

Hillingdon

01

SINCE 2022 188

02

LOCAL LANDSCAPE 189

03

ELECTORAL PROSPECTS 191

- ↗ HAYES 192
- ↗ HARLINGTON AND WEST DRAYTON 193
- ↗ UXBRIDGE 194
- ↗ HILLINGDON AND ICKENHAM 195
- ↗ NORTHWOOD 196
- ↗ RUISLIP 197

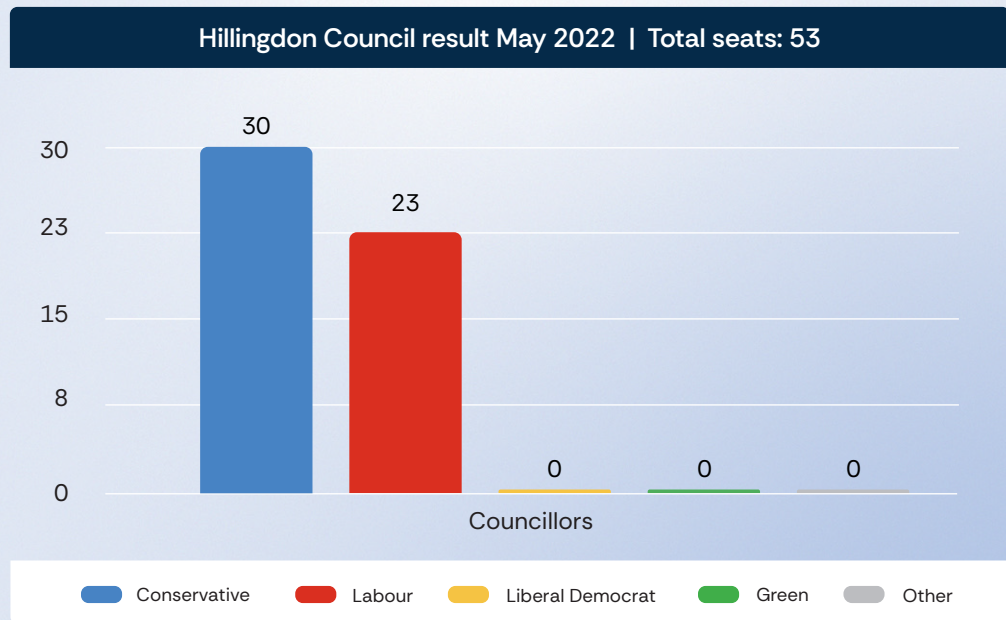
04

WHAT TO WATCH FOR 198

Since 2022

Conservative Defence

The gap narrowed, but remained reluctant to close. Labour picked up seats, even though the number contested had fallen by 12 compared with 2018, but Hillingdon stayed doggedly blue. Conventionally, the Conservatives would consolidate this time, given Labour’s national unpopularity. But these are not conventional times.



By-elections since May 2022

02 MAY 2025	HILLINGDON EAST	CON HOLD
-------------	-----------------	----------

The Tories will enter the elections with the same number of councillors as they started with in May 2022. They’ve gained one thanks to recruiting a Labour councillor – albeit one who’d been suspended then deselected – but also lost one, who resigned from the council earlier this year, leaving his seat vacant.

Labour, by contrast, has had a turbulent time, beginning just a month after the 2022 vote when one of their number was suspended after past online activity was discovered. Three years later, the leader of the Labour group was deselected along with two colleagues, and another resigned from the party. These five have formed the Hayes Independent Party group, representing wards in that part of the borough. A sixth member of the 2022 Labour intake now sits as a Green. The Labour group has therefore shrunk from 23 to 16.

Amid all this, just one by-election has taken place, resulting in a Conservative hold with a small but, for them, heartening swing from Labour. But with Reform likely to disturb the old two-party balance, they might need a few more of those if they are to again win a majority.

