



Democratic Services

Location: Phase II
DDI: 01895 25 0185
CMD No: 2026/1745

**To: COUNCILLOR ADAM BENNETT
CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY,
ENVIRONMENT & ENFORCEMENT**

**COUNCILLOR WAYNE BRIDGES
CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS SERVICES**

c.c. All Members of the Residents Services Select Committee
c.c. Dan Kennedy, Corporate Director of Residents Services
c.c. Richard Webb, Residents Services

Date: 30 July 2026

Non-Key Decision request

Form D

Review of the Free and Subsidised Pest Control Service

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 7 August 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: Review of the Free and Subsidised Pest Control Service

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 & Enforcement / Cabinet Member for Residents Services

Executive Decision Report

Cabinet Member

Thursday, 30 July 2026



Review of the Free and Subsidised Pest Control Service

Cabinet Member Lead	Cabinet Member for Community, Environment & Enforcement (Cllr Bennett)
Consulting Cabinet Members	Cabinet Member for Residents' Services (Cllr Bridges)
Chief Officer responsible	Corporate Director of Residents Services
Report author	Richard Webb; Director of Community Safety and Enforcement

Report classification and reason	Public For General Release
Relevant Committee	Residents' Services
Electoral Ward	All Wards

1. Executive Summary

The report summarises the current Council provision of free or subsidised pest control services for residents and recommends ceasing to provide those services. The recommendations are based on the outcome of a review of use of those services and are intended to ensure best value for money for residents of the Borough from the resources available to the Council.

The current operating model provides a free service to any resident aged 65 or over, regardless of their financial status. The Council also provides subsidised services for residents on certain means tested benefits. The Council does not have any statutory duty to provide these services and they are available for all residents through commercial service providers. These free and subsidised services supported by the Council are used by only a small proportion of residents.

A review of pest control discounts was set out in the approved Medium Term Financial Forecast in February 2026/27. The proposal does not impact Hillingdon Housing tenants and they will continue to be eligible for free or reduced cost pest control services.

2. Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet Member for Community, Environment & Enforcement, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Residents' Services:

- 1) Considers the data and information on residents' requests for free and subsidised pest control services in the report;**

- 2) Notes the equalities impact assessment and the predicted impact to service provision;
- 3) Notes that Hillingdon housing tenants will not be affected by this proposal; and
- 4) Agrees to the withdrawal of the free and subsidised pest control services other than for Council tenants and leaseholders to ensure best use of Council taxpayer resources.

3. Reasons for decision

The Council has a duty to ensure that the resources it has available deliver best value services for residents. A review of the free pest control service offered by the Council for the over-65s shows that typically only 50 to 80 households are visited by the pest control contractor each month, with many of these households receiving multiple visits. Over the last four years, the costs of providing this free service have reached over £248k.

The proposal set out in this report is to withdraw the free and subsidised pest control services offered by the Council and to maintain service provision across Hillingdon's tenanted housing stock and in instances where there is a statutory duty for reasons related to public health, as further explained below.

4. Proposal

Current Council Offer

1. The Council's subsidised pest control service currently provides a free or reduced cost services as follows:

Treatment of rats and mice inside the home and rat nests in the garden (3 visits):

- Free for Council tenants and all homeowners over-65.
- £15 for owner occupier and council leaseholders in receipt of means tested benefits (includes income support, housing benefit, council tax benefits, pension credit, tax credit and working tax credit, Universal Credit and income-related job seekers allowance).

Treatment of wasps:

- £52 for 1 visit for Council tenants or council leaseholders.

Treatment of cockroaches, squirrels, mortar bees, pharaoh ants and woodworm:

- Free for Council tenants

2. The proposal is to end the non-statutory subsidised pest control service which would provide a cost saving to the Council. The offer for Council tenants would remain unaffected as that is separately funded through the Housing Revenue Account and managed by the Property Services team.

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3. The Council will continue to undertake pest control measures on its property and where legally required.
4. Pest control services will remain available to residents through private pest control providers. The end of the subsidised service offer means that these services will probably be at a higher cost to residents who were previously eligible for the subsidised service. Therefore, the impact of the end of the subsidised service will be mainly financial.

