5m savings related to inflation control, whereby keeping inflation below projected levels would contribute to the target. Officers acknowledged the challenge but confirmed that proactive work was already being undertaken.

The Committee sought clarification in relation to potential future arrivals and asked whether any advance notice from government had been provided and what contingency existed should such pressures reoccur. It was confirmed that no prior notice was given because the arrivals involved UK nationals acting independently. It was stated that contingency funding had been built into the budget for unforeseen increases in demand. It was emphasised that lobbying was being undertaken to secure government funding, as only a small number of port-authority councils had been affected.

A question was raised about emergency tree maintenance provision. Councillors observed that limited budget seemed to have been allocated for unplanned pressures, such as storm-related tree damage, and asked how the associated risks were being managed and whether a dedicated external agency might offer improved budget stability. Officers stated that statutory tree safety duties would always be fulfilled, regardless of in-year budget pressures. It was confirmed that a corporate contingency fund existed for unforeseen emergencies. Officers also highlighted a proposed £430k increase in the tree maintenance and inspection budget, intended to strengthen proactive maintenance and reduce the likelihood of storm-related failures. A follow-up question asked whether further funding could be secured if the £430k were exhausted. Officers stated that contingencies could be used, or costs could be mitigated elsewhere within service budgets. The Chair added that the £430k represented an increase, not the total budget.

Members asked for information on the number of people sponsored under the Council's sponsorship policy and the income generated. It was confirmed that detailed data would be provided separately.

Councillors raised questions regarding the Green Lane civic amenity site, where tables within the budget documentation appeared to present seemingly duplicated figures of £70k and £165k. It was explained that the two £70k figures related to separate items—one a saving offset by software costs—and that the £165k represented a pressure from undelivered savings carried forward into the next financial year.

Waste collection efficiencies were then queried, with Councillors asking how a

significant projected saving would be achieved. Officers explained that a service review was under way, focusing on waste prevention and diversion to lower-cost disposal streams. Initiatives such as the “simpler recycling” programme and food-waste diversion were highlighted as key cost-reduction mechanisms. Members asked whether the roll-out of food caddies to 20,000–25,000 flats was part of this work, and it was confirmed that the rollout to flatted properties was imminent and would significantly reduce costs by diverting food waste from residual streams.

The Committee asked how confident officers were that all proposed savings would be delivered, and what proportion of them could be considered secure. It was stated that all proposals had been through rigorous scrutiny, and that every efficiency was intended to be delivered. It was noted that, where external factors prevented delivery, directors would manage pressures through cost-control measures and internal mitigations. It was also stated that new spend-control measures required approval for all new expenditure and were expected to support delivery of savings.

A question was asked regarding the effectiveness of consultations, noting that past consultations had not always aligned with final decisions. Concern was raised as to how resident feedback could be ensured meaningful consideration. The Chair observed that consultations were not referendums and that final decisions were the responsibility of Cabinet and, ultimately, the electorate during elections. It was confirmed that the Councillor’s concerns would be recorded in the minutes.

Members sought clarity concerning fair funding and EFS. They asked whether fair funding was also conditional and whether it required Council Tax to be increased to the referendum limit over three years. Officers confirmed that the government’s figures had been predicated on all councils applying a 4.99% increase in each of the three years. It was explained that business-rate assumptions carried risk, particularly relating to appeals, and that EFS constituted borrowing requiring repayment over 20 years, plus interest if borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board.

Councillors requested further detail on investment in major capital projects, including the water sports facility and crematorium refurbishment, and asked whether these projects were expected to generate sustainable income. Officers stated that the capital programme encompassed schools’ expansion, the new leisure centre, new council housing, and significant housing investment to meet the decent homes standard. The water sports facility was described as a modern replacement offering improved amenities, while the crematorium improvements were intended to maintain service quality and introduce operational efficiencies. It was confirmed that income generation was sought where feasible.

A further question concerned how contingency funding would absorb unplanned pressures such as resident services, community safety needs, and emergency works. In response, it was confirmed that directors would be expected first to manage pressures within their budgets, including through internal mitigations and cross-service efficiencies. Underspends would be banked to offset pressures elsewhere and spend-control measures were expected to encourage cultural change and prevent unnecessary expenditure.

