

Minutes

RESIDENTS' SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

18 February 2026

Meeting held at CR5, Civic Centre, Uxbridge



	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 Officers Present: Jordan Groves, Head of Waste and Green Spaces Dan Kennedy, Corporate Director of Residents Services Liz Penny, Democratic Services Officer Gavin Polkinghorn, Planning Policy Team Leader Adam Stephenson, Assistant Director - Housing Needs & Homelessness Debby Weller, Head of Housing Strategy and Policy
138.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>) There were no apologies for absence.
139.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>) There were no declarations of interest.
140.	TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>) RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 8 January 2026 be agreed as an accurate record.
141.	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>) It was confirmed that all items of business were marked Part I and would be considered in public.
142.	HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>) Debby Weller (Head of Housing Strategy and Policy) and Adam Stephenson (Assistant Director – Housing Needs & Homelessness) were in attendance to respond to Members' queries in relation to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Consultation Draft as set out in the agenda pack. Members enquired how the Government's reported decision to stop sharing temporary accommodation data across London boroughs might impact the Council's four-year homelessness strategy. Officers were unaware of such a decision but stated that losing access to this data would be unfortunate, as London-wide data was used for

benchmarking. They noted that pan-London work on data analysis continued and that online resources remained available, and asked Councillors to share any information they had in respect of this.

Councillors sought further clarification as to whether the central homelessness dashboard, once live, would be accessible to Members of the Committee. It was confirmed that a suite of performance indicators was being developed, capturing both national targets and local MTFS priorities. The dashboard would be available to CMT, the Cabinet, and other stakeholders.

Members asked whether demand modelling was possible regarding asylum seekers, new arrivals and Chagossians, noting ongoing pressures. In response it was stated that numbers were tracked through Government-required submissions and that trends were not constant, with waves of different groups over time. It was noted that numbers in recent years had been higher than before. It was confirmed that MTFS planning included modelling based on 18 months of Chagossian trend data and that planning incorporated both local homelessness and additional demand from rough sleepers and Chagossian households over the next three years.

In response to further questioning from the Committee, it was noted that forecasted and modelled costs were included in the published budget, although figures were not broken down by cohort.

Councillors enquired how many households evicted from private rented accommodation had received discretionary housing payments (DHPs) in the previous financial year. Officers confirmed that DHP data existed but was not available at the meeting. **It was uncertain whether payments could be broken down by eviction type, but overall numbers could be provided.** The Committee queried whether DHP awards had increased over time and whether the allowance was fully used. It was confirmed that the entire DHP budget was always spent each year, and that award volumes depended on available budget rather than application levels.

In response to Members' requests for clarification, it was explained that work was carried out within the Statutory Homelessness Framework and support for households lacking a local connection was limited. It was stated that this was not thought to be a significant issue.

Councillors sought further information regarding the rate of return homelessness among rough sleepers who had been placed in accommodation. It was confirmed that figures were not available. It was recognised that entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs sometimes struggled to maintain accommodation, although numbers were small. Officers noted that Hillingdon had around 14 entrenched cases and reported some successful sustained placements.

Members asked about cost pressures arising from temporary accommodation and how they were mitigated. Officers stated that the published budget included relevant growth items and savings plans. Gross expenditure for the next year was forecast at approximately £35 million, with net costs around £19.5 million.

Councillors enquired how many of the 500 homes referred to in the Strategy had been purchased. **It was confirmed that this matter fell more within the housing remit and that a response would be sought from the appropriate officer.**

With regards to temporary accommodation, Members heard that self-contained units were used almost exclusively, with hotels used only in rare circumstances, such as where specialist facilities were required. It was explained that all households in temporary accommodation were charged rent, with contributions assessed through the Housing Benefit system.

Members asked how many of the 793 verified rough sleepers in 2024–25 were asylum seekers. **Officers responded that such data would be provided after the meeting.** It was added that CHAIN data broke down previous accommodation pathways. Councillors queried why the report described the increase in asylum-seeker rough sleepers as “anecdotal” if data existed. It was explained that the wording reflected comments made informally but it was accepted that data could support the statement.

