



## Democratic Services

**Location:** Phase II

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**CMD No:** 1605

**To: COUNCILLOR WAYNE BRIDGES  
CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY &  
ENVIRONMENT**

**COUNCILLOR JANE PALMER  
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL  
CARE**

c.c. All Members of the Health and Social Care Select  
Committee

c.c. Sandra Taylor – Corporate Director of Adult  
Social Care

c.c. Dan Kennedy – Corporate Director of Residents  
Services

**Date:** 15 January 2026

**Non-Key Decision request**

**Form D**

### **RURAL ACTIVITIES GARDEN CENTRE**

Dear Cabinet Members,

Attached is a report requesting that a decision be made by you as an individual Cabinet Member. Democratic Services confirm that this is not a key decision, as such, the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 notice period does not apply.

You should take a decision **on or after Friday 23 January 2026** in order to meet Constitutional requirements about publication of decisions that are to be made. You may wish to discuss the report with the Corporate Director before it is made. Please indicate your decision on the duplicate memo supplied and return it to me when you have made your decision. I will then arrange for the formal notice of decision to be published.

Liz Penny  
Democratic Services

**Title of Report:** RURAL ACTIVITIES GARDEN CENTRE

**Decision made:**

**Reasons for your decision:** (e.g. as stated in report)

**Alternatives considered and rejected:** (e.g. as stated in report)

Signed ..... Date.....

*Cabinet Member for Community & Environment / Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care*

# RURAL ACTIVITIES GARDEN CENTRE

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Cabinet Member &amp; Portfolio</b>  | Councillor Wayne Bridges,<br>Cabinet Member for Community and Environment<br>Councillor Jane Palmer,<br>Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care |
| <b>Responsible Officers</b>            | Dan Kennedy, Corporate Director, Residents Services<br>Sandra Taylor, Corporate Director, Adult Social Care & Health                            |
| <b>Report Author &amp; Directorate</b> | Dan Kennedy, Corporate Director, Residents Services<br>Sandra Taylor, Corporate Director, Adult Social Care & Health                            |
| <b>Papers with report</b>              | Appendix 1 – Consultation Responses / Findings<br>Appendix 2 – Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment                                      |

## HEADLINES

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Summary</b>  | <p>The Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) in West Drayton has long provided horticultural therapy and community retail services. Following a review, Cabinet decided in June 2025 to close the retail element due to ongoing financial losses and agreed to consult on future support services.</p> <p>Consultation has been completed and the findings confirmed that gardening activities are highly valued by people with learning disabilities. To ensure value for money, the recommendation is to refocus the activities currently provided from the RAGC site and integrate them with the Adult Social Care &amp; Health (ASC&amp;H) Day Resources service for adults with assessed social care needs and continue support for volunteer adults with learning disabilities.</p> <p>The service will not continue in its current community format but will maintain familiar activities initially on-site, along with gardening opportunities at the Civic Centre and other Council sites. Staffing requirements and volunteer roles will be reviewed under the new model.</p> |
| <b>Putting our Residents First</b><br><br><b>Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026</b> | <p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: Safe and Strong Communities</p>   |
| <b>Financial Cost</b>   | <p>The RAGC required a subsidy of £137k in 2024/25 and £114k in 2025/26. This proposal seeks to operate a non-retail care-based alternative at the site, which will save the Council c.£100k per annum, bringing subsidy levels down to £11k and £16k over the next two financial years.</p>  |

|                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Select Committee | Health & Social Care Select Committee |
| Ward(s)          | All                                   |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for Community & Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care:

- 1) Have regard to the findings of the public consultation, which found overall that the horticultural and gardening offer is valued and enjoyed by the adults with learning disabilities attending the RAGC site;
- 2) Agree that the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) will transition from its current model — which offers horticultural activities, community engagement, and vocational opportunities - to a structured day service provision that represents a shift from an open-access, activity-based approach to a service designed to deliver planned, person-centred support aligned with assessed care needs. The new model will focus on providing meaningful daytime opportunities within a framework that meets statutory requirements and will also support volunteer adults attending the site with a Learning Disability as part of a wider programme to promote individual outcomes.
- 3) Agree that the management of the RAGC transfers to the Adult Social Care & Health Directorate under Direct Care Services and is incorporated into the in-house day provision and under the management and supervision of Queens Walk Resource Centre.
- 4) Note and recognise the valued and significant voluntary contributions which have been made over a number of years and that the Council intends to review how volunteers can support in line with the new delivery model on offer at the site.
- 5) Notes from the consultation exercise, the public interest in the future use of the RAGC site as one with community benefit and that any decision on such use should have regard to this feedback.

### Reasons for recommendation(s)

**Recommendation 1** - The recommendation noting the findings from the consultation recognises the value and enjoyment that those participating in the consultation place on the horticultural and gardening activities available to adults with a learning disability. This includes those adults with an assessed social care need attending the RAGC site, as well as those adults with a learning disability who volunteer at the site. The findings from the consultation have been reviewed to inform the recommendations for the future service offer. The consultation questions and responses are set out in Appendix 1.

**Recommendation 2** - In considering the consultation findings and the need for the Council to continue to meet its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, the recommendation to the Cabinet Member ensures that the individuals with assessed care needs are provided with continued access to horticultural and gardening services. The recommendation also ensures that those volunteers with a learning disability currently attending the site who do not have an assessed social care need will be supported to continue to volunteer. The recommendation therefore proposes that the current service offer changes to a new day service offer available to those currently attending the RAGC site. The service offer from the RAGC site for existing service users will continue with the activities they recognise including opportunities at a range of social care sites as well as continuing with gardening at the Civic Centre.

The proposed transition from the current RAGC service, which provides horticultural activities, some vocational opportunities and community engagement to a limited number of adults with a varying level of need including those with an assessed social care need, to a structured, outcomes-focused day service within ASC&H, is driven by the need to ensure sustainability, value for money, and improved support for adults with disabilities. Current analysis shows a low number of service users attending the RAGC site - in total 29 people across the week, with a daily attendance of between 12-17 people. A number of these people (6) at present also have a dedicated support worker who supports them to attend and engage in gardening activities. This is against a backdrop of high operational costs, making the existing model financially unsustainable.

The proposed new day service model will provide targeted, needs-based activities that integrate the Council's current day provision strengths and staff expertise. This will be developed in close partnership with other services to maximise opportunities and support for those attending which align to assessed needs, reduce staffing requirements, and achieve significant cost savings on staffing estimated at £150k annually—while maintaining community engagement and continuity for existing users. Consultation feedback confirms the importance of retaining services and the revised offer will preserve this community value in a more efficient format. This approach aligns with the Council's duty to manage assets responsibly and provide equitable, person-centred services that meet statutory obligations and promote independence.

**Recommendation 3** - Transferring the management of the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) to the Adult Social Care & Health Directorate under Direct Care Services and incorporating it into the in-house day provision under Queens Walk Resource Centre ensures that the service is delivered within an established framework that meets statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014. This integration will provide stronger governance, operational oversight, and consistency across the Council's Day care provision, enabling better use of resources and staff expertise. It will also create opportunities for service users to access a wider range of activities and support, promoting independence and wellbeing while maintaining continuity of valued horticultural activities. Aligning the RAGC with Queens Walk will deliver efficiencies, improve sustainability, and ensure the service is embedded within a model designed to deliver person-centred outcomes.

**Recommendation 4** – The Council recognises that the volunteers who have and continue to support the services offered at the RAGC are valued. The new day service offer for adults with a learning disability from the RAGC site will most likely require a reduced and different contribution from any volunteering offered and therefore their valued contribution and support will need to be

reviewed to ensure effective working arrangements are in place when the new delivery model at the site is operational.

**Recommendation 5** - The consultation with those using services at the RAGC site, the volunteers and the wider public has confirmed the community value placed on the services offered. As with all assets managed by the local authority, the Council has a duty to ensure that these are best meeting needs and managed to deliver value for money, for all residents. Any future options for the use of the site will be considered in due course. The priority at this stage is to transition the current service to a structured, outcomes orientated day service provision, working closely with the existing service users and their carers.

### **Alternative options considered / risk management**

In considering alternative options for the current horticultural and gardening offer from the RAGC site, a 'no change' option was explored. While this was the preferred option for many respondents to the consultation and is understandable given the strong attachment to the existing service, it was discounted for several reasons. Maintaining the current model would not best serve the needs of adults with learning disabilities who benefit from structured, outcomes-focused support aligned to assessed care needs.

The existing service is financially unsustainable, with high operational costs and low attendance, and does not provide the breadth of opportunities needed to promote independence and social interaction. In contrast, the recommended day service model will deliver tailored activities designed to meet statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014, ensure better use of public resources, and offer access to a wider range of diverse opportunities. Recognising that any change can be unsettling, a carefully designed transition plan will be implemented around the needs of individual service users, including those adults with learning disabilities who currently attend the RAGC site but do not meet an assessed need.

### **Democratic compliance / previous authority**

Cabinet approved the decision on 26 June 2025 to close the retail element of the Rural Activities Garden Centre and to undertake a consultation with those using the services and those with an interest in the site on the future of the service offer. Cabinet also agreed to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Community & Environment to consider the findings of the consultation and to make a decision on the future of the RAGC site and any relocation of service provision accordingly. The Cabinet Member may make any decision in consultation with other relevant portfolio holders.

### **Select Committee comments**

None at this stage.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. By way of background, the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) was first established in 1981 and was designed to provide educational and supported learning opportunities for residents with additional needs including learning difficulties, disabilities, and mental health conditions with an emphasis on horticultural therapy. The Centre also used to operate as a community retail garden centre, selling a range of local produce and seasonal plants to the public, some of which are grown on site. Cabinet made the decision in June 2025 to cease the retail offer as it required significant public funding subsidy each year to continue. This was not considered the best use of public funds. The need for a retail garden centre offer from the site is not within the scope of this report as this decision has already been made by Cabinet.
2. The number of people attending and the frequency of attendance at the RAGC by those with an assessed social care need using their personal budget has been reducing in recent years. These service users have support from the RAGC staff, and, currently, 6 service users have additional 1-1 support. Other volunteers at the site have enrolled in activities through self-referrals, or signposting from GP services and the Adult Learning service. While the Council has a general duty to provide universal services, there is no statutory obligation to offer these services at the RAGC, and they are provided free of charge. The Council can meet its duty to provide universal services at alternative provisions or in different formats.
3. Following on from the agreement to the recommendations by Cabinet in June earlier this year, all volunteer service users ('gardeneers') have been offered a social care assessment to see if they should be in receipt of assessed social care services. A number of service users (2) have subsequently been found to have an assessed social care need (a total of 8 assessed social care residents now have additional support when attending the RAGC).
4. The RAGC currently receives a substantial subsidy for services accessed by a relatively small number of residents. In addition, the site's ageing infrastructure would require significant investment to meet health and safety standards if it were to return to its previous full use, including retail operations. However, several buildings on the site remain usable and can support the proposed transition to a day service model for adults with assessed social care needs and volunteer adults with learning disabilities. At this stage, it is anticipated that the new service can be delivered with minimal capital investment. Subject to a decision by the Cabinet Member, a full site assessment will be undertaken once responsibility transfers to ASC&H to confirm compliance, identify any essential works and ensure the facilities on the site are fit for purpose for the Adult Social Care provision.

### Summary of Consultation Findings

5. Cabinet agreed in June 2025 to undertake consultation with those using the RAGC site and those with an interest to consider future service options, which included consideration of the following:

- Relocate those with assessed care needs to the Civic Centre Campus in Uxbridge to provide enhanced horticultural services and development opportunities.
  - Support voluntary service users to move to partner organisations within the local area offering a more diverse range of activities including horticulture and biodiversity, and opportunities for paid employment positions should they desire to do so. The Council would provide training and assistance where required.
  - Consider no change in the location of voluntary and support services for those with assessed social care needs.
6. Residents, service users, their carers and their families were consulted alongside RAGC volunteers over a 6-week period. Consultation commenced on 27 August 2025 and ended on 7 October 2025. Appropriate, supported consultation was undertaken with those with complex needs and care assessments completed as needed. The Social Work Team worked with families to undertake this. A consultation tool setting out structured questions was made available in on-line and hard copy formats.
7. The Council received 202 responses to the consultation, which covered the following main representative groups.
- Club, Society or Organisation: 76
  - Parent or Carer: 65
  - Volunteer: 33
  - Adult Social Care User: 18
  - Staff: 6
8. The consultation shows overwhelming opposition to the Council's proposals in the June 2025 Cabinet report, with 95% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Only 4% expressed agreement i.e. agree and strongly agree, and a very small proportion (2%) were neutral. The consultation strongly confirmed support for maintaining access to horticultural and gardening services for vulnerable adults, with a clear preference that these services continue at the RAGC site.
9. Respondents emphasised the importance of this provision for adults with assessed social care needs as well as those with a learning disability who currently attend but do not meet the threshold for statutory support. Many comments highlighted the therapeutic benefits, sense of community, and continuity offered by the RAGC environment, stressing that these cannot be replicated in alternative urban settings.
10. Overall, the consultation confirmed strong opposition to relocation of gardening activities, with 90% of respondents stating they 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with any proposal for a permanent and immediate move to the Civic Centre. Many comments highlighted that sudden changes would be unsettling for current service users, and some would struggle to travel to the Civic Centre without appropriate transport support. Respondents also raised concerns about the Civic Centre being an unsuitable environment for horticultural and gardening activities, lacking the therapeutic outdoor space provided at RAGC. See appendix 1 for the consultation question, findings and full responses (redacted where required for personal data).

### Recommended Future Service Offer

11. In considering the feedback and all options for the future service offer, consideration also has to be given to the condition of the buildings and facilities on site and whether any significant capital investment is needed, as well as the day to day running costs of the RAGC service for it to continue to operate a community service, wider than the adult social care service offer.
12. Given that the Council needs to ensure best use of taxpayer-funded budgets, the recommendation is to transition the current service offer at the RAGC site to a day service provision re-focused on meeting statutory, assessed social care needs, offering a structured, outcome-based service.
13. By transferring the RAGC into Adult Social Care under the existing Day Provision at Queens Walk, service users will benefit from access to a broader range of activities and opportunities to engage with a wider community of peers. This integration will not only enhance social interaction and independence for adults with learning disabilities but will also enable service users to participate in horticultural activities that support and add value to other front-line services across the Council. Importantly, this transition creates the potential to open up horticultural therapy and related activities to a wider group of ASC residents, allowing more individuals to benefit from the therapeutic, social, and wellbeing outcomes associated with gardening and outdoor engagement.
14. Existing service users who have been dependent on this service for independence and social interaction will continue to have access to the RAGC for ongoing support and assessment, while also developing supported pathways to access a diverse range of opportunities on a case-by-case basis. This approach ensures continuity of valued activities, maximises community engagement, and leverages the strengths of the Council's wider day provision offer.
15. The consultation raised a number of questions about the Council having already determined the future options for the site, including suggestions that the Council wishes to sell the RAGC for housing. The Council does not have a proposal for the future use of the site at this point but will consider any potential future alternative options for the site to best meet residents needs in due course. All organisations that currently use the facilities will be reviewed to establish the appropriateness and contractual arrangements in place for the usage / attendance of the site.



## Next Steps and Proposed Timetable

The following outline proposed timetable sets out the key actions required to implement the next steps, subject to the outcome of the Cabinet Member's decision, to ensure a smooth transition to the new service model:

| <b>Action</b>  | <b>Responsible Officer(s)</b>   | <b>Target Date</b>          |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Notify Gardeneers, Carers, and Volunteers of the Cabinet Member decision   | Chris Wheeler, Director, Environment  | <b>January 2026</b>         |
| Develop detailed transition plan with Gardeneers, Volunteers, and Carers including individual reviews and support arrangements | Jan Major – Assistant Director of Direct Care/ Marc Upjohn – Team Manager Behavioural Support/ Adult Social Work Team/Marcus Harvey – Head of Service | <b>January 2026</b>         |
| Confirm staffing restructure and issue HR consultation documents   | HR, Chris Wheeler, Director, Environment & Jan Major – Assistant Director of Direct Care  | <b>January 2026</b>         |
| Begin recruitment or redeployment for revised staffing model   | HR & Jan Major – Assistant Director of Direct Care  | <b>February 2026</b>        |
| Prepare RAGC site for new day service model (including any minor works or compliance checks)                                   | Gary Penticost – Director of Operational Assets/ Jan Major – Assistant Director of Direct Care  | <b>February– March 2026</b> |
| Integrate RAGC into Queens Walk Resource Centre management structure   | Jan Major – Assistant Director of Direct Care   | <b>March 2026</b>           |
| Launch new day service offer at RAGC site  | Jan Major – Assistant Director of Direct Care   | <b>April 2026</b>           |
| Review volunteer engagement and confirm future arrangements  | Jan Major – Assistant Director of Direct Care   | <b>April 2026</b>           |
| Report back to Cabinet Member on implementation progress   | Jan Major – Assistant Director of Direct Care   | <b>June 2026</b>            |

## Financial Implications

The Rural Activities Garden Centre was subsidised by £137k of Council funds in the 2024/25 financial year, before corporate overheads applied. This figure is currently forecast to reduce to £114k in the 2025/26 financial year due to reduced operating costs following a Cabinet decision in June 2025 to cease the retail element of the service.

| With retail element         | Outturn    | Forecast   |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
|                             | 2024/25    | 2025/26    |
|                             | £'000      | £'000      |
| Staffing                    | 294        | 300        |
| Non-staffing                | 52         | 6          |
| Income                      | (69)       | (52)       |
| Public Health funding       | (140)      | (140)      |
| <b>General Fund Subsidy</b> | <b>137</b> | <b>114</b> |

After removing the retail element of the RAGC (both cost of materials for resale and the associated income) the required subsidy was £168k 2024/25 and an estimated £166k for 2025/26.

| Without retail element      | 2024/25<br>£'000 | 2025/26<br>£'000 | 2026/27<br>£'000 | Saving<br>£'000 | 2027/28<br>£'000 | Saving<br>£'000 |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Staffing                    | 294              | 300              | 145              | (154)           | 150              | (150)           |
| Non-staffing                | 13               | 6                | 6                | 0               | 6                | 0               |
| Income                      | 0                | 0                | 0                | 0               | 0                | 0               |
| Public Health               | (140)            | (140)            | (140)            | 0               | (140)            | 0               |
| <b>General Fund Subsidy</b> | <b>168</b>       | <b>166</b>       | <b>11</b>        | <b>(154)</b>    | <b>16</b>        | <b>(150)</b>    |
| Redundancy / Pension Strain | 0                | 0                | 142              | 142             | 0                | 0               |

The required subsidy of the proposed new non-retail service is estimated at approximately £11k for 2026/27 (a saving from 2025-26 in the region of £154k) although there is likely to be approximately £142k of redundancy costs and pension strain costs in the first year. This is on the assumption that Public Health funding continues at the current level of £140k pa, and before corporate overheads are applied. For 2027/28 onwards, this net cost to the General Fund adjusted for pay inflation would be £16k, (a reduction in operational costs of £150k pa before corporate overheads).

## RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

### The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

The proposed recommendation will have a positive impact on Hillingdon residents by ensuring that adults with assessed social care needs and those with learning disabilities continue to access valued horticultural and gardening activities in a structured, outcomes-focused environment. This approach promotes independence, social interaction, and wellbeing for vulnerable residents while

maintaining continuity of services they enjoy. By integrating the current activities into the Council's wider day provision, the model will deliver a sustainable service that meets statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and aligns with the Council's vision of "Putting Residents First." The revised offer also maximises community engagement and ensures efficient use of public funds, safeguarding resources for those most in need while preserving the therapeutic benefits and sense of belonging that the site provides.

## **Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been completed to consider the potential impact of the proposed recommendations on protected groups and can be found in Appendix 2.

## **Consultation & Engagement**

Cabinet agreed in June 2025 to undertake a consultation about proposals for the future use of the site. Residents, service users, their carers and their families were consulted alongside RAGC volunteers over a 6-week period. Consultation commenced on 27th August 2025 until 7th October 2025. Appropriate, supported consultation was undertaken with those with complex needs and care assessments completed as needed. The Social Work Team worked with families to undertake this. A consultation tool setting out structured questions was made available in on-line and hard copy formats.

Appendix 1 sets out the consultation findings and charts.

# **CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS**

## **Corporate Finance**

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting the recommendations to transition the RAGC from its current model of an open-access, activity based approach to a service designed to deliver planned, person-centred support aligned with assessed care needs, with the management to move to Adult Social Care and Health under Direct Care Services and is incorporated into the in-house day provision under the management and supervision of Queens Walk Resource Centre. The volunteer contributions will be reviewed to fit the new model.

Furthermore, it is noted the current model is forecast to require a subsidy of £114k in 2025/26; this forecast includes an element of the retail function that ceased in June 2025. By transitioning to the proposed day provision model and assuming Public Health funding remains at the current level, the subsidy is expected to reduce to £11k in 2026/27; however, one-off costs estimated at £142k relating to the redundancy and pensions strain costs will be incurred in the first year, which would bring the subsidy to £153k in 2026/27, based on the current operational costs, this is a reduction of £13k. In 2027/28, the subsidy is forecast to be £16k, representing an estimated reduction of £98k compared to the current year forecast and a reduction of £150k based on the current model's operational costs without the retail element. If the transition is approved, the subsidy costs will be met from approved Adult Social Care and Health budgets; as at Month 6 Direct Care Provision Services were reporting a favourable variance of £386k.

## Legal

When considering changes to its services, including the Rural Activities Garden Centre, the Council must ensure that it continues to comply with the duties under Care Act 2014, including meeting assessed needs and providing universal services. Additionally, the local authority must undertake a fair consultation process and have regard to the consultation outcomes, ensuring that the process is genuine and meaningful. The Council must have regard to the outcome of the consultation process when making its decision. There are no legal impediments to the recommendation set out within the report.

## Property

The Property Team have noted the continuing use of the property and are supportive of the recommendations in the report regarding the transfer of the day-to-day management operations to ASC&H. For avoidance of any doubt the overall responsibility for the asset will remain with Property in accordance with the Corporate Landlord approach being implemented.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Cabinet report and decisions – 26 June 2025](#)

## Appendix 1 - Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) Full Consultation Responses 2025

### Overview

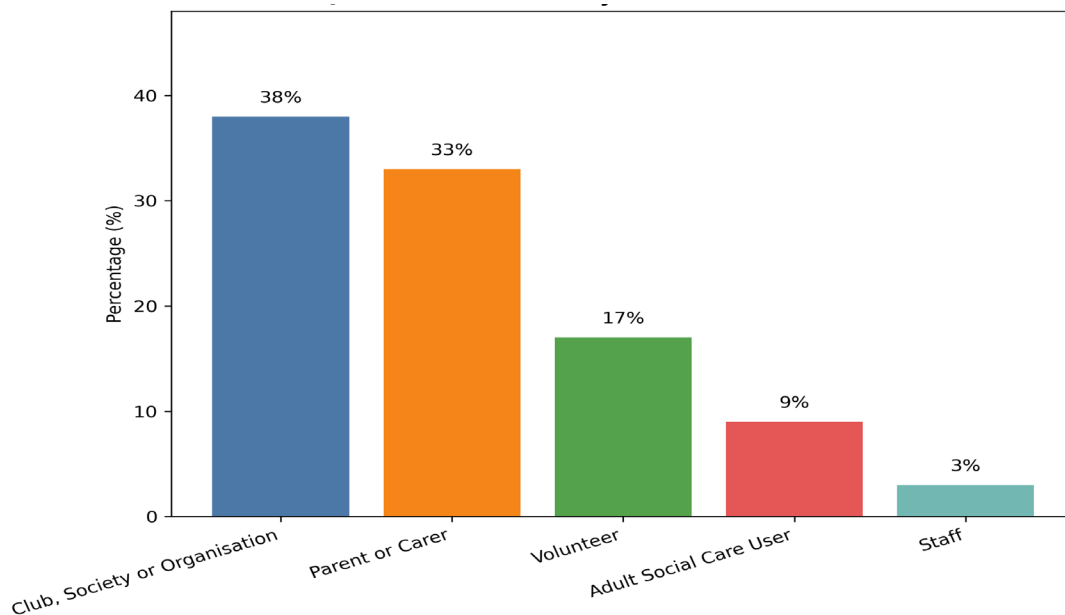
This Appendix includes the consultation results and the full detailed individual responses (redacted for data protection / personal information), so the Cabinet Member can view and consider all responses received. The consultation ran from 27th August 2025 until 7th October 2025 (6 weeks). 202 responses were received.

Respondents consistently highlighted the centre's importance as a safe, therapeutic environment for vulnerable adults, offering routine, social interaction, and mental health benefits. Many expressed that the Civic Centre as an alternative site to the RAGC is unsuitable and unsafe, lacking the calm outdoor setting that the RAGC provides. Feedback emphasised the centre's role as a vital community hub and warned that closure would lead to isolation and higher long-term costs for health and social care. Respondents urged the Council to explore alternative funding models, such as charitable status, partnerships, and reopening the café, rather than removing support. Environmental concerns, including the presence of protected wildlife, were also raised. Overall, the comments strongly advocated for retaining and improving the RAGC offer rather than closing or relocating it.