In response to Members’ questions regarding how the Council determined when efficiencies were negatively affecting frontline services, it was stated that thorough appraisals and impact assessments were undertaken during the planning process. If unforeseen impacts emerged during implementation, officers would reassess the

proposal and present options to Members, ensuring that residents remained prioritised.

It was confirmed that comments from the Committee would be delegated to the Democratic Services Officer, in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead, for submission to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That the Select Committee:

1. Noted the draft revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy proposals for 2026/27 to 2030/31 relating to services within the Committee's remit;
2. Considered and commented on the financial assumptions, savings proposals, growth pressures, service impacts and delivery risks within those proposals; and
3. Agreed that comments to Cabinet for consideration as part of the final budget proposals to be presented to Council in February 2026, be delegated to Democratic Services in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead.

132. PERFORMANCE REPORT (Agenda Item 7)

Dan Kennedy, Corporate Director – Residents' Services, was in attendance to respond to any questions and queries from Members in respect of the performance report as set out in the agenda pack.

Councillors commented that the report contained several positive indicators, including the Council having the fourth-lowest net expenditure per 100,000 residents in London and strong performance in housing landlord services.

Members observed that the report referenced the delivery of 245 new council homes, but they believed this figure represented a gross total and did not account for homes lost through Right to Buy. An accurate net position was therefore requested, and it was agreed that officers would provide this outside of the meeting. The Corporate Director noted that in previous years around 50 homes per year had been lost through Right to Buy, though that number might have increased slightly following a surge in applications when the government reduced the available discount.

Councillors sought clarification regarding recycling contamination levels, noting that these levels had not been quantified in the report. They expressed a desire to understand how much of the Borough's waste and recycling was being contaminated so that potential problem areas could be identified. It was confirmed that the relevant data could be provided and it was suggested that the matter could be fully explored at the next waste-focused Committee session. The Chair agreed and asked that the Democratic Services Officer record this as an item for discussion in the forthcoming in-depth waste session.

The Committee then sought clarification on the statement that one-third of council homes in Hillingdon had failed the decent homes standard. Members observed that this appeared inconsistent with the Council's claims of strong performance in repairs and asked how the two positions could be reconciled. It was explained that the decent homes standard related to physical components such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows and energy efficiency, whereas repair performance related to tenant experience, including response times and achieving a first-time fix. It was stated that tenant

satisfaction remained high. Officers reported that the 30% non-decent figure reflected the position as of 31 March 2024, but significant progress had since been made. It was reported that Cabinet had previously approved £108 million for improvements, that non-decency was expected to fall to approximately 14%–15% by the end of March, and that the Council was on track to reach 5% non-decent homes within two to three years. It was confirmed that regulators had expressed no concerns regarding progress or trajectory.

Members raised a question regarding homelessness pressures linked to Heathrow. Reference was made to a previous report indicating that around 40 families had presented at Heathrow. They asked how many rough sleepers and how many families within the current reporting period had originated from Heathrow-related presentations. Officers confirmed that this information was held and could be provided through the Chair. The Chair stated that it would be appropriate to include the information within the February agenda item on the homeless and rough sleeping strategy and confirmed that this would be arranged.

Councillors referred to a chart showing data on vacant dwellings and asked for clarification. It was noted that the report stated that vacant dwellings were re-let within an average of 30.64 days, which had been reported as 14 days faster, yet the narrative later indicated performance remained 14% below the England average. Members sought clarification on how these statements aligned, as a 30-day void period appeared lengthy. It was acknowledged that the turnaround time could appear long but it was explained that a large number of mandatory checks were required before a property could be re-let, including health and safety inspections, gas safety, asbestos assessments and occasionally significant repairs or replacements, such as boiler installations. It was stated that as the proportion of non-decent homes decreased, the extent of major works required before re-letting would also diminish, resulting in improved turnaround times.

It was agreed that comments from the Committee would be submitted to full Council. The Chair confirmed that comments would be delegated to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead, in line with Committee practice.

RESOLVED: That the Select Committee:

- 1. Noted the six-month performance report for 2025/26, as attached in Appendix 1; and**
- 2. Agreed that Select Committee comments to be presented to full Council be delegated to Democratic Services in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead.**

133. PARKING ENFORCEMENT (Agenda Item 8)

Richard Webb, Director of Community Safety and Enforcement presented the report which provided general background on the Council's parking enforcement approach and outlined key data. It explained that enforcement operations were delivered through a partnership with APCOA, whose contract had commenced in 2022 and was due to end the following year, with options available for extension. The contract scope, as described in the report, included the provision of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) – also referred to as parking wardens – parking and moving-traffic enforcement cameras, and ancillary services such as cash collection.

