

Appendix F – Budget Consultation Feedback



2025/26 Budget Consultation Feedback

Overview of Consultation Process

- This report highlights the key findings of the Budget Consultation 2025-26 conducted by the London Borough of Hillingdon from 13 December 2024 to 26 January 2025.
- The purpose of the consultation was to seek views from residents and local businesses on Hillingdon Council's budget proposals for 2025-26.
- The consultation was publicised:
 - On Hillingdon Council's website
 - Through the Council's social media platforms
- Information about the consultation was also sent directly to:
 - Residents on the Council's Customer Engagement database;
 - Residents' associations in the borough.
- The survey received 113 responses, a decrease of 210 responses from last year.
- The total number of responses and **key themes** from all open questions are shown in the Survey results.
- All results are unweighted.
- Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated.

Summary of key findings

- 99% of the respondents are residents, 1% are on behalf of local businesses or organisations.
- 38% of respondents are satisfied with the budget proposals, 52% are dissatisfied, which leaves 10% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the Council's budget proposals.
- 40% of the respondents agree that the budget proposals give residents and local businesses value for money, with 42% disagreeing, leaving 18% neither agreeing nor disagreeing that the budget proposals give value for money.
- 51% of respondents feel well informed about the budget proposals, leaving 49% feeling not informed.

The document is structured by firstly presenting the survey results and secondly presenting the demographic and background information on respondents.

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Survey results

Q1: How satisfied are you with the Council's budget proposals for 2025/26?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very Satisfied	30	27%
Somewhat Satisfied	13	11%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	11	10%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	26	23%
Very Dissatisfied	33	29%
Total	113	100%

Q1a. Please tell us why:

Positive

Comments suggest that respondents agree for the following reasons:

- Low Council Tax Rates compared to other boroughs
- Good Waste Management – weekly collection
- Worth the money for our Parks

Negative

- Opposed to the further increase in Council Tax
- Concerns on Waste Management and Street Cleaning – with comments including the borough is in need of collection bins as current bin bags are torn apart by foxes and left for the Residents to clean up.
- Concerns about Parking Charges increases
- Concerns on the condition of the roads and pavements.
- Concerns as never in support of the working class who just get by
- Concerns on priorities, suggesting the priorities are wrong
- Concerns on Music School tours finishing.

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Q2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the budget proposals give value for money to local people and businesses?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Strongly Agree	32	28%
Tend to Agree	13	11%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20	18%
Tend to Disagree	20	18%
Strongly Disagree	28	25%
Total	113	100%

Comments on question 2 are a continuation of the same themes raised under question 1.

Q3: How well informed, if at all, do you feel about the budget proposals?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very Well Informed	28	25%
Fairly Well Informed	30	26%
Not Very Well Informed	38	34%
Not Informed At All	17	15%
Total	113	100%

Q3a: Are there any other comments you would like to make about the council's budget proposals for 2025-26?

Most comments were in line with those raised under question 1.

Other comments included:

- Lack of Accessible and Clear Reporting.
- Enhance Engagement: Hold town hall meetings, digital consultations and workshops to gather feedback and build the trust with Stakeholders.

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Survey Results – Demographic and Background Information

Q4. Are you completing this survey...?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
As a resident	112	99%
On behalf of a local	1	1%
Total	611	100%

Q5. Please tell us your postcode:

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
HA4	30	27%
HA5	8	7%
HA6	2	2%
UB3	29	26%
UB4	8	7%
UB7	9	8%
UB8	12	10%
UB9	2	2%
UB10	12	10%
Other	1	1%
Total	113	100%

Q6. Please tell us the name of your business or organisation:

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Fruity Fresh	1	100%
Total	1	100%

Q7. Please tell us the postcode of your business or organisation:

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
HA6	1	100%
Total	1	100%

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Q8: Are you:

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Female	55	49%
Male	51	45%
Prefer not to say	7	6%
Total	113	100%

Q9: How old are you?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Under 18	1	1%
18 to 24	7	6%
25 to 34	21	19%
35 to 44	41	36%
45 to 54	18	16%
55 to 64	10	9%
65+	15	13%
Total	210	100%

Other Responses Received Outside of the Consultation Survey

- There were no Petitions, Letters or emails that were received in response to the consultation Survey.

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Comments from Select Committees on Cabinet’s 2025/26 budget proposals

As part of the Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework Procedure), the Council’s select committees have a statutory role to review and comment on the Cabinet’s draft budget proposals before the final budget is recommended to full Council. The budget proposals were set out by Cabinet on 12 December 2024 and at select committee meetings in January, consideration was given to the draft budget proposals relating to the remit of each committee.

The formal comments of the select committees, whether approved at the meeting or through delegated authority after the meeting as agreed by the Chair, in consultation with the Opposition Lead, are set out below:

Select Committee	Comments
<p>Children, Education & Families Select Committee (7 January 2025)</p>	<p>The Committee recognises the vital importance of early help and intervention as a means of supporting Hillingdon families and young people.</p> <p>With the continued growth in demand-led services, and the challenging financial times for local authorities, officers are to be congratulated with the work undertaken to develop and deliver programmes such as ‘Staying Close’, a review of the Early Years Operating Model and a new Care Operating Model which aims to provide a cost-effective service.</p> <p>As with all budget proposals, however, it is essential that stringent monitoring is continually in place, but the Committee welcomes the proposals under its remit.</p>
<p>Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee (9 January 2025)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This Committee has Cabinet Member lines of accountability to 5 of the 7 Cabinet Members, including areas of responsibility held by the Leader of the Council. Each of the portfolio areas are complex, high in numbers of challenging subjects and large scale, including high spend subjects. Resulting in the Committee having 26 “heads” of responsibility or topics of interest to investigate and hold to account across these 5 portfolio areas. The number of topics we are able to review and report on is limited to “one- at- a -time” due to other pressures. However; the Committee does often receive multiple reports at meetings and receives multiple service updates from relevant Officers. 2. The 2025 / 2026 Budget Proposals

