



2024/25 Budget Consultation Feedback

Overview of Consultation Process

- This report highlights the key findings of the Budget Consultation 2024-25 conducted by the London Borough of Hillingdon from 15 December 2023 to 28 January 2024.
- The purpose of the consultation was to seek views from residents and local businesses on Hillingdon Council's budget proposals for 2024-25.
- 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 210 responses, a decrease of 401 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.
- 48% of respondents are satisfied with the budget proposals, 34% are dissatisfied, which leaves 18% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the Council's budget proposals.
- 46% of the respondents agree that the budget proposals give residents and local businesses value for money, with 29% disagreeing, leaving 25% neither agreeing nor disagreeing that the budget proposals give value for money.
- 56% of respondents feel well informed about the budget proposals, leaving 44% feeling not informed.

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

Survey results

Q1: How satisfied are you with the Council's budget proposals for 2024/25?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Very Satisfied	57	27%
Somewhat Satisfied	44	21%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	37	18%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	35	16%
Very Dissatisfied	37	18%
Total	210	100%

Q1a. Please tell us why:

Positive

Comments suggest that respondents agree for the following reasons:

- Sound Financial Management
- Good Value for Money
- Great services provided by Hillingdon
- Council Tax increases still less than other boroughs

Negative

- Opposed to the further increase in Council Tax
- Opposed to the increase in charge for 1st parking permit, with comments including that when the parking schemes were introduced residents were under the impression that they would receive one free permit a year.
- The need for increased funding on Social Housing, for both new properties and existing properties, for the existing properties comments include the condition and age of the kitchens and windows.
- Concerns about the 5% increase in Nursery fees, with comments including that the 5% increase is steep and that this will result in being charged more than the market rate.
- Concerns on the conditions of specific Footpaths and Carriageways.
- Concerns on Climate Change and funding for Flood Alleviation.

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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	54	26%
Tend to Agree	43	20%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	53	25%
Tend to Disagree	25	12%
Strongly Disagree	35	17%
Total	210	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	60	29%
Fairly Well Informed	57	27%
Not Very Well Informed	60	29%
Not Informed At All	33	15%
Total	611	100%

Q3a: Are there any other comments you would like to make about the council's budget proposals for 2024-25?

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

Other comments included:

- The length of the document being 126 pages, need for more transparency.
- Stop wasting money

Survey Results – Demographic and Background Information

Q4. Are you completing this survey...?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
As a resident	208	99%
On behalf of a local	2	1%
Total	611	100%

Q5. Please tell us your postcode:

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
HA4	33	16%
HA5	10	5%
HA6	6	3%
UB3	36	18%
UB4	13	6%
UB5	4	2%
UB7	26	12%
UB8	32	15%
UB9	8	4%
UB10	37	17%
WD3	0	0%
Other	3	2%
Not Completed	2	1%
Total	210	100%

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

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Anonymous	2	100%
Total	2	100%

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

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
No post code given	2	100%
Total	2	100%

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Q8: Are you:

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Female	100	48%
Male	101	48%
Prefer not to say	7	3%
Other	1	0.5%
Toaster	1	0.5%
Total	210	100%

Q9: How old are you?

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Under 18	0	0%
18 to 24	8	4%
25 to 34	35	17%
35 to 44	42	20%
45 to 54	40	19%
55 to 64	34	16%
65+	51	24%
Total	210	100%

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Other Responses Received Outside of the Consultation Survey

- There was one response received by email from Queens Lodge, Margate.
 - The response was from a leaseholder at Queens Lodge in reference to Section 194, Cabinet will consider a report regarding the disposal of the garages at Queens Lodge.
 - Many of the residents were unaware of the plans to dispose of the garages.
 - The email author requested further information and queried how they would be able to register their objection.
- There were no Petitions or Letters that were received in response to the consultation Survey.

Comments from Select Committees on Cabinet's 2024/25 budget proposals

As part of the Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework Procedure), Select Committees have a statutory role to review the Cabinet's draft budget proposals, which were set out at Cabinet on 14 December 2023 and then to submit their comments to the Cabinet for consideration before the final budget is recommended to full Council. At Select Committee meetings in January and February 2024, consideration was given to reports which provided details of the draft budget proposals relating to the remit of each committee.

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

Select Committee	Comments
Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee 10 January 2024	Members thanked officers for their hard work in bringing balanced, sound budget proposals to the Select Committee for their comments. The Committee noted the position on savings in the budget within the remit of the Select Committee whilst acknowledging inflationary, interest and demand led pressures. Members commended that the Council was still delivering services and investment for residents in comparison to other local authorities, particularly in the areas of local infrastructure, a new leisure centre and significant additional SEND capacity in the Borough's schools.
Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee 11 January 2024	The Committee welcome the budget as published and consulted on set out in the Cabinet papers of the 14 December 2023. We acknowledge the substantial and significant pressures and complexities that are usually involved in a Council setting a balanced Budget across the myriad of disciplines, statutory obligations and service intentions that a council may wish to budget for. This process has been made even more challenging and complex due to the combined effects of inflationary and