Members heard that the Civil Enforcement Officers were deployed to monitor car parks to ensure that parking payments were made, to patrol on-street parking bays, and to enforce parking restrictions, including yellow lines and all permit zones. The contract contained a range of key performance indicators, particularly related to deployment levels, contracted service hours, acceptable error rates in Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) issuing, and responsiveness to the public enforcement line.

It was confirmed that the Council's parking team engaged with APCOA frequently, with daily operational contact and monthly performance meetings to review deployment patterns, emerging issues, and operational data. Formal annual reviews were also undertaken. Deployment decisions were jointly agreed and informed by a broad evidence base, including patterns of non-compliance, school pick-up and drop-off priorities, resident and elected member feedback, and other data identifying areas of highest need.

The challenges posed by the Borough's large and diverse geography were noted, which required CEOs to cover wide areas. To address this, Members were informed that the Council had recently leased a vehicle equipped with Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology to support more efficient monitoring of extensive areas. The Council was evaluating the effectiveness of this approach and actively reviewing CEO deployment models to improve coverage and better respond to resident priorities.

Kenny McCamlie (Contract Manager) and Kedar Mahajan of APCOA were also in attendance. The Contract Manager addressed Members of the Select Committee thanking them for the opportunity to attend and noting APCOA's long-standing relationship with the Borough. He explained that APCOA's head office was located in Uxbridge and that its European headquarters had relocated there in the final quarter of the previous year. He also emphasised the company's strong commitment to Hillingdon and Uxbridge, noting that the organisation also managed a major contract at Heathrow and employed over 500 people within the Borough.

In relation to parking enforcement, Members heard that the organisation employed approximately 60 staff and maintained a flexible employment model that enabled 20–30% of the workforce to operate flexibly. The Contract Manager highlighted the challenging nature of the Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) role, noting that officers worked in all weather conditions and often faced hostility despite performing a vital public service. It was confirmed that the organisation worked closely with the local police sergeant in Uxbridge to improve staff safety, develop methods for officers to protect themselves, and pursue prosecutions where necessary. He reported having achieved successful prosecutions, including two in the past year, and noted additional incidents of lower-level but often malicious abuse.

The Contract Manager expressed appreciation for any recognition the Committee could give to frontline officers and described the collaborative working relationship with the Council's team. He stated that both parties worked hard to ensure that the service provided to the Borough was efficient and cost-effective. The introduction of the new ANPR vehicle was being used as an opportunity to reassess service delivery, strengthen data-led deployment, and ensure that officers were sent to areas of known non-compliance. It was noted that year-on-year increases in Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) numbers were one indicator that deployments were targeting appropriate locations, although PCN volumes could not be treated as a target.

Councillors noted that Members of the Committee had previously undertaken frontline observations of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO). They enquired whether the CCTV control room had been equipped with colour monitors or a radio link to receive *code red* alerts, noting that under-reporting of such incidents had been previously identified. It was asked whether this option had been explored, and if so, why it had not been implemented. In response, officers advised that APCOA staff were not based in the Council's CCTV control room, which remained a secure, supervised-access environment and was not staffed 24/7. Redeploying the officer who ordinarily handled CEO radio communications into the control room had not been considered viable.

Members suggested that, although placing staff permanently in the control room might be impractical, providing a live radio link would allow CCTV staff to hear *code red* calls and activate cameras to support CEO safety. An incident witnessed by Councillors was cited, in which a CEO's device had been taken from them during a distress call. Officers explained that previous reviews had identified significant operational complications. When a *code red* was triggered, APCOA's dedicated control room was already fully engaged in supporting the CEO and, where necessary, contacting the police. CCTV staff simultaneously received multiple other inputs and could not guarantee priority handling. It was emphasised that CEO body-worn cameras were active at all times and pressing the *code red* button often deterred aggressors. Training had been developed with the police to encourage CEOs to move away from danger rather than remain in proximity until officers arrived. Over-involvement by multiple parties during emergencies had also been identified as unhelpful.