Usage

5. Data has been collated for the last 4 years which shows the levels of usage of the free service for over 65s and the subsidised service for residents on means tested benefits. The Council's costs in providing the service, totalling over £248k over the four-year period.

Period	Number of Visits	Cost
Apr 2022-Mar 2023	2346	£50,360
Apr 2023-Mar 2024	4955	£82,158
Apr 2024-Mar 2025	4282	£64,347
Apr 2025-Mar 2026	1921	£51,399
Total		£248,264

6. Data is not held showing the breakdown between the different eligibility criteria
7. Usually, issues are resolved with 3-4 visits. However, many residents access the service multiple times and some received over 25 free visits to eliminate pest activity. The number of times that a resident can access the subsidised service in a year is not limited.
8. Typically, the contractors carry out visits to between 50 and 80 households per month with each visit costing approx. £15 in the first three years and approx. £26 in the last year.
9. Due to a new contract being implemented, the costs of visits have increased. If high numbers of call outs are received in this and future years, it is highly likely that the costs will increase considerably and create a pressure on the Anti-Social Behaviour Team budget (the cost centre that supports the funding of this service).

Legal Framework

10. The Council has a number of statutory duties relating to pest infestations. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990) pest infestations can constitute a statutory nuisance when they pose a risk to health. Local authorities must investigate complaints of statutory nuisance, including those caused by pests. This typically arises as a result of accumulated refuse, unhygienic waste storage, or poor structural conditions. Under the Housing Act 2004, pests are considered a hazard to health (e.g., rats, mice, cockroaches, bed bugs). As a result, the Council in some circumstances has a duty to address pest infestation in residential property.

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11. Pest control is a core responsibility for businesses preparing food for sale or supply, and local authorities have duties under food safety legislation to ensure businesses have pest management systems in place to prevent health risks arising.
12. Businesses have a statutory duty of care over their waste, to ensure it is managed in a way that does not create environmental problems or hazards.
13. Local authorities have duties to ensure businesses manage their waste in accordance with those legal responsibilities. A failure to manage waste appropriately can create food sources for pests, leading to an infestation.
14. The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide pest control services for residents or to subsidise pest control services.
15. The service change does not impact on the way in which the Council will seek to discharge its statutory duties concerning pest infestations or health risks relating to pests.

Budget context

16. The offer of 3 free pest control visits to homeowners aged over 65 or reduced cost visits for any resident in receipt of means tested benefits is jointly administered by the Resident's Hub and the Anti-Social Behaviour Team. The budget for this service is held by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team. Current booking processes do not include means testing or checks for repeated usage of the scheme.
17. The budget is £47.3k p.a. but normally overspends as the cost of services provided to eligible residents typically exceeds the budget (as shown above). The budget is supported by the general revenue fund.

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

18. The proposal to withdraw the subsidised pest control service will directly impact residents who are currently eligible for those services and who would have otherwise accessed those services. These impacts will be financial since the services remain available privately but at a higher cost and will only impact on a small proportion of the population of the Borough given the number of people who currently access this service.
19. The change will provide cost reductions to the Council allowing the Council to avoid or minimise service reductions in other functions it provides and therefore consideration of the impact of this change has to be balanced against the impacts on other functions if this non-statutory service continued to be funded.
20. The Council will still act on reports of pest infestations when it has a statutory duty to do so, which will mitigate the impacts of this service change on residents.
21. An Equalities Impact and Human Rights Assessment has been carried out and is included in Appendix 1 of this report.

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Financial Implications

22. This Policy change will not require any financial outlay at this point. There are no direct costs arising from this proposal since the proposed change will result in a net reduction in service operating costs through the removal of spend across the service and will remove the risk of pressures through overspend.