The Chair sought further information as to how the Council worked with Heathrow Airport, given the high proportion of rough sleepers located there. Officers stated that the relationship had improved greatly, particularly during COVID, when all airport rough sleepers had been moved into hotels. It was reported that Heathrow had increased security patrols working with outreach partners, enabling faster intervention. It was stated that rough sleeper numbers at Heathrow had been kept well below pre-COVID levels and that more rough sleepers were now located elsewhere in the Borough.

The Chair asked how the Council balanced confidentiality and support for rough sleepers with the concerns of affected residents. It was confirmed that work was undertaken closely with voluntary sector partners and **agreed that the Strategy could include more about communication with residents.**

With regard to support for veterans, particularly those experiencing homelessness, the Committee was informed that CHAIN identified veterans, who also received priority on the housing register. Officers noted previous engagement with veterans’ organisations and said that work was underway to broaden and regularise partnership engagement, including through annual or more frequent homelessness forums.

Councillors asked whether rough sleepers on borough borders knew which council to approach, and whether Hillingdon Council met with GLA partners regarding homelessness. It was explained that outreach teams identified rough sleepers within Hillingdon and took the lead in supporting them, though not always by placing them in local accommodation. Officers confirmed regular meetings with the GLA, particularly around funded accommodation schemes for homeless families and rough sleepers.

In respect of gaps between service provision and the needs of rough sleepers with complex needs, Members heard that the number of rough sleepers with complex needs, particularly mental health needs, was increasing. Officers noted reductions in mental health outreach owing to external financial pressures and described challenges where individuals had dual diagnosis but did not meet thresholds for formal care. It was stated that the Council continued to engage partners and seek funding.

It was agreed that the drafting of Select Committee comments to Cabinet regarding the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy would be delegated to Democratic Services in consultation with the Chair and Labour Lead.

Councillor Kaur suggested adding “empathy” to the Council’s stated values as set out on page 21 of the draft Strategy, which the Chair agreed could be considered offline. The Committee agreed to the recommendations.

	RESOLVED That the Residents’ Services Select Committee: 1. Noted the contents of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review; and 2. Agreed that the drafting of Select Committee comments to Cabinet regarding the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy be delegated to Democratic Services in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead.
143.	COMMERCIAL WASTE AND GENERAL WASTE SERVICES (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>) Councillor Wayne Bridges (Cabinet Member for Community & Environment) was in attendance to highlight key points in the report and provide an update in respect of the Council’s Commercial Waste and General Waste Services. With regard to commercial trade waste, the Cabinet Member noted that 79 new commercial waste contracts had been gained while 98 had been lost, largely due to non-payment and price sensitivity. It was explained that 43 of the 79 new contracts related to outstanding debts. Officers had undertaken substantial work in this area, and changes were already underway. One early change had involved improving competitiveness by removing publicly available costings, which had previously enabled competitors to undercut the Council. This measure was expected to strengthen the Council’s market position and support the promotion of the service. It was noted that, despite the reduction in customer numbers, income had increased because the new customers were of higher quality and more reliable. Councillor Bridges expressed confidence that performance would continue to improve and committed to keeping the Committee updated. Councillor Bridges then addressed food waste collection, which had been widely publicised locally and nationally. It was explained that the service was being rolled out to approximately 2,200 properties above shops and 17,000 private block properties, with completion expected within six weeks. The Councillor formally recorded thanks to officers for their hard work on this significant undertaking. He highlighted the financial benefits of food waste recycling, noting the stark contrast between the disposal cost of food waste (£12.79 per tonne) and general waste (£119.28 per tonne). It was stated that the rollout was being monitored case by case, feedback from ward councillors was being received, and any issues would be addressed as they arose. The Cabinet Member proceeded to discuss the significant issue of fly-tipping in the Borough, acknowledging that it was a national problem and that Hillingdon was not exempt. He reported the introduction of new processes to tackle the issue, including the “Waste Drop and Go” initiative, which had been successful to date. Events had already taken place in Charville and Hillingdon West. In Charville, 54 cars and six walk-ins had participated, resulting in the collection of 1.8 tonnes of waste. The Hillingdon West event at the Battle of Britain Bunker had received 90 visitors—an increase of 50%—and had collected just under 2.1 tonnes of waste. Members heard that further events were planned, with the next due to take place at Harlington Road Depot. Councillor Bridges also reported that he had introduced unannounced spot checks across the Borough the previous week, undertaken jointly with officers from waste services, the anti-social behaviour team, APCOA, and other service providers. Spot

checks had taken place in Charville and on New Broadway in Hillingdon East, where instances of fly-tipping had been identified and were being investigated. Additional visits were planned, and Councillors across the Borough would be engaged to identify and respond to emerging hotspots.

