

HILLINGDON people

News from your council
January/February 2024

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'Outstanding' Children's Services



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COVER PHOTO: GET FIT AND ACTIVE THIS NEW YEAR AT ONE OF OUR HIGH QUALITY LEISURE CENTRES.

We've aligned stories in this magazine to our council strategy to keep you updated on our progress. Below is a key to explain the graphics.



Advertising deadline for next edition: **Friday 16 February.**

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Welcome



Happy New Year and welcome to the January edition of *Hillingdon People*. Despite the beginning of a new year, councils are facing a similar predicament and picture to previous ones with challenging economic conditions continuing and funding gaps widening. Government grants aren't meeting the additional cost pressures faced by local authorities as a result of the increased demand for social care services, and housing affordability and homelessness. However, while many councils are issuing section 114 notices because they are unable to balance their budgets, or cutting services, this is not the case for Hillingdon. As part of the council's proposed budget for 2024/25, there is unfortunately no alternative but to increase council tax and fees and charges. Yet despite this, residents will once again pay amongst the lowest levels of council tax in outer London. We know that households continue to struggle, and to ensure that residents don't shoulder the burden, we are continuing to make difficult decisions and find better ways to deliver our outstanding services at lower costs through our rigorous transformation programme. The council will not be cutting frontline services – we will invest further in them, ensuring we continue to provide excellent services for residents, including, free weekly waste and recycling collections, enhanced parks and leisure facilities, resurfaced roads and pavements, town centre improvements and additional homes and school places. You can see many examples of this approach in this edition of *Hillingdon People*, including the delivery of new school facilities to increase the number of places for children with special educational needs (page 12), the continued investment in our leisure centres (page 16), how we're creating more housing and expanding existing properties (page 20), the recent town centre improvements (page 22) and the success of our annual Chrysalis funding scheme to improve community amenities (page 24). You can also read more about the proposed budget on page 10, and as usual, you can have your say on the proposals until Sunday 28 January at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/budget-consultation.

Ian Edwards
Cllr Ian Edwards
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

New way to recycle your electricals



Recycling bin at Uxbridge Library

The council, working in partnership with Material Focus, a not-for-profit organisation funding the scheme, will collect items, including broken kettles, hair styling appliances, cables and electric children's toys.

Small electricals can still also be donated alongside clothes as part of the council's home clothing collection scheme with the charity TR Aid. Larger items continue to be accepted at Harefield Civic Amenity Site and the West Drayton waste weekends.

Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, said: "We are committed to creating a green and more sustainable borough for future generations and our new small electricals recycling scheme in libraries provides another opportunity for residents to recycle and reduce the environmental impact of disposing of general waste."

More information can be found at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/small-electricals-recycling.

The council has introduced small electrical recycling points in libraries across the borough in a bid to increase the number of electronic products being recycled.

Pink collection bins have been installed at nine libraries (Botwell Green, Ickenham, Manor Farm, Northwood Hills, Ruislip Manor, Uxbridge, Yeading, Yiewsley and Oak Farm).

Two banners shine a spotlight on road safety



Schoolchildren at The Breakspair School in Ickenham have put their artistic skills to the test by taking part in a road safety banner competition to reinforce the school's voluntary one-way system on Hoylake Crescent and Bushey Road.

The initiative was run by the council's school travel and road safety (STARS) team and the winning designs were revealed outside the school in November by pupils and Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport.

Cllr Bianco said: "Our outreach work with schools is designed to get schoolchildren and their families engaged, talking and thinking about road safety and the issues involved."

"These colourful banners are a great way to share an important message with the school community."

This month, the school will also be launching a promotional video to inform parents about its future travel and road safety initiatives. This was funded by the STARS team's annual Dragon's Den event which gives junior travel ambassadors the opportunity to pitch for money for their school to put towards their own road safety or active travel initiative.



Restorations carried out to protect Grade I listed bunker

Works to repair water leaks in the shafts that form part of the air ventilation system at the historic Battle of Britain Bunker are nearing completion.

The council is working in partnership with specialist building contractors, Fullers, to deliver the £1.2 million works to the Grade I listed building in Uxbridge, which will help protect and weatherproof the 84-year-old structure for the future.

The bunker, which was built in 1939, developed issues with water seeping into the plant rooms following heavy rainfall, due to its subterranean hillside location, 60 feet below the ground at the end of Wren Avenue.

Work on the restorations began two years ago with a trial that concentrated on one of the lower ventilation shafts before moving on in September last year to the remaining lower shaft and culminating in works to the second pair closer to the bunker entrance.

The specialist work involved digging five-metre-deep excavations



Cllr Bianco views the specialist repair work

around each shaft to the roof of the bunker itself and digging through two 'burster layers' of concrete built to withstand direct impact from 10,000lb World War Two bombs.

The team has been repairing cracks and damage to the shafts, adding a waterproofing membrane above the bunker roof and then putting a permeable system around each shaft that encourages water to flow away from it.

The repairs also included flood relief work to prevent rainwater from further uphill flowing down and pooling on the site, ensuring it is dispersed safely.

Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, said: "We're incredibly lucky to have such a fascinating and unique historical asset in the heart of the borough and are duty bound to preserve it for future generations."

"It was fascinating to see the work firsthand and no small feat to have to excavate through two one-metre layers of reinforced concrete. I hope many residents and visitors enjoy a visit to the bunker and visitor centre this year and uncover for themselves the incredible history of this hidden gem."

More warm welcome centres offer winter wellness activity programme

This winter, the council is supporting more organisations to become warm welcome centres and deliver a range of free winter wellness activities, helping residents to stay warm, active, social and healthy.

Following trial exercise sessions at community venues during the summer, which were well received, the council and NHS North West London is supporting centres to deliver activities and address social isolation and frailty.

Activities include exercise classes, coffee mornings, film screenings, quizzes, bingo, board games and craft afternoons. These free sessions are open to all residents. All council libraries already offer a range of activities and groups throughout the year.

The council is working with community centres, interfaith organisations and its leisure provider, GLL, which have joined churches and libraries that volunteered their venues as warm welcome centres last winter, as well as local partner organisations, H4ALL, Healthwatch and the



Confederation to also provide a range of health information, workshops, screenings, falls prevention information and blood pressure testing at the centres.

Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, said: "Our new winter wellness programme will help to ensure residents can enjoy activities, keep active and healthy while also staying warm and connecting with other people during the colder winter months."

To find out more visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/warm-welcome-centres.

New family hub in the heart of Hayes

In December, the council formally opened its second fully refitted and inclusive family hub in Hayes.

The former ASHA Day Care Centre, near Coldharbour Lane, has been remodelled into a multi-functional site which incorporates a wide range of integrated services for families and children.

Hayes Family Hub was formally opened on Wednesday 6 December by Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education and Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport.

The new hub will include children's centre groups and sessions, outdoor space for play, youth services, parenting programmes, SEND support, adult education opportunities and pre and ante natal maternity support for children, young people and their families. Services will be offered in person or online, giving visitors access to counselling, mentoring, health visitors, a sexual health clinic, baby groups and much more.

It also has a modern reception and waiting area, conference facilities, play areas, contact rooms, meeting spaces,

treatment rooms and a life skills kitchen for supervised learning.