Corporate implications

Financial (mandatory)	Y	Equalities impact assessment	Y
Legal (mandatory)	Y	Workforce	
Alternative options (mandatory)	Y	Public Health	Y
Risk management (mandatory)	Y	External partners	
Asset		Communications	
Procurement		Committee comments	
Planning		Digital	
Climate Change		Other	

a) Financial

The Council's costs in providing the service via John O'Conner (Ground Maintenance) Ltd, totalling over £248k over the four-year period.

Period	Number of Visits	Cost
Apr 2022-Mar 2023	2346	£50,360
Apr 2023-Mar 2024	4955	£82,158
Apr 2024-Mar 2025	4282	£64,347
Apr 2025-Mar 2026	1921	£51,399
Total		£248,264

In 2025/26 the expenditure budget was set at £48,600 with an income target of £500; the Council received £708.33 of income relating to reimbursement of Pest Control expenditure for under 65's. Most of the expenditure relates to over 65's and is not reimbursable.

The savings target arising from the review of the Pest Control Discounts has already been incorporated within the approved 2026/27 budget. As a result, no ongoing budget provision has been included for this service from 2026/27 onwards; any variation from the proposals set out in this report will create a corresponding budget pressure requiring mitigation and assessment through the wider MTFS.

b) Legal

Paragraphs 11 to 16 of this report address the legal framework, confirming that the Council does not have a statutory duty to provide pest control services for residents or to subsidise pest control services. Provided that the Council continues to meet its statutory environmental health

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obligations, there are no legal implications to the proposed withdrawal of the free and subsidised pest control services.

The Council is under a public sector equality duty pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. To this end, an equalities impact assessment has been completed and is appended to this report and has informed the recommended approach.

Any contractual action involved must comply with the Council's Procurement Standing Orders.

c) Alternative options

<i>Alternative Options</i>	<i>Rationale for rejecting option</i>
Option A – Continue to provide free and subsidised pest control services	Information on the use of these services shows that they are of benefit to only a small proportion of Hillingdon residents. To ensure best use of council resources to the benefit of all residents, continuing with the free and subsidised service is not recommended.

d) Risk management

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
Challenge to the Council's decision to withdraw this service	The Council has no legal obligation to provide free or subsidised pest control services for all residents. The Council will continue to meet its duties in relation to pest control and continue to provide pest control services to Council tenants and leaseholders under existing policies.
Residents choose not to contact pest control providers leading to increased pest infestations	Rats and mice occur naturally in the environment and their population is managed through limiting food sources and harbourage. Pest control services will continue to be available to residents, from commercial providers and most likely at higher cost. The Council will continue to provide pest control services where it has legal obligations to do so. Businesses have legal obligations to manage pests in their workplaces and manage their waste appropriately to minimise it becoming a cause of increased pest populations.

e) Other implications

An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken. This report also considers the public health aspect in relation to pest control.

5. Consultation & engagement

No formal resident consultation has been undertaken on this proposal. It is recognised that the proposal to withdraw the subsidised pest control service will negatively impact residents who are currently eligible for those services and who would have otherwise accessed those services. However, there is no legal requirement to provide subsidised pest control services and no legal requirement to carry out a consultation over the cessation of a discretionary service. Pest control services will remain available to residents through pest control companies. Therefore, the impacts on residents currently eligible for the subsidised services will be financial and will only impact on a small proportion of the population of the Borough given the number of people who currently access this service.

The Council will still act on reports of pest infestations when it has a statutory duty to do so, which will mitigate some of the impacts of this service change on residents. The decision to review the pest control discounts was included in the budget setting Cabinet / Council papers, as part of the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy, and therefore this review was communicated publicly in late 2025 and early 2026.

6. Timetable for implementation

The Cabinet Member has the constitutional authority to make alterations to services under their remit in-line with the Council's approved budget.

If this is approved, and subject to scrutiny call-in, implementation of the decision can follow immediately and requires only changes to the Council's website to advise residents on ways to access alternative pest control services and amendments to the Resident's Hub procedures.

List of appendices attached

Appendix 1 - Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers

NIL.

Appendix 1

Status and reason

Public Appendix
For General Release

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

Attached.



Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

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

What is being assessed? Please tick ✓

Review of a service ✓ Staff restructure ☐ Decommissioning a service ☐
Changing a policy ☐ Tendering for a new service ☐ A strategy or plan ☐

Cessation of subsidised pest control service for Hillingdon residents

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

Richard Webb – Director of Community Safety and Enforcement
Dan Kennedy – Corporate Director, Residents Services

Date assessment completed and approved by accountable person

27/01/2026

Names and job titles of people carrying out the assessment

Richard Webb – Director of Community Safety and Enforcement

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

The Council's subsidised pest control service currently provides a free or reduced cost services as follows:

Treatment of rats and mice inside the home and rat nests in the garden (3 visits):

- Free for Council tenants and all homeowners over-65
- £15 for owner occupier and council leaseholders in receipt of means tested benefits (includes income support, housing benefit, council tax benefits, pension credit, tax credit and working tax credit, Universal Credit and income-related job seekers allowance)

Treatment of wasps:

- £52 for 1 visit for Council tenants or council leaseholders

Treatment of cockroaches, squirrels, mortar bees, pharaoh ants and woodworm:

- Free for council tenants

The proposal is to end the non-statutory subsidised element of a pest control service which would provide a cost saving to the council.

The offer for Council tenants would remain unaffected as that is separately funded through the Housing Revenue Account and managed by the Property Services team.

The Council will continue to undertake pest control on its property and where legally required.

Pest control services will remain available to residents through private pest control providers. The end of the subsidised service offer means that these services will probably be at a higher cost to residents who were previously eligible for the subsidised service. Therefore, the impact of the end of the subsidised service will be mainly financial.

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

The proposal will affect homeowners over 65 and those on means tested benefits, who will no longer be able to access the subsidised offer.

According to the Census 2021:

13.5% of the population in Hillingdon are aged 65+

Those on means tested benefits are more likely to have a lower socio-economic status. Although this is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, socio-economic status is linked to other protected characteristics:

Pakistani & Bangladeshi groups most likely to be in low income

Women more likely than men to have never worked/be long-term unemployed and have higher disability rates

[Socioeconomic status - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures](#)

Disabled people face disproportionately poor economic, housing, and employment outcomes

[Protected characteristics by disability status, England and Wales: Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics](#)

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

Stakeholders	Interest
Residents over 65 and those in receipt of means tested benefits	To ensure that pest control services are provided in a cost effective, fair and transparent manner. To ensure they can access an alternative affordable pest control service should they require it. To ensure they can access financial support if required. To ensure that that the council prevents health risks arising from pest infestations.
Hillingdon residents	To ensure that pest control services are provided in a cost effective, fair and transparent manner. To ensure that that the council prevents health risks arising from pest infestations. To ensure that the council provides a cost effective and efficient mechanism to report and resolve environmental problems impacting on residents and where aligned to functions and duties of the Council.
Director of Community Safety and Enforcement	To ensure that pest control services are provided in a cost effective, fair and transparent manner. To ensure that that the council prevents health risks arising from pest infestations. To ensure that the council provides a cost effective and efficient mechanism to report and resolve environmental problems impacting on residents and where aligned to functions and duties of the Council.
Corporate Director of Residents Services	To ensure that pest control services are provided in a cost effective, fair and transparent manner.

	To ensure that that the council prevents health risks arising from pest infestations. To ensure that the council provides a cost effective and efficient mechanism to report and resolve environmental problems impacting on residents and where aligned to functions and duties of the Council.
Leader of the Council and Council Cabinet	To ensure that pest control services are provided in a cost effective, fair and transparent manner. To ensure that that the council prevents health risks arising from pest infestations. To ensure that the council provides a cost effective and efficient mechanism to report and resolve environmental problems impacting on residents and where aligned to functions and duties of the Council.

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 proposal will affect homeowners over 65 and those in receipt of means tested benefits, who will no longer be able to access the subsidised offer.

The proposal may therefore have a disproportionately negative impact on people from these groups from the perspective of potential financial disadvantage.

