

Minutes

CORPORATE RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

19 November 2024



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors John Riley (Chair), Kaushik Banerjee, Farhad Choubedar, Stuart Mathers (Opposition Lead), Elizabeth Garelick, Narinder Garg and Philip Corthorne</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Michael Naughton, Head of Capital Programme Stephen Gunter, Fleet Manager Matthew Kelly, Director of Procurement Anisha Teji, Senior Democratic Services Officer</p>
30.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Adam Bennett with Councillor Philip Corthorne substituting.</p>
31.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
32.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOVLED: That the minutes of the meeting on 17 September 2024 be confirmed as an accurate record.</p>
33.	<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 agenda items would be heard in Part I.</p>
34.	<p>PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE FLEET (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Director of Procurement and Commissioning and the Fleet Manager introduced the report on the Present and Future of the Fleet. The report detailed the current composition of the Council's fleet. Members heard about the challenges in relation to the fleet service which included driver behaviour and fleet damage, which costs the Council approximately £700 per annum. The report also provided further information on data and management, the nature of the fleet, external factors and cultural aspects contributing to fleet damage.</p> <p>It was reported that the Council had a vehicle replacement programme, typically replacing vehicles after seven years. The report noted that 96 frontline service vehicles had reached the end of their serviceable life and were now subject to daily ULEZ fees. There were plans to replace 32 vehicles with electric equivalents and the rest with</p>

diesel, considering various factors like charging infrastructure and costs.

Members asked for further information about the cost of damage and whether it related to insurance excess. Further information was also requested on how the figure of £700k was calculated and how value for money and procurement were achieved. It was explained that the insurance excess was £111,000. Most repairs were done under this amount, and the total cost included direct repair costs and claims against the Council, such as damage to third-party property. The combined value of £700,000 was roughly 50/50 between these two elements. It was also mentioned that benchmarking was difficult due to varying insurance models across different boroughs.

The Committee discussed the value for money in the procurement process. It was explained that all requirements were tendered through frameworks and usual providers. Despite tendering 64 vehicles, this did not make Hillingdon a huge buyer in comparison to fleets that purchased hundreds of units. The importance of value for money, particularly when purchasing food waste refuse collection vehicles, which had a 12-month lead time due to high demand was emphasised. Members were assured that necessary actions were being taken to influence specifications and ensure that the vehicles purchased were reliable and provided the required operational life span.

Members enquired whether the Council benefited from the collective purchasing power of multiple authorities through framework agreements. Officers explained that while frameworks were used, orders were not placed simultaneously due to differing requirements and timing. There were challenges in relation to purchasing cycles with other authorities, particularly due to fluctuating prices and varying replacement schedules. It was acknowledged however that exploring consolidated procurement could be beneficial, especially for expensive items like electric vehicles.

Officers explained that the Alto Group, a group which included fleet services across London boroughs, had discussed joint purchasing. The group was exploring ways to collectively go to the market for better deals, particularly for large purchases like sweepers and refuse collection vehicles. Members encouraged officers to continue exploring joint procurement opportunities.

The Committee was informed that Harrow had a similar fleet size to Hillingdon and the importance of collaboration was empathised. Members also heard about the types of accidents that occurred. The fleet, especially refuse collection vehicles, often encountered accidents due to narrow roads and reversing incidents. There had been issues with beacons being knocked off, which had been mitigated by liaising with other council departments to trim overhanging branches. There had also been fires in the back of vehicles caused by batteries being placed in general waste.

Members were interested in understanding whether recruitment practices or employment trends impacted a driver's performance and EDI scores. It was noted data from trackers was reviewed weekly by the waste management team, who identified and addressed lower-scoring EDI drivers. Both agency and permanent drivers were subject to the same assessments and training. The perception that agency drivers caused more damage was not supported by an exercise conducted 18 months ago. It was also highlighted that there was significant collaboration with health and safety and HR teams to address issues, which were often resolved through training rather than disciplinary actions.

The Committee heard that there was usually a residual value for vehicles at the end of

economic life, which was a positive reason for purchasing and maintaining vehicles rather than leasing. It was mentioned that hiring vehicles sometimes incurred additional costs for damage at the end of the hire period. Regarding second-hand vehicles, it was noted that councils typically had vehicles for five to seven years, and by the time they were available second-hand to buy, they were not viable for purchase.

During Member discussions it was noted that whilst EVs had lower running costs, their high initial purchase price often negated these savings over a vehicle's lifecycle. The need for infrastructure to support EVs, such as charging stations was highlighted. There were also operational challenges of integrating EVs into the fleet, including the need for sufficient charging infrastructure and the impact of unpredictable weather on vehicle availability. There was an ongoing review of the vehicle replacement program, noting that some vehicles had exceeded their expected lifecycle due to economic considerations. The program was reviewed annually to maximise asset utilisation. The issue of ULEZ charges for local authority vehicles was raised, with a suggestion to seek exemptions for these vehicles to reduce costs.

Members requested that a reminder be sent to residents about the importance of disposing of batteries appropriately.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and officers were thanked for their attendance.

35. **HAYES ESTATE REGENERATION UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Head of Capital Programme introduced the report on the Hayes Estate Regeneration Programme.

The report provided an update on the Hayes Regeneration Project, which aimed to enhance the quality of housing and public spaces in Hayes Town Centre and Avondale Drive Estates. The project, part of the Council's Housing Strategy 2021/22 - 2025/26, involved redeveloping these estates to provide better residential conditions and additional housing supply. Following positive resident ballots, Higgins PLC was selected as the developer partner and construction began in September 2022. Members heard that the project was progressing well, with the first phases expected to deliver 110 homes for existing residents by 2025. The redevelopment also focused on improving the social environment through various community engagement initiatives and social value programs.

The Committee noted the project's engagement and success in the ballot process, highlighting the contractor's strong community presence. Further information was sought on how the process had been managed to support people to find new homes or alternative accommodations and how the cost and workforce pressures in the construction industry were being mitigated. It was explained that some people had moved into different accommodations provided by the Council either in the Hayes area or within the Borough, and that future phases were still ongoing and managed on a case-by-case basis. It was noted that leaseholders were dealt with differently from tenants. Regarding cost and workforce pressures, Members were assured that the situation was being monitored closely.

Members emphasised the importance of having properties that were not noticeably different in terms of design and build to ensure sociability and enjoyment for all residents. Officers clarified that the design and appearance were dealt with through

	<p>the planning process, and all properties, whether private or council-owned, met building regulations. Externally, the properties would look the same as per the planning design. Internally, tenants had options for different finishes and the developer decided the standards for properties for sale. The project was on track for completion, with efforts to accelerate the timeline if possible.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the integration of mixed ownership within the estates and potential issues with service charges. It was explained that integration would be addressed through the planning process and that service charges would be communicated in advance.</p> <p>It was agreed that an update would be provided in April or May on the project's progress.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted and officers be thanked for their attendance.</p>
36.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.</p>
37.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>The Chair asked Members to think about possible review topics for the January meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.18 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@hillington.gov.uk or 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.