Local landscape

The northern two-thirds of Hillingdon are habitually dominated by the Conservatives and rest of it by Labour, with a few variable spaces near the middle. Tory strongholds above the M40 contain villages and greenery, sometimes a stone’s throw from Bucks or Herts, and Ruislip Lido, a 60-acre lake with a beach. In the south, the town of Hayes has been represented in parliament as part of the Hayes & Harlington constituency by Labour Left stalwart and sometimes rebel John McDonnell since 1997.

The borough’s biggest town is Uxbridge, noted for its Charles Holden-designed London Underground station, terminus of branches of the Piccadilly and Metropolitan lines, and for the Battle of Britain Bunker, from which crucial RAF operations were conducted during World War 2. The Uxbridge & South Ruislip constituency has more recently found fame as the last parliamentary resting place of Boris Johnson and for the by-election that followed his resignation, won narrowly by the Tories after a campaign focused on the Mayor of London’s then impending expansion of his Ultra-Low Emission Zone.

Hillingdon Council elections since 2002						
Year	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP/Ref	Green	Other
2002	31	27	7	-	-	-
2006	45	18	2	-	-	-
2010	46	18	-	-	-	-
2014	42	23	-	-	-	-
2018	44	21	-	-	-	-
2022	30	23	-	-	-	-

Labour later captured the seat at the general election, though not by a big margin, perhaps reflecting the resilience of Conservative support among voters in much of this part of outer London. Demographic changes that would normally be expected to help Labour haven’t really moved the dial. In the 2021 Census, slightly fewer

than half of Hillingdon residents described themselves as white, a drop from 60 per cent in 2011, while those saying they were Asian reached one third of the total. During the same period, the proportion of homes that were privately rented grew a lot too, rising to over a quarter.

Local landscape

In other ways, though, Hillingdon has retained what might be termed a Conservative character: over half of its homes are owner-occupied and it has the highest level of car ownership of all the boroughs, with almost 80 per cent of households having access to at least one car or van.

Both the current Conservative administration and the Labour opposition have faced significant difficulties during the past four years.

The Tories have had to cope with budgetary problems, and Hillingdon is now one of the eight boroughs in receipt of “exceptional financial support” from the government. Last summer, the council leadership, backed by Kemi Badenoch, blamed the problems on rising homelessness

costs caused by the government’s approach to asylum-seekers, but its own chief financial officer had previously criticised an embedded culture of “optimism bias” in which overspending had become acceptable.

Labour’s troubles began with the suspension of a newly-elected councillor after it emerged that she had previously backed opponents of Haringey Council adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism and had a history of support for figures within Labour accused of antisemitism going back several years.

The oddest loss came in October 2025, after a councillor was accused of working with Reform UK, a charge he denied. He joined the Greens after a spell as an

Independent. Perhaps the most difficult disruption had already come in June, when group leader Peter Curling and a senior colleague were deselected. They left the party complaining that it was no longer the one they had joined. Curling now leads the Hayes Independent Party group and is among those of its members defending their seats under their new banner in 2026.

Disappointment with Labour will affect how Hillingdon residents vote, though there will also be local disillusion with Conservatism. Reform UK will be keen to capitalise. The colouration of Hillingdon’s electoral map may soon become more varied.

 HILLINGDON

Electoral prospects

Hillingdon is hard to divide up into chunks that make geographical sense, mostly because it is an aggregation of a lot of towns and villages that have sprawled together. The new wards created in 2022 in the centre of the borough don't help, although the Local Government Boundary Commission for England did some good work in Hayes.

Hayes

13 seats

Hayes is a multicultural working-class outer London town with an illustrious industrial history including the headquarters and production plant of EMI records and the home of Nestlé, where instant coffee was invented in the 1930s. It has a large South Asian population, mostly of Indian origin, with Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs all well-represented. The White British proportion of the population exceeds 25 per cent only in Charville ward to the west of Hayes on the road to Uxbridge.