### 1. What interest do you have with the RAGC?

| Interest                             | Count | Percentage % |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------------|
| <b>Club, Society or Organisation</b> | 76    | 38%          |
| <b>Parent or Carer</b>               | 65    | 33%          |
| <b>Volunteer</b>                     | 33    | 17%          |
| <b>Adult Social Care User</b>        | 18    | 9%           |
| <b>Staff</b>                         | 6     | 3%           |

(note – some people responding did not provide this information)



## 2. How do you currently use the services or opportunities at the RAGC?

### All Comments

|  |
|--|
| I go there xx times a week to work.  |
| Buying plants etc.   |
| I support its cause.   |
| I don't use the services. I am retired and volunteer as a gardener at RAGC.  |
| I recommended it to people with disabilities or Carers so they can find a supportive activity.   |
| My xxx goes xxx days a week.   |
| I am a member of the public that use the RAGC to purchase plants and other garden equipment.   |
| We can't anymore!  |
| I help at planting the many beautiful plants.<br>Socialising with others, always ready to help others, to me it's my little haven and a little haven to many others, an environment that cannot be dismissed, it's unique, it's like a family. As I say a little haven not to be taken away.   |
| I visit as a customer.   |
| Buying plants & spending time in this lovely place.  |
| As and when 1:1 assistance required.   |
| To work with herbs lotions and potions.  |
| Friends use your services.   |
| N/A.   |
| Buying plants.   |
| At present I don't use the services.   |
| As a xxxx for a family member we visit the centre as they find the centre a calming space, the centre has been a haven for us to visit as it's local and the team are very supportive and understanding of our needs. We were hoping there would be opportunities for us to volunteer at the centre in the coming xxxx. It's disappointing to hear the councils plans. |
| My child comes for xxxx and it's so helpful.   |
| To upskill and mix with a range of people in a supportive environment.   |
| I buy plants 🌱 & veg, cards & gift items.  |
| Visit the garden centre to learn about plants and buy some plants at the garden centre   |
| I use the centre to stock up on plants in my garden and to get a Christmas tree every year.  |
| Our xxx has been a voluntary worker at the RAGC for about xx years and he thrives there. He is seriously xxx with xxx. It keeps him active, gives him valuable social interaction and keeps him highly engaged with all the activity he takes part in there. Otherwise he would spend a lot of time just sleeping.   |
| Have been a Volunteer, my behaviour can be complex so I do xxx half days.  |
| xxx has been going there since he was xx years old and is now xx. He has enjoyed it although he did cut down to two days a week.   |
| I was employed as a xxxx between xxx and xxx.  |

|   |
|---|
| As a parent and a local resident in the area, I have been coming to the activity/garden centre for a number of years. I am extremely saddened that the RAGC is not available to us anymore as we do not have a space like this close to home rather than having to travel everywhere to enjoy a tranquil place like the RAGC. I find it a safe, loving and secure place.  |
| We were fortunate to be able to avail of the facilities at RAGC as a family and have enjoyed sharing this beautiful place with our friends and family. We thoroughly enjoyed this place but particularly as a great learning opportunity for my xxx who loved to come and meet the staff, meet with friends, learn about what the gardeners were doing, see my xxx learn to scoot, gain ideas about what to grow in our garden, see the fish and hens and take part in activities to benefit and improve our health and wellbeing. It is a shame to see the staff and volunteers and adults been affected by the closure. She loved being able to have the freedom to run around and enjoy the RAGC to the full. We miss the space terribly and it should be reopened to the public to enjoy. |
| I feel that the RAGC is such a wonderful community space that could be acquired as community resource for all. We would love to see a Cafe back in the grounds and opportunity to get more involved in the space as really it would be a shame to lose this space. This garden has been here for 40 years and such heart and soul has gone into it.   |
| Used it to purchase plants and as a social place to meet with friends and neighbours.   |
| My family have enjoyed going there for years to buy plants.   |
| It is in the public interest to re-open this site. This should never have been closed. The council needs to work with its residents not against.  |
| Purchasing plants & garden produce vegetables. Engaging with the staff and volunteers, many being vulnerable adults. Ensuring all staff & users have a sense of purpose and belonging.  |
| I attend gardening and plant related workshops held on site and run by RAGC staff. They give myself and other carers who attend great mental health support and wellbeing. These workshops are provided through Hillingdon Carers, which I am a member.   |
| I go and help them staff with the garden centre as its good for my mental health.<br>I find it a restful, peaceful place to be.   |
| I support the RAGC by visiting the site, talking to staff and giving the volunteers the opportunity to provide a valuable service to the public. Being outside, active and with nature is all therapy which is essential.   |
| Buying Christmas trees and such like up to now but my grandson who is xx years old has XXXX so I would like to think that the Rural Activities centre is somewhere which would benefit him in the future.   |
| The shop and the coffee shop if it was still open.  |
| It is a lifeline for adults with learning disabilities like many of those I work with.  |
| I support individuals with learning disabilities on a one to one basis.   |
| Buy their produce and engage in conversation with the people who grow and sell their wonderful plants.  |
| As a volunteer and as a member of the public to purchase plants and see the amazing grounds.  |
| I use experience gained to help me in other horticulture related work. I attend at least once a week.   |
| The xxx we care for goes to the RAGC xxx days a week.   |
| My xxx year old daughter, who has complex mental health needs and lives in a xxxx in XXXXX when she is not an NHS inpatient, volunteers at RAGC for as many hours in the week as possible when she is well enough. I have also attended three carer wellbeing workshops at RAGC.  |
| Room hired on a weekly basis to run Vision on pottery club, an independently funded club for people with disabilities and vision loss.  |
| Visited this great resource on many occasions.  |

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| My xxx used to go to xxxxxxx, during his time there he was a frequent visitor to RAGC. He also frequently attended RAGC through HACS (Hillingdon Autistic Care Support). He successfully completed a work trial to become a volunteer. My xxx absolutely loves the centre, it helps him to socialise without any judgement, helps him feel he is doing worthwhile work, increases his communication skills and to be part of a team. RAGC has been invaluable in helping build his confidence and reducing his anxiety levels. There is nowhere else that my xxx can go that makes him feel valued and worthy. It will be a huge loss if RAGC is closed due to a profit and loss sheet. RAGC has been around for over xxx years and it touches individuals not just in Hillingdon but also in the neighbouring boroughs. RAGC should be allowed to continue as is as they provide such a valuable service to our most vulnerable family members who don't have a voice to speak up for themselves. RAGC is a lifeline to our vulnerable people, it stops social isolation. Its benefits are wide ranging. The staff are dedicated to working with our vulnerable adults and their commitment is evident to see. We need more places like RAGC. Save RAGC. |
| My xxx has been volunteering at the RAGC for around xxx years.  |
| We go to buy plants a few times a year. It is a fantastic environment for adults with special needs and lovely for us to help in a small way.   |
| Socialising, a safe place to meet others with special needs.  |
| Used regularly when open.   |
| Used to provide work skills and social skills. To develop confidence and self-worth.  |
| Our xxx attends the RAGC xxx days a week.   |
| Buying plants, Xmas tree.   |
| Sold plants.  |
| Can't use it since it was shut down by Hillingdon Council.<br>Rather wrongly I add.   |
| Visit regularly and want it to remain open for the community and people who use it. A vital resource and base.  |
| We drop and collect xxxx at the RAGC up to xxx times a week. xxx has xxx and since Hillingdon have taken away all other forms of support for xxxx this is all xxx has left. It gives him a job to do, helps keep his mind going and he has made many friends there. If he loses the RAGC we fear xxx will regress, it will disrupt his routine which can prove very troublesome as he has trouble understanding and coping with change.   |
| We use the RAGC xxx times per week to provide a safe and nurture environment for our xxx who has learning difficulties. He has been attending for over xxx years. we have seen his confidence grow, he has gained some independence and feels valued.   |
| We would visit the garden centre frequently and enjoy the tranquil safe environment.  |
| I love to visit for relaxation and enjoy this beautiful and creative space.<br>I shop for my own garden and seek advice from the wonderful team<br>And I shop for the garden where I work which is a charity supporting those in recovery. The RAGC have helped us while we created a pond and a mega 6ft bug hotel. These 2 projects have brought so much joy and we are incredibly grateful for the support from the RAGC.  |
| I have used the centre as a member of the public for many years.<br>This was to buy plants and produce and visit the cafe alone and with friends and relatives.<br>This has always been a lifesaver for many people who are lonely or need some social interaction.<br>The word 'lifesaver' is not an exaggeration.   |
| I do any jobs the staff ask me to do.   |
| I shop there and know the importance of the RAGC to a friend's family whose xxx works there.  |
| I support the RAGC by purchasing from them, I also enjoyed the space near the former cafe and pond to chill, relax and interact with the staff and volunteers.  |



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| Visit the centre to purchase plants and to support its good cause supporting vulnerable adults and young people.   |
| I used the RAGC to escape the rat run of daily life, I used to sit in the area with seating that allowed me to watch the birds in the growth, this was my way of relaxing as I get stressed, since it's closure I have had to use Little Britain Lake, this is nowhere near as relaxing as RAGC being as it is unkempt and now covered with litter and empty cans, it also does not feel safe as it is prone to drinkers and other undesirable persons so I'm looking for somewhere else now, however having limited mobility does not make this easy. |
| Excellent.   |
| I have 2 xxxx xxxxxx daughters who spend at least twice a week visiting and buying plants and vegetable plants from here.<br>This is a vital part of the local community. They have become more isolated since not being able to visit. They love the animals there too and often enjoy the social side of talking to similar minded people there.   |
| We used to come to visit this lovely place since I had my xx in xxxx. Grab a cup of coffee at the cafe when it was still open, feed the fish and chickens, explore the little woods, talk to the lovely staff at the garden, who were always super friendly and helpful, always happy to share their experiences and tips on gardening.  |
| Shop there to support service users. Visit to show support.  |
| Used to visit & buy plants etc   |
| To buy plants and was also a regular user of the Tea Room socially.  |
| Know an individual and his family who benefit from the RAGC facilities.  |
| To relax and purchases when retail was open.   |
| This is a great local asset for the community. It's a lovely place to go to and chat with the volunteers and locals who use it. It's really important for some people more than others. Please stop taking away services from our community. We need more services and activities for our young and adult residents. The rapid rise in anti social behaviour in the borough is evident. The council needs to do more and be more proactive in giving the community what it needs.  |
| As a respite from pressures but been made harder after closure of cafe by the council which was being run privately.   |
| I did buy all my plants from there several times a year but cannot anymore.  |
| I would have visited as a customer. I also used the cafe run by HACS before it closed. I volunteer with Mencap and I know several people who use Mencap facilities, also work at RAGC.   |
| I used to buy things from the garden centre. And enjoy the pond, garden etc. I'm a local resident.   |
| Support garden sales.  |
| I used the cafe when it was open often at lunchtime with work colleagues. I also regularly used the garden centre to purchase plants and always used it for a Christmas tree.  |
| My xxx has been attending weekly for xxx years.  |
| I go there once a week to do gardening.  |
| We visited many times to buy plants and walk around the grounds.   |
| My xxxx with xxx likes going with carers, will buy from shop and has enjoyed the cafe in the past.   |
| Whilst it was open to the general public I used to visit and buy plants and then use the delightful little cafe.   |
| We miss these facilities.  |
| Member of the public buying plants and compost.  |
| I am not actually a volunteer, but I am a supporter.   |
| Yes.   |
| Resident who buys plants.  |

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| We used to bring groups of otherwise housebound elderly neighbours to the tearoom by minibus. Since the tearoom closed, we have continued to use the garden centre and found it an excellent experience, both horticultural and socially., but we miss the tearoom.  |
| Used to support service users to work at the centre and then a customer.   |
| The users have a real sense of community at the RAGC. Moving them to work around the Civic Centre will destroy that sense of community and satisfaction of doing something worthwhile together with others.  |
| My xx who has XXXX is turning xx on the xx of xxxx and we was planning for him to volunteer here. I really do hope this place is saved as slowly by surely we are losing everything for our young adult with additional needs.   |
| I don't personally use it, but members of my community, Ruislip, do.   |
| I have used the centre on many occasions as a customer.  |
| We buy all our garden plants there. We used to use the lovely cafe before it had to shut too.  |
| I have visited the centre to support its work.   |
| Visit the garden.  |
| Visiting.  |
| I use the garden centre for advice, products and to communicate with the staff.  |
| Visit and enjoy the centre. Buy plants for my garden.  |
| I can't it's shut to the public, otherwise I would visit to buy gardening items or visit the cafe which is sadly missed.   |
| I have bought beautiful plants from there in the distant past. I rarely travel to the RAGC by bike but would do so if there was an appropriate route from the north of the borough. I would like to support its continuance as it was one of the few low-key but comfortably welcoming places to visit in the borough. |
| I use them as they are easily accessible for me and are always happy to give information about their plants. The parking is better as I hold a blue badge.   |
| I bought garden plants and wood chips for the garden, supporting the volunteers in their work.   |
| Buy my Christmas tree from there. Lovely place & opportunities for the local community.  |
| When it was open I bought plants & eggs. Visited the beautiful pond & chickens. Engaged with staff.  |
| I'm a friend of the RAGC.  |
| We go to the shop and enjoy seeing the wonderful work they do there. Many of the gardeneers have come a long way over the years we have attended.  |
| Friend.  |
| I have friends who use and rely on RAGC.   |
| My xx is a volunteer.  |
| Regularly purchased gardening items for local allotment group.   |
| For respite from stress and to tend my garden.   |
| You have closed it to the public so I cannot use it. Shame on the council for taking this resource away.   |
| Visiting, talking, purchasing, caring.   |
| Visit and participate.   |
| As a Hillingdon resident I believe the opportunities the centre provides are very important and environmentally beneficial too.  |
| As xxxx under the Shared Lives family placement scheme, we look after a xxxx. Included in this is his attendance and work at the RAGC.   |
| Buy my plants here.  |
| I have often purchased flowers created by the group and participated in creative groups organised by them.   |

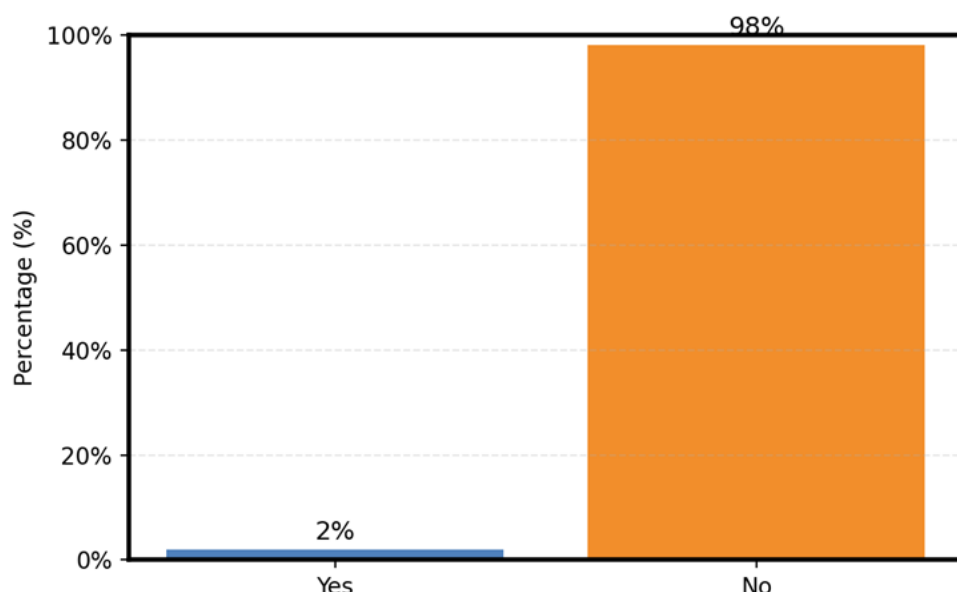
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| To support the centre by buying my gardening needs from them.   |
| Am a friend of the rural activity centre group & use it not only to buy my plants but also to wonder, meditate & help my wellbeing from a busy work live  |
| Customer who utilised the centre to take elderly neighbours and family members. Ideal atmosphere for those that required outside time. The familiar atmosphere had been very much enjoyed and as a green flag location of Hillingdon it was treasured and appreciated.  |
| I don't personally.   |
| Yes I shop here.  |
| Purchase Christmas trees.   |
| A gardening course for mental wellbeing. Also as a garden centre and meeting place when the cafe was open.  |
| My xxx used to volunteer in tearoom and we use the garden centre.   |
| I support the aims of the RAGC.   |
| I have visited RAGC on multiple occasions and can see the care Users and volunteers are so happy in the calm environment.   |
| They supply some of the plants we plant.  |
| Supporting people with life sustaining skills, in a place where they feel safe and secure to enjoy activities in an outdoor space.  |
| I don't but I fully understand and appreciate that it is for many in Hillingdon.  |
| I visited often when they were open to the public and bought plants and compost etc.  |
| Used the tea-room in the past. Buy bedding plants.  |
| We regularly visited the centre to purchase garden plants, compost etc for our allotments and garden at home. When the cafe was open we always used this.   |
| I do not but can appreciate the benefits it brings to the community and to those who work there.  |
| Lovely plants for sale.   |
| <p>I am writing to express my deep concern and strong objection to the proposed closure of the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC).</p> <p>The RAGC is not just a physical space – it is a lifeline for individuals with disabilities, offering them dignity, community, purpose, and therapeutic engagement in a natural environment. To suggest replacing this vital, inclusive resource with placements in concrete-heavy, traffic-adjacent areas such as the Civic Centre's raised flowerbeds is frankly insensitive and unacceptable. Such environments are entirely unsuitable for many of the centre's service users, both practically and emotionally.</p> <p>The current consultation process appears flawed and dismissive, both in its structure and in its failure to properly engage those most affected. I understand the Friends of RAGC have requested the consultation be amended or restarted to ensure proper representation and accessibility, yet these concerns have gone unanswered.</p> <p>Let me be clear: the RAGC must be protected. It embodies everything a community resource should be – inclusive, empowering, and rooted in genuine care. The fact that volunteers and community members are already exploring alternative funding models to keep it open at no cost to the council makes the proposal to shut it down all the more short-sighted.</p> <p>I urge you in the strongest possible terms to halt any plans for closure, engage meaningfully with the Friends of RAGC, and seriously consider community-led alternatives. This is not just about budget lines – it's about people, and your duty to protect the most vulnerable in our borough.</p> <p>Please do not let Hillingdon be remembered as the council that turned its back on those who needed its support the most.</p> |

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| It is a peaceful and tranquil place to go and the added attractions it supports vulnerable adults who maybe would have nowhere to go in terms of employment or hobbies. It is very nice all year and especially at Christmas.   |
| Buying plants.  |
| Was also a customer.  |
| Purchasing plants; chatting to the staff; having a quiet time in a green space.   |
| Shopping.   |
| Used both the Garden centre and the excellent restaurant.   |
| As a visitor.   |
| My xxxx volunteers there and previously, when it was open, we bought all of our garden plants from there.   |
| I am a member of staff.   |
| Local resident & frequent visitor/customer.   |
| Purchase plants etc.  |
| Only through the Carers Trust, but it's not been the same since it closed.  |
| I visit the garden centre to support a well deserved local community asset.   |
| I had previously made purchases at the RAGC, and I have become a 'Friend' of the RAGC. (Why is there not a relevant category for other people in section 1?).   |
| I am a nearby resident, and supporter.  |
| Member of staff.  |
| Up until it closed buying plants from there.  |
| I shop there fairly regularly.  |
| I am a member of staff at the centre.   |
| Friend and supporter.   |
| Regular days at the Garden Centre. This has helped my knowledge and confidence greatly. It's also a perfect location.   |
| Volunteering.   |
| My xxx has attended RAGC for xxx years.   |
| We used them before they were closed to purchase quality mature plants for a job we were doing at a reasonable price. They are kind caring helpful people.  |
| Collect and drop off my sibling who volunteers at RAGC. Visit and enjoy the facilities during my downtime.  |
| I shop there.   |
| Just a nice place to go to. I love it, my children love it.   |
| Enjoyed visiting, buying items to support their work. Know someone who used service.  |
| To support people with additional needs, allowing them to access the service, giving them opportunities to made a valid difference to their own lives in this unique setting.   |
| Our son, xxxx, receives horticultural therapy at RAGC as part of his social care package. He also benefited greatly from the community atmosphere of RAGC and the social opportunities of having the volunteers, staff and others with learning disabilities and autism all working together in one, safe place.  |
| I run the bespoke supported internships and employability courses for those with SEN, or ESOL for Uxbridge college, which is based at the RAGC. The RAGC is a unique business as it has staff, and gardeners. This is a business where Young adults with needs can see people like themselves working in an everyday business. It gives such a message of yes you can learn here, Study here, and go out into the world of work - successful. The support/ work here can be tailored due to the |

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| horticultural therapist on site. The RAGC can adapt and change quickly with its support to give everyone accessing the service has the highest quality experience.<br>The RAGC location works perfectly with a supportive work environment<br>The RAGC is the best - employment pathway into paid work for those with needs.<br>The RAGC has completely transformed lives. |
| I used to buy plants before it closed.   |
| Supporter.   |
| Students from our school Meadow High school (SEN) students attended in groups (with staff support) and for work experience placements.   |
| Visit garden centre and café.  |
| Buy plants from there.   |
| I don't but may wish to do so in future.   |
| I am a Friend of the RAGC and have supported the centre by visiting and buying produce.  |
| I am a Friend of RAGC and use the centre.  |
| Please do not remove the rural activities garden centre, it's a calm and trustable place to maintain people active in the community and its much-needed interactions and active life. What do you offer to replace this?   |
| I facilitate a visually impaired pottery club called Vision on that rent the classroom at the RAGC.  |
| Shop for plants and Christmas trees. Also used the cafe and outside spaces.  |

**3. If you wish to contact the council for further support from a social worker, please provide your contact details.**

| Response | Count | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-------|----------------|
| Yes      | 4     | 2%             |
| No       | 183   | 98%            |



#### 4. Reason for contact:

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| Why the closure discussion of how to keep it open.   |
| I am very opposed to the proposed closure of the RAGC. It is very shortsighted and is penalising the most vulnerable in our Borough when I think with a bit of imagination this centre could be self-sustaining and even profitable. It gives the users a sense of worth and encouragement. I would like Hillingdon council to rethink this very unpopular decision. |
| If you need any more info why this place is so important to the community.   |
| Totally against the rural garden closing. This is a great space & wonderful place for so many. It needs to be kept open & marketed properly.   |
| To try to overturn this council's decision to close the centre.  |
| As a member of the community, I believe the RAGC is a very important resource for the people who are less able, to attend. It has a major impact on their lives. Please do not close it!   |
| I was unaware there was an actual consultation as I couldn't find anything on the council website. I only heard of this through a residents association. This is a material factor in the content of my response. What are you actually proposing? and what are you going to do with the responses?  |
| Update.  |
| The Rural Activities Garden Centre is of value more than money. The special needs people there are worth more than money.  |
| I wish to ensure that RAGC remains open to continue to provide benefits to xxxx and those with learning disabilities and that the social enterprise activities (plant and other products sales) are re-started at RAGC and the cafe re-opened to resume the benefits provided by these activities.   |

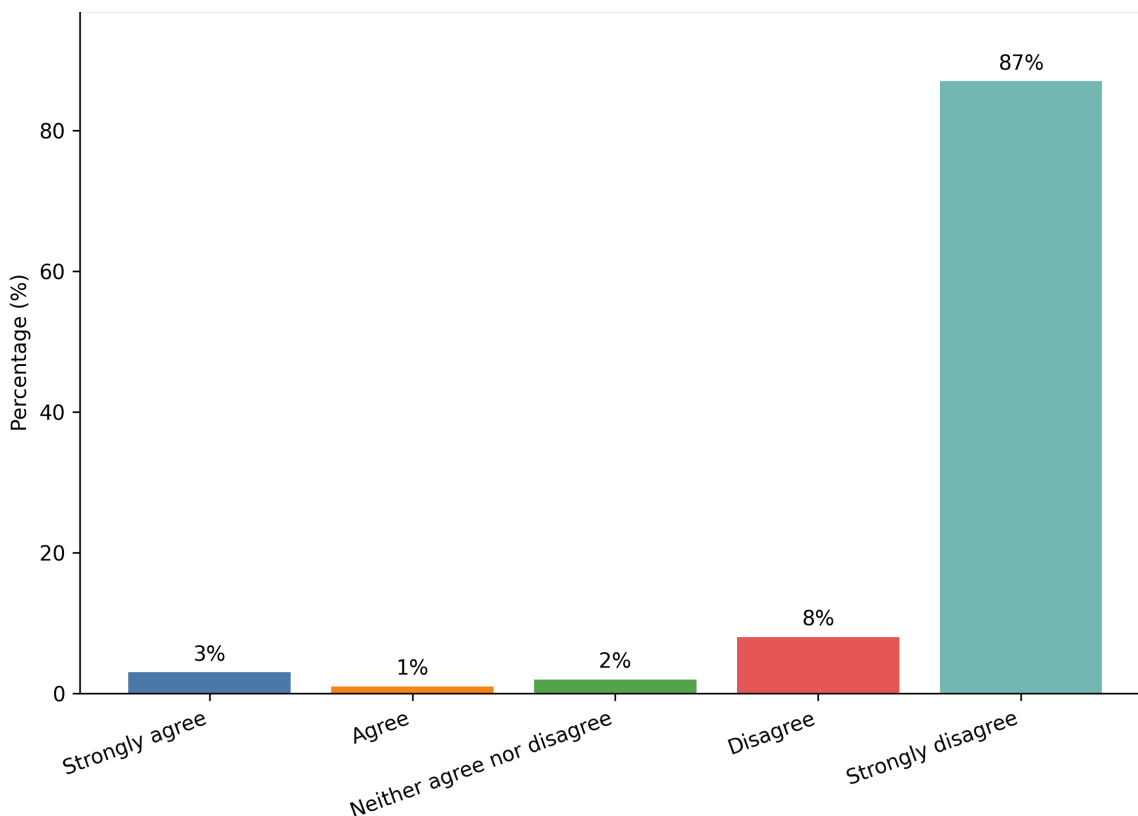
#### 5. Name (Redacted)

#### 6. Email (Redacted)

#### 7. Telephone (Redacted)

#### 8. What is your view of the council's proposals in the June 2025 Cabinet report?

| Response                   | Count | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly agree             | 6     | 3%             |
| Agree                      | 1     | 1%             |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 4     | 2%             |
| Disagree                   | 15    | 8%             |
| Strongly disagree          | 168   | 87%            |



## 9. Please provide any reasons:

### All Comments

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| You are putting all staff out of jobs plus the special needs staff.   |
| It provides a therapeutic service for adults with learning differences.   |
| The RAGC is a community. The gardeners have formed long friendships with each other, the staff and other volunteers. They know and trust each other and feel happy and safe there. To split them up and put them in an unfamiliar place is simply wicked.   |
| It is a service that provided unique massive support for a lot of people.   |
| The council doesn't know how much damage they have caused to the lives of the people that attend the RAGC   |
| They are not acting on the benefit of the community and have not given other options a chance.  |
| The proposed site at the civic centre is not a safe environment for mentally handicapped persons.   |
| Do they really believe what they are offering volunteers a safe environment, working back of the Civic Centre, I don't think so. Where is there logo gone " Hillingdon Residents come first."   |
| Vulnerable adults now have nowhere to go.   |
| It's wrong.   |
| Lack of like for like service local people would have to go distance with disability issues.  |
| It is a great space for community and learning. There are not many places like this and so I believe it is wrong to close them down. I volunteered here a while back and they taught me so much and also made me feel very welcome. The staff are amazing at what they do and the volunteers as well as the community are so grateful for them. |
| I weren't there to give my answer.  |
| The Horticultural therapy services are needed by the local community on its existing site.  |

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| This a community service supporting our young and vulnerable adults, and providers support and services to our future generation. This centre gives them the opportunity to learn vital skills and feel like they are making a contribution to society. It is also a lifeline for their parents and carers knowing they are in a safe environment but also part of the community. The council needs to find alternative savings to support the future of the RAGC.  |
| Taking away a service that these young adults really need.  |
| This environment is unique. Its facilities are unparalleled. It is well documented that being in nature is essential for good mental health.  |
| The RAGC is a Rare Resource that Hillingdon is proud of. You can showcase this as an excellent example of support for Residents with SEND.  |
| Cost of running the garden centre is less than estimated by Hillingdon council.   |
| It was a awful idea to close the centre for adults and for students at different schools and colleges to be able to do volunteering.  |
| The RAGC is an amazing place providing so much for the community, for vulnerable adults working there and for the general public who have a wonderful place to buy plants and shrubs grown there.   |
| The RAGC is not really paying for itself and as long as my xxx has there are suitable alternatives for my xxx he said he would be happy.  |
| If xxx was xxx years old now he would need this type of opportunity, i am sure there are others there now that need this type of support, rather than watching tv and being inside.   |
| The Rural Activities Garden Centre has been around for a long time and the community that it has built is reliant on the site it is based on. This is a site where the adults feel safe, gain confidence and grow skills. The wider community is not a welcoming place for these adults. They verbal abuse, judgement and exclusion. The adults using the site have really blossomed because they are valued and can be themselves at the RAGC. Any plan to give these adults responsibilities around the area instead is short sighted. As a xxxxx I saw the value of an inclusive community which was created. You are taking that service and can never create it again. It shows disrespect for adults with learning difficulties. You should be looking for ways to keep the site going. |
| I was saddened to hear that the RAGC was to close its retail operations surely more of an investigation or consultation could have been done with the local community of residents as well as staff, volunteers and gardeners and their families. Then the RAGC was closed without notice to the public. There needs to be more of an understanding with the shortfall of funding. How has it got to this figure.   |
| Taking away a vital service and a site that could be so much more if given the chance. Council have let the community down. We do not need anytime of housing on this site we need a community site for those using it now to learn and develop etc.  |
| A social service being "loss making" is a ridiculous reason to close the RAGC; the profit isn't the point. It's a fantastic place for vulnerable people to connect with nature and others, and get experience of the working world.   |
| Poor decision, absolutely disgusting what the council have done.  |
| The RAGC is a centre of excellence which the council should be very proud of having in the borough. A place where service users & volunteers have a safe environment with a sense of purpose and belonging. It should remain open.  |
| The council is not listening to the public outrage at the closure of the site. Not one single resident has said it's a good idea to close it. ALL the users of the RAGC as well as the Gardeneers will be adversely affected by the closure and will therefore increase pressure on other already overstretched council services.   |
| As its good for my wellbeing to go there.   |