Cllr O'Brien said: "Family hubs allow us to bring several services together under one roof, making them more accessible for families and young people. This new facility, and the wide range of services and activities available, will be a fantastic addition to the local community and offer a safe place for support, recreation and growth for parents and their children."



Expansion of childcare support

From April 2024, the government is expanding its childcare offer to enable more working parents to get help with childcare costs.

Eligible working parents in England with a two-year-old child will have access to 15 hours of childcare support for 38 weeks of the year, or a total of 570 hours to use flexibly with one or more childcare provider.

To meet eligibility criteria, each parent must earn at least £167 per week and receive a salary of less than £100,000 a year.

You will be able to check with HMRC from this month if you are eligible.

Places with a childcare provider can only be used in the term after the child's second birthday or the term after you have received an eligibility code from HMRC.

From September 2024, the 15 hours childcare offer will be expanded to eligible working parents with children between 9 and 23 months old.

To find out more about the support on offer, visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

New measures to be introduced to tackle illegal parking

The council has agreed new measures to help reduce illegal parking, targeting motorists who currently look to exploit the system for their own gain.

When Cabinet met in December it agreed to reduce the timescales that civil enforcement officers (CEOs) are required to wait when observing motorists who are parked illegally before issuing a penalty charge notice (PCN).

The council's previous 'observation time' was five minutes – meaning the CEOs had to wait and monitor a vehicle for five minutes before a PCN could be issued to the offender. Some motorists exploited this observation time to park illegally for up to five minutes knowing they couldn't be penalised. This illegal parking causes a nuisance, blocking parking bays for shoppers or visitors, and parking on restricted yellow lines.



Observation times will be reduced across council car parks and most on street parking areas where restrictions apply.

Cabinet's decision will also allow the council to retrospectively issue PCNs by post to those motorists who have been caught offending but drive away before the PCN can be issued, or physically prevent it from being issued, such as by threatening violence.

Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, said: "We're committed to creating safe and strong communities but there are some who look to bend the rules, often at the expense of others.

"Illegal parking can block bus routes or take up valuable parking spaces preventing other shoppers from using them.

"These new changes will allow us to keep disruption to a minimum, keep traffic moving and ensure motorists follow the rules there for everyone."

New school road safety campaign

A new awareness campaign was launched by the council at the end of last year to create a safer and more sustainable future for the borough's schoolchildren.

The year-long Active Travel Movement, which started in October, invites schoolchildren and their parents to embark on a journey to ditch their cars and embrace sustainable travel options.

The campaign includes a range of initiatives to encourage behaviour change and move towards active travel becoming the preferred option. Schools will be encouraged to share their successes across social media, and in turn inspire others to get on board.

The initiative began with Walk to School Week, which encouraged families to walk all or part of the way to school. To help plan journeys, the council's school travel and road safety team gave parents access to special maps which highlight five and 10-minute walking zones around their school.

The team also tapped into the children's creativity to get them thinking about road safety topics through competitions. Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 were asked to visually narrate their active travel school journeys, while Key Stage 2 and 3 were challenged to create a road safety invention. The winning designs were framed and presented to pupils to keep.



Armita Rabbanipour of Rosedale Primary School joint winner of the KS2 competition

During Road Safety Week (20 to 26 November) pupils took part in a challenge to 'Be The Brightest School', which encouraged them to dress as brightly as possible for the day to raise the importance of being seen on their journeys as the darker months set in.

Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, said: "We're committed to creating a green and sustainable borough, and it's brilliant to see the future generation playing their part by helping to reduce unnecessary, short car journeys while also keeping healthy and active."

Vouchers – did you know?

Last year we introduced a new paperless parking permit system to help residents and businesses to apply for and renew permits online, this included visitor vouchers.

If you're a resident living in a parking management scheme, you can apply for virtual visitor vouchers using our permit account at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/parking-permits.

You do not need to have your own car/resident permit to be eligible to obtain visitor vouchers. It could be that you have a tradesperson attending your house. Any property that is located within a parking management scheme can apply.

If you don't already have a parking account, all you need to do is create one on the above link, or if you already have one, just sign into your account and then apply for a visitor permit using the 'permit application' option on the homepage.

You can get up to 50 parking sessions with a visitor permit. If you require more sessions, you can apply for another permit.

More Hillingdon playgrounds receive exciting renovations



St Peter's Road

Albion Road in Hayes and St Peter's Road in Cowley are the latest sites to get playground upgrades as part of the council's four-year, £1.6 million refurbishment programme.

The initiative, which will benefit 26 locations across the borough, is providing the latest play equipment at communal housing estates and parks and open spaces to make them more modern, accessible and inclusive.

The renewed playgrounds were opened by the Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana and Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services on Wednesday 15 November.

The new equipment at St Peter's Road includes an inclusive see-saw, cradle seat swing, springer, carousel, climbing frame with monkey bars and a junior multi-play unit with slide specifically for younger children.

At Albion Road, youngsters can enjoy a three-way see-saw and wheelchair accessible roundabout, as well as a double-tower multi-play unit, fireman's pole, hopscotch and extra wide slide.

Cllr Lavery said: "We want to ensure that young residents have access to safe, high quality play and leisure facilities by investing in new

equipment in the borough as part of our commitment to creating thriving, healthy households and enabling young residents to live healthy, active lives. We are also incorporating more accessible and inclusive equipment to ensure no child misses out."



Albion Road

Social housing to get energy-efficient improvements

Social housing properties are being transformed to make them more environmentally efficient through the council's decarbonisation programme.

To date, 61 homes have been completed out of 158 earmarked for the first round of upgrades through the government-funded scheme, which began in February 2022.

The programme targets properties with a lower energy efficiency (EPC) rating and funds a range of improvements to bring them in line with modern standards of Band C or above.

Works can include cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation, loft insulation, window replacements, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, reducing cold bridging and replacement canopies.

Janet Beasley from Braybourne Close, Uxbridge received a new heat recovery ventilation system, double glazed windows and new front door with porch canopy and cavity wall insulation through the scheme.

She said: "I'm over the moon. I'm so pleased I took up the council's offer, it's made a great difference to my life. Before, even with the heating

on I could not get warm. Now, while we have had this awful weather even without the heating on my house is nice and warm, it's brilliant."

The council secured £1,581,432 funding for the programme from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero and is now looking to apply for further funding to bring even more homes in the borough up to higher efficiency standards and help with the council's carbon reduction aspirations.

Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, said: "We're committed to being a green and sustainable borough and have pledged for council operations to be carbon neutral by 2030.

"Bringing our older, less energy efficient buildings into line with modern efficiency standards will play a huge role in us achieving this ambition and includes not only our social housing stock but our other buildings too, such as the Civic Centre in Uxbridge, where work is already underway to make it more efficient.

"The benefits for residents of having their homes become more energy efficient are multiple, with less exposure to damp and cold meaning reduced chance of illness, plus the financial bonus of reduced heating costs as less heat is lost to the outside."

Households eligible for the scheme will be contacted by the council and offered the improvement works.



Janet with Cllr Bianco and Cllr Lavery

SEND Strategy approved

In December, the council agreed its new five-year Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy which sets out a commitment to put children and young people at the heart of services.

Five ambitions will help improve children's and families' experiences of SEND services in the borough, including delivering the right support at the right time; providing inclusive education for all; provision that meets the needs of children and young people; children and young people live happy and fulfilled lives where they are included in the community; and having a flexible offer and range of interventions available for children to access AP.