This block of wards lies to the north of the Great Western railway line, stretching up as far as Hillingdon's section of the town of Yeading, which straddles the border with Ealing. In the south, at Hayes Town, the Elizabeth line has transformed a dowdy minor stop into an impressive station plugged into fast trains through central London. Hayes is an Opportunity Area in the Mayor's London Plan, with 4,000 new homes projected. There are new blocks of flats along the canal.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Belmore	Lab	Lab	Lab	24.1	68.5	-	7.4	-
Charville	Lab	Con	x	49.7	50.3	-	-	-
Hayes Town	Lab	Lab	Lab	19.6	72.2	-	-	8.3
Wood End	Lab	Lab	Lab	26.8	62.0	7.1	-	4.1
Yeading	Lab	Lab	x	30.5	69.5	-	-	-

Charville ward is a perennial marginal which split its favours in 2022 between what we used to call the two main parties. The rest of Hayes has voted solidly Labour since 1986. In 2022, this was by very large margins. The Labour percentages were augmented by the lack of rival candidates. The only complete slates were for Labour and the Conservatives, and Charville and Yeading were completely straight fights.

However, four of the councillors elected here for Labour became Hayes Independent Party members. Hayes Town is the ward of Peter Curling and one of his group colleagues, while another represents Belmore. All three are defending their seats and the local party has fielded candidates for all but one those available in this group of wards. Labour faces its most serious challenge here for decades. Reform might even slip through the middle if the Left vote is split enough.

Harlington and West Drayton

8 seats

These wards are the bits of the Hayes & Harlington parliamentary seat lying south of the Great Western railway line. Pinkwell ward contains Harlington School, and there is a separate settlement of Harlington which is one of the Heathrow Villages, along with Harmondsworth, Sipson and Hillingdon's part of Cranford. West Drayton is the next station along on the Elizabeth line heading towards Reading.

This area is dominated physically and economically by Heathrow Airport. It has given the area some unusual demographics, including the presence of several communities of diverse refugee origin and others still in the asylum system. It also creates local political issues, such as the third runway plan which would see most of the Heathrow Villages between the M4 and the airport bulldozed.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Heathrow Villages	Lab	Lab	x	38.0	54.2	-	7.8	-
Pinkwell	Lab	Lab	Lab	23.0	77.0	-	-	-
West Drayton	Lab	Lab	Lab	35.8	53.1	-	7.1	4.1

Pinkwell is solidly Labour and Heathrow Villages usually is, though it sometimes goes its own way on local issues. West Drayton is marginal. The Conservatives lost the ward's three seats to Labour one by one in the elections of 2010, 2014 and 2018. West Drayton is in rapid demographic change, with the White British proportion falling 20 percentage points between 2011 and 2021, but this does not translate automatically into support for

different political parties. In a Leave-voting, car-owning area there may be potential for Reform. West Drayton was UKIP's second-best ward in Hillingdon (24 per cent) in 2014.

Uxbridge

8 seats

Uxbridge is the “capital” of Hillingdon, in that the borough headquarters are there and it is the main service and shopping centre. But it is only one of several towns and villages that straggle together at the western edge of London. This subgroup of wards is based on the older settlements to the south of Uxbridge centre.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Colham & Cowley	Con	Con	Con	45.2	37.1	-	7.2	10.5
Uxbridge	Con	Lab	Con	45.1	41.5	-	9.3	3.3
Yiewsley	Lab	Lab	x	37.4	54.4	-	8.2	-

Brunel University is in the Colham & Cowley ward and both it and Uxbridge ward have substantial numbers of full-time students (20 per cent and 24 per cent respectively). It is a more White British area (40 per cent) than Hayes, but there is much less owner-occupying than in the suburban wards to the north of Hillingdon.

These social characteristics suggest political marginality, and that is accurate. Labour gained Yiewsley on a high

swing in 2022, picked off a seat in Uxbridge and fell short in Colham & Cowley. But the Conservative defence in these wards was crucial for retaining control of the borough. There is potential for both Reform and the Greens to break into this historically two-party area, although the ex-Labour Green incumbent won't be defending his seat.

