

Minutes

CORPORATE RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

5 March 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), Mohammed Islam, Gursharan Mand, Scott Farley and Martin Goddard (in place of Kaushik Banerjee)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Darren Persaud – Head of Digital Dan Kennedy – Corporate Director of Residents Services Pete Carpenter – Director, Pensions, Treasury & Statutory Accounts Hazel Greenstreet – Lead Finance BP (CYPS) Andrew Low – Chief Estates Officer Glen Martin – Assistant Director Asst Director - FM, Planned Works & ME Comp Matt Davis – Director-Strategic & Operational Finance Anisha Teji – Senior Democratic Services Officer</p>
121.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kaushik Banerjee with Councillor Martin Goddard substituting and also Councillor Farhad Choubedar.</p>
122.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
123.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting on 6 January 2026 agreed.</p>
124.	<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 agenda items 1 – 11 would be heard in Part I and agenda item 12 would be heard in Part II due to the live enforcement matters.</p>
125.	<p>BUDGET & SPEND REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Committee received an update on the Council's financial position and noted the Month 9 (December 2025) budget monitoring report for both the Council overall and the services within the remit of the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee.</p> <p>At Council level, a forecast net overspend of £35.9m was reported. This was largely</p>

attributed to service pressures, challenges in delivering savings and corporate funding assumptions, partly offset by contingencies and management interventions. Within the Select Committee's portfolio, a projected overspend of £5.5m was reported, with favourable movements since Month 7 noted across a number of directorates.

The savings position was reviewed, with the majority of savings reported as either banked or on track. However, delivery risks and the deferral of some savings into future years were highlighted.

It was noted that, since the report had been prepared, conflict had regrettably occurred in the Middle East. Members acknowledged that this was likely to have an adverse impact on energy and interest costs and asked whether any sensitivity analysis had been undertaken to assess the potential effect on the forecast outturn and the wider Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

In response, it was confirmed that energy costs for the current financial year had been protected and that no related pressures were expected to impact the current year. It was also confirmed that all borrowing was held at fixed interest rates, with existing debt locked in at previous rates.

In relation to savings, Members noted that a significant amount of work had been undertaken when setting the savings programme. Concern was expressed about £4m of savings being deferred into 2026/27 and the achievability of those savings. It was suggested that there may be an issue with delivery at levels below Corporate Director, and clarification was sought on how performance issues of this nature would be addressed.

It was acknowledged that the challenges identified for 2026/27 had been recognised. It was explained that all service areas were now required to produce fully deliverable budgets and that a more robust approach to savings delivery was being applied. Processes had been strengthened to ensure accountability was taken earlier in the financial year.

Members also sought clarification on what spend control meant in practice in managing the £35m overspend. It was explained that a review process had been introduced to validate all spend requests, particularly in relation to care expenditure, to ensure that spending was necessary, met statutory duties and delivered essential services to residents. A Spend Control Panel, chaired by the Corporate Director of Finance, had been established to review all orders. It was further noted that, with three weeks remaining until year end, expenditure typically increased and that robust controls were in place to manage this.

It was noted that significant savings had not always been supported by detailed delivery plans. The Committee agreed that all major savings should be underpinned by clear delivery plans, monitored against defined milestones. It was also agreed that each saving should have a unique reference number and be recorded within a single dataset, with monitoring at individual manager level to strengthen accountability.

The Committee noted that a restructure within existing resources could be delivered. However, concern was expressed that savings issues had persisted and that greater assurance was needed that improvements were being embedded. It was reported that departments were being upskilled in the use of Oracle and that new monitoring templates would be introduced from the new financial year to provide managers with

improved financial management tools. It was confirmed that savings targets for 2026/27 would be smaller, to ensure they were challenging but achievable.

It was further reported that work was underway to strengthen spend control through improved systems and catalogue-based purchasing. In relation to agency staffing pressures, it was noted that overspends had arisen due to vacancies in key posts and a competitive labour market. Actions were being taken to increase permanent recruitment, review pay structures and improve succession planning, although wider local government market conditions continued to present challenges.