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| There hasn't been a proper consultation or consideration of how the RAGC is used. Appalling approach, please revisit and take into account what residents (and taxpayers) are saying.   |
| The council should not be closing this Centre. It's a valuable asset and gives support to the most vulnerable in our society. It needs to be retained for future users.   |
| The amount of money saved is paltry and the degree of planning, notice and support to transition to a new model of delivery is pathetic   |
| Closing the RAGC with a detrimental effect on those who go there, it is a unique environment which cannot be replicated in a classroom structure. It gives people freedom to express themselves and gain confidence.  |
| There is a difference between work and job satisfaction. They are a well oiled team. Inclusivity is the name of the game. The leaders do their utmost to promote independence and communication skills face to face with the public, not to be hidden away in some office setting. They can see for themselves the result of their work and the joy it gives to their paying customers.   |
| It provides a service like no other. It teaches and trains people with learning disabilities in horticulture it teaches them work skills in a calm friendly professional environment. The centre boasts beautiful laid out gardens which the public could enjoy. It also wooded area and ponds which are great for wildlife. It creates opportunities for students and colleges and has had men sheds a and other groups. It has been described as the jewel in the crown. This service has seen people grown from shy and housebound into sociable adults, partly from working with staff and integrating with the general public.                         |
| RAGC is a wonderful place for people to work in horticulture and to be together. This cannot be replicated anywhere else.   |
| RAGC provides a unique space for a number of people with learning disabilities who have been attending for many years. It's a beautiful place, provides a healthy workplace where service users are given proper 'work' to do (gardening) that the public used to come in and buy. The council has now stopped this as well as being responsible for years of neglect such as not providing a proper shop or cafe. To say that the RAGC is making a loss is to miss the point. Places like this should be kept open regardless of cost!   |
| RAGC was set up some 40 years ago, not to make money, but to provide social and wellbeing services to the community. Since the 1980s/1990s, the community is where the more needy in society generally now have to thrive if they can. There will inevitably be a local government cost to this, since that is how social/community care works.   |
| I understand that the retail operations were originally set up in order to provide some money back to the council. While I can imagine that there needs to be some capital injection to bring the current centre in line with current health and safety standards, I believe that the centre has the potential to make even more from its retail operations - that is, with a minimal amount of support from the council to advertise and raise community awareness. I, for one, have only relatively recently become aware of the quality of what could be purchased there and the competitive pricing, compared say to my local commercial garden centre. |
| The closure of the RAGC will result in our club needing to relocate for the 2nd time within 2 years, after losing our position at Harlington Community school due to its closure without any support given to aid our funding of a new facility. The RAGC site supports our club members needs as well as supporting the RAGC financially and offering opportunities for members to experience our club.  |
| How can you take away such a valuable service that supports many vulnerable young people.   |

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| <p>From personal experience RAGC is a safe place for our vulnerable adults. My xxx first attend RAGC through xxxxxxxx school, also through HACS (Hillingdon Autistic Care Support) and through Uxbridge College.</p>   |
| <p>He successfully completed a xxxx to become a volunteer. My xxx absolutely loves the centre, it helps him to socialise without any judgement, helps him feel he in doing worthwhile work, increases his communication skills and to be part of a team. RAGC has been invaluable in helping build his confidence and reducing his anxiety levels. There is nowhere else that my xxx can go that makes him feel valued and worthy. It will be a huge loss if RAGC is closed due to a profit and loss sheet. RAGC has been around for over 40 years and it touches individuals not just in Hillingdon but also in the neighbouring boroughs. RAGC should be allowed to continue as is as they provide such a valuable service to our most vulnerable family members who don't have a voice to speak up for themselves. RAGC is a lifeline to our vulnerable people, it stops social isolation. Its benefits are wide ranging. The staff are dedicated to working with our vulnerable adults and their commitment is evident to see. We need more places like RAGC. Save RAGC.</p> |
| <p>The RAGC not only provides gardening items in its garden centre arm but also and mainly it provides a community of social care, wellbeing and support for many vulnerable people who volunteer there. This cannot be replaced elsewhere. The Councils proposals to provide a tiny area for volunteers to spend looking after a few flower beds is not a replacement for what the RAGC has. The RAGC is a very large site which provides educational support in many different skills. If the council would like to be known for ignoring the needs of vulnerable adults then this is the way to do it and it will strongly affect their ability to get re-elected.</p>  |
| <p>The RAGC is an amazing place for Adults with learning difficulties. It should not be compared with making profits like normal garden centres. The general public are appalled with the Council decision to close this.</p>  |
| <p>Valuable place for the most vulnerable people in Hillingdon.</p>  |
| <p>It was part of the community doing such good work for young people with disabilities. The council should be ashamed of themselves for not putting in the relatively small amount money needed to support the venture.</p>   |
| <p>The alternative provision doesn't provide space to learn safely and planting flowerbeds doesn't provide a variety of skills. It also doesn't allow space they can safely walk around without being a target from abuse.</p>   |
| <p>The RAGC has all the facilities needed so why spend money building something at the civic.</p>  |
| <p>Could have been funded voluntary, would not listen to us.</p>   |
| <p>It makes sense not to use council tax payers money to provide discounted plants - the council is not a commercial business.</p>   |
| <p>It's all a Hillingdon Council whitewash.</p>  |
| <p>A vital resource for the clients who use the centre. A help to the NHS.</p>   |
| <p>Ceasing the retail operation of the RAGC is one thing. However closing it to 'save' money is another. I would like to see evidence of how closing it will save money. Its not just people with disabilities who use the RAGC. Its also people with mental health issues. Given how bad the mental health facilities are at Mill house for example closing the RAGC would surely mean more money would need to be spent in order to support all users of the RAGC elsewhere. Why take away such a vital, familiar and safe environment for so many people. It doesn't make any sense.</p>  |
| <p>How many more services will you take away from vulnerable people. RAGC is a community, it is a safe and secure environment for growth and healing. We need spaces like this in our borough.</p>   |
| <p>The garden centre should remain open as it offers a vital service allowing people with additional needs to feel valued and have a purpose in a safe and nurturing environment.</p>  |

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| I don't feel the RAGC have been given a fair chance.  |
| I believe that closure of the current site will be disastrous and the alternative proposal does not go anywhere close to meeting the value of the current site.   |
| The RAGC is a safe, friendly haven where people can recharge their mind and body.(ONE OF A KIND). It's a very necessary place for care in the community. It will be a tragedy to loose it.  |
| I know the importance of this organisation (RAGC) to the families of those who work there - it supports both the valued and purposeful occupation of the volunteers and provides a much needed few house respite for the families.  |
| RAGC is valuable resource for adults and young people with disabilities. Providing them with opportunities to be part of the community and work.  |
| The RAGC was never there to make it profitable, it was there for the people to get a sense of worth for working there, giving them a purpose to feel achievement for creating such a relaxing place.  |
| The councils description of the garden centre is comprehensible inaccurate. In reality it is a haven of calm and caring environment which is special and not easily replicated. It certainly will not be replaced on a roundabout gyratory system. I cannot think of a worse suggesting.  |
| Closing this centre is a huge setback for the huge autistic and special needs community. This place is more than just a garden centre. This gives special needs people the sense of belonging but also gives them a reason to get up in the morning, to speak to like minded people, to give them a sense of responsibility by looking after the plants and growing the vegetables. The cafe part could open and this could be a self funded place without the need for council funds if it were allowed to carry on. It's a shame the council just want the land back. This isn't about just closing the centre because they can't afford to run it. They want the land to sell off for money. But in reality, this will cost the council so much more in the long run. There are no other places like this. |
| This place is so needed for the community and the people who work there.  |
| The centre is a lifeline for these adults. Please allow them to keep their safe space where they make friends, feel useful, learn new things, grow and look after wildlife. Everyone deserves this. It's ideal and what and where they know. You can't replicate what's there. Some of the adults don't have the comprehension to fully understand the politics behind the reasons for closure and Should not have too. It has taken years for them to get it like this and they feel secure. The things they create they're cannot be created at the civic centre. It's like their sanctuary. Please let them continue. Life can be short and they deserve a good outcome like other people. There was no proper consultation and a proper timescale for closure.  |
| This is a vital important facility in Hillingdon & needs to be kept open & used more. So many young & vulnerable people have benefited from it... Tent space get all schools to visit - market it properly to help it become financial stable.  |
| This is a well used and valued resource and opportunity for adults with Learning Difficulties to engage in enriching work/hobbies developing valuable skills and opportunities to interact and help the visiting public. My family have been coming to the Centre for decades. It's a crying shame and I am astonished that this much needed and used resource would be sacrificed to build flats on for whoever.   |
| N/A.  |
| Completely mishandled and false statements.   |
| The amount of saving in £s achieved from the closure will be more than offset by the additional costs of providing tailored support services to those affected by the closure.  |
| There will always be people with learning or physical disabilities. In a civilised society it is our duty to provide safe and stimulating environments for those people who are unable to work in a paid capacity but still have the ability to contribute in a positive way to society.  |
| This is an important local resource. The volunteers who work there really need this and for some it's a key centre of their world, their mental health will be devastated by its closure. I will personally miss the  |

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| garden centre. I know that during Covid closures they were very busy and it brought in a lot of finances. I do not believe that the financial information that has been shared so far is accurate.  |
| This is destroying a community and network that has dedicated so much time and effort to helping those in the greatest need in such a joyful caring way.  |
| 1. The RAGC is more than just a garden centre. It provides a sense of purpose and value to adults with learning disabilities in a safe and caring environment. There is a strong sense of community which has been established over decades which brings together people from all parts of society. It cannot be replicated in the alternative proposed by the Council.<br>2. I disagree with the rationale for closing it which was, in my view, based on inaccurate information.<br>3. There is already precious little appropriate work experience available to adults with learning disabilities. I am appalled at the lack of consideration for their wellbeing. It feels as though they are an easy target. |
| I like going to the RAGC. I like working there.   |
| The numbers didn't add up, the reasons made little sense.   |
| The Rural Activities Centre should remain open to the people who work there. It should also be open to the general public to support the Activities by buying plants and using the cafe.  |
| This is a valuable asset to our community.  |
| I totally disagree, why didn't the council buy the land off Buckinghamshire Council instead?  |
| This is a community value. Bad council management should not be at the detriment of others.   |
| This is a seriously important resource which is needed in the community. Without it we lose the skills that this centre helps to share with all attending, so needed by them all.   |
| Takes away valuable services for vulnerable people. It was built using my council tax and will not be replaced with equivalent services. The effect on users will spread to their families and then the wider public - the very residents that are supposedly placed first on the Council's publicity slogan.   |
| The RAGC is a very important part of Hillingdon's infrastructure, bringing benefits to the staff who work there and to visitors/ customers, including many residents of Hillingdon, who support the activities of the centre. Its good location means saving car mileage and emissions, especially as it's accessible by bus from most parts of the borough. Otherwise, travelling to other garden centres means more distance, more time and less satisfaction.  |
| This is a very valuable resource for the area as there are not many left for people with disabilities to feel safe and able to have a meaningful place to feel they contribute to the community, it is absolutely disgusting to cut the service for the vulnerable without proper procedures, customers would gladly spend more if they knew it needed it, the council should be ashamed of themselves and I hope they sleep well at night, you are ruining the area for all residents on many levels due to incompetence and lies. Shutting this very well run and used centre is totally cruel and despicable.  |
| Splitting up the volunteers will do more harm than good.  |
| Our adults with additional needs need this place! It would be wrong to take it from them.   |
| This is a vital community asset, not a commercial garden centre. The fact that it makes a "loss" is as relevant as saying our primary schools don't make a profit!  |
| I believe the justification is flawed, the costings are skewed to justify the decision to close and little or no thought has been given to the longer term implications on other services by the removal of this key resource to those who have attended for many years.  |
| It is totally flawed.   |
| This is a key organisation for many who work there and a resource for local people.   |
| This is a vital community interaction place for people who need to have somewhere to visit and enjoy and work with other like minded neighbours.  |
| The centre provides a lifeline for those who use it.  |

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| I don't think your looking at the broader picture. The help that places like this provide is irreplaceable. It's an education centre, a job and a social outlet.  |
| The proposals do not meet the needs of the people involved with the centre and are entirely unsuitable.   |
| It's a fantastic resource for adults with learning difficulties who want to work outdoors. Not everyone wants to work in an office, hospital etc... gives so many varied life skills.   |
| Closure of this site would have a strong negative impact on those working there.  |
| Lack of clarity in proposals, Inadequate consultation, inadequate impact assessment.  |
| Don't defend the Centre it is needed.   |
| It's not best for the community.  |
| This is an essential support network for the volunteers, offering them a safe and supportive environment.   |
| This centre is the heart of the community & means so much to the workers & public.  |
| The RAGC is a vital lifeline to the service users that go to the centre they enjoy going there it gives them purpose and structure to their day and the families see a difference in those service users to close the centre would be detrimental to them and they would have no purpose and structure to move the service to the council is not a great or an ideal place to move too just to make the council look pretty and great.  |
| This centre must not close!   |
| Weakens Hillingdon Council's statutory social care responsibility.  |
| The service provision at RAGC is unique and special. It cannot and is not replicated elsewhere. The users have formed a special bond over many years, they are a community and breaking them up for these dubious reasons is cruel and unnecessary.   |
| This garden centre gives people who would otherwise not the chance to work. As all are volunteers and many people use it to buy their plants I fail to see how it runs at a lose.   |
| An essential facility for supporting those who don't have a voice but have benefited from the excellent opportunity they've been given.   |
| Please do not close this resource. Help make it work.   |
| The activities centre has provided many vulnerable young people with work experience and social contact. It was intended as a social services resource and not a commercial enterprise. The council should engage with the volunteers and the rest of the community to come up with a viable funded plan.   |
| The centre is a safe and nurturing place for vulnerable adults, enabling them to learn and grow in a safe environment.  |
| The centre is too important to lose.  |
| The RAGC is a unique facility, wonderfully tailored to the needs of such users, providing a range of well suited activities with good social interactions. It also provides huge potential for the development of the site. This potential has not been utilised due to poor management and lack of vision that it previously had. Such growth, including mindful business aspirations, could have significantly reduced the financial deficit and with the involvement of suitable external organisations might well have eliminated the deficit. The RAGC has previously been described as one of the "jewels in the crown" of Council facilities. It seems clear to us that the closure of the RAGC is being contemplated at the expense of the Council's increased expenditure and reduced income on other matters such as dumping of waste on street corners and the permitted development of inappropriate habitable units at the bottom of people's gardens. Such things are developing the antagonism of local residents, as will the closure of the RAGC. In other words, the Council is not using the income from its' residents in an appropriate manner. The community around us is deeply infuriated by such things. |
| Leave things alone that work and keep people steadfast.   |

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| The alternative does not provide the support and network required to give this group the same support that is offered currently.  |
| Taking away the opportunity to give the less able the right to dignity.   |
| You are taking vital support for those who need it, sticking them up in the civic centre is not a solution. Stop spending money on things that aren't important - ie Hayes Town Centre & put the money to invest in this service  |
| Unless the site is being sold (which has been denied) myself and family and neighbours are not convinced that the savings hasn't been convincingly communicated warrants the retail closure. It feels that the location will eventually be sold by dismantling its impact bit by bit.   |
| I think the Council's primary reason for closing the Centre is flawed: RAGC was not established to make a profit per se, but to be a social enterprise for those who would benefit from working there ("working" doesn't necessarily imply being paid).   |
| This is a place that gives so much more than just shopping it gives people a purpose and that is invaluable to people mental health and we'll being. By closing this it's actually going to put more strain on the council to fit the bill for mental health referral and need.   |
| Any decent society should value its most vulnerable members and in relative terms the RAGC isn't asking for so much.  |
| This rural centre is a life line for many people. It has provided training, and fellowship which is very much needed in our multi cultural community.   |
| The suggested alternative horticultural activities in a public space do not meet the needs of the RAGC for a safe and quietly controlled environment that meets users needs. Unfortunate harmful incidents may arise in poorly controlled open public spaces. Persons with anti-social intentions, uncontrolled animals or those with undiagnosed mental conditions are not being monitored until incidents occur. How could the unpredictability of such incidents affecting visible but vulnerable garden workers in public spaces be anticipated or prevented? Who bears the risk? |
| It will be an absolute disgrace to close the RAGC.  |
| Put your residents first with your actions and support the centre to continue.  |
| Has the cabinet report been published and widely circulated. I suspect not sufficiently so.   |
| An excellent place for the residents of Hillingdon and the clients who work there.  |
| This has been very important for meeting and socialising with other people.   |
| Suggested options are not in line with needs.   |
| This facility was unique for people with learning difficulties where they could work in peaceful surroundings and learn a skill. Gardening is on the list for GPs to prescribe as medicine for people with anxiety and depression amongst other health issues. It works for me!   |
| it provides a vital service to those who work there as well as to their families while also being a wonderful garden centre.  |
| It helps people who need support.   |

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| <p>I am writing to express my deep concern and strong objection to the proposed closure of the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC). The RAGC is not just a physical space – it is a lifeline for individuals with disabilities, offering them dignity, community, purpose, and therapeutic engagement in a natural environment. To suggest replacing this vital, inclusive resource with placements in concrete-heavy, traffic-adjacent areas such as the Civic Centre's raised flowerbeds is frankly insensitive and unacceptable. Such environments are entirely unsuitable for many of the centre's service users, both practically and emotionally.</p> <p>The current consultation process appears flawed and dismissive, both in its structure and in its failure to properly engage those most affected. I understand the Friends of RAGC have requested the consultation be amended or restarted to ensure proper representation and accessibility, yet these concerns have gone unanswered.</p> <p>Let me be clear: the RAGC must be protected. It embodies everything a community resource should be – inclusive, empowering, and rooted in genuine care. The fact that volunteers and community members are already exploring alternative funding models to keep it open at no cost to the council makes the proposal to shut it down all the more short-sighted.</p> <p>I urge you in the strongest possible terms to halt any plans for closure, engage meaningfully with the Friends of RAGC, and seriously consider community-led alternatives. This is not just about budget lines – it's about people, and your duty to protect the most vulnerable in our borough.</p> <p>Please do not let Hillingdon be remembered as the council that turned its back on those who needed its support the most.</p> <p>This is a safe haven for the most vulnerable in our society. Please do not deny them their small amount of independence in a safe, secure environment. There's an increase in more children being diagnosed and this would be a safe haven for those young people in years to come. Mental health decline plays a huge role with people on the autistic spectrum and would have a costly impact on mental health inpatient and outpatient services which this RAGC could support with prevention and intervention.</p> <p>It provides brilliant support and benefits many people. Great plants. Great prices.</p> <p>Great idea to if managed in a structured way that does not leave users with nothing to do. Great idea to support service users to move to partner organisations across Hillingdon [not just in Hayes] to benefit from a more diverse range of activities including horticulture and biodiversity, and ideally opportunities for paid employment positions should they desire to do so.</p> <p>Any alternative is not safe for the workers.</p> <p>The RAGC is an extremely valuable asset to the community and a life line for all the disabled people who work there.</p> <p>This Centre should still be fully funded by our Council.</p> <p>It's lazy accountancy to put such a small sum ahead of the social good for some of the most vulnerable residents.</p> <p>The RAGC needs to be kept open to provide opportunities for those that have limited opportunities in life due to their disabilities. The RAGC is a safe space for them with experienced staff who genuinely care for them. It's also a place where they can come and socialise which is very important since it is the only social network that they have. It's highly unlikely that they will get another job or opportunity to volunteer at a place that provides such opportunities.</p> <p>I believe the figures provided in the report are inaccurate. When members of staff asked for the accurate figures we received no response.</p> <p>This was a valuable resource for the community and a wonderful place to visit.</p> <p>The activities proposed for the centre's volunteers are totally unsuitable.</p> |
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| They Council come up with the most hideous ideas which just don't work. They are just clutching at straws to find different ways of operating it.  |
| The RAGC has been providing a safe space for young vulnerable adults since 2003, to develop skills and make friends. I think it was Gandhi who said, 'The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members' - and I think that this is an excellent example of that. We have a responsibility to those who are most vulnerable in our borough. Allowing this service to continue also delivers wider benefits - improved health and well-being for members, and volunteers, and respite for families means a reduction in costs for the NHS, as well as providing a service for the community through growing beautiful plants.   |
| This is an important service to be maintained.   |
| The vulnerable adults who attend on a daily basis have been devastated with this news, and the impact it has on their mental health and wellbeing is very upsetting to see. It would be a real shame if our vulnerable adults reverted back to the way they were before joining the RAGC.  |
| RAGC is vital to the community and to the young people who work/volunteer there. It provides sanctuary and support. The alternatives suggested by the council are not suitable for neurodivergent people at all.   |
| This should continue to be a place for adults with special needs/ learning difficulties to flourish and interact with the wider community.   |
| It provides an essential service for those people who work there, giving them opportunities and purpose.   |
| The alternative suggestions made will not provide safe and meaningful 'jobs'.  |
| The RAGC is clearly a vital resource in our local community of Hillingdon, used by people who truly benefit from what is being offered to them. It should not be closed. There does not appear to be any other similar facilities being offered to replace it, so why close it in the first place? This safe environment, connecting people with autism and/or learning disabilities with nature provides a place of calm, peace, learning, confidence and communication. It has been in our local community since 1981. That's over 40 years of people who have benefited. Why is closing this centre even being considered? It is shameful and the decision-makers should be ashamed of themselves. Keep the RAGC open. Please. Just talk to the people who use it to understand why this is a priority. |
| The RAGC was always, and remains, a social enterprise. The retail element of the site was a means of funding the running of the social enterprise and minimising the cost of provision to the council. Removing this funding has increased the cost to the council of providing this service. I would like to emphasise the council will need to continue to fund social care for the users of the service irrespective of where or how this is provided.  |
| Over 44 years RAGC has built up a respected reputation for the benefit it provides for its users. How long will it take to provide similar support in the Civic Centre or other environment?   |
| RAGC is a wonderful place for volunteers and staff and cannot be replicated anywhere else. It can also be made a profitable site.  |



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| <p>"Putting our Residents First"</p> <p>Does this not include those with disabilities?</p> <p>Why break up a community that works hard to achieve their best?</p> <p>It supports pupils and students from local schools and colleges to achieve their best too.</p> <p>The well established (40yrs plus) RAGC serves those with additional needs, in a safe environment.</p> <p>The community has enjoyed, at their expense through tax, the facilities and interaction with the Gardeneers/Volunteers. They have enjoyed the peaceful gardens, though the Council, in the minutes from the 11 September meeting suggest there are many parks in the Borough to enjoy. How close to the RAGC are these parks? As someone with limited mobility, a walk to the RAGC may just be manageable. However, this does not meet the criteria of "Putting the Residents First".</p> <p>What is going to happen to the special needs people working there as well as the staff looking after &amp; caring for them. not to mention the extremely practical of the garden centre where you could go and purchase your plants an obtain knowledge &amp; advise on how to care for them. The whole thing is just very sad &amp; cruel.</p> <p>The councils inability to budget appropriately should not force this burden on to vulnerable residents with limited opportunities.</p> <p>The centre provides the ideal environment for the people with various conditions and levels who work there allowing them to develop self confidence and a feeling of purpose.</p> <p>It's used by many in the community and a place its for families. I cannot see how every community space is being closed.</p> <p>This is a valuable resource for local very disabled people, to improve health, skills and maybe get into work. It's a valuable resource for locals to visit and buy plants, use the cafe too!</p> <p>The financial report is inaccurate. The information being given to the public is misleading. The RAGC provides a service. It is not a business.</p> <p>The proposals are based on inaccurate financial information as Friends of RAGC pointed out to the council. The alternatives to RAGC are unsafe for many of those who attend RAGC. The council has not carried out any consultation in developing these proposals and the current consultation is flawed as pointed out to a member of staff who said he would respond shortly to the points made to him on 29th August 2025, but he has still not responded, suggesting he realises the consultation is improper.</p> <p>The alternative is not appropriate for the gardeners. It does not provide a safe or rural environment.</p> <p>The Council and Cabinet have not looked all options to keep the RAGC open.</p> <p>RAGC has been a valuable source if support for our students.</p> <p>This is such a valuable resource for some of our most vulnerable residents. Giving them a purpose, improving their self-esteem and some independence and self worth. Teaching them new skills and help with skills they struggle with, why oh why would a council remove it. The council should be holding it up as an excellent model for encouraging and helping or vulnerable residents.</p> <p>This can't be a massive cost. Mostly it's run by volunteers.</p> <p>Object to depriving vulnerable people who have used this facility of use in the future. The alternative of providing a facility at the Civic Centre would not be of the same quality.</p> <p>Totally unsuitable for the volunteers to have a meaningful future.</p> <p>Wellbeing and welfare of the volunteers will not be maintained.</p> <p>I think the council could of done more to make the retail side of the centre a success, by not closing the cafe that was very popular with people from far and wide coming there, this brought more people</p> |
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| into the garden centre to buy plants etc and to enjoy the grounds. They have stopped using it for adult and community learning which again lowered the numbers coming through the gates and have not allowed the people who use the centre or support it any time to redress any of the councils concerns before the decision to close it. This was an underhand decision by the council. |
| The centre provides vital services. In other areas such centres are well supported.   |

# **10. Can you suggest an alternative option that would allow services to continue to be provided on the RAGC site without council financial support?**

## **All Comments**

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| Don't close the garden centre.  |
| Council needs to budget for it.   |
| Allow a charity to take over. Allow the cafe to reopen without the restriction of only a years lease which I believe is the current option.   |
| No.   |
| Put it out to tender.   |
| Yes many.   |
| Go fund<br>Local community fund<br>Private fund.  |
| Yes. Open the retail outlet and let an independent business take over the running of it at realistic prices. It's not as if they would have to pay the volunteers is it?  |
| Hopefully the RAGC will be saved by a caring comment.   |
| More community involvement - grants/money raising strategies.   |
| Sports club sponsorship.  |
| N/A.  |
| No.   |
| The council needs to continue providing financial support.  |
| Look for a business to support the service as part of their charitable giving. I'm Sure there is a cafe type busy that could open at the site that would provide funding to run the service.<br>Allow the service to plant flowers to be used by the borough instead of buying them.<br>Change the way the Hillingdon magazine is distributed I'm sure 90% of it goes in people's bin without being read - this is a waste of money and has an impact on our footprint. Stop providing free services to those that don't need it. I'm sure the council could find a number of ways to save money with seriously impacting the community. I'm not fully aware of all the projects that government have planned but these should be reviewed first. |
| A charity to take it over? A small contribution?  |
| Options could include: Team building activities for local companies, accessible activities for local schools, tie this in with national curriculum. Local artists could have units on site like pop ups. Horticulture Therapy could be offered. Urban vegetable growing, Pollinator projects. Garden outreach projects. Environmental education.  |
| SEND Residents are extremely Vulnerable and need our Council's Financial Support. Possibly try a Charity with a strong Funded History.  |
| The alternative not charging residents would be to run it as a charity and raise funds to run the centre.   |