The Committee asked whether CEOs had access to "people-safe" technology, GPS connectivity, or devices enabling communication once *code red* was triggered. APCOA confirmed that activating the red button opened a live microphone, alerted nearby CEOs, and automatically transmitted the officer's location to APCOA's control room. GPS information on handheld devices also enabled emergency services to be directed to the officer's location if they were unable to speak.

Members queried 420 recorded verbal abuse incidents and 31 *code red* incidents, asking whether under-reporting might be linked to the diverse ethnic backgrounds of CEOs. Questions were raised regarding whistleblowing channels, reporting confidence, and how APCOA ensured staff safety in a challenging environment where abuse could relate both to role and ethnicity. APCOA responded that CEOs were strongly encouraged to report incidents, including "code blues"—lower-level but potentially harmful incidents, often racist in nature. Although such behaviour generally originated from passers-by and could not easily be prevented, reporting enabled pattern-spotting, dual deployment and targeted policing support. A confidential reporting line was available, although management actively fostered direct reporting relationships. CEOs were reminded that under-reporting prevented the organisation from building an accurate picture of risks.

Councillors sought clarifications as to whether racist incidents were logged as hate crimes and formally passed to the police. It was explained that staff were encouraged to do so and that an online reporting template had been jointly developed with the local Police Sergeant. Misconceptions—such as the belief that prosecutions might restrict international travel—were actively addressed. APCOA reported higher prosecution success than many boroughs but acknowledged that further improvements were welcome.

Councillors raised concerns about CEOs frequently being observed in groups of four to six in high-footfall areas, which appeared to reduce enforcement efficiency. It was asked whether this was common and how CEOs were being deployed effectively. In response, APCOA confirmed that CEOs were remote workers, and several operational reasons could explain groupings, including shift changes and deployment patterns. However, it was acknowledged that improvements were needed. GPS and live mapping were used to monitor CEO locations, and Council officers also had access. Human instinct to gather in groups existed, and management actively countered it through performance monitoring and training. Councillors were encouraged to report instances for review.

Members then asked how the Council's parking enforcement hotline data was logged—specifically whether it was recorded at road level—and how APCOA used that information to identify hotspots. APCOA confirmed that all hotline reports entered its system and were used to identify persistent problem areas, alongside complaints received by Council officers and Members. Data recorded during each visit—such as whether a vehicle was moved on or a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) was issued—supported proactive deployment.

In response to Members' questions regarding the CCTV enforcement vehicle, its benefits, and its role in CEO and public safety, it was explained that the vehicle employed automatic number plate recognition to scan permit zones efficiently—something impossible on foot. Although officers still had to exit the vehicle to issue certain PCNs, use of the vehicle enabled redeployment of foot patrols to high-non-compliance areas.

A further question concerned repeated pavement parking near schools and what actions were taken to address high-risk areas. APCOA stated that significant resources were dedicated to school patrols, although enforcement could be challenging. Parents' responses varied, and statutory observation periods limited immediate action. Councillors were encouraged to submit specific locations for review.

Councillors asked about the three CEOs assigned as quality monitors, including their deployment and how data captured through their cameras had been used. It was explained that these officers were deployed daily, with data uploaded to the Council's digital system. Council officers would need to provide details on how the data was analysed, and APCOA committed to arranging this.

Questions were then raised about how required hours and PCN issue rates compared with other London boroughs and how enforcement officers were trained. APCOA outlined its training programme: online modules, British Parking Association-regulated exams, supervised local instruction, pairing with senior CEOs, and a strict sign-off process. Differences in observation times (e.g., instant for school zig-zags, 5 minutes for permit bays) were explained, and APCOA acknowledged that inconsistent answers given to residents should not have occurred.

Further questions were raised regarding enforcement of motorcycle parking, particularly relating to delivery drivers. APCOA explained that motorcycles were generally exempt from displaying pay-and-display tickets unless traffic orders specified otherwise. Restrictions had been updated in some areas (e.g., Ruislip) following Cabinet approval. In relation to complaints about deployment at Ruislip Lido, APCOA noted that winter and summer deployment patterns existed but could be reviewed.

Councillors asked whether CEOs worked to targets. It was confirmed that no PCN-issuing targets existed; however, issue rates per hour were analysed to identify anomalies, training needs, or deployment inefficiencies.

