

Minutes

CORPORATE RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

6 January 2026



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

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors John Riley (Chair), Adam Bennett (Vice-Chair), Scott Farley, Stuart Mathers (in place of Gursharan Mand), Sital Punja (in place of Mohammed Islam) and Peter Smallwood (in place of Kaushik Banerjee)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Matthew Wallbridge (Chief Operating Officer), Dan Kennedy (Corporate Director of Residents Services), Steve Muldoon (Corporate Director of Finance), Chris Malin (Head of Finance - CF & Finance), Matt Davis (Director-Strategic & Operational Finance), Anisha Teji (Senior Democratic Services Officer)</p>
112.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kaushik Banerjee with Councillor Peter Smallwood substituting, Councillor Gursharan Mand with Councillor Stuart Mathers substituting and Councillor Mohammed Islam with Councillor Sital Punja substituting.</p>
113.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
114.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting on 19 November 2025 be agreed.</p>
115.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be considered in Part I.</p>
116.	<p>CABINET BUDGET PROPOSALS 26/27 (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Committee received an update on the Council's financial position, noting that the Month 7 forecast remained broadly consistent with Month 6. Officers outlined the context for the 2026/27 budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2028/29, highlighting significant demand pressures in adult social care, children's services and homelessness, alongside cost increases exceeding inflation. The Council continued to experience financial pressures, with reserves fully utilised and funding levels remaining below those of comparable authorities. A 4.99% Council Tax increase was proposed, which would still leave the Borough among the lowest charging in Outer</p>

London. The 2026/27 budget included £22m of savings, rising to £30m by 2028/29, with £2.1m related to this Committee's remit, while growth of nearly £70m was required to rebase budgets for unavoidable pressures. The capital programme had been substantially reduced to £229m over five years, with borrowing also significantly lowered. Officers confirmed that the Council could not balance the 2026/27 budget without Exceptional Financial Support (ESF) and was seeking £60m for the coming year, alongside further requests to restore reserves and address overspends, with future years also showing funding gaps that may require support. Risks identified included savings delivery, demand instability particularly in temporary accommodation and uncertainty around business rates following a major airport revaluation.

The Committee discussed the financial position in detail. Members referenced statements from London Councils regarding the severe pressures across London and the forecast multibillion-pound funding gap by 2027/28. Further information was requested on the operation of spending controls and officers reported strengthened processes, including senior sign-off for staffing, enhanced panels in adults' and children's services and a new system for temporary accommodation decisions. All non-contractual spend now required formal approval at multiple levels.

Members questioned the impact of rising demand particularly in children's services, SEND transport, adult social care and homelessness on the Council's ability to deliver statutory duties while making savings. Officers acknowledged the pressures and emphasised the need for stronger demand modelling and more granular weekly and monthly data to track caseloads and ensure residents were supported in the most appropriate and cost-effective settings. In response to a query on outsourcing the film office, officers confirmed this related to external management of filming activity, which generated income and formed part of wider procurement reviews of service delivery models.

Members also explored trends in service delivery and the role of digital investment. Officers highlighted examples where modelling informed decisions, such as past shifts between outsourcing and in house provision. Ongoing digital improvements, including a new website, automated systems to reduce manual processing and enhanced business intelligence tools for forecasting and monitoring spend were reported.

The Committee asked about recruitment controls and was assured that the new process for approving posts was now well-established and operating efficiently. In terms of savings within property services and resident services, officers confirmed that directorates had reviewed structures and working practices to identify achievable proposals while maintaining service delivery. Members raised concerns about energy costs and officers outlined ongoing work to reduce consumption, including the Civic Centre decarbonisation programme, insulation upgrades and participation in a national energy procurement group to secure competitive prices. The Committee also discussed the impact of improved procurement practices more widely, which officers reported had contributed positively to achieving value for money.

The Committee looked at EFS and how the related borrowing costs had been included. Officers explained that these costs were expected to reach around £10 million a year by the end of the three-year period. Members raised concerns about the Council's past difficulty in delivering savings and officers described the challenge sessions held to test proposals and the requirement for detailed delivery plans, supported by corporate oversight. Officers also noted that Hillingdon had historically had lower borrowing than many other authorities because it had avoided speculative investments, although the

use of EFS would now increase borrowing levels.

Members asked about the phased fair funding settlement and business rates assumptions and It was explained that Government forecasts included assumptions about Council Tax but did not take into account the expected Heathrow appeal. Officers then outlined capital plans, noting that spending had been reduced to keep costs affordable, with investment focused on statutory duties, regeneration and major HRA projects, and that long-term affordability continued to be monitored. Members also queried the deliverability of savings such as garage voids and green waste subscriptions and it was explained that income had been spread across future years, noting that lessons from previous years had informed the approach. Officers reported around 75 responses in the first week of the public consultation and confirmed that the ranking question followed best practice.