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| Do some marketing to raise awareness to bring in more revenue. Bring back the Cafe that was so popular and brought people there to enjoy the surroundings.   |
| I don't think so. All alternatives would be too expensive.   |
| You should look into other Horticultural Therapy organisations such as THRIVE who could take over the running of it. Why should the council stop funding the site. There are a large number of people using it. It improves their physical and mental health. This will save the council money. You need to fund it.   |
| An opportunity to set up this place as an Asset of Community Value would give the residents an opportunity or a group to take over the running of the space. There is so much that can be done here to improve how a community can work together. it could be a centre of excellence and look to the current staff to reopen the space.  |
| Get your local community involved in funding options and making it a non profit or social enterprise there are so many options that could make it even better and to bring back the cafe. I am looking at building a business plan for a social and mental health site with a cafe etc along with what is already on the site.   |
| No, and I shouldn't have to. This is an entirely appropriate use of council funds. People who don't suck recognise that and are happy for their taxes to be spent on things like this. The only other thing I can suggest is that our government introduces a wealth tax to help pay for important services like this.   |
| The RAGC supporters along with the local community should be allowed to explore options to enable it to set up a service themselves. This could include sponsorship. This service must kept open in order to continue its excellent work in helping young vulnerable people.   |
| Friends of RAGC have submitted their proposals.  |
| Retail it as a commercial garden centre but advertising it properly across the whole of Hillingdon. Use it for education purpose and charge a fee like you do with adult education.  |
| Yes! Keep it open to the public so they can spend their money there!!  |
| Allow supporters of the RAGC time to raise funding to reinstate the cafe, the garden centre complete with greenhouses. Now that many more people in the borough are aware of the plight of the RAGC I think support will be forthcoming.   |
| The council should find funding from somewhere else.   |
| Yes if there had been due to notice then the Council could have reviewed a range of alternative funding models such as a Social Enterprise months/years ago but this knee jerk decision has left everyone with no option. It is just a cynical timeframe so the centre can be closed and sold off for flats to plug the Council's financial black hole.  |
| As stated previously it is a unique environment which has been built over 30 years or more, from an empty plot to what it has now become through hard work. Difficult to suggest an alternative which offers such benefits.  |
| I suggest using some of the revenue from Heathrow airport to be spent on improvements at RAGC. Their plants could be used to enhance the visual impact of LHR to our visitors.   |
| It needs to explore the social enterprise route and look at other models and see how they perform.   |
| Local partnerships with local businesses, grants and contributions from users families.  |
| Get sponsorship to keep RAGC open and renew and update facilities. Charge service users for using the facilities. Let other charities use the premises.  |
| Please see 5 above. Initially there would need to be a proper assessment of the minimal adaptations needed to enable the site to conform to current health and safety standards. I believe it should be possible to raise at least part of this cost from an appeal to the community, perhaps in return for financial supporters being named in a book or on a plaque at the Centre. There are many examples of this model working where there is strong feeling within a community. Presumably a relocation to the Civic Centre would involve some capital injection from the council. That money would be much better spent on improving what is already there and well-established at RAGC. |

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| National lottery grant application or sponsorship from other likeminded organisations or businesses to allow the continued operation of the RAGC. I understand it's a financial strain, but the return you get through supporting the community and giving individuals a sense of worth, purpose and supporting their positive mental wellbeing is invaluable and should not be overlooked, considering the RAGC has been operational and supporting those individuals for 40+ years.   |
| It's a service that is essential. Not necessarily self financing. It is respite for these families too.   |
| Continued sponsorships, Support from local authorities / local businesses, fundraising, donations, flyers, social media.  |
| There are so many ways the RAGC can bring in revenue that's not being pursued.  |
| <p>1. It should not be know as a HIDDEN gem. It should be marketed and advertised so all in Hillingdon and the surrounding area know it's there and the beauty it provides in addition to many other services so they will go there.</p> <p>2. Corporate sponsorships. There are many large companies that the RAGC has orders with who could sponsor the RAGC in exchange for their product to me highlighted and endorsed. This is a very successful business model.</p> <p>3. Events. The RAGC could host events there for companies, private parties, wedding parties etc. The surroundings are beautiful and there is ample parking.</p> <p>4. There are many other items that can be sold that are not even known. The aviary is full of beautiful canaries for one that are increasing dramatically in number and could be sold as well as an aviary experience sold as they are amazingly tame when being fed. This is just one of many.</p> <p>5. Gardening advice. The. People who work there provide advice on plants that are not doing well. This could be advertised to get people in. And then advice on garden layout and where to place plants in gardens for them to flourish could be another service that could be paid for as well as landscaping advice.</p> <p>6. Contribution boxes at the RAGC so visitors can donate towards the upkeep.</p> <p>7. Advertise Friends of the RAGC website so that people can donate online.</p> <p>8. Cafe. The Cafe site is a wonderful area with seats by a waterfall and in many very calm beauty spots it's a site that would be sought after as a commercial venture as it could do incredibly well if the RAGC was advertised.</p> <p>9. Banners should be placed outside as I doubt people even notice it as they drive by. This would get visitors to the area to stop for coffee, food, beautiful surroundings, plants, advice, event ideas, the aviary tour etc etc.</p> <p>10. A visitor centre with souvenirs, cards, and other items.</p> <p>These are just off the top of my head...</p> |
| So many more people know about the RAGC now. With help in advertising it might well do so much better than before.  |
| Open the coffee shop.   |
| The council should contribute financially to show that it's not just all about money.   |

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| Let the gardens be run as a charity with rent being paid to the council for the land - which was originally gifted to them.   |
| Reopening of the shop and cafe to create money to help pay for the site.  |
| As above, get lottery funds.  |
| Plenty of communal garden/green areas owned by the council where gardening could take place. Roundabouts etc, Civic Centre, by local libraries.   |
| The amount of financial support is minimal really given what the RAGC gave back to the community. As I said before its all just a whitewash from Hillingdon Council.  |
| I would volunteer to help the staff and clients.  |
| Perhaps the RAGC could survive with user donations. Social care for adults is means-tested anyway, so why not do the same here?   |
| Maybe the RAGC could be tasked with growing food only which can then be used at food banks. The field to the rear of the RAGC would be perfect for this. This would also provide plenty of work for the adults and provide food for people who are struggling.  |
| Allow them to have a business manager, reopen the cafe, utilise the selling season, rent out the field - open space - to schools for camping experiences or local events.   |
| Allow private business to operate it. There are no garden centres locally that offer such a worthwhile service and if the tearooms were reopened they would invite even more trade.   |
| Maybe set up another tea shop and continue to sell the plants and wonderful plant boxes.  |
| Become a charity or a co-operative.   |
| No but having worked with SEND families in education, this is exactly the kind of opportunity that SEND adults need to give their lives purpose and occupation and which should be funded as a priority by the council.   |
| Local businesses support or donations.  |
| The RAGC could support itself if it was given the chance to prove that, you have never asked RAGC to support itself or show that it could.  |
| I also feel that people in the area of Hillingdon would not mind at all if a 50p charge was put on council tax to cover the loss the council is claiming they have for RAGC.  |
| Let RAGC prove they can do it alone, do not just close the door and chuck the key even if you are hiding bankruptcy and wish to sell the land for income.   |
| Yes.  |
| Yes, open the cafe, it's run purely by volunteers, let it carry on bro NG run by volunteers. Make money in the produce they grow, the plants they grow. There are many ways to make money from the garden centre to keep it open. And although I have a very tight budget, 11 pence a year to keep it open, I'm sure no council tax payer would disagree to that! |
| Get the cafe reopened, find private investors for funding.  |
| Increase council tax.   |
| Use it more ! Review use & marketing.   |
| The Council can buy the plants from the Centre to use in the green areas that they service therefore reducing costs of buying elsewhere. More advertising of what is sold and the Tea Room  |
| Retail on both selling plants and coffee shop to generate income via lease.   |

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| I would suggest that the council prioritises works that actually need to happen and essential services.   |
| In Yiewsley alone, contracts have been given to OHara to rip out kilometres of existing footpaths and kerbs that are perfectly fine. How much is wasted on this and where else is it happening?   |
| Some work from the council on investigating fly tippers and serial littering, issuing fines would either reduce the behaviour or raise funds from fines. There are plenty of cameras in the area but no people to survey them   |
| Maybe maintaining things through regular inspections and repairs rather than letting things go to a state of disrepair and then replacing with new would be better value to the taxpayers.  |
| Pursuing the 1000s of people who haven't paid their council tax is another way of raising funds.  |
| By looking into local company's help crowd funding and using charitable organisations such as proceeds of crime which I'm sure would contribute.  |
| To obtain other sources of funding to allow the service to continue as it did, and improve the marketing of the retail aspect that was at the site encourage more income from the sale of plants etc. It has much more potential.   |
| I've heard that the centre could be used by adults studying horticulture and paying for their courses.  |
| Refresh the role of the garden centre and expand the things that are sold.  |
| Given all the financial data and support I'm sure that a suitable model could be established - the cynical decision to close without the time to do this shows a lack of understanding by the cabinet members of what the role of a local authority should be.  |
| At least attempt to put the running of both the restaurant and centre out for tender to see if anyone can put forward a business case.  |
| We have been trying since July to put together an alternative funding model which would remove the financial responsibility from the council. Regrettably the council has not provided the financial information which we requested to assist us in developing the plan. We will nevertheless offer an alternative and will present it to the council in due course.                                  |
| Answer the RAGC's questions and allow them the numbers and time.  |
| Sponsorship from local companies.   |
| See the answer above.   |
| Yes there are options but why wouldn't the council want to support this?  |
| Not really.   |
| Create a cooperative.   |
| Sadly not.  |
| I'm afraid I'm not able to.   |
| Keep the services and reopen the café, improve publicity, including prominent advertising outside the site (including commercial adverts). Secure sponsorship from local companies and use the parking space to offer chargeable secure parking outside the hours when the centre is closed. Link to local parks and promote the centre's horticultural excellence and value for money to park users. |
| Keep it open and look for private funding or give it to someone who actually cares about people's lives Stop cutting services to save your own skins!!!   |
| Offer it to the volunteers to run themselves.   |
| Open up to the general public and make a non profit business to help support itself or at least give them a chance.   |
| I fail to see why the council is not providing financial support. Maybe you could put up a few less flags and spend the money on the RAGC?  |

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| I believe that there should be council support for such a service and budgets on other areas should be reviewed, additionally allow time for this to be set up and a charitable cause and allow time for fund to be raised, whilst the council covers rent and rates the cost of the carers and the running costs, mainly voluntary could be covered by the retail being managed and costed appropriately.   |
| Allow them to find funding themselves and keep the location.   |
| Offer the funding to a private organisation, look at other funded groups in the Borough that could have reduced funding.   |
| No.  |
| Alternative funding scheme.  |
| I understand an alternative financial model is being prepared and time should be given to allow it to be explored.   |
| Where?   |
| Thinking about this!   |
| Probably not but why should the council not support it financially?  |
| Anyway a more comprehensive analysis might well show it saves money.   |
| Stop funding migrants hotels.  |
| Increase publicity and raise money via charities etc   |
| Firstly ask the public if they are happy for public funds to be used as I'm sure many people would prefer this to other council spending. But I'm sure there could be a community group set up and either some kind of monthly subscription or donations. Bring back the cafe and make it profitable, it's a good site where people would come, it was previously restricted due to its opening hours but even if it just opened at weekends and a few days during the week, people would come. Ask Rusty Bike how they run theirs which is not for profit and mostly run by volunteers. |
| Support from schools & local businesses.   |
| Fund raising on a grand scale<br>Monthly donations by the public<br>Lottery Fund.  |
| Perhaps have local or independent sponsors that maybe like to contribute to the RAGC maybe organisations like the national lottery can be an option.   |
| Yes there are fantastic enterprising staff there. They have always been encouraged not to raise a profit and their wares are sold very cheaply. Give them a year of support to let them transition, apply for funding elsewhere.   |
| Reduce council budget for self-publicity which is a waste of money.  |
| Allow them to be a self funding CIC without having unregulated fees laid into their accounts by the Council. If you remove the costs from the balance sheet that are levied for services they don't need or could achieve from other sources at minimal cost the RAGC can easily balance its books.  |
| Charity's lottery sponsors.  |
| No.  |
| Grant to keep coffee shop open and personnel using it to experience work placement.  |
| The council SHOULD be financial supporting the centre. However, the Friends of RAGC are working on an alternative funding model so the centre can remain open with no cost to the council. I would like to suggest that the council engage with the Friends group to support them in this.   |
| Sponsorship, reduced funding, contributions.... but ultimately the council has to provide financial support to this amazing place.   |
| I believe proposals are being made for continuation, but do not know the details.  |
| Consideration of turning the RAGC into a Social Enterprise or putting in place forward looking management capable of suitable development of the site ought to be the first aim of the Council.  |

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| Unfortunately the price of things would have to rise but charity begins at home and the Council should look after their residents first not illegal outsiders that's Government problems.  |
| Continue with the setting they have, but reach out for more local volunteers to help keep this going.  |
| Support the individual because you are obliged to and make it more viable as a retail outlet.<br>Something I believe you let run down.   |
| Let the friends of the centre be spoken & listened to - as there are plenty who would invest in this site so as to keep open.  |
| The friends of RAGC have put forward a number of suggestions.  |
| Seek alternative funding so it is self-sufficient, with any profits being put back into the Centre.  |
| Maybe change users a pound or two on entry or give what they can.  |
| Improve the cafe maybe franchise that part and improve the car park.<br>Run classes but charge more to residents who can afford to pay.<br>I could have paid but was not asked.  |
| There are a number of mental health charities that may give advice if not direct financial support. Council is in a good position to make funding bids to national organisations. RAGC needs strong publicity to capture the attention and financial support from local people. RAGC needs to make contact with similar horticultural or occupational groups across the UK to lobby for national funding for adult occupational special needs. |
| Set it up as a Social Enterprise.  |
| Discuss the 'Friends' proposals.   |
| I am sure there would be enough people with ability to fundraise that could keep the site open. Opening a cafe would also prove very popular and this would draw people in.  |
| Increasing the cost of the items sold could possibly be one way.   |
| Find a partner organisation. Chorleywood managed to do it for their cricket clubhouse.   |
| The council should work collaboratively with the Friends of RAGC, who are already exploring a viable alternative funding model that would allow the centre to operate without ongoing council financial support.   |
| This could include a combination of the following:   |
| Partnerships with local charities or social enterprises that specialize in disability services, horticulture therapy, or community wellbeing.  |
| Grant funding from national or regional bodies focused on inclusion, mental health, and green spaces (e.g. The National Lottery, Social Investment Fund, or DEFRA's Green Social Prescribing initiatives).   |
| A community-run model with support from volunteers, local businesses, and fundraising campaigns – this has worked for similar centres across the country.  |
| Income-generating activities such as plant sales, workshops, garden rentals, or café facilities – all of which could reinvest profits into maintaining services.   |
| Long-term leasing or asset transfer of the site to a not-for-profit group, allowing independence from council budgets while safeguarding the purpose and mission of the site.  |
| This centre has immense social value, and with the right support and flexibility from the council, a self-sustaining future is possible without sacrificing the wellbeing of the vulnerable people it serves.  |
| Get rid of the Labour Party as they are withdrawing money from the most vulnerable in our society ie: disabled and elderly.  |

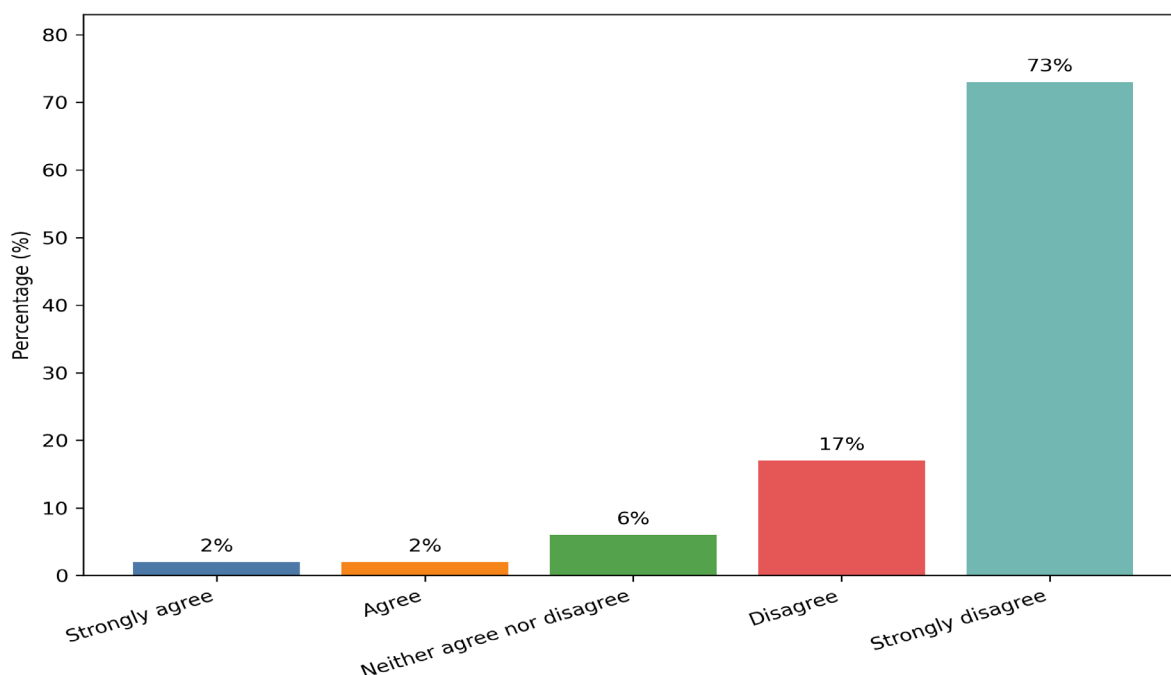


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| No sorry.   |
| The council could engage colleges and organisations like Capel Manor College, Merrist Wood College, the Bedford College Group etc to see if they would be willing to take on responsibility for the site to enable them to offer apprenticeships and training primarily targeted as the current service users, focused on offering them Horticulture Operative standard opportunities                     |
| Enquire with charities, perhaps the RHS would help.   |
| No, this should be council led as a valuable asset.   |
| Eliminate some of the many council staff paid over £100000 a year to pay for the Centre and other useful services.  |
| Save money elsewhere. For instance, look into value for money of consultants and in particular agency staff employed by the council in such areas as finance and HR.  |
| For the council to consider other places that could shut that wouldn't put such a vulnerable group of adults in difficult position.   |
| My colleague is currently putting a business plan together to include all of our ideas as a staff team. We believe that people who use the service at the RAGC should be charged, to provide a revenue. The retail side to continue and be increased to provide more produce and plants. Amalgamation of the Green Spaces team with RAGC to increase productivity around the borough.                     |
| Charitable donations and improved opportunities for the retail facility to generate supporting revenue; such as local advertising and wider community awareness.  |
| Leave it to the staff and volunteers at RAGC who know best as they work and volunteer there. I am sure they will come up with the best ideas that doesn't involve Council financial support.  |
| To keep the garden centre where it is.  |
| I understand an alternative cost-neutral plan has been proposed to the council. I would like to know whether the council has been supporting the centre through purchasing plants that are grown there, for use throughout the Borough?   |
| Can private contributions, through branding, marketing or other that can be explored?   |
| Become a social enterprise, get taken over by a charity or get sponsorship.   |
| By continuing to allow the sale of plants to the wider community.   |
| Donations from the public?  |
| As Staff, we are aware of other social enterprises (whether cio/cic/charity) that are self-funding and would ask for an appropriate period of time for self-funding options to be fully explored before any further decisions are taken regarding the RAGC. This is in effect Option 2C from the report submitted to the Cabinet on the 26th June   |
| Seek local grants and ask for donations. I know of many people and firms who will donate.   |
| Support organisations who submit applications to run the RAGC.  |
| Look at the local sector ie "exploring alternative models of operation that would allow the RAGC to continue without financial cost to the council" As per XXX and many other Cllrs say in correspondence.  |
| WHAT HAS THE COUNCIL DONE TO ADDRESS THIS?  |
| Perhaps we could fund raise to make up for the short fall.  |
| Revoke support of asylum seekers in London Borough of Hillingdon. Asylum seeker support costs the council £5m since July 2025. Over 5 years ending 31/03/25, the council has experienced a £11.3m funding gap related to asylum support contributing to the councils debt exceeding £16m. Once asylum support is revoked, the council can redirect monies to funding services such as the RAGC that serve |

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| ACTUAL residents of Hillingdon instead illegal free-loaders who arrived uninvited and contribute nothing.  |
| Perhaps a new charity funded by donations could be started.  |
| Pls refer to the friends group. They have ideas/suggestions that would help the local community.   |
| Charge DWP & health services, financial business plan for building resilient service e.g. building local networks/people going there not only to be serviced users but also customers.   |
| No... All council services need financial support.<br>One Option would be to go to charity status.   |
| If the council had responded (as agreed) to provide financial figures for RAGC's operations, Friends of RAGC would likely have been able to progress negotiations with a partner (who we have already met) to lease the land for RAGC and run RAGC in partnership without the need for council support. XXXXX agreed to provide these figures when we met him at the Civic Centre on 31st July 2025 but has failed to provide any of these figures, so we have not been able to progress this.<br>As it is, we do not have sufficient financial information to develop an alternative model for running RAGC but as soon as we get the financial information we can progress this. |
| Run as it is in the local authority supporting everyone who needs to access the service. However also as a Employability training centre for those looking for paid work.  |
| Crowd funding or monetary sponsorship from large local businesses.   |
| Councillors take a 10% pay cut and put that monies towards keeping a valued service provider.  |
| Re open the tea room. Charge providers for the services offered at RAGC. Make it a training provider in its own right  |
| I really don't understand why the council won't support this service. I dare say they'd rather spend potentially more money having to provide other support to the vulnerable individuals in this service. Also if the centre has been providing plants for council to use throughout the borough are you now going to be spending more sourcing them or not other. Allowing the borough to further decline as appears to be happening rapidly.  |
| Crowdfund.   |
| That is the Council's responsibility. Particularly as I recall Cabinet members proudly praising the Centre in the past.  |
| Alternative funding e.g. Charity, Lottery? Cafe reopened which would allow the centre to support themselves.   |
| No   |
| No I believe social activity places should be a priority for the council. Try setting up some charity in other places where people is happy to spend and contribute, but not in the locality.  |
| Allow sponsorship from companies that can support the RAGC. Let community groups use it for meetings, for a rental fee. In the grand scheme of the millions that's is being spent from the council purse on housing migrants the £137, 000 defected that it is claimed was paid by the council tax payers for the site last year, is a drop in the ocean and I would prefer my tax to go towards supporting the vulnerable in the borough.   |
| Fund raising. Rent space to small garden suppliers and crafts people.  |

**11. The council proposes to relocate those attending the site with Adult Social Care Plans to the Civic Centre with new facilities. What is your view of this?**

| Response                   | Count | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly agree             | 4     | 2%             |
| Agree                      | 4     | 2%             |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 12    | 6%             |
| Disagree                   | 33    | 17%            |
| Strongly disagree          | 145   | 73%            |



**12. Please provide any reasons:**

**All Comments**

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| Disgusting.  |
| Does not meet the therapeutic needs of its client group.   |
| Reason as I've stated above. Also, it is not a safe site for them to be in as it has easy access to the shopping centre, the station and main roads. |
| It will not be the horticultural facilities they currently have.   |
| Some of the people cannot travel on their own without help.  |
| Its very difficult for people with constraints to adjust to new areas.   |
| Many of the volunteers need to be in an enclosed and safe environment, not somewhere where they are liable to wander out onto a busy trunk road!     |
| Offering a very unsafe environment. Area known for alcoholics, drugs, isn't that enough.   |
| The civic centre which some have been told they are going to, is not the correct setting for them.   |

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| Why? Where are these facilities?  |
| Certain disabled have issues with change.   |
| The people that are attending the RAGC as you know have learning disabilities/difficulties. As someone who is xxxxx I struggle to find spaces where I feel comfortable and also struggle with change. I believe removing the members from the RAGC could potentially make them feel uncomfortable but also may knock their confidence as they have gotten used to their environment and have built strong relationships with the staff. I don't see this being beneficial or supportive to these individuals. |
| Most of volunteering are local.   |
| As I said in the first place the services are needed in the current location.   |
| This is not the right environment for this service to move to, and feels like it is just a sticking plaster. The civic centre is a busy and noisy area and is not suitable for those with additional needs.   |
| The Civic Centre is just another indoor building not conducive to improved mental health. At the RAGC people have the opportunity to learn life skills in an environment that is unparalleled in the borough. not conducive to.   |
| Too Corporate. Too large. Safeguarding.   |
| The purpose is to have wild open plan not to force residents to come to town to experience the wild life.   |
| It's a ludicrous poorly thought out plan that will provide very little work for very few volunteer vulnerable adults. It's absolutely no exchange for what the RAGC offers. Whoever has put this forward is ignorant of or deliberately ignoring what the RAGC is and offers everyone who benefits, from the workers to the general public.   |
| My xxx is on the xxxx and works best in a structured environment, with clear instructions.  |
| Due to xxxx being xxx he should be ok going to the civic centre, however younger people wouldn't have the benefit of the garden centre  |
| It is a token response. The majority of people using the site need a base to go to feel safe and secure. You write stuff thinking you know what is good for them. You do not know. You have no interest in the wellbeing of these adults. Your plans lacks any respect for the community that has been created at the RAGC. You need to preserve communities that promote cohesion, inclusivity, mental health and physical health.   |
| How will this be managed as obviously a lot of change for those involved and measuring the effectiveness of this change.  |
| A calm environment is needed not somewhere like the civic.  |
| The Civic Centre has zero capacity for a garden centre.   |
| Not enough space for vulnerable adults to carry out their duties. Very unsafe   |
| The safety of vulnerable adults would be compromised. Also, no enclosed safe sense of community. Many vulnerable adults cannot cope with unpredictability and change.   |
| The civic centre is completely unsuitable for this as it's not safe, no fencing to protect vulnerable users, very noisy as it's next to a dual carriageway, unsuitable for people with sensory issues. Very uneven surfaces and steps unsuitable for people with mobility issues.   |
| They feel safe and secure there. They have a good rapport with the staff who look after their needs and they confined in them with some of their concerns and issues.   |
| That option isn't like for like or for purpose. If responses that have been received already you will see why take account.   |
| The civic centre is the most uninspiring place I can think of.  |
| There is nowhere near the same space there and this centralises more and more facilities and removes a community asset from Cowley when there's little in the area already.   |
| As stated previous, a classroom environment is far less beneficial.   |