Dan Kennedy, Corporate Director of Residents Services and Jordan Groves, Head of Waste and Green Spaces, were also in attendance. The Head of Waste and Green Spaces provided a brief summary of the key points in the report which presented an overview of waste and recycling services performance for 2025–26 to date, including commercial waste, domestic collections, recycling improvements, and the rollout of the simpler recycling programme.

It was reported that Commercial Waste Services continued to operate in a challenging and competitive market. During the year, 79 new contracts had been gained, generating just under £200,000, while 98 contracts had ended, primarily due to non-payment or business closures, which reflected wider trends. Despite the overall reduction in contract numbers, Members heard that the service had reported a net income gain of nearly £60,000, highlighting the service's focus on quality over quantity. Compliance work between the commercial waste team and the anti-social behaviour team had strengthened, particularly where issues such as fly-tipping or the absence of lawful waste contracts had arisen.

Domestic waste services were reported to have remained largely stable. It was noted that the garden waste service had moved to a paid subscription model, and the Council was exploring ways to increase participation. At the time of the report, over 23,000 households were subscribed, generating £1.62 million in income. The Christmas period had led to an increase in missed collection reports due to altered collection schedules, which had caused temporary confusion for residents. An ageing vehicle fleet had created operational challenges, and capital investment for replacements had been included in the 2026 capital budget and beyond.

The Committee was informed that recycling services continued to expand. Although some quality issues had been identified with the supply of recycling and food-waste sacks, remedial measures were underway. Contamination-reduction initiatives showed positive progress and were supported by crew-led education and trials of reverse-litter bins in communal settings. The simpler recycling rollout remained on schedule. Surveys for flats above shops had been completed, deliveries were underway, and officers were actively engaging with residents to explain the purpose of the service. It was confirmed that 19,000 additional properties had already received the service. The rollout to private blocks was expected to be completed shortly, and the flats-above-shops element was expected to be completed by 31 March 2026.

Performance indicators were reported to be positive overall. Commercial waste was forecast to generate £2.1 million in income. The Harefield Civic Amenity Site diversion rate had risen to 74%, and recycling contamination continued to decrease in monitored areas. Reports from October, November and December showed a reduction in refuse waste collected compared with the same period the previous year, resulting in disposal-cost savings. It was noted that the Council's recycling rate remained above the London average, having increased from 36.7% in 2023 to 39% as of December 2025. Additionally, 836 more tonnes of household food waste had been collected between April and November 2025 compared with the previous year, equivalent to approximately £120,000 in avoided disposal costs.

In summary, it was stated that the service developments supported environmental targets, improved resident experience, strengthened compliance with new national simpler-recycling legislation, and enabled continued review of services to achieve further reductions in waste and operational efficiencies.

Members enquired whether lessons had been learned from lost commercial waste contracts and how much the Council was likely to spend on recovering outstanding debts. Officers explained that commercial waste debt recovery was often limited because business closures made it difficult to identify owners. It was stated that robust debt-recovery processes were followed, but in many cases, businesses left the area entirely, or owners could not be traced. Small debts were not pursued where recovery would cost more than the amount owed.

Councillors queried whether the collection of contaminated residential recycling waste would be reviewed, highlighting inefficiencies caused when bags were left behind and later needed separate collection. Officers reported that recycling education officers were deployed to properties with persistent contamination issues and undertook door-knocking and resident engagement. Education was prioritised before enforcement. It was confirmed that waste left for extended periods posed environmental, health, and street-cleansing issues and was therefore cleared where necessary.

The Chair referred to a previous performance report, noting the Committee's interest in quantified contamination data. **Officers stated that the data was not immediately available but would be provided at a later date.** The Cabinet Member added that contamination issues were continually reviewed and that new waste-segregation legislation and the food-waste scheme would support improvements.

The Committee praised the Community Waste Day event in Charville and asked how locations were selected. It was confirmed that the scheme was a pilot selecting areas with high fly-tipping rates or strong resident demand. Positive feedback and high tonnage levels were noted. The Cabinet Member added that locations were in the south of the Borough, where fly-tipping was most prevalent, and that proximity to Harlington Road Depot was also a factor.