The plan also focuses on five desired outcomes. These are for children to be the best version of themselves; enjoy good physical, mental and emotional health; have pride and understanding of their unique identities; have a stable home where they feel they belong; and be and feel safe, loved and empowered.

Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, said: "Our children and young people are the future of the borough. We are just as ambitious for children and young people with SEND and those who access AP as we are for every other child. They are entitled to the best possible life opportunities that we can give them, from their birth and early childhood through education and as they transition into adulthood and employment."

To read the strategy, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/send-strategy.

Marking White Ribbon Day 2023

The council held a sponsored walk and candlelight vigil to mark White Ribbon Day in November.

The national campaign brings together local authorities and partner organisations that deal with domestic abuse and seeks to change attitudes, behaviours and systems around masculinity that perpetuate gender inequality and men's violence against women.

To mark the day, members of the council's Hillingdon Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service took part in a 10-mile '13 Bridges Walk' to help raise funds for Hillingdon Women's Centre who support survivors of domestic abuse.

The campaign also marked the start of '16 days of activism', a global campaign to end violence against women and girls, with the council promoting its awareness

work with messages and activities for both residents and staff.

The 16 days culminated on Monday 11 December with a candlelight vigil at the Civic Centre in Uxbridge in recognition of the borough's survivors.

Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, said: "Domestic abuse is a very real and harmful issue, and any efforts we can make to stop it at the source, by raising awareness and helping educate men and boys around the impacts of their actions and words, can only help make our borough safer."

If you're a victim of domestic abuse, or know someone who is, and there's an emergency that's ongoing or life is in danger, call 999 now. In non-emergency cases, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/abuse to find out more about local support.



Cllr Jane Palmer

Christmas card winners revealed

The council's Christmas card competition returned at the end of 2023, with a record number of residents submitting their festive designs to be in with a chance of their artwork featuring on our digital corporate cards.

Fifty entries were received for the adult and child categories, with the winning entries selected by Leader of the Council, Cllr Ian Edwards.

Benjamin Rozario-Dalton, age 9 from South Ruislip, won the children's category with his colourful drawing of a train and Christmas tree scene.

The runners-up were Lily-Rose Smith, age 8 from Ruislip, with

her drawing of reindeer flying Father Christmas and his sleigh above Hillingdon, and Aiden Fernandes, age 7 from Hayes, with his Christmas tree made from a painted leaf.

Ann Gaines from Hayes was selected as the winner of the adult's category with her knitted nativity scene and stable made by a local shopkeeper in Hayes.

Runners-up included Jill Carubelli, age 49 from Hayes, with her embroidered Christmas tree,



Benjamin Rozario-Dalton



Ann Gaines

and Coral Parnell, age 29 from Northwood, with her tree collage.

Cllr Edwards said: "I had a very difficult job choosing the winners for our e-cards for 2023 as we received so many creative entries!"

"Well done to everyone who entered – it was fantastic to see all of your amazing artwork."

Fraud team wins Grand Prix award



The counter fraud team with their awards

The council received two awards at November's Public Finance Awards, including the highest accolade of Grand Prix winner.

The ceremony, held at JW Marriott Grosvenor House Hotel London, celebrated the people, products and services that demonstrate excellence and originality within public finance, with the council receiving the Outstanding Fraud Prevention, Detection and Recovery award, and best in class across all the shortlisted entries, the Grand Prix.

The Grand Prix is the highest industry recognition, with the council's counter fraud team recognised by a panel of sector leaders for its ingenuity, creative initiatives and success in tackling fraud.

The service won the awards for taking a proactive approach to fraud prevention, detection and recovery and the processes it has implemented which focus on loss prevention and income maximisation.

The judging panel were presented with evidence of the team's success in achieving record financial savings of £12.3 million during 2022/23 across multiple areas, including tenancy fraud, business rates and fraud in homelessness.

They were impressed by the team's creation and implementation of a fraud risk register, which provides real-time reviews on

emerging risks and allows them to deploy resources in an agile way, and the embedded mandatory verification processes across social housing, right to buy and succession applications.

The judges commented that Hillingdon demonstrated "a very strong nomination that showed results over and above target. The team took a holistic approach to audit, creating an organisation-wide counter fraud culture led from the top down."

"Their risk-based strategy secured real-time delivery and significant savings as well as being sustainable with plans for continuous improvement."

Cllr Martin Goddard, Cabinet Member for Finance, said: "I am delighted to see our counter fraud team recognised for the excellent service they provide to create safe and strong communities by preventing fraud and protecting the public purse. Congratulations to the team for their continued dedication and commitment."

Fraud is a serious crime which can have a devastating impact on its victims and reduces the availability of the council's resources to protect those most in need of support.

Anyone who suspects that someone is committing fraud against the council can report it directly, in confidence, at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/reportfraud or by calling 0800 389 8313.

Revised Smoke Control Area

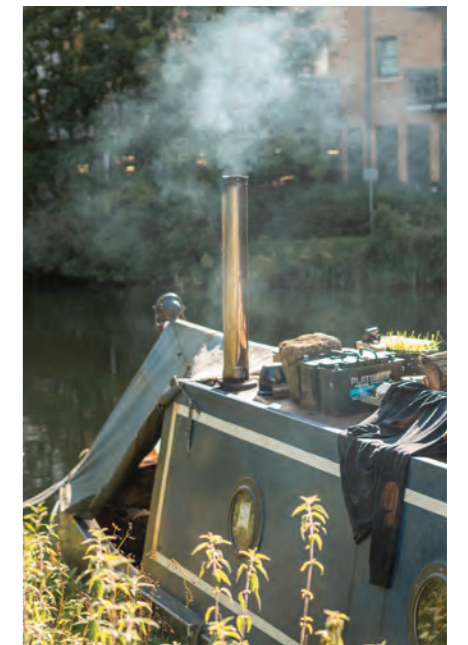
In November, the council's Cabinet agreed to implement a new Smoke Control Area (SCA) across the borough to help improve air quality and reduce airborne pollutants.

The previous (SCA) didn't cover the whole borough or any of its waterways, but the revised version will now ensure full coverage across Hillingdon.

New environmental protection measures have been introduced in the Environment Act (2021), which set binding targets for air quality. Following electoral ward boundary changes, not all of the borough's properties were covered by the existing SCA. Furthermore, waterways were excluded completely, meaning moored vessels using smoke-producing stoves and heaters were not subject to its conditions.

The SCA enforces what materials are burned in the borough, and how, to help address poor air quality from smoke pollution and other emissions. The burning of unauthorised solid fuels is an offence within the SCA, which the council enforces by way of fines. This means residents, including those living in moored vessels, will need to ensure both their stove and the fuels they're burning comply with requirements to avoid falling foul of the law.

A public consultation into the revised SCA is available at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/smoke-control-consultation and runs until Friday 29 March.