The Committee sought further clarification regarding a reduction in PCNs issued by CCTV cameras, noting that camera numbers had decreased from 120 to 75. It was asked whether the reduction in PCNs had resulted from fewer cameras rather than improved compliance. APCOA explained that compliance had improved particularly at new yellow-box junction enforcement sites. Older cameras with extremely low detection rates had been removed because replacement costs were unjustifiable.

The Chair concluded by thanking APCOA representatives for their comprehensive answers and invited APCOA to provide written information on wider enforcement services. A site visit for Members was also suggested.

RESOLVED: That the Select Committee:

Noted the contents of the report which provided background information to support the scheduled question and answer session on parking enforcement in the Borough, and in particular the ongoing work with APCOA through which they had brought forward initiatives to improve facilities for motorists whilst generating an income for the Council.

134. CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS REPORT (Agenda Item 9)

Ian Thynne, Head of Environmental Specialists, was in attendance to respond to Members' questions in relation to the Climate Change Progress Report included in the agenda pack. The Chair thanked him for his thorough, comprehensive and interesting report.

Councillors asked how confident the Council was that climate-change targets and associated deadlines would be met. The Head of Environmental Specialists responded that confidence was difficult to quantify because a trend analysis was still being undertaken to map the routes toward achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. He explained that climate action was **not** a statutory duty for local authorities and therefore competed with other pressures. He confirmed that meeting the targets would be challenging, although substantial progress had been made since the declaration of the climate emergency. A programme of activity and the release of £1.5m in Section 106 funding for community-facing carbon-reduction projects were highlighted as supporting elements, though the full cost and pathway to the targets had not yet been fully established.

Members enquired what major challenges existed in relation to fleet decarbonisation and whether electric-vehicle capacity could be retained in the future. It was explained that performance tracking had been difficult due to the absence of detailed dashboards showing mileage and fuel consumption. It was stated that electric refuse vehicles were extremely expensive and that prioritising them could reduce the Council's ability to deliver other services. It was also noted that required charging infrastructure was not yet available. Therefore, the heavy fleet was likely to retain a carbon footprint in 2030, and offsetting measures would be required. Smaller diesel vehicles had already been replaced by electric models but refuse lorries and heavy vehicles were unlikely to be electric by 2030 due to replacement costs and operational constraints.

In response to Members' questions as to whether initiatives such as carbon monitoring or energy-efficiency schemes had been assessed for cost-effectiveness, it was confirmed that the Council sought not only carbon savings but also financial savings for residents. It was noted that carbon-saving measures—such as replacing Civic Centre gas boilers with air-source heat pumps—were designed to reduce long-term energy costs during periods of high market volatility. Monetary and carbon savings were embedded jointly within strategic planning.

Councillor enquired whether the Council had considered the use of hydrogen-powered fleet vehicles. It was confirmed that hydrogen vehicles remained largely at pilot-stage development. The Council's realistic focus was on electric vehicles and that hydrogen was not currently on the Council's agenda.

The Committee sought clarification as to whether Heathrow expansion or changes associated with the Cranford Agreement could slow local climate-action progress. It was confirmed that the recent Cranford Agreement decision involved redistribution of existing flight movements rather than an increase, so no additional carbon output would result from that change. It was noted that a third runway would have a major carbon impact, but calculation of aviation emissions fell within central government responsibility. The Head of Environmental Specialists explained that the Council's targets related to its operational emissions, while major emissions sources such as the airport, the M4, and the M25 fell outside its control.

Members asked whether future pay-per-mile charging—expected around 2028—had been factored into fleet-modernisation planning, particularly regarding electric and hybrid vehicles. It was stated that significant work was still required on fleet analysis, and current data gaps meant that the question could not yet be answered; upcoming work in the calendar year would provide greater clarity.

In response to their questions regarding how much of the Council's capital programme depended on external or grant funding, Members were informed that the Council's operating model centred on embedding carbon saving within existing structures rather than creating costly additional programmes. It was stated that housing-improvement programmes, public-sector decarbonisation grants and Section 106 funding had been key sources of support. While grant funding remained useful, it was noted to be decreasing, and the Council would therefore continue to combine internal efficiencies with external funding where possible.