The cohort of people who are in receipt of means tested benefits are more likely to be from a Pakistani or Bangladeshi background, be women and/or have a disability.

Consultation

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

Please tick ✓ NO ✓ YES ☐

No specific consultation has taken place as part of this assessment.

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

Legal context

The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to-

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Council, as a public authority, is also required to comply with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Article 8 of the ECHR provides that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence and that there shall be no interference by public authority with the exercise of this right except such as "in accordance with the law" and "necessary in a democratic society".

The Council has a number of statutory duties relating to pest infestations.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990) pest infestations can constitute a statutory nuisance when they pose a risk to health. Local authorities must investigate complaints of statutory nuisance, including those caused by pests. This typically arises as a result of accumulated refuse, unhygienic waste storage, or poor structural conditions.

Under the Housing Act 2004 pests are considered a hazard to health (e.g., rats, mice, cockroaches, bed bugs). As a result, the Council in some circumstances has a duty to address pest infestation in residential property.

Pest control is a core responsibility for businesses preparing food for sale or supply, and local authorities have duties under food safety legislation to ensure businesses have pest management systems in place to prevent health risks arising.

Businesses have a statutory duty of care over their waste, to ensure it is managed in a way that does not create environmental problems or hazards.

Local authorities have duties to ensure businesses manage their waste in accordance with those legal responsibilities. A failure to manage waste appropriately can create food sources for pests, leading to an infestation.

The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide pest control services for residents or to provide subsidise pest control services.

The service change does not impact on the way in which the Council will seek to discharge its statutory duties concerning pest infestations or health risks relating to pests.

Budget context

The offer of 3 free pest control visits to homeowners aged over 65 or in receipt of means tested benefits is administered by Customer Contact Centre but the budget for this service is held by the Street Scene Enforcement team. The budget is £47.3k p.a. but normally overspends as the cost of services provided to eligible residents exceeds the budget. The budget is supported by the general revenue fund.

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
Residents aged over 65	Residents aged over 65 will no longer receive subsidised pest control services from the Council. The proposal may therefore have a disproportionately negative impact on this group. All reports of pest infestations that are assessed as potentially falling within one of the statutory duties of the Council will still be investigated by the Council. These legal duties apply so that any infestation that is likely to be hazardous to health will still require action from the Council. Pest infestations in Council property will continue to be investigated by the Council. If implemented, the impact of the proposal will be monitored.
Residents in receipt of means tested benefits who are more likely to be from Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds, women and/or those with a disability	Residents in receipt of means tested benefits will no longer receive subsidised pest control services from the Council. The proposal may therefore have a disproportionately negative impact on this cohort including those who share protected characteristics including those from Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds, women and/or those with a disability. All reports of pest infestations that are assessed as potentially falling within one of the statutory duties of the Council will still be investigated by the Council. These legal duties apply so that any infestation that is likely to be hazardous to health will still require action from the Council. Pest infestations in Council property will continue to be investigated by the Council. If implemented, the impact of the proposal will be monitored.

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

Equality Group	Impact on this group and actions you need to take
All	The efficiencies generated from the withdrawal of this service will ensure that other services which face higher levels of demand or which support the most vulnerable in the area can continue to be provided.

D) Conclusions

We recognise that the proposal to withdraw the subsidised pest control service will directly negatively residents who are currently eligible for those services and who would have otherwise accessed those services.

These impacts will be financial since the services remain available but at a higher cost and will only impact on a small proportion of the population of the borough given the number of people who currently access this service.

The change will provide cost reductions to the council allowing the Council to avoid or minimise service reductions in other functions it provides and therefore consideration of the impact of this change has to be balanced against the impacts on other functions if this non-statutory service continued to be funded.

We recognise that the end of the subsidised service for people in receipt of means tested benefits will result in people of lower socio-economic status losing access to a subsidised service that they may need. However, the Council will still act on reports of pest infestations when it has a statutory duty to do so, which will mitigate the impacts of this service change on residents.

Signed and dated:



27/01/2026

Name and position: Richard Webb; Director of Community Safety and Enforcement