Councillors asked whether commercial waste services were being sufficiently advertised and whether additional bin sizes could be offered. Officers responded that further expansion could be considered, but larger containers required different vehicles. Officers highlighted ongoing work integrating waste-service sales with enforcement visits, where businesses without trade-waste agreements were offered Council services.

Councillors queried how businesses were being encouraged to reduce waste generation. In response, it was stated that legislation required businesses to segregate waste and that enforcement teams and sales staff promoted compliance.

Members asked whether soft-plastics recycling could be better supported by providing information on locations such as supermarkets. **It was confirmed that national trials were ongoing and that website improvements, including locator links, would be explored.**

The Committee sought further clarification as to whether issues with bag quality had been addressed and whether compensation was received from the supplier. It was confirmed that compensation had been agreed and that contractual issues were being

resolved. With regard to the lifespan of compostable food-waste liners, it was explained that lifespan depended on storage conditions and could be up to 12 months in warm, dry environments. **Clearer public guidance would be considered.**

Councillors raised concerns about inconsistent collections, particularly around schools, and the increased interval between waste being piled and removed. Officers acknowledged the issues and stated that stronger management oversight was being introduced to reduce delays, prevent blocked pavements, and improve operational consistency.

Members queried whether operatives could report split bags so that street-cleansing teams could attend. Officers stated that closer working between the waste collection and street-cleansing teams was already taking place, ensuring that follow-up crews were deployed. **Councillors requested that thanks be passed to the waste collection crews, which officers agreed to relay.**

Councillors requested enforcement data regarding commercial waste and what challenges existed. It was reported that data was held in Power BI and that ASBET and waste services were working collaboratively. Repeat offenders were monitored, and first-time issues were approached through education.

The Committee enquired how private commercial operators' waste-disposal practices were verified. It was explained that businesses were required to hold valid waste-carrier licences, which could be inspected by the Council.

In response to Members' queries as to whether bin lorries could be wrapped to advertise Christmas collection changes, it was noted that wrapping had been used previously and was cheaper than bolted-on boards, though less flexible. **Future exploration was possible.**

Questions were also raised about selling advertising space. Officers explained that revenue in other boroughs had not met expectations, but opportunities to promote council initiatives were commonly used.

Concerns were raised by several Councillors that street sweepers were attending roads on incorrect days or ahead of refuse vehicles. It was confirmed that a review of sweeping rotas, including solo operatives, was underway to improve alignment with waste collection schedules. Councillors asked whether residents could be notified in advance so they could move vehicles. Officers responded that advance notification through flyers or online messaging was feasible in heavily parked areas.

A further question sought data on the number of solo sweepers; **officers stated that a full review was needed to determine whether capacity was sufficient.**

Members reported widespread misuse of litter bins for household waste and asked what action was being taken to tackle this. It was explained that a borough-wide litter-bin rationalisation exercise was planned. Bins that attracted persistent fly-tipping could be removed, though impacts on local amenity would be considered. Education and signposting to waste-disposal options would continue.

Councillors raised issues about fly-tipped waste in gullies and ditches that crews could not safely access. Officers confirmed that signage or notices could be introduced to inform residents that the Council was aware but awaiting specialist equipment or safe

	conditions. A grab lorry was available for certain cases, though health and safety risk assessments remained paramount. The Committee enquired how usage and frequency of emptying litter bins were monitored. It was stated that part of the rationalisation project involved reviewing collection frequencies and staff observations. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the forthcoming Love Clean Streets app would support resident reporting and hotspot identification. In response to Members' questions as to whether discount schemes such as Hillingdon First could be applied to commercial waste, it was explained that the Council's selling point was reliability rather than low cost, but flexible pricing models could be explored. The competitive London market made discounted initiatives challenging. The Cabinet Member added that removing votes from the public domain empowered officers to make commercial decisions and offer discretionary discounts where appropriate. Councillors asked why the Council did not service Heathrow Airport commercially. Officers explained that the Council's operations were geared toward small and medium enterprises, not large-scale waste producers requiring compactor bins, skips, and multiple daily collections. Opportunities could be explored but would require significant investment. Members suggested that QR codes could be placed on bins to report fullness. In response officers highlighted cybersecurity risks involving cloned QR codes leading to fraudulent websites. Location-based labels or the new reporting app were considered safer alternatives. Councillors sought further clarification as to what happened when dumped waste contained identifiable addresses. Officers stated that an address alone did not prove who dumped the waste. Investigations required further evidence and were conducted by the enforcement team. The Chair recognised the Borough's strong waste-collection service and thanked refuse crews. The Cabinet Member concluded by thanking the Committee for its questions, acknowledging ongoing challenges, and expressing commitment to continued improvements and collaboration with Councillors. RESOLVED: That the Residents' Services Select Committee noted the update in the report.
144.	WEST LONDON WASTE PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>) Gavin Polkinghorn, Planning Policy Team Leader, was in attendance to respond to Members' questions regarding the West London Waste Plan paper as set out in the agenda pack. Councillors enquired whether, given that the boroughs worked collectively across London, any changes to the London Plan could allow the waste-apportionment targets to be altered mid-process. It was asked whether such changes could be made or whether targets would remain fixed. In response, it was explained by the Officer that the West London Waste Plan had been required to respond to the apportionment figures set out in the 2021 London Plan.