Hillingdon and Ickenham

8 seats

These wards are to the north and east of Uxbridge town centre. They are more traditional, owner-occupied interwar Metro-land suburbia than those to the south, with Ickenham & South Harefield being the most upmarket (46 per cent professional/managerial). Rates of car ownership are particularly high, which helps explain the Conservative hold in the Uxbridge & South Ruislip parliamentary by-election.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Hillingdon East	Con	Con	Con	58.5	34.9	-	-	6.7
Hillingdon West	Con	Con	x	54.4	35.4	-	10.1	-
Ickenham & South Harefield	Con	Con	Con	56.3	21.6	-	22.1	-

Ickenham has been long been a very safe Conservative ward, but Hillingdon proper has a marginal history. Hillingdon East used to elect Labour and Liberal Democrat councillors and even an Independent Socialist, but the Conservatives ejected the last Lib Dem in 2010 and the main threat in 2026 probably comes from Reform.

The Hillingdon West vote has been postponed due to the death of one of the Reform candidates. It will now take place on 18 June and might be crucial in determining the balance of power.

Northwood

5 seats

Northwood is the poshest part of Hillingdon, its prosperous suburban avenues crossing the border with South West Hertfordshire as the Metropolitan line clatters between Northwood and Moor Park. Northwood (55 per cent) and Northwood Hills (46 per cent) are the two Hillingdon wards with the highest proportions of graduates and, unlike some graduate-heavy wards closer to central London, this is not because the population is particularly young.

Like in Harrow and parts of Brent, this suburban idyll is attracting prosperous middle-class residents of Asian heritage and becoming increasingly diverse. As in much of Hillingdon, their religious affiliations are variously Muslim, Hindu and Sikh. Also, as in most of Hillingdon, demographic change has not resulted in much political change. Class and income are the predominant factors,

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Harefield Village	Con	x	x	56.9	11.0	-	32.1	-
Northwood	Con	Con	x	61.1	13.9	17.2	7.8	-
Northwood Hills	Con	Con	x	54.7	23.0	11.9	10.4	-

although credit is due to Hillingdon Conservatives for adapting with enthusiasm to social change.

Harefield is a rather insular village that gives the impression of not particularly liking the fact that it is in London. It used to be the basis of a marginal ward which Labour gained in a famous by-election in 1993 that

flipped control of Hillingdon from 35-34 Conservative to 35-34 Labour. But since then, it has undergone a long-term swing to the Right. UKIP polled 27 per cent there in 2014 and the National Front got 24 per cent in 2006. Northwood seems safe enough for the Tories but Harefield Village looks like a Reform target.

Ruislip

11 seats

John Betjeman’s poem Middlesex, published in 1954, is a hymn of regret for the county that disappeared under concrete, brick and lawn in the interwar period. He contrasts the modernity of the “red electric train” at Ruislip Gardens with the small remnants of the lost rural county on “the outskirts’ edges” that keep the memory of the pre-suburban county alive. Some of the surviving hedges and woodlands can be seen from a steam train that runs around Ruislip Lido today, but it is otherwise surrounded by comfortable suburbs.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Eastcote	Con	Con	Con	58.9	21.8	9.7	8.4	1.3
Ruislip	Con	Con	Con	62.3	17.7	10.8	9.3	-
Ruislip Manor	Con	Con	x	59.8	24.2	8.2	7.9	-
South Ruislip	Con	Con	x	56.9	27.7	-	8.2	7.2

The Ruislip wards are heavily owner-occupied (68–76 per cent), a bit more so than Northwood, although they have somewhat fewer graduates. The northern two (Eastcote and Ruislip) are in the Conservative-held Ruislip, Northwood & Pinner parliamentary seat, and the southern two (Ruislip Manor and South Ruislip) are in shakily Labour Uxbridge & South Ruislip.

The Conservatives secured large majorities in all four Ruislip wards in 2022. Going back, Labour used to be able to win the South Ruislip wards in a good year such as 1994, and the Lib Dems won in Ruislip Manor for a while. However, UKIP managed 16–20 per cent in 2014 and Reform might stand a chance in South Ruislip in particular.



HILLINGDON

What to watch for

The options for Hillingdon boil down to a Conservative hold or No Overall Control with the Conservatives the largest party. It would take only a four-seat loss to deprive the Tories of the majority they have had since 2006. But they could compensate for any Reform inroads, probably concentrated on the western fringe of the borough, by making gains from Labour elsewhere.