The Committee also noted that links had been established with Brunel University in relation to students studying for a Master's in Computer Science. It was reported that Digital already had arrangements in place involving students and care leavers supporting the Business Support team and that consideration was being given to extending this approach to Finance.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Noted the budget monitoring position as at December 2025 (Month 9) for the Council.**
- 2. Noted the budget monitoring position as at December 2025 (Month 9) for the services within the remit of the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee.**

126. **DIGITAL STRATEGY** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Committee noted progress in delivering the Digital Strategy 2024–2027, including a range of achievements across digital platforms, business intelligence, infrastructure modernisation, digital inclusion and Technology Enabled Care.

Key developments highlighted included the launch of the new Council website, the expansion of business intelligence dashboards, the modernisation of ICT infrastructure and continued work to strengthen cyber security. Progress was also reported in relation to digital inclusion and technology enabled care, alongside ongoing work to improve connectivity, develop smart city initiatives and build strategic partnerships. The next steps agreed by Cabinet in December 2025 were noted, including accelerating digital transformation, strengthening inclusion activity and further embedding technology within adult social care services.

It was reported that an awareness programme was being delivered through libraries, using data and metrics, such as garden waste participation, to help identify residents who may require additional support. Joint sessions with Microsoft had been held in libraries and Members noted the importance of access to online services through the Council's website.

Members were advised that the Council's digital capability was strong but that the main challenge was ensuring that all staff were able to fully utilise the technology available. Progress had been made in building staff capability through regular internal communications, training delivered via the Digital Academy and the development of digital champions. It was noted that delivery reports and website improvements were supporting colleagues, including housing officers, to better assist residents while working in the field. It was emphasised that cultural change was needed alongside

technical solutions.

Members sought assurance that back-office systems were sufficiently prepared to support digital delivery and highlighted the need to balance ambition with organisational capacity. It was acknowledged that private sector benchmarks created high expectations around speed and responsiveness. The Clean Streets app was cited as a positive example, having streamlined business processes and provided useful analytics to identify trends, support behaviour change and address issues such as fly-tipping. It was noted that care was being taken to avoid over-promising and under-delivering.

Concerns were raised about potential gaps between customer reporting systems and internal council processes, particularly in relation to response times. It was reported that issues had been identified, with highways presenting particular challenges, and that further updates would be provided once timelines had been confirmed.

Clarification was provided in relation to laptop provision. It was explained that original numbers had been based on contractual assumptions and that some devices had since been found to be unsuitable due to rapid technological change. As a result, numbers had been reduced and further reviews were planned. It was also reported that a partnership with a charity had been established to provide SIM cards. Members were advised that residents were not required to create an account to access digital services and could do so as guest users.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Noted the progress made in delivering the Digital Strategy 2024–27, including achievements across digital platforms, business intelligence, infrastructure modernisation, inclusion, and Technology Enabled Care.**
- 2. Noted the next steps agreed by Cabinet (December 2025), particularly the acceleration of digital transformation, strengthening of digital inclusion activity, embedding of technology into adult care services, and enhancing strategic partnerships.**

127. **RIGHT TO BUY BACKS** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Committee noted an update on residential property acquisitions for 2025/26, covering the performance of both the in-house acquisitions team and the Madison Brook Residential Property Acquisitions contract.

Progress against acquisition targets was reported, with a number of properties completed, under offer or in the approval process. It was noted that the remaining Housing Revenue Account budget had been allocated to other projects. Members were advised that the Madison Brook contract had supported delivery during 2025/26 but that its use would be reduced or brought to a close in 2026/27 following improvements to in-house processes.

It was noted that a key benefit of the Madison Brook programme had been the ability to access a larger and faster pipeline of properties. However, this had been offset by higher refurbishment costs. Concern was expressed that refurbishment costs had not been negotiated as effectively as anticipated and that analysis had identified a significant difference in repair costs between the different acquisition routes. It was

confirmed that these cost differences were being reviewed, with the aim of identifying good practice and implementing a more efficient and streamlined in-house approach.