Continuing to put residents first

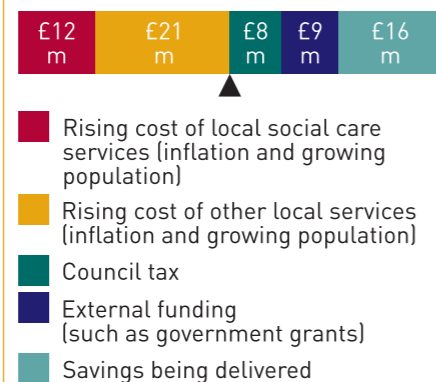
Hillingdon residents are once again set to pay amongst the lowest levels of council tax in outer London as part of the council's proposed budget for 2024/25, which also sees further investment in the borough's excellent and award-winning services.

The national picture

Councils across the UK are continuing to face acute and unprecedented budget pressures. Government funding isn't increasing in line with inflation which is creating widening funding gaps. London has been profoundly affected by the prolonged impact of high inflation, increased

demand for care services, housing affordability and homelessness. To bridge the gap, increases to council tax and fees and charges are inevitable despite the ongoing cost of living crisis. Some local authorities are already cutting discretionary services – but not here in Hillingdon.

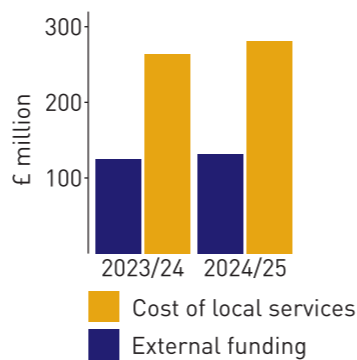
Balancing additional expenditure with funding 2024/25



How we're delivering efficiencies

The council has continued to deliver a balanced budget thanks to its track record of sound financial management and willingness to take tough decisions. Each year we minimise the funding requirement from residents by creating efficiency savings through our transformation programme while continuing to maintain and invest in services for residents. Rather than cutting services, we believe in changing them – finding better ways of delivering the same service but at a lower cost. This might be achieved by relocating an existing service to achieve economies of scale in the use of our

Funding the rising cost of services



Council tax and fees and charges for 2024/25

Core council tax will increase by 2.99 per cent and a levy of 2 per cent to fund residents' adult social care will also be charged. In practice, this equates to a total of 4.99 per cent – £1.27 a week for a Band D property. Hillingdon residents will likely pay amongst the lowest levels of council tax in outer London (see right).

Outer London council tax per Band D property for 2023/24



Hillingdon's fees and charges are likely to remain lower than most London local authorities, and will be set in line with Consumer Price Index inflation towards full cost recovery for discretionary services used by residents. These charges will support the elderly, the most vulnerable, and maintain the award-winning core frontline services residents have come to expect from the borough.

Cllr Martin Goddard, Cabinet Member for Finance, said: "The national funding picture for local government remains bleak, with authorities facing huge strain and struggling to balance budgets without limiting or changing their service offer or a significant injection of funding from government. "Here in Hillingdon, the council's sound financial management continues alongside an effective savings delivery programme to ensure that residents don't pay as much as others and that the council can continue to maintain and invest in its award-winning services. "The next year will continue to prove challenging, and we are going to have to continue to look at even more innovative and efficient ways to deliver our outstanding services, but we will maintain our commitment to putting our residents first through our robust financial planning."

Delivering outstanding services for residents

The council has built and maintained a substantial capital programme which will see investment of £217.8 million in services, facilities and schools and a further £441.8 million between 2024/25 and 2028/29 on increasing and improving the council's housing stock. The council's 2024/25 budget continues to maintain and invest in services for residents, including:

- free weekly waste and recycling collections
- leisure facilities
- town centre improvements
- road resurfacing
- new homes
- school places.



A digital-enabled, modern, well-run council

Visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/budget-consultation before Sunday 28 January to have your say on the proposed budget





Cllr O'Brien and Cllr Bianco in one of the new classrooms at Charville Academy

School facilities expanded to provide additional SEND places

The council has completed work at two primary schools to enhance facilities and create additional places for children with special educational needs (SEND).

In December, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, Cllr Jonathan Bianco, and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, Cllr Susan O'Brien, visited Charville Academy, Hayes to mark the completion of a new educational facility at the school for pupils with SEND.

The work was part of the council's multi-million-pound project to build new spaces and expand existing buildings in mainstream and special needs schools to ensure more availability of local school places for children with SEND.

The council has created a new and bespoke specialist resource provision (SRP) at the school, offering group and therapy rooms, classrooms for Key Stage 1 and 2, a utility space, toilets and a welcome space. This will provide an additional eight students with autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) with support, and double to 16 in September.

Nicola Kelly, Head at Charville Academy, said: "This is an exciting opportunity for Charville Academy to support the local authority's plans and commitment to enhance provision for children in Hillingdon to receive specialist education in a bespoke, purpose-built setting within our school.



A group/calm room at Charville Academy

"The specialist provision will provide direct access to mainstream education opportunities as well as needs based targeted support in small groups. It is designed so that all our children develop the life skills they need to thrive in the 21st Century."

The council has also created an SRP at Ruislip Gardens Primary



New toilet facilities at Ruislip Gardens Primary School

School, where initially 12 primary-aged children with ASC will receive support. Nursery-aged children who may also need access to SEND provision will also benefit from a new 16-place early years assessment centre. The two-floor building includes group, therapy and sensory rooms, SRP and assessment centre classrooms, toilets, store facilities and a kitchen.

Nicky Bulpett, Headteacher at Ruislip Gardens Primary School, said: "The whole staff team is excited to be part of this significant change to our school as we all understand the rising demand for specialist education.

"Although very much part of the mainstream school, a whole new staff team has been created and they have been working tirelessly to ensure we provide the best possible education to the children who attend.

"I feel proud to be the first headteacher in Hillingdon opening an assessment centre for two to five-year-olds. These are very few in number across the country and they aim to ensure that young children are assessed much earlier in life and their needs identified. In this way, we will be able to signpost parents towards the most appropriate settings and provision for their children. All evidence suggests that early intervention maximises outcomes for young people and it will be fantastic to be able to contribute towards this process."

In addition to this, works are underway at Meadow High School in Uxbridge. The council is expanding this school in two phases, creating a satellite school in Harefield with 90 extra places and building a new classroom block at the existing site. This will provide eight new places and reprovide 82.

Cllr O'Brien said: "We are committed to creating thriving, healthy households and ensuring that every child in Hillingdon has access to a school place, including children with additional needs.

"Real progress is being made to meet demand for specialist provision in our schools through this building programme, and these are key examples of where we've reviewed how areas in our schools are used and how they can be adapted to address the increasing demand for places and provide opportunities for young people with specific needs to learn alongside other pupils in a mainstream setting."

Our SEND Local Offer

A child or young person can be described as having SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

You can access information and advice for children and young people with SEND, as well as their parents and carers, all in one place on our website.

Support includes:

- what to do if you think your child may have special educational needs
- advice on childcare, education and employment
- support with health and wellbeing challenges
- details on financial support available, including an online benefits calculator
- transport for children travelling to and from school
- a calendar of SEND specific events and activities
- information on preparing for adult life
- opportunities for a short break away for children and carers.

For more information, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/send-local-offer



A new classroom at Ruislip Gardens Primary School

Passionate about your local community? Become one of Hillingdon's next councillors

Councillors can make a real difference to the quality of life of local people and how local issues are dealt with. Councils look for people from all backgrounds and experiences who reflect the communities they serve to put themselves forward for election.

