

Minutes

CORPORATE RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

17 September 2025



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

	Committee Members Present: Councillors John Riley (Chair), Adam Bennett (Vice-Chair), Kaushik Banerjee, Farhad Choubedar, Narinder Garg and Sital Punja LBH Officers Present: Matthew Wallbridge (Chief Operating Officer), Steve Muldoon (Corporate Director of Finance), Ian Anderson (Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries), Andy Goodwin (Head of Strategic Finance), Michael Naughton (Head of Capital Programme), Anisha Teji (Senior Democratic Services Officer)
92.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>) Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gursharan Mand with Councillor Sital Punjal substituting. Apologies were also received from Councillor Mohammed Islam.
93.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>) None.
94.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>) RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting on 23 July 2025 be agreed.
95.	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>) It was confirmed that all items would be heard in Part I.
96.	ANNUAL COMPLAINT & SERVICE MONITORING REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 MARCH 2025 (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>) The Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries introduced the Annual Complaint & Service Monitoring Report covering the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Members were informed of key changes introduced by the Local Government and Housing Ombudsman, including new complaint handling codes which had led to a shift from informal to formal complaints. As a result, fewer service improvements were recorded due to stricter procedural pathways. A decrease in service requests from 3729 to 3208 was highlighted, while Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints had increased. Ombudsman complaints remained stable, with 77

received and 18 upheld. Officers explained that many were not investigated due to lack of merit, often linked to dissatisfaction with Council policy. It was reported that the system continued to function effectively, with most complaints resolved early.

Members acknowledged a significant drop in compliments—from 502 in 2021 to 110—largely due to underreporting and the absence of initiatives such as wildflower planting, which had previously generated positive feedback. Internal processes were also cited, with staff often unsure where to direct compliments.

The Committee recognised a reduction in Member enquiries from 6,236 to 3,320, while service requests increased to 7,100, resulting in a balanced overall volume of interactions. Common enquiry topics included housing services, antisocial behaviour, and waste, while fly-tipping and street cleansing dominated service requests. Officers outlined investment in data analytics, including geolocation and live reporting tools, which had helped identify hotspots and inform resource allocation. However, seasonal factors and budget constraints were acknowledged as ongoing challenges.

Concerns were raised about the lack of follow-up on recurring issues. Officers confirmed that hotspot data could be shared with Members, subject to GDPR considerations. Follow-ups typically focused on frequent reporters, although arrangements could be made for specific cases upon request.

Lessons learned from upheld Ombudsman investigations were discussed, with most cases relating to housing services during 2022–2023. In many instances, corrective actions had already been taken before the findings were issued. Significant faults had been reviewed by senior officers, and Members were assured that recommended improvements had since been implemented across relevant services.

The Committee explored how Hillingdon compared to other London boroughs and councils nationally. While all councils applied the same definitions for complaints and service requests, Members observed that interpretation and application varied. For example, whether a complaint was considered upheld often depended on individual judgement. It was also noted that even within Hillingdon, councillors submitted varying levels of service requests based on local needs and perspectives.

Officers confirmed that comparative data with neighbouring authorities could be provided upon request, offering insight into Hillingdon's performance across various services. Further clarification was requested on how fly-tipping and street cleansing data had been used to inform cabinet decisions and resource deployment.

Members welcomed the success of a ward-based hotspot visit initiative, which had actively involved local businesses and households in efforts to reduce waste. There was interest in repeating similar initiatives, and it was suggested that analysing the link between service reductions and rising request volumes could help shape future planning. Some waste-related complaints were found to stem from avoidable oversights rather than staffing shortages.

The Committee considered whether compliments could be linked to staff performance reviews. Officers confirmed that while compliments are valued and shared, only those recognising work beyond standard duties are considered in formal evaluations. The relatively low number of complaints and compliments was acknowledged, especially in the context of serving a population of over 250,000 residents.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee noted the contents of the report and provided**

	comments to officers as appropriate. 2. That a copy of the report be shared with other Select Committee Members.
97.	BUDGET & SPENDING REPORT - SELECT COMMITTEE MONITORING (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>) The Committee reviewed the financial position and performance for the 2024–25 financial year. Members noted underspends of £1.3 million in Finance and Transformation and £1.9 million in Corporate Services and Property. Of the £4.7 million savings target, it was reported that £1.7 million had been achieved, with the remaining £3 million carried forward into 2025–26. Members discussed the capital budget allocation of £120 million, noting an underspend of £33 million due to project delays. These included a contractor going into administration and slippage in the delivery of the water sports facility. The Committee considered the relatively low underspend of £15 million in the Housing, Operations and Assets capital programme to be a positive outcome. Looking ahead, the Committee was informed of a projected overspend of £4 million for 2025–26, identified as early as month two. This was attributed to treasury pressures linked to reduced cash balances and rising borrowing costs. Members also noted an additional shortfall of £1.6 million in Corporate Services and Property, caused by delays in leasing Civic Centre space. The savings target for 2025–26 was set at £8.3 million, incorporating the £3 million carried forward. The Committee acknowledged that over half of the savings were either banked or on track, while £974,000 was flagged as at risk and £1.2 million was proposed for write-off. The Council's debt level of £500 million at an interest rate of 2.2% was acknowledged by Members and considered manageable. The Committee welcomed the continued cautious financial approach, which avoided excessive borrowing and high-risk investments. However, concerns were raised regarding the lack of clarity around capital receipts for 2025–26. Members noted that approximately £600,000 had been received, with additional funds carried forward to support transformation-related spending. It was further noted that the £17 million transformation programme lacked sufficient detail, and officers committed to providing clearer reporting in future updates. Members requested a more detailed breakdown of departmental savings, and officers confirmed that the data was available. By month two, 51% of planned savings had been banked and 23% were on track for later delivery. The Committee raised questions about accelerating future savings, noting that many had already been delivered through early actions such as vacancy removals. The Committee discussed garage assets, which had been revisited using an ABC classification model to assess their condition and potential use. A review of the garage portfolio was underway, and Members were advised that further details would follow. Broader asset management was also addressed, including efforts to consolidate asset data into a central system to support strategic decision-making and better align services with residents' needs. The new finance lead shared observations on the team's strong corporate knowledge and outlined plans for due diligence, including reviews of savings, capital receipts, and transformation spending. Members noted that the results from 2024–25 were being used to improve forecasting and budgeting for 2026–27.

	The Committee was informed that the Council had set a £5 million savings goal as part of its new operating model, listed under unallocated savings. Half of this was expected to come from operating cost reviews and the other half from spend control measures. Legal compliance under Section 114 legislation had been maintained, with no immediate risks identified, although Members noted that cash flow remained a concern. Questions regarding the Oracle system were raised and addressed by the Audit Committee. Members noted that a capital budget had been allocated for system improvements and that work was ongoing. Savings in digital and technology contracts were being pursued through early assessments and contract consolidation. Rising costs linked to AI investment were acknowledged, and Members welcomed efforts to explore in-house solutions to reduce reliance on proprietary software. The Committee discussed procurement practices, referencing a previous review that highlighted the need to reduce contract numbers and avoid duplication. Members noted that a procurement and contract review had been launched, funded through the capital transformation programme, with the aim of improving sourcing models and commercial management. A commitment was made to revisit savings throughout the year, and both the 2024–25 outturn and the 2025–26 month two budget monitoring position were formally noted. RESOLVED: That the Committee: 1. Note the 2024/25 outturn position. 2. Note the 2025/26 Month 2 budget monitoring position.
98.	FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>) RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.
99.	WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>) RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.27 pm.

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.