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| Brick desert on a busy roundabout. No room for pond, chickens' , wildlife, fresh air, or the visitors who relish a trip to buying something for their own garden or window box.  |
| The Civic centre is unsuitable and is seen as running the service down and then closing it completely. The RAGC provides a service for so many people within the borough.  |
| It's a complete waste of time and will not in any way replicated RAGC but maybe this is the reason for the move. RAGC is on Green Belt land and is unlikely to be able to be used for any other purpose.   |
| Plans of the new facilities have not been shown to us. It sounds like the new scheme will just be looking after flower gardens at the civic rather than the wide range of plant growing at the RAGC. It will be much less busy with little interaction with the general public.  |
| I do not know who would fall outside of this net - hopefully those on section 117 post-hospital admission aftercare would fall within it, but I am not certain. xxx, for one, is clear that facilities at the Civic Centre will not work for her - being in the centre of Uxbridge will trigger her anxiety. It is too 'busy' and not able to be a peaceful but industrious place like the current RAGC. |
| My understanding is that the site location within the civic centre requires funding to make it operational, whereas RAGC is already established within the community, that funds should be spend on maintaining its operation and upgrading its current structure to maintain safety for the public.   |
| Safety is paramount for these people. How can RAGC be replicated in the Civic Centre?  |
| Civic centre is not a safe space, area does not have the same open quiet, nurturing environment. Poor alternative.   |
| This is a ridiculous plan that is fatally flawed. There will not be enough work for even a small. Percentage of volunteers as well.as not providing social care and a community.. f snooze looks closely at this load of false words the council has come up with, they would see right through this.  |
| The Civic centre is just not appropriate for these Adults. It doesn't compare at all favourably compared to the current site.  |
| Not fit for purpose. Nor like for like.  |
| Concrete!!!  |
| It is not a safe enclosed space and they will be at risk of abuse.   |
| It's not safe for some of the people who attend the RAGC.  |
| Does not look like a safe environment to work.   |
| This sounds like a very good idea, a safe environment and a place to continue the work.  |
| These people need looking after and need stability in their lives. None of what has happened or proposed provides that stability.  |
| Not in the fresh air, learning new skills.   |
| With 'new' facilities? So how is this saving money? XXX was attacked on a bus by a man. XXX did nothing to provoke the attack and had 7 teeth knocked out. How will you safeguard users?   |
| It is not a safe and secure environment - strong safeguarding concerns as our XXX has been assaulted before on public transport. We have no had consultation to explain these proposals.   |
| The Civic Centre is not safe to allow vulnerable people to work there. Even with supervision they are at risk of bullying and ridicule by the general public and the actual building and grounds is not calming at all. The unpredictable nature of the environment at the CC is just not safe.  |
| It's not a safe space. It's indoor and the service users and volunteers currently have a fabulous space.   |
| The site does not come close to providing same kind of environment as the current site.  |
| This is not a like for like Facility.  |
| Why would you fund the move / new facilities when the RAGC site is perfect and already in existence. Surely the cost of the move and new facilities will also require council funding. Familiarity and consistency enable the SEND volunteers to feel safe and confident - change can be distressing and scary.  |

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| Totally inappropriate location would not have the same feel. Location is far too busy with traffic and exposed. Noise and busy road would likely cause distress. Would be total unnecessary cost to put in place when there is a perfectly suitable location where it currently located  |
| There is no way that the people who attend RAGC can work in the environment of the Civic Centre, these people are shy, some very nervous, some withdrawn, you are throwing them to the lions, these workers can grow and supply all the plants needed by Hillingdon for their lamppost baskets, flowers in the parks, for all Hillingdon's needs from RAGC in West Drayton Road. |
| It's unsuitable. The comparison is a stark one. Not least as any risk assessment have created work on a busy gyratory system as not appropriate.   |
| The civic centre cannot possibly provide the same as the garden centre. This is preposterous to even suggest this could be the same.   |
| The site cannot be replicated. Nature like this cannot be moved. They feel safe there and secure. Their needs cannot be met appropriately in the civic centre. They have all they need at the rural activity centre. It's exactly how they need it. They don't need alternative provision; they want the status quo.   |
| Civic centre is red brick eye sore & expensive to run /keep change structurally - get the listed building status removed.  |
| Accessibility and the disruption and distress this will obviously cause current and long term volunteers who often do not cope at all well with change.  |
| This is a current established setting that is familiar, the civic is not fit for purpose and disruptive.   |
| Why should people need to relocate and travel to another facility when this is perfectly fine.   |
| As the site is not fenced in the council would have to provide more staff to care for them. Thereby defeating the object of saving money.  |
| It is not an equivalent facility in a safe environment.  |
| As stated above. The people I know who attend RAGC need to be supervised in a secure environment. I believe the Civic Centre is a more open environment with the public passing by. Customers who were visiting the centre would have been more sympathetic to the needs of the service users.   |
| There will be no retail side and the I believe that volunteers benefit from working in that environment.   |
| It has taken years to build this worthy facility and just weeks of poor decision making to rip it apart - not something cabinet members should be proud of.  |
| Can they seriously replicate the experience of working in the centre where they meet the public.   |
| The site is wholly unsuitable for our son. There does not appear to have been any risk assessment of the proposed site which is full of steps, by a busy main road and not self-contained. It will also present risks from potentially angry/violent members of the public who are visiting the civic centre.  |
| I want to stay at RAGC.  |
| Planters at the civic centre surrounded by concrete are not the same as outdoor space surrounded by greenery.  |
| Need to access outside space.  |
| People have been learning Horticultural skills at the Centre, which, I doubt, could be replicated at the Civic Centre.   |
| You are misleading and there won't be good opportunities there. It will be too close to a dual carriageway and not enough garden space.  |
| New facilities being offered are not suitable and do not compare with the excellent provision at RAGC.   |
| A lot of the volunteers are vulnerable and they could end up in dangerous situations- will the council be responsible for incidents that happen at the placement?  |
| The facility is useless and with the high level of public throughflow this is damaging to potential users.   |
| The centre is well established to provide acre to the community. By moving the centre one changes the dynamics making it less effective.   |

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| The RAGC is s controlled, managed space for vulnerable people. The Civic Centre is open and scary.  |
| The RAGC is a special location. An oasis on the edge of the built up area where people can escape the urban hubub.  |
| It is not a safe environment for service users, absolutely nothing like the current centre that has been used for many years, and is not a long term option, just a side thought because you had to say something as if you had given it some thought!!! Which clearly you haven't. |
| They are likely to be split into very small groups in a noisy environment unlike the RAGC which is a peaceful place.  |
| It's not the same and you know it! What is wrong with Hillingdon.   |
| The safety of the vulnerable adults - the civic centre is not enclosed and is surrounded by the bypass. Totally unsuitable.   |
| The council just want to use this ground to make money the size and acreage of the current site are ideal the new proposal reduces this considerably.   |
| The volunteers and users have been here for years and are happy. The disruption and change will be detrimental to all involved.   |
| This is a rural setting away from Uxbridge.   |
| This is a built up area and not a place for vulnerable people. Uxbridge is now a place where you even have to be careful to have your phone in your hand.   |
| Gardening should be outdoors in a rural setting not at such a horrible building in a town!  |
| What are the facilities, are they suitable for all disabilities, us there enough space to allow freedom of movement and space for a quire.  |
| The Civic Centre is not an appropriate site for many of those people due to its position close to the dual carriageway.   |
| Why relocate people who are happy where they are?   |
| Many worked here for years. Very unsettling for them.   |
| Whilst some people might be happy at a new venture at the Civic, the two are fundamentally not like for like. The Civic is not a semi-rural enclosed site. Some people would not be safe on a site with unrestricted public access next to an unfenced dual carriageway the other.  |
| I can't get there unless blue badge parking is offered. Or let us park under the building!!   |
| It makes no sense.  |
| Not a secure area, unsafe. Getting them to do council jobs, not very fair on the volunteers. Doubt many people would want to send their loved ones to such an environment.  |
| Parking.  |
| Totally unsuitable for staff with disabilities.   |
| It's a terrible idea and not a healthy area to be relocate to with all the toxic fumes from all the vehicles and not a peaceful area.   |
| The staff have developed skill and community. You can't just 'move that'. Also the centre is performing a service to the public and has been so successful at inclusivity and diversity.  |
| Proposal is not an equal or suitable alternative.   |
| The alternative provision is mere lip service and a smokescreen. It bears no resemblance to the RAGC provision and is also for only a small percentage of existing users.   |
| The rural garden centre is a community and a chance to engage with the public in a normal work environment.   |
| Don't believe the council would be able to replicate what was previously offered.   |
| Everything is going to civic centre. It would not work at the civic centre people would not visit a garden centre cafe in the middle of town.   |

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| This is a dedicated safe external space. It is not appropriate to relocate them to the Civic Centre. We need activities in different locations around our large borough to be near the people that need them.  |
| It is not like for like. It will not offer or provide the same opportunities.  |
| Horticultural work could not be provided there and is a particularly beneficial.   |
| The proposed alternative arrangement cannot fully replace the wonderful and unique service the RAGC provides and such an alternative doesn't appear to be thought through and in a longer term seems likely to fail.   |
| Why should they have to relocate to a worse environment there is only so much they could do with flower beds outside the Civic Centre and is the council trying to do this by making people redundant in there gardening dept using these volunteers from RAGC.  |
| This setting would be too overwhelming for many of those who attend and would not offer the same support.  |
| Due care and attention should say it all. These people will NOT have a safe environment.   |
| Some need to have stability & sending to the civic centre is not the answer  |
| Due to the openness of the CC location, it would not provide the secure support and family feel for the volunteer workers and the now dismissed visitors.  |
| The soul of RAGC, which is an essential part of the Centre for the users, will disappear.  |
| The civic centre has just moved the library there and it's not great, the actual building is not fit for most users who needs are to be outside in fresh air, not place on top of each other were you cannot move around without bumping into people, most people are suffering with anxiety after COVID so being place inside will do more harm than good and the centre will not last, but I guess that's why the council wants.   |
| It's an urban environment and lacking in the peace and tranquillity many volunteers need. Peace and tranquillity that the volunteer.   |
| The present site has wildlife interest and is a fresh air space, the Civic Centre is a concrete jungle.  |
| Site needs to remain open.   |
| An uncontrollable and impersonal venue for those already impacted by life-long mental conditions that could all too easily be made worse. made worse.  |
| The Civic Centre area is much too busy and not calming.  |
| The centre is a home to those that use the facility, the civic centre is a place of business. Not appropriate.   |
| They lose the sense of community.  |
| It is not a secure area.   |
| Council proposals are not in line with needs.  |
| It would be too noisy and intimidating for some people with certain needs, especially those requiring a quiet space.   |
| I assume that the Civic Centre will not give those attending it with the ability to learn and grow as they currently have - it will simply be a place for them to go without learning a usual tool such as gardening/growing plants.   |
| Only if they are happy to do so and it doesn't affect their health.  |
| I strongly oppose this proposal. The Civic Centre is an entirely inappropriate replacement for the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC). The RAGC offers a peaceful, therapeutic, and natural environment that supports the mental and physical wellbeing of people with disabilities. Replacing it with a space surrounded by concrete, traffic, and urban noise at the Civic Centre shows a complete lack of understanding of the needs of these individuals. The suggested alternative does not replicate the unique benefits of the RAGC. It strips away the opportunities for outdoor activity, meaningful horticultural work, and the calming environment that many service users rely on. For people with sensory needs, mental health challenges, or physical disabilities, this could be distressing and even harmful. This is not a like-for-like relocation – it is a downgrade, and an unacceptable one. I urge the |

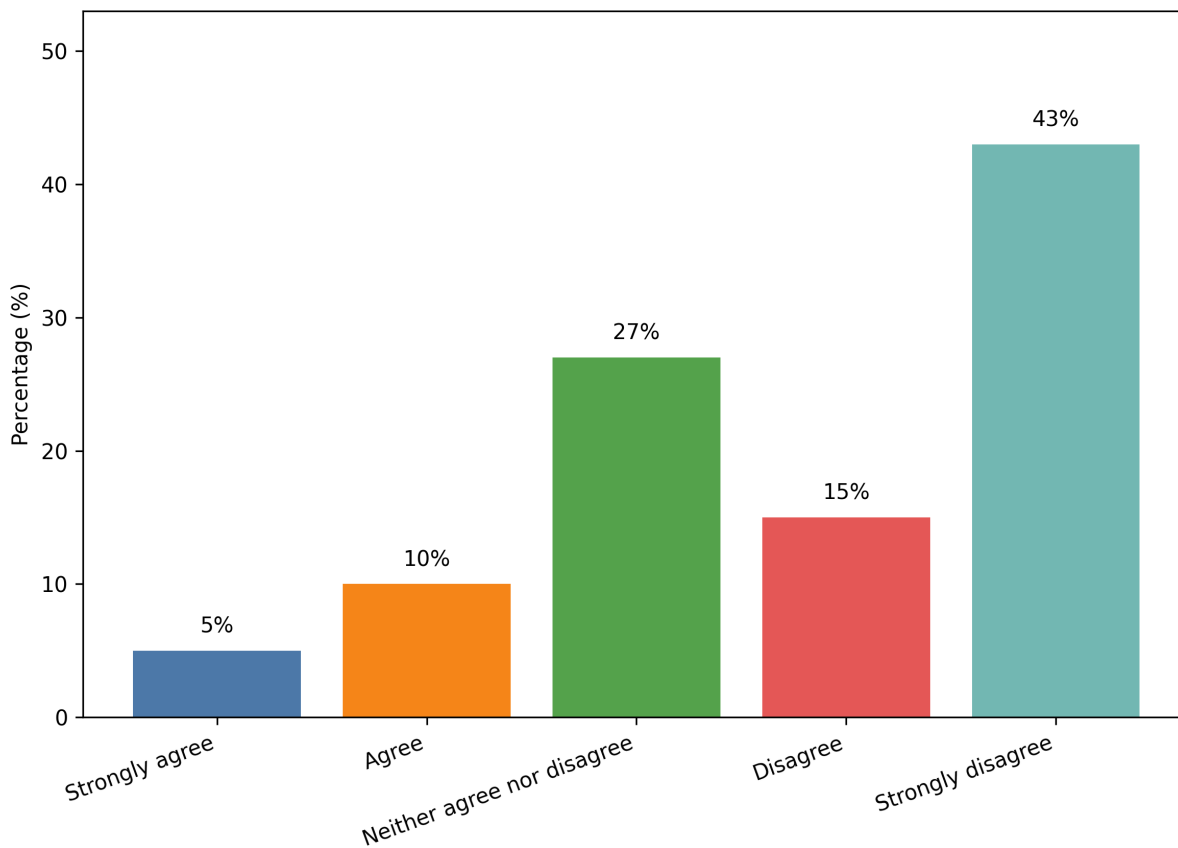


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| council to abandon this proposal and instead work with the community to find ways to keep services running at the RAGC site, where they are genuinely effective and valued.   |
| Uxbridge is becoming a rough area and I feel these vulnerable adults would be at risk of bullying and the whole Pont of the RAGC is the tranquillity and peace where some of the adults would struggle with the noise and built-up area of the civic centre.  |
| Just keep it going.   |
| Would be better to relocate to multiple Council locations including local libraries (with green spaces) to help those with mobility challenges benefit service users.   |
| It is not a safe enclosed space. The workers need to be able to do useful work.   |
| Where in the civic centre is there the same amount of space available.  |
| Keep them doing useful work.  |
| It's not fit for purpose.   |
| The civic centre is not a safe space - no cameras. There are also needles from drug users - NOT a safe space for anyone to work let alone those with learning difficulties.   |
| The proposed site would provide less varied work and less opportunities for community integration. The hazards of the proposed site e.g. its current use by misusers of drugs and alcohol make it an unsuitable location for use by vulnerable adults.  |
| These are totally unsuitable.   |
| It's unethical. The Civic Centre is not a good place - it is a busy area and very close to the main road.   |
| The civic centre is difficult to get to.  |
| The current location provides health benefits through working outside with and in nature. This would not be possible in the Civic Centre.   |
| This will not offer the same kind of outdoor activities.  |
| There is no comparison, the RAGC ticks a lot of boxes with what we have on site to offer vulnerable adults, colleges, schools and the hiring out of our classroom. The majority of our vulnerable adults are unable to read and therefore the library has no benefit for them. The civic centre is based in the high street and will make most of our vulnerable adults feel even more vulnerable and causing them to be anxious. |
| Not suitable for neurodivergent people.   |
| Not a suitable environment for attendees.   |
| No suitable facilities at the civic centre to provide equivalent opportunities.   |
| As in 9 above.  |
| I'm not aware the Civic Centre has any growing spaces for service users to grow anything.   |
| The users of the RAGC are vulnerable and do not react well to major changes in their lives. The move to relocate attendees to other sites needs to take their individual abilities into account. It may prove that an urban centre location will be unsuitable for some of these vulnerable adults.   |
| As above  |
| It's a ridiculous location with very little opportunity. There will be nowhere for volunteers to relax and form a community.  |
| We have grave concerns for our son who has learning difficulties, speech problems and could be easily led by inappropriate adults. The Civic DOES NOT meet the security of the RAGC.  |
| It is a known fact that interacting with nature is good for both the mind & body, particularly where Special Needs people are concerned.  |
| Has a long-term resident of Hillingdon, I have seen Uxbridge decline sharply since the mid 2000's. Frankly speaking, Uxbridge is an embarrassment. It's the council has allowed this neglect to compound year on year. This has resulted in a town which is no longer safe for residents fully able   |

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| and vulnerable alike. Having vulnerable adults working in open public spaces such as the Civic Centre will them open to abuse. For the council to have even considered this as an alternative is insulting and shows how disconnected the council is from everyday people.   |
| I think the environment would not suit them.   |
| No open space. you propose an office building as opposed to an outdoor space. Outdoor helps people mental health, wellbeing and so many other things.  |
| This will destroy the existing team and location. The purpose of what is being offered at the RAGC will be lost forever. This unique setting and the facilities it provides is too good to be destroyed.   |
| The Civic Centre is unsafe for many people receiving horticultural therapy at RAGC for a variety of reasons already pointed out the council, many of which relate to its city centre location which has a high crime rate and its open aspect which is unsafe for vulnerable people with learning difficulties both from the viewpoint of road safety and the ease with which visitors to the Civic Centre (including offenders groups) can approach those with learning difficulties. It also lacks the supportive, community atmosphere of RAGC, with police often dealing with homeless people and drug addicts in and around the Civic Centre. This is not a safe environment for vulnerable people. |
| The Civic centre site is not at all suitable as a permanent base. However, the services needed for the Civic centre can be provided from the RAGC centre.  |
| It is not a safe, spacious, rural, environment where the gardeners and their volunteers can work to nurture plants and their own mental health.  |
| The area suggested is completely inadequate for those presently using the RAGC.  |
| There are 2 supported internships running through the council which would take up most if the placements meaning other students could not access it.   |
| What like the library? Shame on you, what will those services look like, do the council know themselves. Whatever it is it will not be something that allows these individual to experience and feel part of the community and interact with other residents using the facility.   |
| There is tremendous benefit from being outside in the open air.  |
| See answer 5 above.  |
| As already stated in 5.  |
| As stated in 5.  |
| The council need to provide support to a number of families, individuals and they cannot all be placed in one corner of the town, needs to keep activities spread and support options across diverse environments for mental health purposes.  |
| I don't think that it is a safe and secure environment for some of these adults, but all means possible ask them to volunteer to help the parks and gardens team ( with special support) create gardens at the civic centre to match those at the RAGC and help maintain the grounds there, this would help them feel valued and all the plants that are needed round the bough could be grown at the RAGC. as well  |
| The centre provides essential community support to all those attending.  |

**13. The council proposes to signpost volunteers without care plans to wider opportunities that may lead to employment or further training and development. What is your view of this?**

| Response                   | Count | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly agree             | 9     | 5%             |
| Agree                      | 19    | 10%            |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 52    | 27%            |
| Disagree                   | 29    | 15%            |
| Strongly disagree          | 81    | 43%            |



#### 14. Please provide any reasons:

##### All Comments

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| I don't know how you are closing to build houses when there is still plenty near there to build.  |
| Reason as stated above.   |
| What opportunities?   |
| There isn't enough work for able bodied people.   |
| Seems like a reason to let people off.  |
| How do they think the severely handicapped are somehow going to find employment if they haven't managed to already? Honestly get real.  |
| No real care provided, volunteers feel safe, happy and learning and socialising skills at the RAGC. Why take this away from them.   |
| These people need consistency where they feel safe & protected.   |
| Most volunteers do it because they care - they don't necessarily need more paperwork or training - most are of an age whereby they have stopped work of taken early retirement.   |
| Resights cause upheaval and facilities are all ready there so what benefits the move.   |
| I believe that care plans are very important for these individuals as they provide an individualised, consistent pathway for care, ensuring a person's specific needs, preferences, and goals are met. To not have them would not be efficient for these individuals. If you are going to close them down and least provide some sort of stability and security for them by making sure they have care plans.                         |
| Sign posting is not a suitable alternative.   |
| The RAGC. Should be a centre of training excellence. Students used to leave with industry recognised qualifications NPTC's. It also used to offer industry qualifications in retail and catering. Staff and service users worked together on a gold winning garden at Chelsea flower show. They also won a gold medal at Hampton Court. The RAGC should be celebrated and held up for what it is. A jewel in Hillingdon's crown.      |
| It won't happen. The RAGC supplies the widest opportunities possible. Anyone suggesting this knows nothing about what the RAGC offers it's workers.   |
| The volunteering will need to be local, as xx travels locally on any long distance will need support. xx does not read or write and will not ask for help when in the community.  |
| This is complete nonsense. Why take away a beautiful volunteer opportunity? You could create more volunteer roles at the site. The site in itself is an opportunity for volunteers to work towards further training and development.  |
| It should be doing more particularly, if volunteers have been with the RAGC for a very long time.   |
| Why can't you just signpost volunteers to wider opportunities without closing the RAGC?   |
| Signpost? One to one meeting with all volunteers to ensure they are place somewhere they feel comfortable and happy. Signposting will not help these vulnerable adults.   |
| The sense of community and safety at RAGC is vital to keep for the mental health of users.  |
| If there are any other "wider opportunities that may lead to employment or further training and development" I'd like to see them ! There is nothing like the RAGC it's such an asset to Hillingdon. Also Employers may say on paper they are willing to offer jobs to people with disabilities but it's rarely the case and often the employee gets burnt out and overwhelmed within a few months and are sacked or forced to leave. |
| Having worked with the volunteers its not something they want to do. At the last cabinet meeting, the ones who attended without family support didn't even know the decision was to lose the centre and were very upset as they had been going along there for a large number of years.   |
| That sounds like a good idea but should not replace the RAGC.   |

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| This should've always been happening.   |
| Signpost opportunities is always a good idea. Finding more rewarding work is not always possible. If it was that easy all of these people would be in paid work now.  |
| I have seen this happen before for example, at Colham Green and Parkview services and it no longer exists. All you see is people with disabilities wandering aimlessly in Uxbridge.   |
| This seems to simply be a way of trying to support a closure of a vital organisation  |
| We haven't seen any plans of the new facilities. Plant growing is likely to be just flowers rather than the wide at RAGC with no ponds, chickens, birds, polytunnels, Christmas trees or general public. Likely to be a much smaller place, more isolated and lonely.   |
| I am not sure what those opportunities would be! There does not seem to be any opportunity equivalent to the RAGC at the moment.  |
| I agree that it is a good idea, but do not understand why this cannot be done within the current RAGC centre, as there is already an education site there. If funding is in place to support this, jobs could follow as a result.   |
| They have found their place. Please let that continue.  |
| Lots of promises with little achievement.   |
| These are just empty trumped up words that won't come to anything. It says MAY lead to wider opportunities etc as the council well knows that it won't. If these volunteers could work for money, they would. These words are meaningless.  |
| Not a realistic option. Council paying lip service to the residents.  |
| Won't get done.   |
| Having completed project search xxx has applied for over 100 jobs and no one is taking on anyone with a learning disability as there are so many applying who do not have a LD. A signpost to other things will not give them the access or support they need to get social and work skills they need.  |
| Some of the people won't feel comfortable travelling elsewhere.   |
| These people need to be employed.   |
| Proactive and helpful.  |
| It's all about the council riding roughshod over people's lives.  |
| Keep the centre open.   |
| Sign posting is not enough.   |
| This option would have already have been explored and presumably did not meet their needs. The RAGC is a unique place to support people who, even without a care plan, are vulnerable and need tailored support to help them have a positive life experience.   |
| This council has not got a great reputation for supporting those who are vulnerable with LD. I've seen at least 2 day centres close in recent years and prime example the Woodside site is still empty. The RAGC is something LBH should be incredibly proud of. Please save it.  |
| If all else fails, this is a positive step that presumably already takes place. It should not automatically mean the closure of the RAGC however.   |
| Won't happen.   |
| It is not about the council, it is about the people, their feelings, their sense of safety, this was and is their safe zone and will be for many others should they need it, if you let it stay open.   |
| This question is so disrespectful. People without care plans are not avoiding work, May gave different care needs but these are vest provided in a calm and caring environment and if when they able to move into a work environment from the garden centre it will be because the centre has provided them the environment and support and skills they needed to make that step. |
| Just because people do not have care plans in place does not mean they can just go somewhere else! Most people with special needs suffer with such anxieties that the garden centre helps them cope with  |

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| every day life. This question alone sums up the basic misunderstanding the council has about the special needs community.  |
| They are content with what they had as it was working.   |
| Lack of investment to supported internships - utilise Heathrow partnership more directly & not just via Uxbridge college.  |
| In my experience this will be an epic failure as these exceptional volunteers need intensive guidance and support and without that they will most likely withdraw socially.  |
| The council proposes a lot of stuff then don't follow through on it and it's forgotten about down the line.  |
| Most are not suitable.   |
| That should be happening anyway where relevant.  |
| Don't know any details.  |
| I don't believe that they will be able to adapt due to their personal mental health/learning disabilities  |
| As above.  |
| Typical council speak. What's wrong with giving them opportunities when they are working in a commercial environment i.e. the existing centre?   |
| Why change what is already working well?   |
| Do not trust that this is your intention.  |
| Outside environment needs to be encouraged.  |
| I would like to know more about how this could be facilitated.   |
| Some volunteers might feel comfortable working at the same location, as they have done over the years. They need the help and support provided.  |
| You know well this is a cop out.   |
| This is an established centre proving the such needed care to all attending. Moving the care to other venues/agencies dilutes what is on offer. These other venues/agencies will in future years lose funding and the people who so need this help will be abandoned. Everything is here at this centre providing the help and care needed.  |
| "Signposting" is inherently just that - pointing the direction. These people need guaranteed equivalents of their current roles.   |
| The RAGC provides a caring, sheltered environment which is likely to get a better response developing the future of those in its care than signposting to external organisations. It depends on the individuals, who are often more sensitive than average and need careful understanding of their needs. RAGC provides the personal attention which can bring about a better result than one size fits all referrals. |
| Hot air and no intentions of following it through just something to say to make it look like you care but do not!  |
| The volunteers are needed to run the RAGC.   |
| Its simply not that simple given the specific needs of the users and special skills of those who volunteer.  |
| I agree if this is possible and it is what people would like to do.  |
| Users may feel a loss of support and gives them a purpose.   |
| I'm not sure the council has this ability and resources.   |
| The opportunities will not be the same and may be hard for the people who use the centre to adjust to given their additional needs.  |
| Choices must exist. Change doesn't always work. Routine is necessary.  |
| Signposting possibilities can happen from the RAGC and do not require this move. Plus they 'may lead' means nothing will really happen.  |
| As a parent of an adult with learning difficulties I have yet to see this signposting and support is either not there or very can't.   |