As a councillor you can help your local community and wider society by representing the views of local people to ensure the community has the services it needs, supporting residents with local issues, or helping to shape the community by conceiving and driving new ideas. Being a councillor is about giving back and bringing energy, passion, creativity and a hard-

working attitude. It's a varied, flexible and highly fulfilling role. You don't need any experience or specific qualifications, and you can gain new and transferable skills, experience and knowledge. You can either be a member of a political party or an independent. Councillors are also paid an allowance, to reflect the time commitment involved, with a special responsibility allowance also paid to those in significant leadership roles.

What do councillors do?

Councillors bring people together. They work with local people, groups and partners to agree and deliver local priorities. The decisions they make are implemented by council staff/officers.

The role is to serve and represent everyone in the ward they are elected to. They lead the local conversation, and you can be part of that to make your area the best place it can be.

Some councillors are also appointed to additional roles, such as being a Cabinet member or a committee member.

Councillors serve and represent the community in many ways, including:

- 1 talking to constituents by phone, email, letter, social media, at drop-in surgeries, home visits, community meetings and at local events
- 2 doing casework by responding to queries and issues about council services from local people, investigating concerns and helping with solutions where possible. (Remember resolutions can sometimes take time and aren't instantaneous)

- 3 keeping the community informed about local issues and events by email, newsletters, blogs, social media and in person
- 4 reading council meeting agenda and reports, researching evidence to understand issues and participate in discussions, planning and decision making
- 5 attending formal council meetings, as well as meetings with local partners and organisations
- 6 working collaboratively with local people, voluntary and community organisations, police, health partners and businesses to shape the future of the local area
- 7 building strong relationships and encouraging people to get involved and share their views and ideas.



Who can be a councillor?

To be a Hillingdon councillor you need to be:

- British or a citizen of the Commonwealth.
- at least 18 years old
- registered to vote in Hillingdon or have lived, worked, or owned property here for at least 12 months before an election.

You can't be a councillor for Hillingdon if you work for the council or if you have been convicted of certain offences.

Your life experience, everyday skills, passion and commitment to people and communities are vital, and it's important that councils reflect the local population.

You don't need experience or qualifications - you will receive training if elected. Though there are some useful skills which help, including:

- being a leader in your community
- having good communication skills
- partnership and team working
- problem solving, questioning and analytical skills
- being flexible, adaptable and open-minded
- being organised and having good time management
- having political understanding.

The role can be done flexibly around employment, studying, caring, and other voluntary commitments. Your employer must allow you to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to perform your duties. The amount of time you spend on your duties is up to you and depends on the different roles and commitments each councillor takes up.



Cllr O'Brien with local councillors and Children's Services staff

Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education,

has been a councillor for Ruislip Manor ward for 14 years and became a Cabinet member in December 2019. She said: "Before becoming a councillor, I spent more than a decade volunteering with children in schools and organised groups and I was a Brown Owl in the Brownies and a Rainbow leader. I'd always enjoyed getting involved in the local community and was looking for a new opportunity to give back and serve the public.

"I had a busy job in the private sector at the time and my child was still quite young, but I was keen to make a difference to my community. After discussing the role with my family, I applied and was elected in May 2010.

"Representing Ruislip Manor has been a real pleasure and I particularly enjoy being able to help local schools and causes. We recently allocated ward budget funding towards resources for our three local schools and provided equipment to one of our musical theatre groups. We also ensured that Wealdstone Youth Football Club has enough pitches for their many youth teams. There are of course always challenges to the role, you can't say yes to every request and that can be frustrating.

So, what qualities do you need? Cllr O'Brien said: "In this role, you will meet residents of all ages from all walks of life so you need to be a good listener and problem solver, especially when you are making changes that affect a lot of people. I think the main qualities you need are empathy, good communication skills and most importantly, you need to be honest."

"I love my role in the Cabinet, and I've worked with so many inspirational residents and council staff. Our recent 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating for Children's Services has been the absolute highlight of my portfolio, and I'm so proud of the teams that work so hard to keep our families, children and young people safe."

Cllr Gursharan Mand, councillor for Pinkwell ward,

became a councillor in May 2022. He said: "After 10 years working as an engineer, I made a career change and became a secondary school teacher. I was then elected to the management committee at my local Gurdwara where I liaised regularly with councillors and MPs to support the charity, and really enjoyed getting involved in voluntary work such as supporting children in education and mentoring young adults. This inspired me to want to do more work in the community, and the headteacher at my school suggested that I'd make a good councillor.

"I'm really enjoying the role so far - it's been fun! I'm trying to make a meaningful difference and I like interacting with residents, whether at my drop-in surgery or on walk-about. I've also enjoyed supporting young adults who aspire to get into university by helping to run career workshops and courses, and I've been fortunate to be placed on the Planning Committee where I've learnt so much working with officers and other councillors.

"To be a councillor, I think you need to be a people person and willing to help others - it's a great role for character building. Most councillors fit their work around their day job so you will need to be prepared to sacrifice your time, but most importantly you need to really listen to people and want to make the effort to contribute to your local area."



Cllr Mand on a walk-about with local councillors, volunteers and police in Pinkwell ward

Interested? Find out more information, including what you need to do to stand in the next local election, by visiting www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor

A digital-enabled, modern, well-run council



Helping you set good for you goals for 2024

Thinking about being more active, getting healthier and improving your fitness, or focusing on your physical and mental health this new year? Hillingdon has plenty of ways to help you get started.

The council has redesigned, upgraded and refurbished a range of leisure facilities in Hayes, Ruislip, South Ruislip and Uxbridge since September 2022 as part of a £2.25 million council investment programme in partnership with GLL, operating under the Better brand, to modernise equipment and surroundings for you to get fit in, whatever your age or ability.

The programme has seen the centres' popularity grow and encouraged more of you to sign up over the past year, resulting in a 26 per cent increase in membership this year in comparison to last. Whether you're interested in visiting a few times a month or looking for all-inclusive access to activities, you'll find a range of membership options, including pay-as-you-go, to suit your needs.

Recent improvement works

More than £500,000 funding was invested in 2023 to complete upgrades to Botwell Green Sports and Leisure Centre in Hayes. This has included improving the lower gym to introduce workout zones and high specification equipment to match the standards of other leisure centre facilities in the borough. The changing rooms have also had a makeover and the 3G pitches have been resurfaced.

For younger children, a new and exciting four-floor soft play area has opened outside the gymnastics hall, providing a space for climbing, sliding and crawling, and a separate dedicated play zone has been created for children under three.

Outdoor improvements were also made to the netball courts at Queensmead Sports Centre in

South Ruislip in July, which included resurfacing and drainage work.

Additionally, work is also continuing at the council's new Platinum Jubilee Leisure Centre in West Drayton despite the contractor filing for administration, with a new contractor to be confirmed in due course. The new centre will house a 25-metre swimming pool, training pool, splash-zone, gym and health suite, soft play, climbing wall, youth zone, a café and terrace, and even a rooftop 3G turf football pitch.



Getting fit and active outdoors

Being outside in natural light has been proven to support good mental health and wellbeing. The council offers an array of activities for all tastes across the borough.

Free led walks are held, Monday to Sunday, in many of Hillingdon's award-winning parks. Find out more and book at discover.hillingdon.gov.uk/led-walks.