It was further explained that, if the new London Plan currently under consultation were to be adopted with different figures, then the West London Waste Plan would need to be revised accordingly, as the targets would differ.

Members queried whether any backup or emergency arrangements were in place in case existing waste sites in Hillingdon became unusable or required closure. They asked whether contingency planning existed or whether it was assumed that services would continue smoothly.

The Planning Policy Team Leader responded that the Plan had demonstrated that sufficient waste-site capacity existed to meet both current and projected requirements. It was stated that additional waste sites could come forward ad hoc through the development-management process, providing further capacity between plan cycles if needed. The Officer noted that historically there had been very little churn in safeguarded waste sites, which tended to remain long-term. However, if a significant reduction in available sites occurred, additional provision could be brought forward.

Councillors referred to a contribution of £30,000 per borough per year over a five-year period and asked how this figure had been determined. They enquired whether value for money was being achieved and whether Hillingdon had scrutinised its contribution in comparison with that of neighbouring boroughs.

It was explained by the officer that all West London boroughs contributed the same amount. The pooling of resources for waste planning was described as a significant cost saving, encouraged by the London Plan. Although specific procurement details were not available at the meeting, it was confirmed that value-for-money considerations were embedded in procurement processes and that further information could be provided if required.

The Committee asked about the adaptability of the five-year plan in light of technological developments, including the introduction of Love Clean Streets. Members sought clarification as to whether the Plan had been prepared in a way that allowed for technological evolution.

The Planning Policy Team Leader responded that the requirement to update local waste plans every five years was itself intended to ensure responsiveness to technological change. It was stated that new recycling requirements, new approaches to handling contaminated waste, and other technological developments had been incorporated into the Plan.

Members sought further clarification relating to housing-target increases across West London. They enquired how effectively the Plan had accounted for expected growth and whether the Borough risked under-anticipating the impact of significant housing expansion or proposed new settlements. Councillors asked whether the five-year plan was robust enough or whether an emergency review might be required.

It was explained that growth would be addressed through the standard five-year update cycle. If the new London Plan introduced higher housing targets, these would be reflected in the Council's local plan and handled through the natural progression from site identification to planning permission and build-out. It was confirmed that plans could be updated more frequently than every five years, if necessary, though in practice the five-year cycle aligned with development timescales and allowed for ongoing adjustment over time.

	It was agreed that the drafting of Select Committee comments to Cabinet regarding the West London Waste Plan would be delegated to Democratic Services in consultation with the Chair and Labour Lead. RESOLVED That the Residents' Services Select Committee: 1. Noted the contents of the draft West London Waste Plan; and 2. Agreed that the drafting of Select Committee comments to Cabinet regarding the West London Waste Plan be delegated to Democratic Services in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead.
145.	FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>) RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.
146.	WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>) It was recalled that Councillor Gardner had submitted a motion on CCTV at the meeting of Full Council, and that the Select Committee had been delegated to undertake a review of the matter. It was noted that the Select Committee's Work Programme for March and April was very busy. Moreover, local elections were due to be held in May, followed by the first meeting of the new Committee in June, which was not an appropriate time to commence such a review. The item had therefore been scheduled for the July meeting. Members indicated that they were happy with this approach. RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.36 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 democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, officers, the press and members of the public.