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| It would be very unsettling for volunteers. Many of whom have found this a safe and secure place to be.   |
| Sign-posting without actual help can be very confusing.   |
| You're penalising those who try to cope with the minimum of help. Making sure more people will look for help.   |
| Leave them as they are.   |
| This move will only be available to a few staff.  |
| They are a team who work & support each other.  |
| It's all very well and good but that should be an option if the volunteers don't want to take that opportunity and prefer to stay as a volunteer.   |
| As above.   |
| The council is trying to pass its responsibility to other overloaded entities.  |
| These other opportunities already exist so why does "signposting" make them more suitable or viable. Also I am aware that some of these facilities are under threat. Why not take that concept and add it to RAGC so that place can enhance its provision? Especially as the number of persons requiring such support and provision is increasing annually. |
| But will it actually happen or is it all talk!  |
| Don't fix what's not broken!  |
| But this centre has been doing that for years why break that up.  |
| Who would not agree with the council helping people into work and other opportunities? I would like to know more about what this means. Signposting to opportunities is great, I would hope that the council would also PROVIDE opportunities.  |
| Yeah, but will they. They already have e this and the council are taking it away.   |
| Sounds OK, depends on the details.  |
| This is a reduction in the service currently being offered, and some existing users are likely to be incapable of coping with the proposed change, thereby requiring the Council to meet the resultant needs of such people.  |
| Cheap dangerous Labour.   |
| It's a way out for the council.   |
| Do they not understand those who have specific needs.   |
| After all this time this question should not be contain 'proposed' all steps should already be documented and the outcomes expected including the supposed savings or and value for money.  |
| Great idea BUT the key word in the proposal is MAY lead to further employment or further training and development. I have over 40 years of experience in this area of education and know that the chances of this are very, very, limited.  |
| This is a good idea if doesn't take away the goals of what the garden centre aims to do.  |
| The council is not best placed without a full evaluation of the volunteers condition to make any decision. Ignorant convenience nor economic expedience may result in a long-term placement.  |
| The truth is there is nothing available these people will be left with nothing.   |
| Surely this should be happening anyway?   |
| This appears to be a mallet to crack a nut and does not address individual needs.   |
| It shouldn't be up to the Council to make these decisions. Everyone is different and require different things to cope. You can't put square pegs in round holes.  |
| A sign post may not help.   |

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| I strongly disagree with this proposal. It completely overlooks the unique value the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) provides to volunteers without care plans.   |
| Many of these individuals are not seeking traditional employment or training pathways – they volunteer at the RAGC for structure, purpose, routine, social connection, and wellbeing. These are people who may be vulnerable in ways that do not meet the threshold for a formal care plan, but who still rely heavily on the supportive, inclusive environment RAGC provides.  |
| "Signposting" them elsewhere is not a solution. It's a dismissive approach that offers no guarantee of suitable alternatives and ignores the fact that there is no equivalent setting that replicates the therapeutic, inclusive, and empowering nature of RAGC.  |
| Removing this opportunity will cause real harm to individuals who have found a safe and meaningful place at the RAGC. Rather than stripping this away, the council should be working to protect and expand inclusive volunteering models like this – not outsourcing them to unsuitable or impersonal alternatives.   |
| Why move them where they are comfortable where they are. Moving volunteers maybe a tick box for the council and not consider their individual needs and this will be out their routine and somewhere they're not comfortable with.  |
| Would be great if the council could work in partnership with DWP / Job Centre's to maximise opportunities.  |
| It is a very woolly suggestion without any actual proposals.  |
| Any opportunity is better than nothing.   |
| Council should look after these people.   |
| This is just fluff. Care plans are no use without resources.  |
| The RAGC needs to stay open to provide them with opportunities. Without a care plan in place it will be very unlikely that they will get another job since they have limited experience. I know of friends with several degrees who have been out of work for a year - therefore some of these adults at the RAGC will also experience this.  |
| It's a nice idea in principle but there's no evidence so far that there's any opportunities actually available that could meet their needs and cope with their behaviours. In addition many of the people who access the RAGC have done so for many years and would really struggle with change and travelling to a new place of work with new people who they don't know or understand them and their behaviours. At the RAGC we are a tight knit group and have been told we are like family as we look out for one another and staff go above and beyond in supporting people who are struggling or having issues and problems. We understand the importance of providing a safe community and environment for people with challenges who are socially isolated. Our work has led us to supporting people in hospital and liaising with families and social services when people need extra or emergency support. We have attended health appointments and supported people with forms and letters when they cannot read, write or understand what is being said that affects them. We feel that other places may not be able to offer the support we provide to our people. This could then become detrimental to person and put pressure on external services such as GPs Hospitals Social Services etc. |
| Will the Council come up with these plans or is it just a 'dangling carrot leading to an idea that won't materialise.   |
| The RAGC provides a 'community' which protects vulnerable young people, as well as training. It may not be possible or appropriate for those people without care plans to thrive in the wider working world. We should be nurturing their skills in the most-appropriate setting for them. It is our responsibility to do so. Once training has been given, in a supportive setting, people may be ready for longer-term employment outside, as they will have more confidence in their skills and abilities (both gardening and social skills).  |

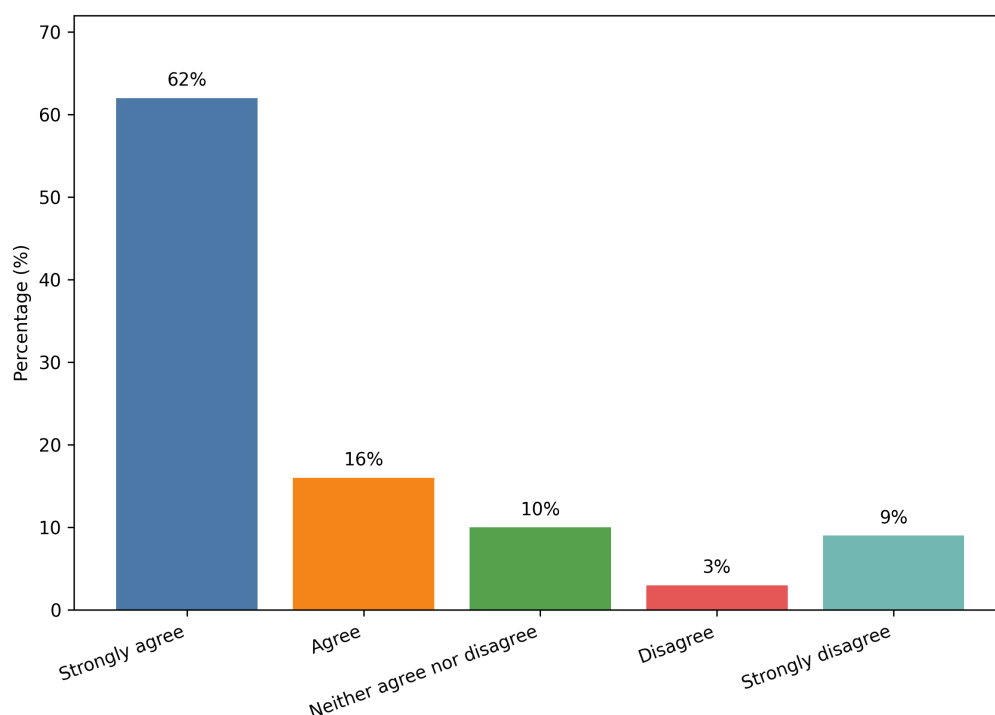


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| You are fully aware of the vulnerable adults we have attending the RAGC, and therefore, by taking the time read their file/information you would know that work related courses are not suitable for the majority of our vulnerable adults.  |
| These people are vulnerable adults and wouldn't have a chance to thrive.   |
| Council should provide more support not just signposting.  |
| I've been trying for sometime to find a volunteer position for my disabled daughter without success. There are no wider opportunities.   |
| Some of the volunteers have worked at the RAGC for many years, building strong relationships with other volunteers and service users. They choose to volunteer at the RAGC for good reason. Why would they want to volunteer anywhere else?  |
| Volunteers attend the site as a means for care and support. In the event the site is removed many of these volunteers may need more support from the council, with the associated costs , for their care.  |
| As an aspiration it would be ideal if our volunteers are able to undertake further training and development or be able to take up other employment opportunities. However, based on an in-depth understanding of the capabilities of our attendees, I think the council should examine the feasibility of achieving this on a case-by-case basis. The costs of the investigation and resulting costs for social care may well be greater than the council anticipates. |
| This appears to be a "one size fits all" solution without considering the individual's needs.  |
| Again a ridiculous idea which is totally unsustainable.  |
| The well established team of gardeners/volunteers NEED to remain together.   |
| They have friendships groups, work exceptionally well together and interact with each other and staff.   |
| Beginning again to make new friends is daunting and so difficult for those attending the RAGC.   |
| Why would any sane person want to break up a group of people who were getting on with life whilst having a sense of purpose, just to save a few pounds, so squander it on something else. Just a crying shame.   |
| Why were there no care plans in the first place?   |
| If suitable employment could be found that might be fine for some but the centre needs to be there for the others and as a back up in case the job does not work out.  |
| Signposting does not help local communities that have been built up over time. it decimates them. we need communities.   |
| What services? Wouldn't this take someone's time, how is that funded?  |
| This could be done alongside keeping the RAGC open.  |
| Please note that there has not been any consultation about this so the wider opportunities are likely to be inappropriate and/or unsafe to those with learning disabilities and autism.  |
| Majority of the programmes are a short tick box exercise they do not give the space for volunteers to inspire, grow , excel and pass thru skills onto the younger generation or those who need as and when.  |
| It might work if the decision involves empathy and complete agreement from both sides.   |
| A proposal of ifs and buts. Not worth the paper it was written on.   |
| I work with school students.   |
| Shame on you council. Why couldn't you invest in this place to allow it to be added as a place for employment and further training. Rather than allow some of these big organisations potentially exploit this.  |
| This will not be the answer.   |
| This is a cop out.   |

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| This is a job for the council that can be fulfilled without disrupting ongoing useful projects   |
| A lot of the volunteers may have their own personal struggles physically and mentally and this is why the volunteer because it helps them, but they may not be unwell enough to come into the category of needing support. And life is not all about. getting a job! |
| Volunteers need the correct training.  |

**15. Considering the financial pressures the council is facing, should existing services provided at the RAGC site remain as they are without the changes to remove financial support?**

| Response                          | Count | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|-------|----------------|
| <b>Strongly agree</b>             | 116   | 62%            |
| <b>Agree</b>                      | 30    | 16%            |
| <b>Neither agree nor disagree</b> | 19    | 10%            |
| <b>Disagree</b>                   | 5     | 3%             |
| <b>Strongly disagree</b>          | 17    | 9%             |



**16. Please provide any reasons:**

**All comments**

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| Know answer you will do what you want anyway.  |
| The council should put the welfare of the gardeners as a priority. The health care professionals have already said the trauma of being relocated will cost the council more in the mental health fallout and treatment so the council will not save money but will be worse off. |
| In the long run it is better use of resources than just spending it on care plans on personal assistants plus how it will isolate people using it as the only way to have so thing positive to do.   |

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| They are getting nothing now by stopping them from selling their products something is better than nothing they will all be out of.  |
| Yes. Do not touch anything at RAGC.  |
| If you close the retail side, the council will have even MORE of a deficit! It's a no brainer.   |
| Hillingdon Residents come first, does that not say it all  |
| Stop paying for refugees & keep the money for our own Hillingdon residents.  |
| Why change what works.<br>It ain't broke, don't try to fix it.   |
| N/A.   |
| Council never face pressure from that garden centre.<br>It's more is a business and you trying to make money.  |
| The council is responsible for the financial pressures and this service should not be penalised due to that. The council could look to local businesses for charitable support to make this a more profitable offering.  |
| As above.  |
| SEND Residents are among the Most Vulnerable people our Borough needs to Protect.  |
| Alternative is available to council to let it run as charity.  |
| Like I said, try some simple marketing of the place to bring in more revenue, more sponsors and return the Cafe. The council likely just wants the land and the proposed closure is all about that.  |
| He would love to have his volunteering remain at the present site because he has been there so long. He does not like change but if the volunteering elsewhere came with the right support he would cope.  |
| You need to support this site. It is worth the money. close the site and you ruin the work of a generations of staff, volunteers and service users. You break up a happy community and push people back into their homes creating physical and mental health problems.                               |
| Surely there needs to be more of a consideration as to other areas where there are shortfalls. it can't be just the RAGC that can be seen as a financial pressure. It seems sad that. Have you not seen the increasing problems in the borough with fly tipping increasing daily.                    |
| Please provide the figures for the last couple of years and when the loss making was apparent with the RAGC.   |
| The RAGC should stay where it is and look at alternative sites around the Borough. It is areas like this that should be available to those with learning disabilities and the wider local community groups, children and adults with additional needs and schools in improving health and wellbeing. |
| There are other options to help run the site so it's not just the council.   |
| I am sorry the council is facing financial pressures, but the vulnerable people who benefit from the RAGC shouldn't be punished for it. You must protest at the gates and demand a reasonable outcome to the Fair Funding Review from our government NOW.  |
| However funded either by the Council or by the community, RAGC must remain open to all.  |
| The council has wasted so much money in other projects and other areas such as the re built "scout hut" on Moorfield road Cowley which has stood empty since it was finished - why ? I imagine it's not fit for purpose so consultation was flawed.  |
| The council chose a developer who went bust while building the new West Drayton sport centre and swimming pool, again poor research by council to find a competent developer, how much money has been lost/overspent there?  |

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| The council has not provided a proper breakdown of individual costs for the RAGC showing it's incompetence in the running of it. Why wasn't the retail and education costs separated ? Looks from the outside to be a complete shambles by the council.  |
| Because it provides an excellent service and trying to move people around the borough will cost just as much to the council and those services will also need to be paid for.  |
| I am aware the council are in financial difficulties but time should be given to reassess the situation. Closure is penalising the very vulnerable and this is not fair.   |
| We need community assets in Cowley.  |
| You have the best leaders/managers/ teachers/ carers/horticulturists imaginable personified in 2 people who organise volunteers and the people in their care. Value what you have more highly.   |
| If this service is removed people will become isolated and increase mental and physical health issues which will cost the borough in the long run.   |
| RAGC is a very important community organisation and it also helps develop horticultural skills for members.  |
| This is a unique day centre where service users flourish in a family like environment. The site needs investment and proactive management to make the most of the site.  |
| Please see my thoughts in the answers above. I acknowledge that it is considered changes are needed to conform to current health and safety standards. I do not know what these changes are, but I do know that current staff are very vigilant, experienced and sensible. My xxx spent many happy and productive hours at RAGC without any incident whatsoever. I would imagine that health and safety changes need to be minimal, perhaps focussing mainly on the need for an initial assessment of what tools each individual service user should be allowed to use.  |
| They should stay as they are, but with continued financial support there is an opportunity for growth and expansion both for the site and individual.  |
| Just leave something in place that works. It takes a long time for young special adults to develop relationships and feel safe in their routines.  |
| There is nowhere else available that my xxx can go that makes him feel valued and worthy. RAGC has been around for over 40 years and it touches individuals not just in Hillingdon but also in the neighbouring boroughs. RAGC should be allowed to continue as is as they provide such a valuable service to our most vulnerable family members who don't have a voice to speak up for themselves and have poor employment outcomes. RAGC is a lifeline for our vulnerable people, it stops social isolation. It's benefits are wide ranging. The staff are dedicated to working with our vulnerable adults and their commitment is evident to see. We need more places like RAGC not less. |
| The council could provide SOME financial support but the majority of the cost should be covered by other revenue streams.  |
| I would be hopeful the general public will rally round to help.  |
| Unique and valuable place for the most vulnerable.   |
| Not all about money. Do something good for the community.  |
| The council won't save any money as it will cost more to provide support individually for all the people that are currently there.   |
| Cannot continue as it is - the underfunding of LBH by central government has put an unprecedented strain on local government.  |
| It did not cost a mountain of cash to run the RAGC for the benefits it provided.   |
| The council are making the wrong decision. Keep the centre open.<br>Bad management from the council. I understand the council is bankrupt.<br>Help the clients. Keep the centre open.  |

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| For all the reasons I have provided above. Looking at the RAGC as a cost is irrelevant. The council seems not to be looking at the benefits it provides its users and their families which far outweighs any cost.  |
| This is a valuable service offered to local residents who benefitted from the service the RAGC provides especially when the cafe was operating and the garden centre was open to the public.  |
| I feel the financial support given by the council is not astronomical. Considering the people working there are most unpaid. If the people are sent elsewhere, it would cost more.  |
| Funding for this should be a priority in my view as a council tax payer.  |
| I believe that reopening the cafe and some marketing could make the centre more financially viable.   |
| As already said, I feel sure that people would not mind helping RAGC with a small tax charge which would cover the small loss it puts the authority in, the tea rooms could be opened again, this would make income for them, if they know they have to charge for plants to survive and keep going RAGC could do it, even if I had to help that is how strongly I feel about this issue. |
| A culture is as mature as those it provides care for. Why is the council under financial pressure. I'd rather pay a little more in council tax.   |
| I think 11pence out of council tax payers money is money well spent, and doesn't even equate to half a pint of milk or a couple of slices of bread. It will save the council money in the long run.   |
| Protect those residents who families have lived locally for years & need local facilities.  |
| It's already being paid for and has had a hugely positive impact on the lives of the volunteers. Cut the amount being paid to comfortably provide accommodation and benefits to illegal immigrants. SORT YOUR PRIORITIES TO THE BRITISH PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE TO THE BOROUGH.  |
| I think this "consultation" is trying to confuse people as much as possible. I don't understand this question.  |
| The government has put money into local council to improve the areas they could set aside money for the RAGC.   |
| As answered above. Cutting this service will inadvertently cause higher costs elsewhere to support the volunteers.  |
| If the Council are reimbursed by the Government for the cost of housing 'asylum seekers ' then the cost of looking after our own British vulnerable people in the borough will be more than covered.  |
| The cabinet members are always faced with difficult financial decisions - focusing in on one 'soft target' is both cynical and uncaring - and a vote loser.   |
| If the council can spend money on, to my knowledge three private houses and spend thousands refurbishing them they could surely afford to help fund the centre.   |
| I believe that the figures given about costs are inaccurate but in any case I believe that the RAGC could run at little or no cost to the council if the cafe were reopened and other initiatives put in place.   |
| RAGC are trying to fund the centre themselves but your refusal to engage means they cannot.   |
| Financial support should be maintained.   |
| RAGC is a vital local service that should be funded by the council. It makes a big difference for a small outlay. Hillingdon needs heart.   |
| Absolutely, to shut down the RAGC would be a crime. They have helped so many people with disabilities and provide a service to residents of Hillingdon. We need this business.  |
| This is an extremely valuable tool and centre to be there to help all attending and care for their particular needs   |
| Keep the services. The knock-on costs of disruption are far higher than the Council's "gain".   |
| The centre is an important part of Hillingdon's social infrastructure and demonstrates the borough's commitment to offering the best services to its citizens. The cost per resident is very small in relation to the benefits which users and staff gain from the centre.  |

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| Cutting it is letting down vulnerable people and it totally cruel and disgusting you should do what it takes to keep it running.  |
| It is cheaper option than referring them to the NHS.  |
| Our additional needs adults love this place and so does the public.   |
| This is an important community facility that the council should fund as part of its social care responsibilities.   |
| Review the numbers in a transparent and proper manner and look for ways to enable a move towards self greater funding through sales.  |
| The financial pressures that the council are facing are due to their own mismanagement and local residents should not be paying for their mistakes.   |
| This a providing a vital service to the vulnerable and hope to lonely people in the borough. Giving meaning to the retired and a focus to get out of your bed and house. It's a network of hope and encouragement.  |
| It's hard to understand what the actual proposals are.  |
| Funding could be achieved through other financial changes as the amount is astonishingly small. For example cuts to councillors allowances could infill the shortfall.  |
| Why marginalise the most vulnerable in the community who have no voice and need people to speak on their behalf. They have far fewer options than most.   |
| Appreciate Hillingdon Council's financial pressures, but consider this a priority in social care. Hopefully other funding could be found without damaging this amazing resource.  |
| Its a drop in the ocean financially but a huge difference to the integrity of the community.  |
| There are other ways to save money without penalising the weakest members of society.   |
| Leave it as it is and put a committee in place to source funding.   |
| The council need to consider the impact of closing this facility & cut costs in another area.   |
| Regardless of the councils financial pressures perhaps the council could make a smaller contribution to the running of the RAGC and have outside contributors/organisations or sponsors to contribute the rest of the total running costs the RAGC requires.  |
| This was so sudden. Given them a year to change the way the service is run and get funding elsewhere.   |
| The council should reduce cost of it's non productive activities.   |
| Caring for those less fortunate is actually what makes us human. If money is the Councils only interest then perhaps it's those persons within the authority with such an attitude that need to step aside.   |
| It's hardly the fault of Hillingdon residences if Hillingdon council have financial pressure because they can't manage our money properly. There is no accountability as to where they spend our money. The rural garden centre must be a drop in the ocean compared to money wasted else where.  |
| N/A.  |
| The council needs to save money but withdrawing all funding to a valuable and important resource is wrong. The council should look at efficiencies within the centre or increased income to be able to reduce the council funding. If the council want to stop providing any funding then they should at least do it on a tapering scale and reduce the amount of funding each year. This gives the centre the chance to work on alternative sources of income. |
| Find funding elsewhere. Do not cut these services.  |
| Don't know enough details.  |
| As inferred above, we believe every effort should be made by the Council to reduce or eliminate the deficit being incurred by better management of the facilities and the possible involvement of external support/organisations.   |
| Stop wasting money in other places let the Government pay for the problems the last Government created.   |

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| It is a lifeline for these people and would result in greater mental health problems, resulting in more social care interaction with them - surely at a higher cost than the existing support they receive.  |
| These people are vulnerable and need care.   |
| Without some if not full financial support the council are merely kicking the can down the road. There will be financial support in the not too distance future in providing more mental health issues. Keeping the family members of the volunteers in good mental health with the breathing space that the RAGC provides by accommodating their charges is money well spent. |
| I think the council should continue to give financial support, but the Centre also needs to look for additional funding.   |
| The council is at fault here not RAGC, the council did not do there job so why should the rest of the community be may to pay for the mess up.   |
| As described previously in this form.  |
| Nothing of any worth left in the borough for our adults with disabilities only this.   |
| RAGC must endeavour to work in partnership with other organisations to wean itself from total support from LBH.  |
| It's a question. The options are inappropriate.  |
| Consider the 'Friends' proposals.  |
| May be a council audit will provide finances.  |
| Partially agree but having an independent cafe would increase customer visits. Maybe the running of the site could be partially funded by charity donations.   |
| We appear to be able to provide support for others who have come from outside of the community and reducing service to those within the community who are vulnerable. Maybe the council should be looking at reducing spending in those other areas.   |
| The existing services should remain – and the council should explore alternatives that allow the RAGC to continue without requiring direct financial support.  |
| While I understand the financial pressures the council is under, cutting vital services for vulnerable people is not the answer. The RAGC provides exceptional value – not just in terms of the care and support it offers, but in the long-term social, emotional, and even economic benefits of keeping people active, engaged, and supported within their community.        |
| Shutting the RAGC would not save money – it would likely shift costs elsewhere in the system, such as mental health services, social isolation interventions, or crisis care.  |
| There are already community members and organisations willing to develop an alternative funding model for the site. The council should be supporting these efforts, not closing the door on a much-loved and essential service.  |
| The RAGC should be protected – not because the money is there, but because the need is. With creativity and collaboration, it can continue to operate without draining council resources.  |
| I feel this will be more costly as a lot of these young people may have a decline in mental health and a lot of finding would be needed in terms of health or housing needs  |
| The Council must make tough decisions and this loss making site cannot be justified. Can instead work with HMG agencies like DWP to develop innovative alternative service user opportunities.   |
| It gives essential support to the volunteers.  |
| As above seek savings elsewhere.   |
| I am of the opinion that the services at the RAGC should remain as they are, and even increased, but the financial model needs to change I.e. funding of the service needs to be obtained elsewhere.   |
| The cost is relatively small .   |

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| <p>If it was possible to retain the existing services, I believe that would be the ideal option, however, I think that the RAGC team have put together an alternative funding model, which would keep the centre open at no cost to the council. This should be carefully considered.</p>  |
| <p>Perhaps if the council pledged to contract to use the services that RAGC provides, that would also provide a sustainable funding stream for the service.</p>  |
| <p>By closing the retail of the RAGC, you stopped money coming into the centre, and that hasn't helped the finances.</p>   |
| <p>We wanted to apply for grants and funding, but told no.</p>   |
| <p>We were always told not to charge anyone attending the RAGC by the previous leader. But, when it was suggested to start charging to help save us, again, the idea was ignored.</p>  |
| <p>It would be more expensive for the Council to find adequate provision elsewhere.</p>  |
| <p>It may be possible to achieve a break even financial situation.</p>   |
| <p>If partial funding can be sought from elsewhere the Council should continue to make the majority of financial commitments.</p>  |
| <p>The retail operation was a means to fund the social care provided at the RAGC. From my knowledge of the accounts, the retail operation generated an approximate profit of £65k per annum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revenue of ~£85k per annum;</li> <li>- Direct costs, limited to Soil, Plug Plants and Christmas Trees of ~£20k per annum</li> </ul> <p>Closing the retail operation has removed this profit which contributed to adult social care provision.</p> <p>Currently all other costs of the RAGC remain.</p> <p>The Council could reduce staff costs through making staff redundant.</p> <p>The Council may also increase costs through the cost of increased social care provision for all users of the RAGC. In addition, there may be increased cost to the council to provide security for the site should it become vacant.</p> <p>The council should consider all costs and revenues when making further decisions regarding the RAGC.</p> |
| <p>RAGC is an important site within the LBH portfolio of support. It is fairly unique and has provided/provides vital support to many people. Additionally RAGC teaches volunteers how to make their way in horticulture</p>   |
| <p>SEE Q6 RESPONSE.</p> <p>I SINCERELY HOPE THAT YOU NEVER HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS SO VULNERABLE AS THOSE ATTENDING THE RAGC.</p> <p>WE HAVE BEEN FIGHTING OUR XXX CAUSE SINCE XX WAS BORN. THE WHOLE SYSTEM IS AN ONGOING BATTLE. XXX NEEDS HIS PARENTS AND SIBLINGS FIGHTING XXX CAUSE. XXX IS LIMITED ON HOW XXX CAN EXPRESS XXXXX.</p> <p>HAVING FOUND THE RAGC XX YEARS AGO, XXX HAS GROWN FROM A XXXX TO A MUCH MORE CONFIDENT XX YEAR OLD. THEIR TIME AT THE RAGC IS XXX SAFE PLACE. THE BONUS TO US IS THAT XXX IS IN A SECURE ENVIRONMENT WITH PEERS AND STAFF WHO UNDERSTAND XXX.</p> <p>XXX IS CURRENTLY IN PANIC MODE. KEEPS ASKING US WILL IT STILL BE OPEN AT CHRISTMAS? WILL MY MATES STILL BE THERE?</p> <p>THE COUNCIL SEEM TO HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT IS LIKE FOR US A FAMILY. WE APPRECIATE THE RESPITE WE HAVE WHEN OUR XXXXX IS AT THE RAGC.</p>   |