Councillors asked whether there were plans to install new electric-vehicle charging points in Council areas, and how many were planned for the year. In response, the Head of Environmental Specialists noted that the Council had joined the West London EV charging scheme and continued to use air-quality-related Section 106 funds. He confirmed that the EV strategy was being reviewed for increased ambition and that further rollout—especially on-street charging—was expected. He also described expanded tree-planting efforts and the development of "climate parks," providing cooler shaded areas and increased carbon sequestration.

The Committee sought further clarification as to how decisions were made regarding the replacement of large mature trees with smaller saplings, noting residents' concerns about environmental value. It was explained that the Borough planted tens of thousands of trees annually, far exceeding its loss rate. Although a precise carbon-equivalency calculation between mature trees and mass sapling planting had not yet been undertaken, it was confirmed that overall planting volumes surpassed

losses. Developers were also required to contribute to biodiversity net gain, and HS2-related planting would add hundreds of thousands of additional trees.

In response to their requests for clarification as to how the Council engaged with volunteers and community groups—including those supporting Ruislip Woods—and how a proposed People's Assembly would interact with such groups, Members were informed that the Head of Environmental Specialists met monthly with Friends of the Earth and worked with other volunteer organisations, though more engagement was desired. Increased community-facing work had been funded through Section 106 allocations, and the Cleaner, Greener Festival was cited as an example of joint working. Collaboration with Ruislip Woods Trustees was being explored to secure innovative management approaches and external funding support.

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

135. **SECTION 19 FLOOD INVESTIGATION** *(Agenda Item 10)*

Ian Thynne, Head of Environmental Specialists, was in attendance to respond to Members' questions in relation to the Section 19 Flood Investigation report included in the agenda pack.

Members asked what lessons had been learned from the recent increase in flooding incidents, noting that these had been significantly more frequent than in previous years. The Head of Environmental Specialists responded that the primary lesson learned was that flooding had worsened as the climate had continued to change. He stated that the September 2024 events had been among the worst the Borough had experienced, with devastating impacts on residents in areas such as Ruislip and Northwood. Flooding remained an emotive subject because residents could go years without incident and then suddenly face displacement, property loss, and severe distress.

It was explained that the Council had struggled to keep pace with flood-risk management due to ageing drainage infrastructure, limited funding, and complex interactions with Thames Water. As a result, the Council had shifted toward innovative approaches using green spaces to reduce flood risk. Thirteen projects were being delivered through external Environment Agency funding, a significant achievement given the small size of the team. However, much of the Council's work necessarily remained reactive, given the impossibility of predicting exactly where future flooding would occur. It was noted that, while proactive projects were being implemented in areas identified as vulnerable, flooding often had to occur before intervention could begin. When incidents did occur, the Council acted quickly; for example, after more than 100 properties were flooded at Ruislip Gardens, a flood action group had been established and a project identified to reduce future risk.

Members enquired whether improved funding and monitoring would enable better preparedness and risk prediction. It was confirmed that, while additional information and funding would be helpful, flooding ultimately depended on unpredictable weather conditions. Officers described the extreme rainfall of 2024, equivalent to a month's worth falling in a single day, which exceeded the design capacity of many local schemes. It was emphasised that forecasting precise impacts was extremely difficult because outcomes depended on seasonal conditions, infrastructure state, and unpredictable variables. It was noted that residents needed clearer information about their flood-risk status and greater encouragement to undertake their own resilience

measures.

The Committee Members asked specifically about situations where blocked gullies and drains were contributing to local flooding. They queried whether the Council could recharge Thames Water for the administrative time spent chasing the company to resolve issues for which it was responsible. In response, it was explained that responsibilities were highly fragmented: Council gullies drained into the Thames Water sewer network, which then flowed into rivers managed by the Environment Agency. In practice, disputes frequently occurred over ownership of drainage systems beneath carriageways or at property boundaries. Reports were often passed back and forth between agencies, creating inefficiencies.

It was believed that costs for reporting or chasing Thames Water were not recovered and it was acknowledged that residents often did not understand which authority held responsibility. Engagement with Thames Water was described as difficult because it was required to prioritise spending its customers' money carefully, while the Council also had statutory duties. The national "common reporting tool," intended to streamline processes, remained some distance away from implementation.

Councillors sought further clarifications as to whether, in cases where the Council had undertaken work that later proved to be Thames Water's responsibility, cost recovery was pursued or could be expanded. The Head of Environmental Specialists agreed that this was an important issue and stated that he would raise the matter with the Highways team to provide a more detailed answer on cost-recovery mechanisms. He noted that Thames Water's operational teams had often been helpful in clearing networks when asked, although strategic cooperation remained challenging.