There are also 37 outdoor gyms in parks and open spaces across the borough designed to encourage residents to keep fit and active outside for free. The facilities are suitable for all ages and fitness levels. The equipment varies from site to site, but can include a cross trainer, leg press, seated row and big shoulder wheels. For a full list of gyms, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/outdoorgyms.



Free exercise classes are held by fitness experts Our Parks at some of Hillingdon's parks. Lessons include boxercise, circuit training, bootcamp-style sessions. Anyone aged 16 and above can attend the adult classes. Young people attending the children's classes must be accompanied by an adult. Find out more at www.ourparks.org.uk.

Enjoy one of the council's 10 tennis sites across the borough.

Tennis can help to maintain your health, fitness, strength and agility as it allows you to have a whole-body cardiovascular workout, while strengthening your bones, keeping your body fat down, building muscle strength, and improving balance, flexibility and hand-eye co-ordination. Find a court near you and book by visiting www.hillingdon.gov.uk/tennis.



Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, said:

"We are committed to creating thriving, healthy households where children, young people, their families and vulnerable adults and older people live healthy, active and independent lives.

"We are continuing to invest in our sports and leisure facilities, delivering some of the best in London and creating high quality opportunities for all our residents to get active and take care of their physical and mental health regardless of their age or ability.

"The new year is a great time to set new goals and try new things, often on your doorstep. Whether you're tempted to join a gym, increase your steps by enjoying one of our many lovely parks, or want to attend one of the many other activities taking place across the borough – there's something for everyone!"

Works that have already taken place

Highgrove Pool and Fitness Centre in Ruislip benefited from £1 million refurbishments in September 2022 to enhance its fitness class studios, with one transformed into a dedicated studio for its group cycle class. The gym was also reconfigured to create a dedicated training area, new equipment was added, and new sauna and steam room cabins installed.

Improvements were also carried out to Hillingdon Sports and Leisure Complex in September 2022, which created a new group cycle studio, activity room, expanded the gym

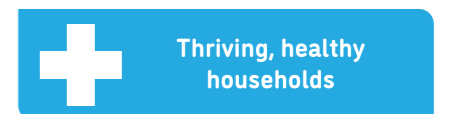
space and added a range of new fitness equipment.

Did you know?

Older residents can swim for free or join a free weekly swimming lesson, which caters for all abilities, at three of the borough's swimming pools. Over-65s can book a swim session or a class at Hillingdon Sports and Leisure Complex, Botwell Green Sports and Leisure Centre and Highgrove Pool in person, or by visiting the Better website.

For more information about the centres and to sign up, visit www.better.org.uk/hillingdon

To find out more about the council's parks, leisure opportunities and activities, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/leisure





Our Children's Services are judged 'Outstanding' by Ofsted

The council's Children's Services has been judged as one of the best in England, following an 'Outstanding' Ofsted report in November. Inspectors praised "excellent council staff" and "exceptional practice" for enhancing the lives of children and families in Hillingdon.

Ofsted inspectors visited council staff, families, foster carers and local partners in Hillingdon between Monday 2 to Friday 6 October. The exceptional report, released on Monday 20 November, recognised the increased demand for services in the borough but commended the council's stable and experienced senior leadership team for strengthening and improving practices.

Inspectors praised effective leadership from the council's Chief Executive, Tony Zaman, who spent eight years as Director of Children's Services, recognising that his knowledge, experience and

"Children and families are prioritised and benefit from the aspirational and proactive senior management team and political leaders in the borough who bring a strong track record of continuous improvement."

solid relationships with partners had benefited children and families at a strategic level. Hillingdon staff and social workers were also highly commended for their dedication to improving children's lives.

Since its last Ofsted report in 2018, the council has introduced an innovative Stronger Families Hub which offers locality-based early help and out of hours support to children and families and launched an award-winning Adolescent Service and response to contextual safeguarding.

"Social workers are skilled, experienced and ambitious for children, who they know well and visit regularly. Social workers are committed to children and are proud of their roles in their lives, talking with warmth and knowledge about them."

The report noted that partnership working is strong in Hillingdon and acknowledged that services improve outcomes for children by listening to feedback from partners, families and different communities to drive innovative transformation.

"Children and families benefit from relationship-based practice and the recently created Stronger Families Hub, which is making a positive difference to their lives."

"Children in the London Borough of Hillingdon continue to receive highly effective services. Very strong political support and diligent partnerships have enabled the senior leadership team to be an excellent champion for children, families and young people."

Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, said: "We are thrilled to achieve such a remarkable Ofsted rating for our Children's Services, and I'd like to thank all our staff and partners who continue to strive to improve outcomes for children and young people. "Despite increasing demands on council services, we are continuing to make prudent efficiencies in council service delivery while further investing in delivering outstanding frontline services like these. "We have embraced new technology to strengthen our offer to families and will continue to successfully work together with our partners to enhance the lives of children and young people across the borough."

Top findings highlighted in the Ofsted report

- Children in care receive an outstanding level of help and support.
- There is strong collaborative multi-agency working that helps keep children at risk of exploitation safe.
- Teams recognise the importance of care leavers engaging in education, employment or training.
- Senior leaders are determined and ambitious for their children and have continued to strengthen and improve services.
- Out of hours support is timely, particularly for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children or those who may have been trafficked through Heathrow Airport.
- The virtual school is very well led.
- The Stronger Families Hub, children in care service, adolescent team and adoption work stand out as areas of strong and innovative practice that result in some excellent outcomes for children.
- Safeguarding concerns are met with a timely response.
- Assessments of children's needs are strong.



+ Thriving, healthy households

Providing more new homes and expanding existing properties

The council continues to create safe and strong communities with access to high quality, affordable housing.

While issues with housing supply continue across the country, during the past year, the council has been creating new homes through the shrewd use of brownfield sites, extending homes to increase the council's portfolio of larger properties, and smaller households are being encouraged to downsize to free up larger homes for those in need.

Plans approved for homes and new library in Yiewsley

Proposals for a new library, community facility and 95 new homes at the former swimming pool and Falling Lane site in Yiewsley were approved by the council's Planning Committee in December.

In August, Cabinet approved appropriation of the vacant brownfield site, which had been unused for over a decade, so it could be used for planning purposes.

At the Yiewsley Library site, plans include 50 new homes, with 28 parking spaces and 90 cycle parking

spaces. Fifteen car parking spaces will be for use by Rabbsfarm School and 13 residential.

For the former Yiewsley Pool site, proposals include a new and larger 316 square metre library and a 75 square metre community space, along with 45 new homes, and 25 car parking spaces, of which 18 are residential. Library visitors will also have access to nearby Fairfield car park.

The plans also include improvements to Yiewsley Recreation Ground, which the site lies on the border of, as part of the council's expanded leisure offer to local residents.

The plans were revised following feedback from residents to ensure local people would experience the benefits of the new development, which include:

- affordable housing that is modern, fit for purpose and meets or exceeds space standards and includes wheelchair accessible properties
- an energy efficient development that will lower bills for residents

- improved access to the recreation ground
- more play space for children
- new trees and a landscaped garden on the site of the old bowling green.

The land at Yiewsley Recreation Ground will not be affected by the development, other than to deliver the park improvements. As Metropolitan Open Land, the recreation ground will continue to be protected by planning policies.