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| WE ASK THE CLLRS TO GO ALONG AND SPEND SOME TIME AT THE RAGC TO SEE HOW THEY STILL WORK TO KEEP THE RAGC IN WORKING ORDER, ATTEND TO THE CHICKENS, CLEAN OUT THE PONDS, PLANT SEEDS, AND LOTS, LOTS MORE.<br>I UNDERSTAND, AS OF NOW, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN AN ORGANISED TEAM FROM THE COUNCIL VISIT THE RAGC.   |
| Look it is help that is needed here to help the facility to do better rather than close the door.<br>One wanders what the council have in mind for the plot of land now?  |
| The RAGC's funding and service should remain as it is. As previously stated, the councils inability to budget appropriately and should not force this burden on to vulnerable residents with limited opportunities.   |
| The existing services should remain the same though perhaps some public funds might be necessary.   |
| It's a great service. why take it away from the people who use it? maybe even you should promote it.  |
| Money/investment to help the future of the RAGC can be found from local 'big' businesses.   |
| It is unclear what is meant by this question. Does the council mean services as they are now (with social enterprise activity stopped) or as they were before sales of plants and other products were stopped? Enquiries by Friends of RAGC indicate that RAGC could operate with much improved financial performance if the resources including the land and cafe were properly exploited. We have been advised by other professionals about this. If this had been done, RAGC would not need financial support, apart from the transitional period, so this is the path to removing financial pressures from the council. |
| This question does not make sense . However yes it should remain a full service the shop should return, the cafe should open If a employment programme is run there properly it can cover all the costs of the RAGC as long as a retail business is able to run again.  |
| It would be a compassionate decision to keep the provision for the adults who need support and for others who may need it in future, since it is the only site in the borough that provides a rural activity gardening education and life experience.   |
| The council has not looked at all options. Short sighted option to cover the financial mess the council is in.  |
| It is a very valuable resource for young people.  |
| Because as a Council you have a duty to support and provide these services. Closing individuals away in the Warren that is the civic centre is an insult to these individual. Feel like your closing them away instead of encouraging community engagement and that works both ways for the individuals and giving opportunity to community to embrace and support the service they are being provided with.  |
| Can't cost that much.   |
| See answer 5 above.   |
| The centre is a worthwhile 'jewel in the crown' of LBH. The cafe should never have been closed and should be reopened.  |
| This is an essential obligation that any caring council should provide.   |
| These are priorities for the community and should be left untouched. Instead of cutting essential services the council should look for other creative ways to make money, out of those able to support, with a transparent intention people will support the council initiatives.   |
| I would like my council tax to go towards supporting this gem in our borough and more to be made of it. It's a good place for education.  |

## 17. Is there anything the council should be made aware of when considering the future of the RAGC?

### All Comments

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| Look at all who work there losing their jobs.  |
| The trauma they will cause the gardeners as already explained above.<br>Also, there is protected wildlife such as great crested newts and stag beetles which must be taken into account.   |
| There is not options like RAGC anymore they are actually effective for people with complex, needs and might be their only alternative.   |
| They will all be out of a job come the election in May.  |
| Yes. This site is a huge community point for many reasons. Leave it alone. Hands off!!!  |
| If it can't be part run by a private enterprise ( like the Beck theatre) can it be given charitable status?  |
| Have a heart, why take away the heart of the community, care that is so needed, for whom, refugees.  |
| Keep the Garden Centre open so that staff remain in their jobs. Have some compassion!  |
| The council has shown complete disregard for the staff & service users. Shame on you, Hillingdon Council   |
| People above money   |
| People's requirements over penny pinching. Think of damage to people in emotional ways you just don't understand   |
| There's not a lot of places like this, like I have stated. As a government I believe you should be promoting communities/organisations like this not trying to shut the down. We need to encourage young people of all backgrounds and abilities especially in the agriculture industry to believe they have a space to learn in as well as feel comfortable in. |
| It's just good as its.so why you suddenly decided to change?   |
| The council should consider the impact to the community and vulnerable adults along with those working at the service when making their decision and look at areas that will not have as big an impact on people's lives like I mentioned above stop sending the magazine to all homes, those that want it could sign for it or read it online                   |
| These young adults reliance on this centre.  |
| The RAGC has been threatened with closure for many years. However, successive councils have all come to see the importance of this place to Hillingdon and it's residents. It's a truly an amazing resource.   |
| Possibility of a Serious Case Review if Support for these Residents fails badly. If Service is relocated or reduced in a detrimental way.  |
| The centre is close by other site for children and adult with special needs and this will have impact for those who wants to easily commute between those sites.   |
| They will be letting down the community, robbing the vulnerable adults in the community of such a valuable place for them to thrive and the general public in the Councils ward who could enjoy this also if awareness was further raised.   |
| The length of time the user has been attending and the lack of volunteering opportunities with proper structured support out there.  |
| I feel that the RAGC is providing a vital service to the borough.  |
| I worked at RAGC for xxx years. It is a once in a lifetime place that has been created over decades. The council needs to value this and see potential in the community and how it uses the site. The council has been letting it fall apart for many years intentionally.   |

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| It is hard to put into words the magic of being there day to day. So many interactions between the people who use the site. Watching people grow in confidence. Watching people being happy amongst nature. So much laughter and joy exists on this site. To close it would be selfish, short-sighted and greed driven. Look for answers - not money.   |
| The RAGC should be allowed to become an asset of community value rather than be sold off for housing or other alternative means. Have you not thought about using this space as a centre of excellence for teaching and using the knowledge of current staff, volunteers, gardeners, parents to share with the wider local community and residents. You can still work closely with the local colleges and businesses in the area. Working with local businesses to offer fitness classes, grow your own, There is so much too do!            |
| Setting up community groups and sharing the space in the portacabins, cafe with using the produce grown on the site for the greater good, giving younger adults the opportunity to set up a business to enhance their skills and step on the career ladder, setting up allotments and using the experience of staff to support this work. So much opportunity for a local community and businesses to get involved, Set up a mini forest school via the woodland walk. Find ways to get the community involved.                               |
| Think of how it could be developed and what a local community hub it could be in a local area that does not really have much for the local community.   |
| RAGC is not just any garden centre. It is the jewel in Hillingdon's crown. A sense of pride for 40 years. This potential blip in finances could be the start of something even bigger and better but it must stay open for our community in order to prove it can continue to sparkle!  |
| The RAGC is a HUGE asset to Hillingdon, it should be celebrated and uplifted.<br>The Cafe was a great asset too and is greatly missed, I know the council set unachievable and unrealistic proposals to all the people who offered to take it over previously.<br>I implore you to keep the RAGC in the current location and allow the cafe to open again. If retail is important for funding then much better advertising for example signage outside is necessary and relatively low cost. I'm sure Friends of RAGC would be happy to help. |
| Its a service that meets people's needs and a lot of people come there to buy plants and to sit and be for their wellbeing<br>Closing it may mean that the council the council could be needing to provide services for other people.   |
| The detrimental effect it would have on the users. The unpopularity of the decision to close it. The shortsightedness of closing such a worthwhile and valuable asset to our community.   |
| What type of site if RAGC located on?<br>The people that are there mental health and wellbeing as this is a big change and differently issue.   |
| The amount of money saved is so paltry, is it worth all this heartache really?  |
| Closing the RAGC would be very bad and such a loss to the London Borough of Hillingdon. It gives individuals a purpose in life, working outside and gaining confidence on a daily basis.<br>Many have made friends there over the years and remain friends to this very day.  |
| I think they should visit, but some plants, talk to the people there and wonder why you can't get a nice cup of coffee in the beautiful garden any more. Oh no! We can't buy plants there, because the banking facilities have been withdrawn. Shame!!!   |
| The impact it will have on individual lives and the impact it will have on the community who value it a lot.  |
| The RAGC site is on Green Belt land and will unlikely be given permission for development other than its current use. Horticulture is an important sector and RAGC has been helping to developing skills in its users   |
| The RAGC is very popular with the public and this side of things should be improved and expanded.   |
| They need to be aware that alternative facilities within the heart of Uxbridge will not work for many of the individuals who currently benefit from working at RAGC. They need to look at making the most of  |

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| what is already there, rather than pulling the plug and weakening the existing infrastructure of the current site.   |
| I appreciate the financial aspect is important, but the removal of the RAGC will have a detrimental effect on both the members and the community. Many of the individuals working within the site will suffer mentally from this situation which I do not feel.<br><br>Is being considered enough, almost overlooked.  |
| Think about how it would be if your son or daughter had the needs that some of these people have. There by the grace of God. Have a heart.   |
| There is nowhere else available that offers vulnerable adults feel valued and worthy. RAGC has been around for over 40 years and it touches individuals not just in Hillingdon but also in the neighbouring boroughs. RAGC staff are committed to the work they provide our valuable adults and are genuine committed to encouraging our vulnerable adults to flourish. RAGC should be allowed to continue as is as they provide such a valuable service to our most vulnerable family members who don't have a voice to speak up for themselves and have poor employment outcomes. RAGC is a lifeline for our vulnerable people, it stops social isolation. It's benefits are wide ranging. The staff are dedicated to working with our vulnerable adults and their commitment is evident to see. We need more places like RAGC not less. |
| If the council wants to be re-elected it should tread very carefully when making the decision. If it wants to be famous now and in the future and the council that completely let down vulnerable people in the Borough and closed a wonderful location then it shouldn't be nervous. The council could be known for being responsible for turning around the place and saving it from closure rather than just wanting the land for something else and ignoring the people, what the RAGC already provides and the many, many possibilities.  |
| It is imperative the site is reopened and advertised better and possible more volunteers to help it run with less council money needed.  |
| The service it provides is irreplaceable and is a tiny percentage of the council budget. Why pick on the most vulnerable/ and disadvantage. How can this be putting residents first?   |
| Your reputation is already bad and you will not get in again.  |
| People with learning disabilities already get penalised in every part of life and this just reinforces their feelings of lack of self worth . How about sorting out the loss making depts within the council to offset what is a small sum relative to the council spending to keep it open.   |
| Their jobs are in danger.  |
| Council need to look at the matter in a proper business like way.<br>Enough of the bully boy attitude.   |
| Keep the centre open.  |
| All of the answers to the previous questions.  |
| Knock on effect of closing such places will cost the council more in the long term. Users will regress in learning as their routines will be disrupted. With nothing to do or little we will have the same problems as currently of young people and antisocial behaviour. RAGC is a safe place where users can be who they are without judgement. It offer families a respite, mental health healing for all.   |
| The RAGC is so much more than a garden centre. It is a lifeline for so many vulnerable people and their families who are watching other services close or become over crowded. The centre is unique and should be developed to give even more people the opportunity to shine.   |
| It's not just a gardening project. It enhances lives and promotes independence.<br>The love and hard work that has gone into this haven over the last 40 years is incredible.<br>Im always overwhelmed with the happiness and joy whenever I visit.  |
| What will happen to all the people , from all areas and needs do.  |

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| Yes, just how hugely important the RAGC is to the volunteers and their families and how distressing this whole process has been for them.   |
| How important this centre is to the local community, volunteers.  |
| Yes, consider the people whose lives you are going to really impact, consider the people that work there, the people who shop there, the people who find solitude there, consider them when you want to buy plants for the council instead of going elsewhere, consider the savings you could make by giving them the chance to prove their worth to the authority.   |
| Yes, the benefits of having emotional empathy.  |
| You are damaging people's lives taking away for some the only reason to get up out of bed in the mornings. The only meaning they have and way of meeting people and giving them purpose. Also a sense of responsibility.<br>All for the sake of money, and land.<br>Sometimes you have to look at the bigger picture.   |
| Please put people before funding. We understand there are financial difficulties but please support the most vulnerable members of our society. We need to be there for them and treat them like we would like to be treated or this could lead to more anxiety. Be truly thankful that you can make choices and have choices as some people with additional needs have less life choices and chances than others in society. Let's do the right thing for them - reopen the centre and work together to make it work.<br>Please!!! |
| Residents who pay into the Borough views on what money is spent on!   |
| Consider your decision carefully as this will send a huge statement to the Council Tax Payers of what is a priority and whether adults with Learning Difficulties and their families are of any concern to you or their future  |
| Listen to the users & their families, carers who clearly do not want this facility to close.  |
| Stop cutting essential services and facilities to people in need.   |
| Care and consideration for the unstable people in the borough.  |
| The well being of the volunteers that is very difficult to cost.  |
| Listen to the personal stories of those that use this facility. I miss visiting the centre . Hillingdon is losing more and more of our green and pleasant land.   |
| Bulldozing this through will put cabinet members decision making competence clearly in the public scrutiny.   |
| At least see if there is away they can work with private individuals or companies to keep the centre open.  |
| Take the views of current staff and users into account. It's lovely to see the interaction between staff and the public. Nature element is also important.  |
| Ask the people and listen to their ideas instead of just taking the easy option.  |
| Can you not find a charity/organisation that will buy RAGC in order to run it at least? If they need funds to purchase, we will all help chip in. RACG used to be a successful business, it still can be. Please reconsider reopening it, it will be a huge loss to the area. The business needed help in order to make a profit, it's not too late. Thank you.   |
| This is an extremely valuable asset which cannot be lost, diluted or closed.  |
| Everything you've been told in petitions and council meetings.  |
| Hillingdon's past commitment to RAGC demonstrated its caring and environmentally friendly attitude to life in the borough. The feelgood factor is important and will be lost if the centre closes completely. At a time when there is distrust of local and central government, this would have a very negative effect. I for one would no longer feel proud to be a citizen of Hillingdon. I'm sure many others feel the same way.   |

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| There will be absolutely nothing left for disabled or people with learning disabilities left, if you had your way they would be back in asylums locked up and forgotten about... you are uncaring nasty people who don't care a bit about anyone but yourselves.              |
| The level of community support for it as it was.  |
| Be honest and transparent the way in which this has been managed absolutely diminishes trust and faith in the council - holding public meetings in such a way that people are excluded due to space, refusal to answer questions makes a total mockery of Hillingdon council. |
| The support given by the centre.  |
| The life's of the families it is affecting.   |
| Alternative funding proposal.   |
| The impact on the people's lives involved with the Centre will be huge.   |
| It's not just for adults with learning difficulties, it's a resource for everyone.  |
| Yes. The negative impact on this it serves.   |
| Why might people like to live in outer London?  |
| It is wide spread as a rumour that the council plans for a tent city on the plot. Don't do it.  |
| We have so few green spaces we can go to now in this borough, this place is a haven for both the public & staff. My mental health will suffer without this type of place to go to.  |
| Not that I'm aware of.  |
| The devastating loss for locals, the gardeners and the staff. One of the staff XXXX is well equipped to take the centre into its next iteration with a background in commerce.  |
| The land should not be considered for development.  |
| RAGC isn't perfect but it is far better than any proposed alternative.<br>Perhaps letting it stand completely alone as a CIC, and without the burdens of local authority influences, would allow it to grow to its full potential.  |
| Yes the mental well being of their vulnerable residences should be a priority.  |
| Those affected whose lives will be effected.  |
| You are letting down the most vulnerable people in society. people mental health are on the decline and shutting down will escalate this and cause more expense in the future.  |
| Engage with and listen to the Friends of RAGC, the volunteers, users, and the wider community.  |
| Beat in mind that if the council close this facility, there will be repercussions for the council. Already people are not happy with certain new policies and changes to council services.  |
| The RAGC, being a unique facility and environment for the service users, is irreplaceable and should not be lost.   |
| Think about the distraught they are causing to the hard working people there at the moment 🙄 look after our own first.  |
| The fact that this is a truly brilliant group, that should not be changed.  |
| You will put people around the civic centre and to protect them you will have to put fencing and security to protect them, that in my opinion will cost much more annually.   |
| The wider community who use it.   |
| Reevaluate the reason, purpose and outcome of the change to those using RAGC. Be open either what the expected savings are to be v the cost of the change.  |
| There is far more to an enterprise than financial losses and gains: please consider all those who work at RAGC as you can't put a price on the benefits to them.  |
| This is a wonderful place and does so much more for the community the council will ever see or understand.  |
| This site is a hidden treasure at the moment once its gone we are all the poorer. More publicity is needed to make it viable.   |
| This is a life line for so many gives them purpose.   |

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| The present situation needs to move gradually towards being privately and publicly financially supported rather than be loss of an established and working venue.   |
| Consider the Users.   |
| Public opinion.   |
| Hillingdon used to be a borough where families with extra / special needs felt supported. Help is getting harder to access.   |
| Individual needs.   |
| This closure has had a huge impact on the individuals that benefited so much in being there. It should not be closed because of the government's failure to control immigration.  |
| The impact that this is likely to have a severely vulnerable part of the Hillingdon community and their parents/carers.   |
| Yes. The council must understand that the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) is not just a "service" — it is a community, a sanctuary, and a vital support system for many people who would otherwise be isolated, overlooked, or left behind.   |
| The site provides far more than horticulture. It offers:  |
| Purpose and routine for people with disabilities and mental health challenges   |
| A calm, sensory-friendly environment that cannot be replicated at the Civic Centre or in other proposed settings  |
| Social inclusion for volunteers without formal care plans, who still depend on the structure and support RAGC provides  |
| Lifelong learning and skills development for people who may not thrive in conventional education or employment pathways   |
| Preventative value – reducing strain on health and social care services by improving mental and physical wellbeing.   |
| The council should also be aware that there is active community interest in keeping the site running without financial burden on the local authority. Rather than closing RAGC, the council should pause, listen, and engage with those working on sustainable, community-led alternatives.   |
| To proceed with closure without doing so would be a failure of both compassion and vision.  |
| To prioritise the most disadvantaged like the young and disabled and with the amount of children coming through mainstream school with 2-3 with ASD in each class, a lot more could be implemented to this site to enhance these young peoples life skills and opportunities that without places like this, they would have no future or prospects. |
| Shame it has become a political issue. Hopefully can secure cross party consensus on innovative options   |
| It is very sad to disrupt a kind and useful location, essential to the young people who work there.   |
| The impact of closure for most volunteers would be life changing for the worst. Research shows that being in nature, having soil in your hands, growing plants etc has a great positive effect on mental health.  |
| Spend money more wisely instead of on inflated £100000 a year council salaries.   |
| The impact it's going to have on the families and the people that work there themselves. It will cause significant distress for those who volunteer there - especially since the council have never once taken the time to explain what is happening in a way that they can understand. The councillors should know                                 |

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| full well the impact it will have - especially since one of them is neighbours with those that are impacted.   |
| <p>We are a thriving community, a green and environmentally conscious community, a community who have won awards to promote the councils prestige. A place where people can be themselves, be heard and seen even with all of their challenges. To split this community up would be a terrible tragedy. It would lead to putting pressure on services such as mental health, GPs. There should be more sites in our borough like ours where GPs and Social services could socially prescribe people to, that need our help and support. I thought the Conservative Party were all for making Green Gyms and projects like ours to get.</p> <p>People out in the open in nature. Get kids away from screens and learning about nature and the food we eat and where it comes from. To get ex offenders rehabilitated back into society and to support adults with mental health to stay out of hospitals. I understand that the RAGC model and financial structure needs to change but we have been asking for a long time to apply for charity funding and to become more self sufficient but we were always blocked and told we were a social enterprise and providing a service and that we don't need to make money. We have so much support from our community over 7000 signatures and people offering to help and support us. There must be a way to save us from closure. Please do the right thing and at least give us a chance to change it all around with a decent plan in place. Our site keeps people safe and supported. We can expand it to support many more types of people within the community we can continue to make Hillingdon proud.</p> |
| Can't think of anything at the moment.   |
| I am proud to be a long-standing resident of Hillingdon, and hope that the council will reconsider their decision to close this resource - I think this is a moral obligation that we have - to look after all our residents, but particularly those who are most-vulnerable.  |
| <p>Give the RAGC the opportunity to be 'The Jewel in The Crown' once again.</p> <p>It's an awful thought of our vulnerable people going backwards when they have achieved soooooooooo much by attending the RAGC.</p> <p>The LBH logo is 'Putting residents first'. Well, you have heard what they want. The people of borough have made it clear what they want. Even though staff can't get involved, the support out there for trying to saving the RAGC has been amazing.</p>  |
| You are losing a valuable resource from the income of plant sales.   |
| The lives of all those involved with the RAGC and how closing this site will adversely affect them - both service users and volunteers.  |
| <p>The council should consider the viability of continuing to run the RAGC as a social enterprise. Ideally exploring the way in which similar services are provided by other Council's exemplar social enterprises.</p> <p>Enough time needs to be allowed to develop and provide full consideration of this as an option.</p> <p>I know that the wider stakeholders in the RAGC, such as the Friends of the RAGC and other Hillingdon community organisations would welcome and actively help the council in this analysis.</p>   |
| Social needs and benefit to the individual.  |
| Funding is available from other sources.   |

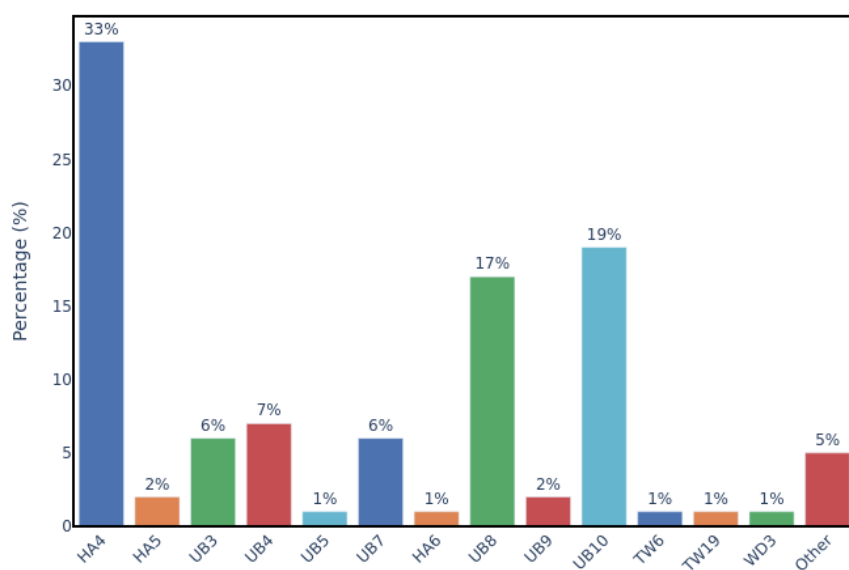


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| <p>THE COUNCIL SHOULD TREAT US WITH RESPECT WHEN WE ATTEND THE NUMEROUS MEETINGS AT THE COUNCIL. WE DO NOT NEED TO BE TOLD OFF FOR SHAKING OUR HEADS, IT IS MINUTED, SO THE CLLR CONCERNED KNOWS WHO THEY ARE. WE HAVE ALWAYS FOLLOWED PROTOCOL AND HAVE WRITTEN REPEATEDLY TO MANY CLLRS AND PROTESTED IN A DIGNIFIED MANNER.</p> <p>WE NEED TO FIGHT FOR OUR FAMILY MEMBERS WHO ATTEND THE RAGC.</p> <p>PLEASE REMEMBER, IT IS NOT ALL ABOUT MONEY, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT ADULTS, WHO ARE ALREADY SELF HARMING AND BECOMING SO STRESSED BY THIS WHOLE SITUATION.</p> <p>FROM RECEIVING A TELEPHONE CALL ON 28 MAY TO SAY THAT A MEETING WAS TO BE HELD AT RAGC ON 30 MAY, TO DATE THIS SITUATION HAS BEEN A FIASCO.</p> <p>INITIALLY NO USER FRIENDLY LITERATURE FOR THE ATTENDEES, EVENTUALLY A CONSULTATION DOCUMENT RUNNING FROM 27 AUGUST TO 7 OCTOBER. I UNDERSTAND THERE ARE NOW OVER 8,000 SIGNATURES ON THE PETITION TO PREVENT THE RAGC FROM CLOSING AND SEVERAL HUNDRED LETTERS SUBMITTED.</p> <p>PLEASE TAKE HEED OF OUR PLEA AND OUR SUGGESTIONS - WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR SEN FAMILY MEMBER</p> <p>BY MOVING THESE VULNERABLE ADULTS, THE COUNCIL WILL INCUR AN EVEN MORE FINANCIAL BURDEN.</p> |
| <p>Please have a bit of consideration for the special needs, that will unfortunately bear the brunt of this decision.</p>  |
| <p>Public faith in the council and the wider Conservative party is shockingly low. The Conservative party are farcical. By closing the RAGC and replacing it was asylum seeker housing (as the rumour goes) will demonstrate to residents, that the council are more concerned with needs of illegal, uninvite migrants over actual residents of this borough. There would be a domino effect that the council will not be able to handle: distrust in the council, lower quality of living for residents, and vulnerable adults left with nothing.</p>  |
| <p>Discuss in detail with the local communities and the friends groups.</p>  |
| <p>This is a unique site the provides peace and tranquillity for all that enter. This should be protected at all costs.</p>  |
| <p>Owing to the huge public support for RAGC and the need for it continue to provide high quality, cost effective social care support as well as social enterprise activities, the campaign to keep RAGC open will intensify into 2026, even if the council attempts to close RAGC in the meantime.</p>  |
| <p>Yes - the council do not see the RAGC on a day to day basis . The council should be aware that this business has saved lives , supported young adults to go to work . Set up business ! And transform our local community.</p>  |
| <p>The council has repeatedly been made aware of issues which it has, so far, completely disregarded.</p>  |
| <p>What this service provides and if supported actually saves money.</p>   |
| <p>There are no other facilities in the borough that provide the same services.</p>  |
| <p>For once stop with the tick box exercises to save a few pounds. Which if properly explored might show it has a real potential to cost the borough more in the longer term. But hey by the time that's realised the individuals making the decisions will have moved on leaving others to deal with the mess.</p>  |
| <p>The Council should already be aware of such issues.</p>   |

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| Yes. Do you understand the moral need to provide meaningful work for adults who CANNOT support themselves. Please consider and support the work of the Friends of RAGC and help them find an alternative funding model which would keep the centre open. |
| The importance of the centre to the volunteers who rely on it.   |
| There are cutting essential services for our community, reducing options for those that need it most, will lead to more mental health issues for families and people in the community, affect morale and health and well being.                          |
| RAGC is essential for the people involved but other support could be investigated.   |