Members considered the overall value for money achieved through the programme, including both the benefits and the limitations. It was noted that Right to Buy was a long-standing national policy and that the primary purpose of the acquisitions programme, supported by Cabinet, was to rebuild and expand the Council's social rented housing stock. Members were advised that refurbished properties had been brought up to a high standard, meeting modern and energy efficiency requirements, and that there remained a strong commitment to ensuring homes were fit for the future. Lessons learned were being actively applied to improve and modernise processes, with a continued focus on increasing housing supply.

It was reported that approximately 50 properties had been sold through Right to Buy, but that a greater number had been added to the housing stock overall. Members were advised that the acquisition target for 2025/26 had been 80 properties and that future targets would be influenced by funding availability and location. It was also reported that grant funding had been secured from the Mayor of London and that acquisitions were generally focused on former local authority stock, in order to support value for money and management efficiency. Members further noted that £7m of capital funding had been allocated, with applications for Mayoral grant funding forming part of the acquisition cycle.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Noted the performance of the in-house acquisitions team to date in 25/26.**
- 2. Noted the performance of the Madison Brook Residential Property Acquisitions contract 2025/26.**

128. **BUILDING SAFETY STRATEGY – FIRE SAFETY POLICY UPDATE 2026** (*Agenda Item 8*)

The Committee noted the updated Fire Safety Policy (2026), which reflects changes in legislation and regulatory requirements relating to housing, operational and commercial buildings. Members noted the Council's strategic approach to managing and mitigating fire risk, including arrangements for governance, assurance, performance reporting and resident engagement. It was also noted that the policy supports compliance with new statutory duties and strengthens protections for residents through a risk-led and resident-focused approach.

Members acknowledged that fire safety remained a critically important area of work. It was reported that residents were being supported to understand the actions being taken by the Council, with regular engagement activity having taken place. Over the previous four months, residents had attended sessions, engaged positively and demonstrated a proactive approach. Assurance was provided that information had been shared with residents across all wards and tenures.

It was confirmed that fire risks were assessed and risk-rated according to severity, with mitigation managed through regular inspections, including checks of communal areas and walkways. It was noted that leasehold properties were subject to a red-rated risk process where applicable.

Members noted that new regulations would increase the level of scrutiny and were

	<p>likely to result in additional capital expenditure for some properties. It was confirmed that no additional grant funding had been identified at this stage. Members were further advised that work was underway with the Finance team to quantify the potential additional financial impact.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted the content and purpose of the updated Fire Safety Policy (2026). 2. Supported the strategic approach adopted by the Council to manage and mitigate fire risk in line with new legislative requirements. 3. Endorsed the continued development of performance reporting and resident engagement arrangements arising from the policy.
129.	<p>BUILDING SAFETY PROGRAMME - FIRE SAFETY IN PRIVATE SECTOR MID AND HIGH-RISE BLOCKS OF FLATS (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>The Committee received an update on the Building Safety Programme relating to fire safety in private sector mid- and high-rise blocks of flats.</p> <p>It was noted that the programme had been established in response to national requirements introduced following the Grenfell tragedy. Progress to date was reported in relation to data collection, risk prioritisation, investigations and enforcement activity. High-rise buildings had been assessed and categorised using a risk-based approach, with enforcement action taken where required. Work on mid-rise buildings had been deferred due to funding and resource constraints.</p> <p>Members were advised that the programme remained ongoing and was currently funded until April 2026. It was noted that the programme was contributing to improved fire safety standards and living conditions for residents living in affected buildings across the Borough.</p> <p>Members discussed this matter further in Part II as it related to live enforcement cases.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the update on the Fire Safety Programme.</p>
130.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.</p>
131.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.</p>
132.	<p>BUILDING SAFETY PROGRAMME - FIRE SAFETY IN PRIVATE SECTOR MID AND HIGH-RISE BLOCKS OF FLATS (<i>Agenda Item 12</i>)</p> <p><i>That this report be declared as exempt from publication as it involves the disclosure of information in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraphs 6a and 6b of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), in that the report contains information which reveals that the authority proposes (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person and (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment and that the public interest</i></p>

	<p><i>in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.</i></p> <p>It was noted that the report included supporting information outlining the buildings under investigation and their current status.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the update.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.00 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.