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	<p>interest rate pressures contributing to the harsh economic realities for everyone concerned, in working with or being provided for, by the Council. Service provision of every type has been affected by the economic circumstances that the London Borough of Hillingdon has to "live with and in". Add to this the way in which local authorities are financed, with the seemingly haphazard and timely unhelpful funding formulas makes budget setting and provision a complexity of extraordinary proportions.</p> <p>In this regard, we commend the work of the Cabinet Member for Finance, in particular, together with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet and, of course, the Finance Officer Team for their excellent work in achieving a balanced budget for this time period. Many other local authorities with the same pressures are failing and will fail to achieve what the whole finance team have done in Hillingdon.</p> <p>We are particularly keen to endorse the proposals for savings, within our Committee remit, while continuing to promote and maintain all services in whatever way can be done so. The clear intention to drive efficiency in service provision without a reduction in service is welcome and necessary. Where necessary some services will need re-balancing or realigning and refreshing to meet the current circumstances.</p> <p>That is only to be expected when applying efficiency standards, prudence in approach and financial rectitude. Strong financial management of the Hillingdon budget is the absolute route to budgetary success.</p> <p>We acknowledge the budget proposals for the committee service areas, the need to update, in as resident focused as possible, the overall picture regarding fees and charges and Council Tax is a significant challenge given the economic issues as they have developed in recent years contrasting with the past.</p> <p>Proposals for digitalisation, commercialisation, better use of services and delivery are all budgetary proposals that are welcome and which we as a committee will closely scrutinise to aid the process. We will be keen to engage with reviews around commercialisation in appropriate areas and of services e.g. Legal services, corporate services and others in our remit. This budget is a significant achievement which is to be commended.</p>
Residents' Services Select Committee 16 January 2024	The Residents' Services Select Committee commends the hard work of officers in achieving a balanced budget and supports the proposed budget, acknowledging its strategic alignment with the comprehensive five-year MTF period. The

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	<p>budget demonstrates a proactive response to challenges, notably inflation, the cost-of-living crisis, and the sustained impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This financial plan showcases sound principles of fiscal management, adeptly utilising Earmarked Reserves to navigate inflationary pressures and address local priorities. The Committee also recognises the budget's approach to tackling challenges posed by insufficient Government funding through strategic allocations and a deliberate effort to avoid over-reliance on General Balances.</p> <p>In addition, we commend the meticulous development of savings proposals, understanding the delicate balancing act required when proposing increases in Fees & Charges to ensure a balanced budget. The Committee acknowledges the necessity of these measures in the face of economic challenges.</p> <p>The Committee welcomes the continuation of the Council's commitment to putting residents first with the proposed capital expenditure, emphasising the continued prioritisation of our residents. The investments in local infrastructure and a new leisure centre are examples of the Council's commitment to enhancing the well-being and quality of life of those we serve.</p> <p>The Committee commends the continued dedication to and investment in resident focused initiatives. Notably, allocating £7.5 million for the Chrysalis and playground replacement programme, as well as £1 million for environmental and recreational initiatives, such as tennis court upgrades. The Committee is also pleased to endorse the £532,000 investment in local shopping parade initiatives, demonstrating support for small businesses and promoting local shopping.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Residents' Services Select Committee endorses the proposed budget. The proposals ensure the long-term fiscal resilience required and support the Council's unwavering dedication to sound financial management, ensuring the financial security and well-being of our community for the years ahead.</p>
<p>Health and Social Care Select Committee 23 January 2024</p>	<p>The Committee again acknowledges the continuing challenging financial environment but also recognises the importance of health and social care to the lives of an increasing proportion of Hillingdon's community. The Committee is grateful to Council officers for their work on the budget as well as the staff who have worked tirelessly to provide health and social care services.</p> <p>Health and Social Care is continuously looking to innovate and develop new ways of working and new service provision</p>

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	<p>to help manage pressures. This is evident in the savings within this area that are linked to investment in digital solutions that look to prevent the costs of people coming into the service. The Committee is pleased to note that a model is being developed to track and monitor the effectiveness of this support going forward. The Committee believes that it is important that the standard of services are monitored to give all confidence that the Council continues to meet their statutory duties.</p> <p>Of the proposed £218m capital budget, £6m will be used by the Council to set up its own care home, supporting a saving of £550,000 per annum from 2025/26. Whilst there are clearly potential risks associated with purchasing a care home, the Committee looks forward to seeing the positive impact of this initiative.</p>
<p>Children, Education & Families Select Committee 1 February 2024</p>	<p>The Committee recognise the pressures that are placed on the Council's budget within the context of a challenging economic environment in terms of exceptional inflationary pressure; the impact of the cost-of-living crisis; the continuing legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the increase in demand on Children's Services. Amidst these pressures, the Committee particularly commends the additional SEND capacity in the Borough's schools.</p> <p>The Committee also acknowledge the vital importance of early help and intervention as a means of supporting Hillingdon families and young people before matters escalate, and also as a means of alleviating the demand on non-statutory services.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Committee note the importance of continuing to closely monitor the situation regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).</p> <p>Finally, the Committee would like to thank officers for their work on the budget for 2024/25.</p>

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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

- [Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee - 10 January 2024](#)
- [Finance and Corporate Select Committee - 11 January 2024](#)
- [Residents' Services Select Committee - 16 January 2024](#)
- [Health & Social Care Select Committee - 23 January 2024](#)
- [Children, Education & Families Select Committee - 1 February 2024](#)