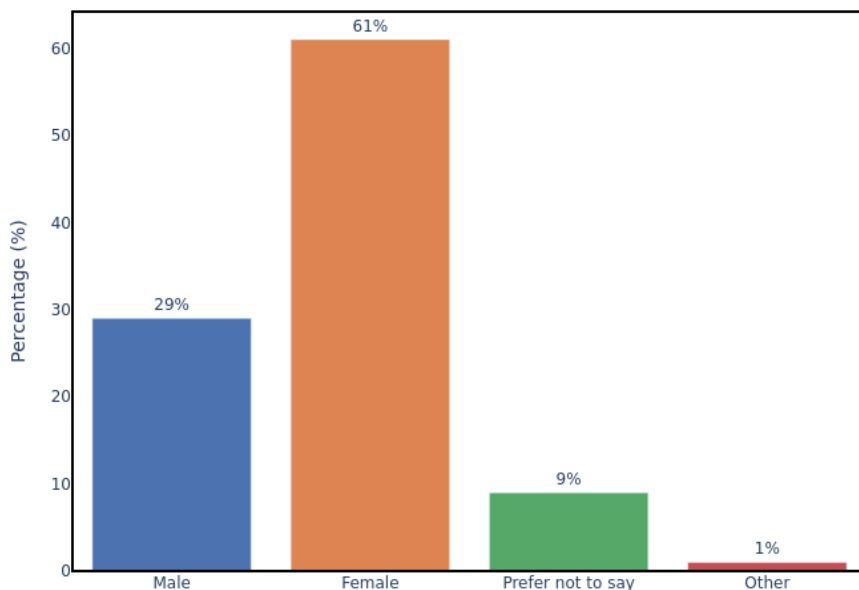
**18. Please tell us your postcode. Please note we collect postcode data to gain a better understanding of which parts of the borough respond to our consultations. We cannot identify individual properties or addresses from this information.**

| Postcode | Count | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-------|----------------|
| HA4      | 65    | 33%            |
| HA5      | 4     | 2%             |
| UB3      | 12    | 6%             |
| UB4      | 14    | 7%             |
| UB5      | 1     | 1%             |
| UB7      | 11    | 6%             |
| HA6      | 2     | 1%             |
| UB8      | 34    | 17%            |
| UB9      | 3     | 2%             |
| UB10     | 38    | 19%            |
| TW6      | 1     | 1%             |
| TW19     | 1     | 1%             |
| WD3      | 2     | 1%             |
| Other    | 9     | 5%             |



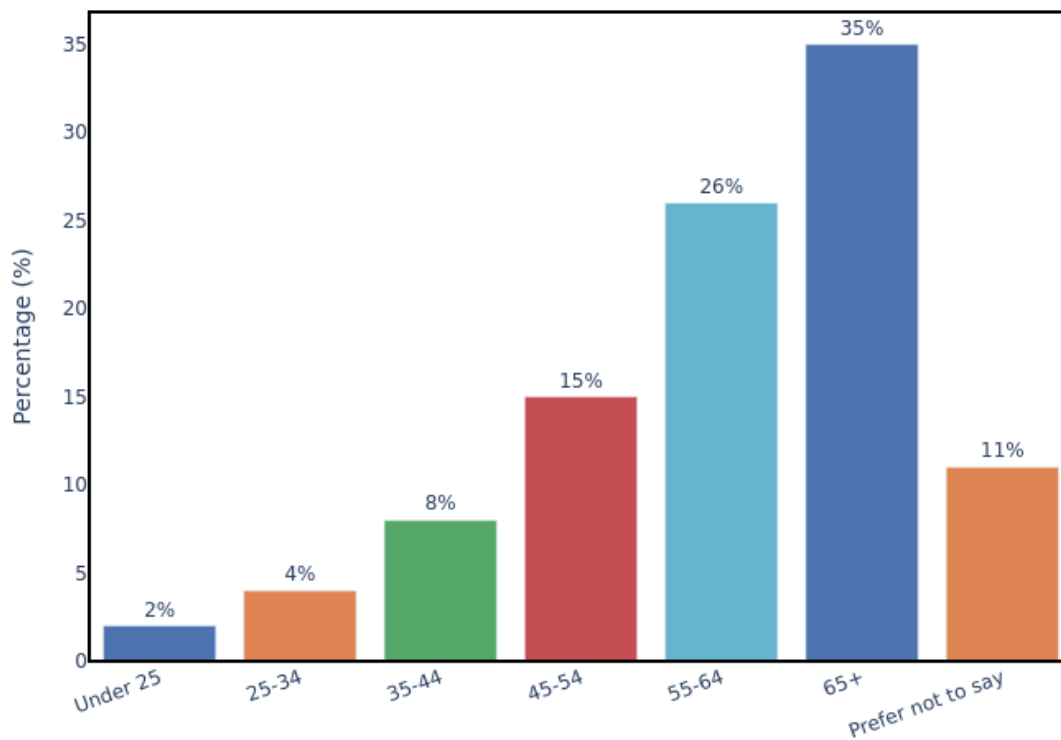
19. Are you:

| Response          | Count | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-------|----------------|
| Male              | 56    | 29%            |
| Female            | 119   | 61%            |
| Prefer not to say | 18    | 9%             |
| Other             | 1     | 1%             |



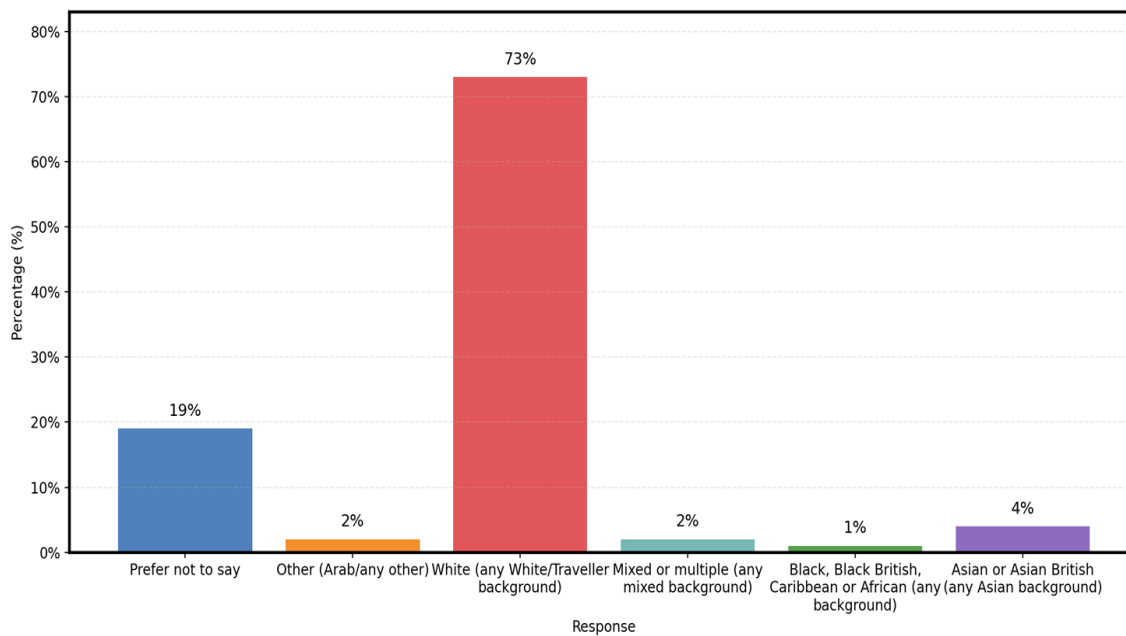
20. What is your age range?

| Response          | Count | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-------|----------------|
| Under 25          | 3     | 2%             |
| 25-34             | 8     | 4%             |
| 35-44             | 15    | 8%             |
| 45-54             | 30    | 15%            |
| 55-64             | 50    | 26%            |
| 65+               | 68    | 35%            |
| Prefer not to say | 22    | 11%            |



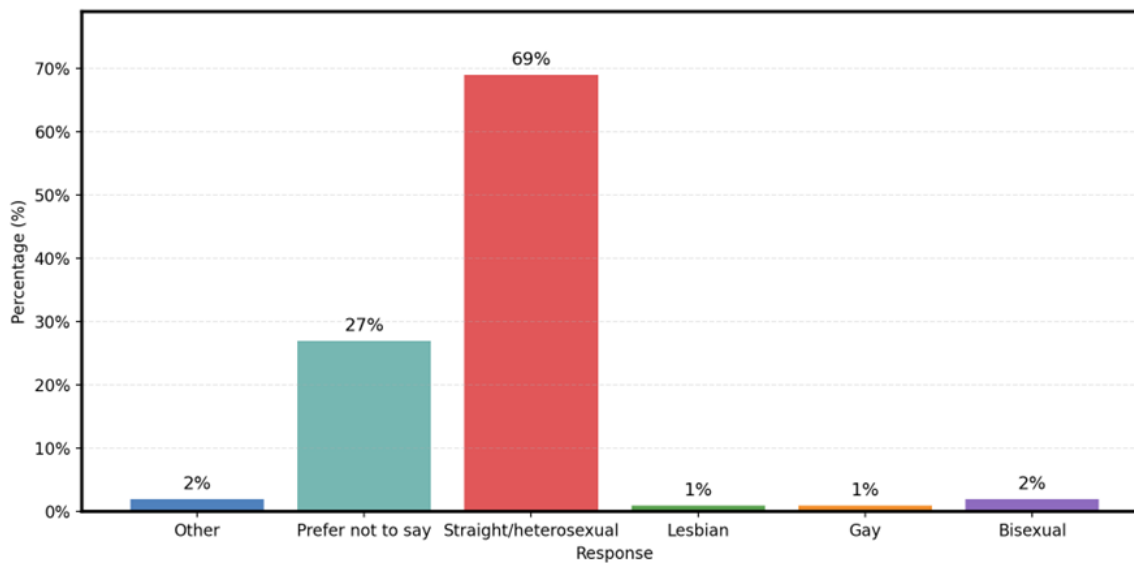
## 21. Which group best describes your ethnicity?

| Response  | Count | Percentage (%) |
|---|-------|----------------|
| Asian or Asian British (any Asian background)               | 8     | 4%             |
| Black, Black British, Caribbean or African (any background) | 2     | 1%             |
| Mixed or multiple (any mixed background)                    | 3     | 2%             |
| White (any White/Traveller background)                      | 144   | 73%            |
| Other (Arab/any other)                                      | 3     | 2%             |
| Prefer not to say   | 37    | 19%            |



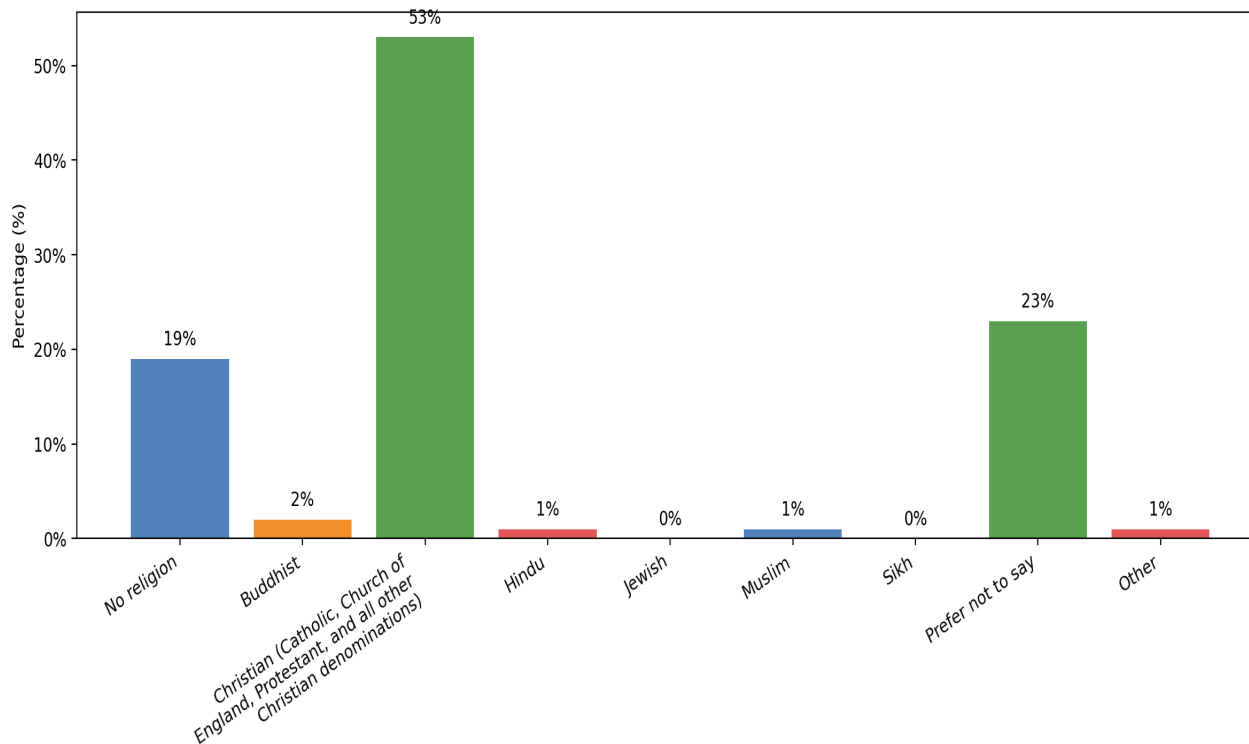
## 22. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

| Response              | Count | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------|
| Bisexual              | 3     | 2%             |
| Gay                   | 1     | 1%             |
| Lesbian               | 1     | 1%             |
| Straight/heterosexual | 134   | 69%            |
| Prefer not to say     | 52    | 27%            |
| Other                 | 3     | 2%             |



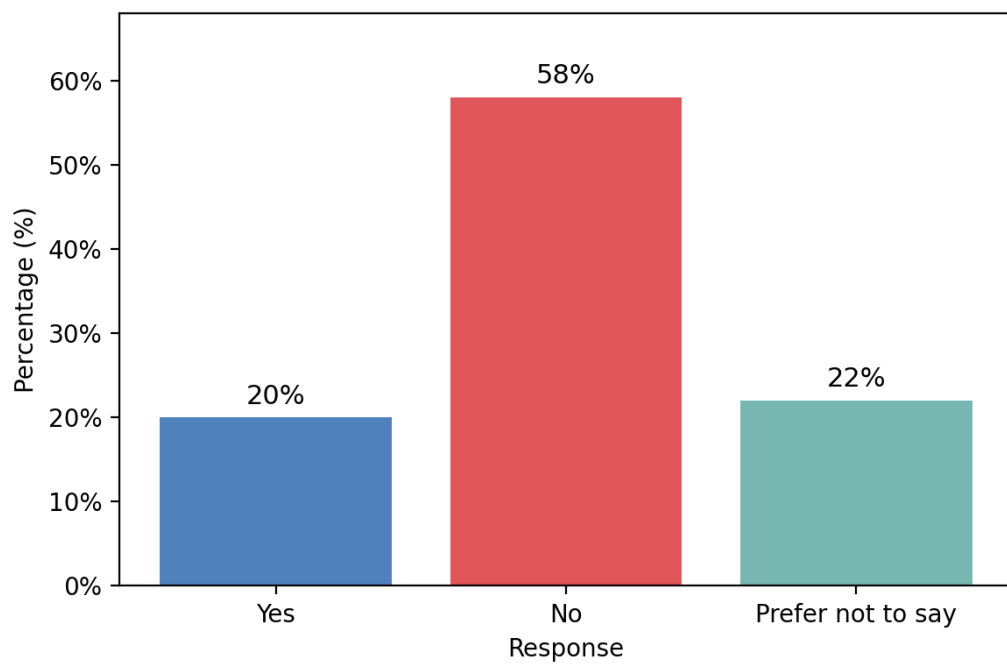
### 23. What is your religion or belief?

| Response   | Count | Percentage (%) |
|--|-------|----------------|
| No religion  | 37    | 19%            |
| Buddhist   | 4     | 2%             |
| Christian (Catholic, Church of England, Protestant, and all other Christian denominations) | 104   | 53%            |
| Hindu  | 2     | 1%             |
| Jewish   | 0     | 0%             |
| Muslim   | 1     | 1%             |
| Sikh   | 0     | 0%             |
| Prefer not to say  | 45    | 23%            |
| Other  | 2     | 1%             |



### 24. Do you have a disability? A physical or mental illness or condition that has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

| Response          | Count | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-------|----------------|
| Yes               | 39    | 20%            |
| No                | 113   | 58%            |
| Prefer not to say | 44    | 22%            |





# Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

## STEP A) Description of what is to be assessed and its relevance to equality

### What is being assessed?

Review of a service ☒ Staff restructure ☐ Decommissioning a service ☐

Changing a policy ☐ Tendering for a new service ☐ A strategy or plan ☐

A review of the service provision of the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) to include:

- 1) a transition of the management of the service to Adult Social Care and Health
- 2) the implementation of a structured day service provision designed to deliver planned, person-centred support aligned with assessed care needs.

The new delivery model will focus on providing meaningful daytime opportunities within a framework that meets statutory requirements and will also support volunteer adults attending site with a LD as part of a wider programme to promote individual outcomes.

Who is accountable? E.g. Head of Service or Corporate Director

Daniel Kennedy– Corporate Director of Residents Services

Sandra Taylor – Corporate Director of Adult Social Care & Health

Date assessment completed and approved by accountable person

11<sup>th</sup> December 2025



## Names and job titles of people carrying out the assessment

Jan Major – Assistant Director of Direct Care – Adult Social Care & Health

Marcus Harvey – Interim Head of Waste and Green Spaces – Residents Services

Vicky Trott - Equality and Wellbeing Manager – Human Resources

### A.1) What are the main aims and intended benefits of what you are assessing?

The RAGC offers learning experiences for people with additional needs, growing their skills and confidence to support opportunities for learning.

The proposed transition of the RAGC service into a structured, outcomes-focused day provision within Adult Social Care (ASC) aims to ensure equitable access to valued horticultural and gardening activities for adults with assessed social care needs and learning disabilities and those with low to moderate needs, who have had a history of attending the RAGC and require continued support.

By integrating these activities into the council's wider day service offer, the model seeks to promote independence, social interaction, and wellbeing for vulnerable residents, while safeguarding continuity of support for existing users.

The revised approach is designed to maximise community engagement, deliver person-centered services that meet statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, and ensure efficient use of public resources.

In doing so, the council is committed to reducing barriers to participation, fostering inclusion, and enabling all service users—regardless of background or ability—to benefit from therapeutic, educational, and social opportunities.

The transition plan will be developed in partnership with service users, carers, and volunteers to ensure individual needs are met and that the impact on protected groups is fully considered and addressed.

### A.2) Who are the service users or staff affected by what you are assessing? What is their equality profile?

Users of the existing RAGC service can be considered in four group profiles.

1. 'Gardeneers' – volunteer gardeners with additional needs
2. 'Gardeneers' – volunteer gardeners with assessed social care needs
3. Independent volunteers
4. Schools, colleges, and education facilities across the borough whereby students with additional needs gain horticultural skills and experience.

6 of the gardeners that have been identified with social care needs attend the centre with a paid carer.

The equality data that is known for the 30 gardeners and 11 volunteers is presented below:

## **Age**

### Gardeners

- 15 (50%) are under the age of 39
- 9 (30%) are aged between 40 and 59
- 6 (20%) are over the age of 60

### Volunteers

- 1 (9%) is under the age of 39
- 1 (9%) is aged between 40 and 59
- 5 (46%) are over the age of 60
- 4 (36%) age is unknown

## **Disability**

### Gardeners

Although the exact nature of the disability of the all the gardeners is unknown, they are deemed to be vulnerable adults, and many have some kind of neurodiversity, poor mental health, and/or learning disability which impacts on their day to day lives.

### Volunteers

There is no data on the disability status of the volunteers.

## **Sex**

### Gardeners

- 3 (10%) are female
- 27 (90%) are male

### Volunteers

- 9 (82%) are female
- 2 (18%) are male

Equality data is not held for any other protected characteristics.

Equality data is not held for users attending through an educational facility however the students accessing this service generally have Special Educational Needs.

No data is held for carers that attend the site.

A.3) Who are the stakeholders in this assessment and what is their interest in it?

| Stakeholders   | Interest   |
|--|--|
| 'Gardeneers' - volunteer gardeners with additional needs and/or an assessed social care need | <p>To ensure that they have access to continued provision of meaningful activities and social interaction, which is delivered in a safe and welcoming environment, appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>To ensure that any transitional arrangements address individual needs and remove barriers to participation.</p>  |
| Independent volunteers   | <p>To ensure that their contribution is recognised and they are able to continue their voluntary work if they wish to in line with the new delivery model.</p>   |
| Carers / family members of the gardeneers  | <p>To ensure that their relatives ( Gardeneers) who attend the RAGC have access to continued provision of meaningful activities and social interaction, which is delivered in a safe and welcoming environment, appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>To ensure that any transitional arrangements address individual needs and remove barriers to participation.</p> |
| Education providers  | <p>To ensure that they have access to skills-based learning for their students in a safe and welcoming environment.</p> <p>To ensure that any transitional arrangements address individual needs and remove barriers to participation.</p>   |
| Council staff  | <p>To ensure that any redeployment and/or redundancy processes are carried out in line with council policy and procedures.</p> <p>To ensure that the gardeneers, volunteers and carers are fully supported during the transition.</p>  |
| Assistant Director of Direct Care – Adult Social Care & Health                               | <p>To ensure that the gardeneers have continued access to meaningful activities and social interaction in a safe and welcoming environment, that is appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>To ensure that volunteers are where possible</p>  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>able to continue their voluntary contributions in line with the new delivery model.</p> <p>To ensure that any transitional arrangements address individual needs, provide full support, and remove barriers to participation.</p> <p>To ensure independence, social interaction, and wellbeing for vulnerable residents, while safeguarding continuity of support for existing users.</p> <p>To ensure maximum community engagement, the delivery of person-centred services that meet statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and ensure efficient use of public resources.</p>   |
| Corporate Directors of Adult Social Care and Health, and Residents Services | <p>To ensure that the gardeners have continued access to meaningful activities and social interaction in a safe and welcoming environment, that is appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>To ensure that volunteers are where possible able to continue their voluntary contributions in line with the new delivery model.</p> <p>To ensure that any transitional arrangements address individual needs, provide full support, and remove barriers to participation.</p> <p>To ensure independence, social interaction, and wellbeing for vulnerable residents, while safeguarding continuity of support for existing users.</p> <p>To ensure maximum community engagement, the delivery of person-centred services that meet statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and ensure efficient use of public resources.</p> |
| Leader of the Council, Council Cabinet and Members                          | <p>To ensure that the gardeners have continued access to meaningful activities and social interaction in a safe and welcoming environment, that is appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>To ensure that volunteers are where possible able to continue their voluntary contributions in line with the new delivery model.</p> <p>To ensure that any transitional arrangements</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>address individual needs, provide full support, and remove barriers to participation.</p> <p>To ensure independence, social interaction, and wellbeing for vulnerable residents, while safeguarding continuity of support for existing users.</p> <p>To ensure maximum community engagement, the delivery of person-centered services that meet statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and ensure efficient use of public resources.</p> |
|--|---|

A.4) Which protected characteristics or community issues are relevant to the assessment? ✓ in the box.

|                               |   |                       |   |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| Age                           | ✓ | Sex                   | ✓ |
| Disability                    | ✓ | Sexual Orientation    |   |
| Gender reassignment           |   | Socio-economic status |   |
| Marriage or civil partnership |   | Carers                | ✓ |
| Pregnancy or maternity        |   | Community Cohesion    |   |
| Race/Ethnicity                |   | Community Safety      |   |
| Religion or belief            |   | Human Rights          |   |

## **STEP B) Consideration of information; data, research, consultation, engagement**

B.1) Consideration of information and data - what have you got and what is it telling you?

The profile of the gardeners shows that they are proportionately more likely to be men aged 23-49 with a disability.

Any proposals may therefore have a disproportionate impact on this equality group.

## Consultation

B.2) Did you carry out any consultation or engagement as part of this assessment?

Please tick ✓

NO ✓

YES ☐

No consultation activities were undertaken specifically as part of this assessment however a comprehensive consultation was undertaken to inform the proposed transition of the RAGC service.

The process ran from 27 August 2025 to 7 October 2025, and included residents, service users, carers, families, and volunteers associated with the RAGC site. The consultation was designed to be accessible, with structured questions available both online and in hard copy formats and supported engagement for those with complex needs. Social Work Teams worked directly with families to ensure all voices were heard.

A total of 202 responses were received, representing a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including clubs, societies, parent/carers, volunteers, adult social care users, and staff.

The feedback overwhelmingly opposed the council's proposals to relocate services, with 95% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Respondents emphasised the importance of maintaining access to horticultural and gardening activities for vulnerable adults, highlighting therapeutic benefits, community, and continuity—particularly for those with learning disabilities who may not meet statutory support thresholds.

Concerns were raised about the suitability of alternative locations, the impact of change on service users, and the need for appropriate transport support.

The consultation confirmed strong support for retaining valued activities at the RAGC site and highlighted the need to consider the impact on all protected groups, ensuring that any transition plan addresses individual needs and reduces barriers to participation.

Feedback from the consultation was reviewed and directly informed the recommendations for the future service offer, ensuring that the revised model promotes inclusion, continuity, and equitable access for all service users.

Engagement and consultation will be ongoing to ensure the impact of the proposals, if approved, is monitored.

### B.3) Provide any other information to consider as part of the assessment

#### Legal context

The council has a public duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations (Equality Act 2010)

#### Financial context

The savings attached to this review is £150k

#### National policy context

The revised approach is designed to maximise community engagement, deliver person-centred services that meet statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and ensure efficient use of public resources.

## C) Assessment

What did you find in B1? Who is affected? Is there, or likely to be, an impact on certain groups?

C.1) Describe any **NEGATIVE** impacts (actual or potential):

| Equality Group                              | Impact on this group and actions you need to take   |
|---|---|
| Male gardeners aged 23-49 with a disability | <p>The proposed changes in service provision may have a disproportionately negative impact on this equality group due to their vulnerabilities, as they may need time to adjust to any changes.</p> <p>The transition plan will be developed in partnership with service users, carers, and volunteers to ensure individual needs are met and that the impact is fully considered and addressed.</p> <p>The impact of the changes will be monitored and any additional mitigation measures will be implemented where necessary.</p> |
| Carers                                      | <p>The proposed changes in service provision may have a disproportionately negative impact on this group as they are supporting those who are particularly vulnerable and who may need time to adjust to any changes.</p> <p>The transition plan will be developed in partnership with service users, carers, and volunteers to ensure individual needs are met and that the impact is fully considered and addressed.</p>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | The impact of the changes will be monitored and any additional mitigation measures will be implemented where necessary. |
|--|---|

## C.2) Describe any **POSITIVE** impacts

| Equality Group                      | Impact on this group and actions you need to take   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Vulnerable adults with a disability | <p>By integrating activities at the RAGC into the council's wider day service offer, the model seeks to promote independence, social interaction, and wellbeing for vulnerable residents, while safeguarding continuity of support for existing users.</p> <p>The council is committed to reducing barriers to participation, fostering inclusion, and enabling all service users—regardless of background or ability—to benefit from therapeutic, educational, and social opportunities.</p> |

## D) Conclusions

The proposed transition of the Rural Activities Garden Centre service into a structured, outcomes-focused day provision within Adult Social Care (ASC) aims to ensure equitable access to valued horticultural and gardening activities for adults with assessed social care needs and learning disabilities.

This change represents a shift from an open-access, activity-based approach to a planned, person-centred service aligned with assessed care needs.

Although the change in delivery is intended to be positive for the service users and volunteers, it is recognised that there may be a negative impact on some people who may find change more challenging.

The comprehensive consultation and engagement exercise highlighted that any transitional arrangements need to address individual needs, provide full support, and remove barriers to participation.

The transition plan will be developed in partnership with service users, carers, and volunteers to ensure individual needs are met and that the impact is fully considered and addressed.

Further Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out as and when required.



**Signed and dated:**

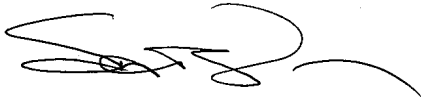
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Kennedy', written over a light blue horizontal line.

13/01/26

**Name and position:**

Dan Kennedy, Corporate Director, Residents Services.

**Signed and dated:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Taylor', written over a light blue horizontal line.

13/01/26

**Name and position:**

Sandra Taylor, Corporate Director, Adult Social Care & Health