In relation to staff training and financial management, new investment in learning and development, improved financial training, stronger procurement awareness and better use of data systems was highlighted to the Committee. Officers also pointed to strengthened governance, including savings dashboards and spend controls over £500 and said these measures, together with rebased budgets and increased oversight, placed the Council in a stronger position to deliver savings and maintain financial stability.

The Committee considered the draft response to Cabinet. An amendment was proposed to retain the first two paragraphs and final section but to add wording commending the current government for the additional funding received this year, noting the increased allocation of £126.7 million over the next three years and its commitment to ensuring that Hillingdon residents continued to access much-needed services. Members agreed it was important to recognise that the uplift in funding was necessary and had now been provided. The Committee also discussed whether to retain references to Heathrow Airport in the response. Some Members argued that Heathrow should remain included because it disproportionately affected Hillingdon's finances more than other boroughs and had been highlighted by officers as a significant forecasting risk. The draft response, incorporating the proposed amendments, was put to a vote and received three votes in favour and four against, including the Chair's casting vote. The Committee then voted on whether to submit the original response to Cabinet as their view on the finance budget. Four members voted in favour and two voted against.

The Committee therefore agreed the following comments:

'The Committee is grateful for all the hard work undertaken by both Councillors Goddard and more recently Lavery in their respective Cabinet roles. Together with all the Finance Officers of the Council in whatever capacity.

We recognise the exceptionally challenging climate that has pertained over the last several years which has impacted not only harsh condition in which local authorities have to operate, but also the related but vital economic landscape in which partner businesses and services inhabit.

All local authorities report significant challenges in operating in these conditions, some with far more issues than other. We in Hillingdon face particular problems associated with Heathrow which historically and currently has never been financially addressed. This includes the pressures from asylum seekers, many of whom are unaccompanied

	<p><i>children who generate immediate additional unrecoverable costs to our residents.</i></p> <p><i>It is of note that London Councils are forecasting a multi-billion deficit in London wide Council funding for at least 50% of Boroughs in the Capital by the end of 2027 - this is unsustainable.</i></p> <p><i>The conditions under which Hillingdon is operating, with our additional pressures, are very significant. However as evidenced in the performance report, the Council has continued to provide good quality services at amongst the cheapest across London.</i></p> <p><i>We welcome all the efforts and proposals to ensure that the correct savings are made while keeping to the desire to maintain good services at reasonable costs to residents.'</i></p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 3. Agreed the above summary to be submitted to Cabinet for consideration as part of the final budget proposals to be presented to Council in February 2026.
117.	<p>BUDGET & SPENDING REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>The Committee considered agenda items 5 and 6 together as they both related to financial performance.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted the budget monitoring position as at October 2025 (Month 7) for the Council. 2. Noted the budget monitoring position as at October 2025 (Month 7) for the services within the remit of the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee.
118.	<p>SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>The six-month performance report for 2025/26 was presented to the Committee. Hillingdon's performance was benchmarked against other local authorities using publicly available data and it was found that the Council maintained one of the lowest net expenditure levels in London despite unique operational pressures. Adult Social Care was delivered in a financially sustainable way, achieving a 'Good' CQC rating, while Resident Services and Children's Services were recognised for strong value for money and high-quality outcomes. Challenges such as rough sleeping and non-decent homes were identified but significant investment and improvement programmes were reported. Overall, the Council's performance management framework was shown to</p>

	<p>support accountability, transparency and continuous improvement for residents.</p> <p>Questions were raised about the benchmarking practices used across service areas. Assurance was sought on the consistency of comparator groups, as different sets of boroughs appeared in different tables, with some including authorities such as Slough, Coventry and Peterborough while others did not. Clarification was requested on why benchmarking peers varied between metrics and directorates. It was noted that clearer explanations would be helpful and future reports would include annotations explaining the rationale for each benchmarking group.</p> <p>Discussion then moved to the presentation of cost and performance information. It was commented that the resident services pack focused mainly on cost figures without showing how these translated into outcomes, such as the number of road repairs achieved for the level of spending. Officers noted that previous annual reports had included more detail on outputs, but feedback had indicated that these were too lengthy. It was confirmed that the annual report combined benchmarking and activity-based data and officers agreed that Members' suggestions would be considered when designing future reports.</p> <p>Members also asked whether performance reporting took account of internal trends as well as external comparisons. It was confirmed that extensive internal data was reviewed daily and monthly through business intelligence dashboards, service-level meetings and directorate leadership sessions. It was noted that around 190 automated dashboards were now in use and that work continued to strengthen staff capability in using data effectively. It was emphasised that efforts were ongoing to balance transparency, usability and the volume of information provided to both Members and residents.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the final comments relating to the Select Committee's budget comments be delegated to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chair (and in consultation with the Opposition Lead(s)).</p>
119.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>RESOVLED: That the Forward Plan be noted.</p>
120.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.15 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji, Senior Democratic Services Officer on ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk or 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.