Councillors queried whether the growing use of concrete in new developments—and the resulting reduction in natural drainage—was being addressed through planning requirements. They proposed measures such as mandating that residents retain part of their front gardens as permeable surfaces. In response, it was clarified that new developments were already required to achieve Greenfield runoff rates and to incorporate sustainable drainage systems. The greater issue was existing dwellings, many of which had paved front gardens and numerous dropped kerbs. These longstanding changes had reduced infiltration capacity across the Borough and formed part of the legacy issues contributing to current flood problems. The Council was therefore focusing on encouraging residents to adopt measures such as water-butt installation to reduce runoff at household level.

Members enquired who was responsible for cleaning canals and rivers, given that residents often dumped large items such as mattresses and pallets in local waterways. It was explained that canals were managed differently from rivers: canals did not generally have floodplains because their water levels were artificially controlled, whereas rivers were managed by the Environment Agency. It was noted that dredging, often requested by residents, was costly and only provided short-term relief before silt re-accumulated. River maintenance responsibilities depended on ownership, and many residents were unaware that they legally owned and were responsible for maintaining sections of watercourses adjoining their properties. This complexity was part of the wider challenge the Council faced in managing local flood risk.

The Chair asked for clarification regarding a historical flood reference in the report and requested that wording be updated. He also sought further clarification as to how flood action groups (FLAGs) would be engaged in a manner that ensured expert voices were heard without overshadowing residents who had concerns but less technical

knowledge. The Head of Environmental Specialists stated that flood action groups served as the frontline link with affected communities and that residents' lived experience was crucial to understanding local flood mechanisms. The value of working with these groups was highlighted, noting that different areas had different histories and patterns of flooding. It was confirmed that engagement would continue to be strengthened to ensure balanced representation and effective collaboration.

Members thanked the Head of Environmental Specialists for his report and for providing acronyms and abbreviations for ease of reference

RESOLVED: That the Residents' Services Select Committee:

- 1. Noted the findings of the Section 19 investigation and the scale of impacts across priority catchments; and**
- 2. Noted the programme of actions for 2025/26, including targeted drainage improvements, community Flood Action Groups (FLAGs), and collaborative schemes with EA and TWUL.**

136. FORWARD PLAN (Agenda Item 11)

RESOLVED: That the Residents' Services Select Committee noted the Forward Plan.

137. WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 12)

The Chair, Councillor Peter Smallwood, updated the Committee on the plans for the next few months and explained that these had already been discussed with the opposition leader, Councillor Kamal Kaur. He paid tribute to Councillor Bridges, the former chairman, thanked him for chairing the Committee diligently and fairly for many years and congratulated him on becoming the Cabinet Member for Residents Services. He also thanked Councillor Farley for his excellent work as the previous opposition lead.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Singh and Councillor Dot to the Committee and outlined recent discussions about whether to undertake a mini-review. Although footway parking had been considered, it was ultimately felt that such a review would be too substantial to complete properly in the short time remaining in the administration. Instead, it was noted that the Committee planned to focus on a series of smaller topic-based discussions.

He explained that the January meeting would examine parking enforcement with input from officers. Waste services were scheduled for February, and Councillor Bridges had been invited to attend alongside the Corporate Director. In March, it was confirmed that the Committee would look at community safety and cohesion, inviting partners such as the police, fire service, and faith representatives. Members were encouraged to suggest additional contributors. In April, the Committee planned to consider the topic of HMOs, with Councillor Tuckwell agreeing to participate.

It was confirmed that the Committee would continue to operate in the same way as under Councillor Bridges's chairmanship: external partners or officers would give a brief presentation before the Committee moved directly to questions. Members were expected to read the papers in advance. The questioning format would remain as one question plus an optional follow-up.

The collaborative work undertaken by the Committee in respect of funfairs and circuses was also recognised by the Chair. It was noted that a deposit scheme was now in place, that had originated from cross-party collaboration within the Residents' Services Select Committee. This demonstrated that, by working together, positive outcomes could be delivered protecting land and ensuring that deposits were taken from those operating said funfairs and circuses.

RESOLVED: That the Residents' Services Select Committee considered the Work Programme report and agreed any amendments.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.36 pm.

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