Creating new homes and expanding some of our existing properties

In November, the council broke ground for the construction of six new homes on the site of former garages in Sullivan Crescent, Harefield.

The new development will deliver four two-storey terraced homes at one end of the site and two two-storey semi-detached houses at the other, along with new trees and car parking spaces.



Sullivan Crescent

The new homes will include air source heat pumps and underfloor heating as a greener energy solution, and following feedback from residents bordering the plot, a mature tree within the site will be retained. The development is expected to be completed by autumn this year.

On the same day, the council also began to build a new four-bed home on a piece of vacant council land in Rowan Road, West Drayton, which is scheduled to be completed in summer. Financed by Greater London Authority grant funding, it will include an open plan living space with bifold doors onto a spacious garden and the installation of electric vehicle charging points to encourage greener travel.



Rowan Road

In addition, three more properties are set to be enlarged through the council's home expansion programme. This project creates additional rooms to council homes to address the lack of and high demand for three and four-bedroom homes. Work is underway at properties in Long Drive, South Ruislip; Manor Way, Uxbridge; and Great Central Avenue, South Ruislip; which will be adaptable for use by disabled residents.

Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, said:

"We're continuing to fulfil our commitment of delivering high quality, affordable homes for residents.

"This is no easy task in a borough with swathes of protected green space and areas of dense housing where there's little opportunity to build. So, we've explored how we can extend homes in our existing housing stock to address the increasing demand for larger homes, as well as building on brownfield sites near our town centres that have previously laid vacant or unused to bring exciting social and economic opportunities to residents and local businesses."



Considered downsizing?

If you're living in a property with more rooms than your household needs, the council can help you downsize to a smaller home.

Whether you can no longer manage your home or afford unoccupied bedrooms, or just want to move to smaller accommodation, there are a variety of options available and financial incentive packages for eligible tenants, which can help with the costs of moving.

Anthony Whenman, 74, (pictured) has lived in the borough all his life. After he was left wheelchair bound it made living in his three-bedroom townhouse in West Drayton difficult as he couldn't easily leave or navigate the floors, but after using the council's downsizing scheme he has regained his independence.

He said: "My living room and kitchen were in the middle floor, I couldn't get to the bathroom on the top floor, and I never went out. It was like being a prisoner really."

He heard about the scheme through a friend and applied for a level-access wheelchair accessible home, securing a one-bed bungalow in Hayes.

Anthony added: "It's great, I can get out now to go shopping to Hayes or Uxbridge."

"I think the downsizing scheme is worth considering, if you're elderly why do you want a big place? It's difficult to heat and keep clean. I'm really happy here now."

Find out more about the downsizing scheme at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/downsizing.



Retire to the coast?

If the notion of fresh, salty sea air appeals, did you know you can make a break from the city and move to a coastal or rural location as part of the Mayor of London's Seaside and Country Homes scheme for over-55s?

It offers the opportunity to move to bungalows and flats, managed by housing associations located mainly across the south coast, but also in eastern England and the west country.

For more information, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/downsizing.



CGI of Falling Lane



Revitalising local economies

The council is committed to regenerating the borough's town centres to preserve their unique identity and deliver further economic growth.

In December, the council started to install a new permanent light and sound feature at the Blyth Road underpass in Hayes to honour the work of Alan Dower Blumlein, an engineer who invented stereo sound.

In 1935, Blumlein shot the world's first stereo film, *Trains at Hayes* from a window in EMI's offices which overlooked what is now Hayes & Harlington station.

His frustration with the poor sound quality of the cinema of the 1930s led him to conceive the idea of what he described as "binaural stereo sound" so that the sound heard moved in the same direction as the pictures on the screen.

The new 'Sound of Hayes' underpass has been constructed



Installing the feature in the underpass

from steel, aluminium and natural pigmented mineral panels. The tunnel installation plays with textures, sound

and light and echoes the stereo sound of local people passing through Hayes on their daily commute.

Shopping parade transformation

Works to transform Sutton Court Road Parade, Hillingdon into a vibrant local shopping district completed in December.

The council has invested £460,000

to boost footfall and enhance the local area for residents.

Improvements include signage on the external façade of the parade; a new central boulevard with landscaping

and dual lantern lighting; new paving; and upgrades to street furniture, including bins and cycle stands and the screening of utility cabinets.



Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, said: "Revitalising the borough's town centres is an integral part of our Council Strategy and we're determined to ensure they remain attractive places for people to visit and shop.

"The new 'Sound of Hayes' underpass and Sutton Court Road Parade improvements are two examples of the high quality infrastructure projects we're delivering across Hillingdon."

For more information on town centre improvements, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/towncentres

 A thriving economy

Coming soon

This month, works will commence on Mulberry Parade, West Drayton to enhance the area for residents and businesses.

The distinctive character of the parade will be celebrated with unique

branding which includes a wall mural, shutter art and footpath graphics. Other highlights are new paving and street lighting and a zebra crossing and footpath to link the shopping parade with Stockley Recreation Ground.



Husna Abbasi

Spark a love of learning in 2024

Thousands of residents will start their new year by returning to learning with one of the council's adult education courses.

Learn Hillingdon classes are helping people to do everything from improving their spoken English to securing a job in cyber security.

The council has hundreds of part-time day, evening and weekend classes on offer. Low-cost sessions are delivered at our three adult education centres, in the community and virtually, and many are fully funded by the government.

The new year is a great time to look at our courses and think about how they could help you start a new career, progress goals, or learn a new skill. Many of them can lead to work.

Highlights of this year's programme include classes to help you work and progress in the care sector. If you'd like to support children with their early development, Learn Hillingdon has courses to support your qualification as a teaching assistant or early years practitioner. Additionally, our Step into Teaching course gives learners the tools to secure flexible and rewarding tutoring work.

Alternatively, master the art of floristry with award-winning tutors,

who offer introductory to advanced-level qualification courses. And if you're interested in cooking healthy, homemade meals for your family whilst making your money go further, contact us about our cookery sessions.

Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, said:

"We're committed to ensuring that residents of all ages have access to high quality learning opportunities and our adult education centres help thousands of residents each year to get into work, live more independently, make a career change, learn a new skill and meet new people.

"Our flexible and varied programme ensures local people can fit studying in around other commitments, such as work and raising a family and all of the classes have been designed to offer great value for money – so start your learning journey with us today!"

Husna Abbasi, 37 from Hayes, is mum to five children aged between 16 and one year and has been studying with Learn Hillingdon for two years. She has studied maths, understanding working in the health sector and awareness of dementia.

Husna aims to secure work caring for older people. She said: "I'm able to make time for study because I really enjoy it. When I first started studying, I was nervous, I was like, how am I going to do this now I've got responsibilities?"

"Some days it isn't easy but my husband is supportive, and my daughter says, 'Mum, the baby's asleep, let's do our homework together!' I've also got a clearer vision now I'm studying and working towards a job where I can help people.

"The teachers are so supportive, and we're given enough time to get our work done, it's all manageable. I regret not doing this sooner!"

For more information about the courses on offer and to enrol, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/adultlearning

 A thriving economy

Enhancing your community facilities

Each year, the council invests £1 million into improving local community and leisure facilities through its Chrysalis scheme. Residents are encouraged to suggest refurbishment projects, such as path, playground and outdoor gym upgrades, community centre works and new sports facilities for all to enjoy.