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	<p>2.1 The Committee notes the budget proposals relating to the areas under our remit and acknowledges not only those but inevitably the effects of pressures and influences outside our remit which effect the overall position.</p> <p>2.2 There are very high spending and costly service areas frequently noted and referred to in the budget report which in themselves provide the some of the most financially challenging sectors of the Council's work which impact on virtually all other services.</p> <p>2.3 The Committee also notes and acknowledges the consistent impact of external and all financial pressures which continue to have a significant impact on budget setting, namely; inflation pressures, rising costs, increased demand for costly services, reduced or inadequate central government funding, adult social care costs and system (such as it is), high demand for specialist children's services and all of the complex impacting pressures set out in the budget report. The setting of a balanced budget in these circumstances is not only an exceptional challenge from years gone by but a continual complexity in these deeply problematic economic times.</p> <p>2.4 The Committee note and welcome the financial strategy, and the 8 budgetary aims set out in the Executive Summary. We encourage the Cabinet and Officer team(s) to pursue these aims and this strategy to the fullest extent.</p> <p>2.5 The Committee are also concerned to ensure that all senior managers, budget holders and decision makers are evermore commercially and financially aware being cognisant of the need to be so. Building a sustainable culture of financial understanding.</p> <p>2.6 Such a culture as identified in 2.5 will assist in ongoing determination to successfully obtain the savings needed in pursuit of future budgetary balancing.</p> <p>2.7 The Committee notes the savings programme, the continued development and implementation of the digital and other transformation plans, the careful attention to reviewing all Council</p>
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	<p>expenditure so that it is fit for purpose. These being essential factors in setting out the financial position on a better course for the future.</p> <p>2.8 Set against the national and consequential financial picture, with what many see as an inadequate financial structure for local government, the fact that the Cabinet, in particular the Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, and the Officer finance team have been able to produce a balanced budget across the Committee’s service areas is to be commented.</p>
<p>Residents’ Services Select Committee (14 January 2025)</p>	<p>The Select Committee acknowledges the efforts of officers in addressing significant challenges arising from the increasing demand for housing and homelessness support. Members commend the detailed analysis provided by Council officers, which highlights both the immediate pressures and the innovative steps being taken to manage these issues.</p> <p>The Committee recognises the Council’s prudent use of reserves as a temporary measure and its commitment to rebuilding these reserves, despite external pressures beyond local control.</p> <p>The Committee endorses the Council’s proactive engagement with central government to address critical funding gaps. Current benefit rates, which cover only 5% of private rentals within the Borough, place an unsustainable burden on the homelessness budget. Members emphasise that this is a national issue disproportionately impacting local councils and commend the Council for advocating on behalf of residents for a fairer funding settlement.</p> <p>While the higher-than-expected local government finance settlement is welcome, the Committee notes that it remains insufficient to meet the scale of demand for services.</p> <p>The increasing number of right-to-buy applications is a positive step towards encouraging local home ownership. We support the Council’s efforts to explore innovative and cost-effective approaches, such as cash incentives, to help tenants transition to private housing. However, members emphasise the critical need to safeguard an</p>

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	<p>adequate housing stock to meet the growing demand.</p> <p>The Committee commends the Council’s adoption of zero-based budgeting, which strengthens financial accountability and enhances oversight, particularly for senior officers managing service budgets. The Committee also highlights the importance of contingency planning to address potential risks, ensuring the Council remains well-prepared for unforeseen pressures.</p> <p>The Committee commends the Council for its ongoing improvements in digital access, which have significantly enhanced service delivery for residents. While encouraging the Council to continue optimising digital solutions to meet the evolving needs of the community, we also recognise the importance of supporting residents who are not digitally able. We encourage the Council to ensure that accessible, non-digital alternatives also remain available to meet the needs of all residents where possible.</p> <p>In summary, the Committee recognises the good work undertaken by Council officers to navigate persistent challenges in housing and homelessness. However, Members remain concerned about the long-term sustainability of the budget and reiterate their support for continued lobbying and partnership working to secure fairer funding and deliver better outcomes for residents.</p>
<p>Health and Social Care Select Committee (23 January 2025)</p>	<p>The Committee recognises the dedication of staff in Adult Social Care and their continued efforts to do more with less to support residents in Hillingdon during these financially challenging times. It is this high performance that resulted in the CQC rating Hillingdon as 'Good' in its recent inspection. Whilst there is more than can be done to improve the way that the Council works, Members are aware that, at a time of significant financial pressure, efforts should be directed at maintaining current 'Good' levels of service rather than using the limited resources available to achieve a CQC rating of 'Excellent'.</p> <p>Social workers' use of artificial intelligence is a positive step forward and has improved performance by enabling the Council to act quicker, undertake more assessments and control demand. However, Members have expressed some concern about the Council's reliance on digital</p>

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	<p>transformation to deliver the level of savings needed. It will be important to ensure that these savings plans are monitored and that other options are explored should the digital options not achieve the savings expected. Members have requested that the progress, impact and outcomes of the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence be reported back to the Committee.</p>
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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Minutes of the detailed budget discussions at the above Select Committees:

- [Children, Families and Education Select Committee on Tuesday 7th January 2025](#)
- [Corporate Resources & Infrastructure Select Committee on Thursday 9th January 2025](#)
- [Residents' Services Select Committee on Tuesday 14th January 2025](#)
- [Health and Social Care Select Committee on Thursday 23rd January 2025](#)