During the 2023/24 financial year, the scheme has funded 17 projects, including improved allotment facilities at various locations across the borough, a new playground and outdoor gym for West Drayton and Yiewsley residents, and a refurbished car park at Kings College Playing Fields in Ruislip.

Playgrounds at Stockley Recreation Ground

Managed through the Chrysalis programme with funding from the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, improvements were made to the play facilities at Stockley Recreation Ground by installing a family fun play area for younger children, and a new trim trail for older children to enjoy.

A play zone for infants and pre-schoolers has been installed which includes a set of swings, see-saw, roundabout and a multi-play area with a slide. Children can enjoy

imaginative play with colourful play panels featuring a shop front and a train, and the area has been fenced to offer peace of mind to parents and guardians

Local resident, Amina Malik, said: "I live nearby, and this park is fantastic for my two-year-old daughter. I bring her here every day and the range of equipment is perfect for her age range."

Imtiaz Raja added: "The new playground flooring is a wonderful addition to the park as I know my children can enjoy themselves safely."

The existing play equipment for older children is still in good condition and an adventurous trim trail has been added to offer more variety. The playground facilities were opened on Wednesday 15 November by the Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana; Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services; and ward councillors Jan Sweeting and Mohammed Shofiul Islam.



Stockley Recreation Ground playground opening ceremony



Ivy Gutierrez, aged 7, at Stockley Recreation Ground

Stockley Country Park outdoor gym

The pre-existing outdoor gym at Stockley Country Park was unfortunately targeted with graffiti and vandalism, leaving most of the equipment damaged beyond repair.

The new outdoor gym area is larger than before and caters for a range of users, featuring robust equipment such as callisthenic bars, plyometric platforms, a balance beam and benches. There is also a dedicated cardiovascular zone and a running track around the gym.

Peter McCready, from West Drayton, said: "The outdoor gyms across Hillingdon are fantastic. It's great to hear that the one near me is being refurbished and I can't wait to use the new equipment."

The new facilities were completed in December.

Kings College Playing Fields

Eastcote Hockey and Badminton Club received £100,000 Chrysalis funding, in addition to £75,000 from HS2, to refurbish the car park at Kings College Playing Fields. Works will be carried out in the summer.

Rob Riddleston, Chairman of Eastcote Hockey Club, said: "The car park has fallen into a poor state of repair with the increasing numbers of leisure and sporting users of Kings College Playing Fields in recent years. In the winter and at times of high rainfall it becomes unusable and puts pressure on car parking elsewhere."

"This grant is fantastic news and will help the local community improve a rundown car park facility."

We've been working in close cooperation with the council and are delighted with the award from HS2."

To suggest a community refurbishment project, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/chrysalis

Cllr Lavery said: "It was a pleasure to officially open the playgrounds at Stockley Recreation Ground and to meet the families who are already benefitting from the upgraded facilities."

"We are committed to creating safe and strong communities and these schemes do just that. Our Chrysalis fund empowers residents to put forward local improvement projects that matter to them and our alley gating scheme continues to keep residents safe."

"We will also soon be launching a £1 million park improvements scheme."



Stockley Recreation Ground



Stockley Recreation Ground

Protecting residents' alleyways from intrusion

Homes with access to private alleyways can sometimes be at risk of burglary, fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour, so the council offers financial and administrative assistance to residents wishing to install their own vehicle and pedestrian gates.

The council's alley gating scheme has been running for nearly 20 years, and this year, we have invested more than £11,000 into installing three new lockable gates and three refurbished gates to enhance public safety.

In October, the council invested £2,573.55 (covering 90 per cent of the total cost) for the installation of a vehicle alley gate that would benefit and protect 11 households in Yeading from anti-social behaviour. Following multiple concerns

regarding graffiti, littering and burglary, **lead resident Cornel Hewey** applied for funding.

Cornel said: "In addition to increased anti-social behaviour, vehicles were using our shared alleyway unauthorised, especially during term time as the alleyway is next to a school. We were eager for gates to be installed as it was becoming dangerous, and one of our neighbours' children was almost hit by a car driving down the alley."

"Since the gates have been installed, we have all felt much safer and this has added much more security to the properties that back onto the alleyway. The scheme has been a wonderful experience from the onset, and we are happy residents."



Find out more about the alley gating scheme at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/alleygatingscheme



Getting the right care at the right time

For information about the services that can help you visit: www.nwlondonicb.nhs.uk/winter



scan me

Pharmacy



Visiting a pharmacy is a quick and easy way to get clinical advice from a medical professional on minor health concerns like colds, stomach pains, or eye infections. No appointment needed.

GP/doctor services



Trained health professionals at your local GP practice can help with a wide range of general health problems. They may see you in-person, online or over the phone.

Not registered? Visit: nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp

GP help evenings and weekends

Call your GP as normal. The answer phone will provide details of where to get an out of hours appointment.

Mental health services



If you are feeling anxious, worried or depressed, the NHS offers free talking therapies. Visit: nhstalk2us.org

In a crisis, call the free 24/7 NHS helpline:

Ealing, Hounslow, Hammersmith, Fulham - **0800 328 4444**

Brent, Harrow, Hillingdon, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster - **0800 023 4650**

NHS 111



Fully trained advisors are available to help at any time and book you an appointment, if needed. Contact NHS 111 at 111.nhs.uk or call 111.



CUT ME OUT

In a life-threatening emergency, call 999 or attend A&E.

New hospital passes significant development milestone with planning permission granted



In October, the new Hillingdon Hospital received full planning permission and passed another major milestone in its development.

The brand new hospital will give the people of Hillingdon and beyond a new state-of-the-art facility that will support the very best of modern healthcare.

It will have the same mix of services as available now at

Hillingdon Hospital and be built in the same location (next to the existing hospital).

Good progress has been made so far with the decant and enabling programme to clear the site for the new build. This will continue in the new year culminating in the demolition of old buildings for a cleared site in 2025.

The hospital will remain open as normal throughout both the site clearing works and the hospital building works. Healthcare teams inside and outside of the hospital are working to ensure patient care continues to be joined up during this time.

The Trust will continue to work with the New Hospitals Programme to refine plans and finalise the Outline Business Case.



Weddings at the Great Barn

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- Births, deaths and ceremonies**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/births-deaths-ceremonies
- Businesses and licensing**
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- Councillors, meetings and consultations**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/council
- Council tax**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax

- Families' Information Service, fostering and adoption**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/families
- Fraud Hotline**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/report-fraud
0800 389 8313
- Health and wellbeing**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/health
- Housing Services**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/housing
01895 556666
- Hillingdon Social Care Direct (adults) (including TeleCareLine and Meals Service)**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/socialcare
01895 556633
- Leisure (including parks, leisure centres, theatres and events)**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/leisure
- Libraries**
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- Planning and Building Control**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/planning
- School admissions**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/schooladmissions
- Stronger Families Hub**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/stronger-families
- Transport, roads and parking**
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/transport

Mental health support

- Hillingdon Mind**
01895 271559
- Samaritans**
116 123 (freephone)

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 We are offering market value to lease homes in the borough which have become permanently or long-term vacant to increase our housing provision and provide homes for residents in need.
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www.hillingdon.gov.uk/buy-back-scheme

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