

Minutes

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

19 October 2016

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Jane Palmer (Chairman), Judith Cooper (In place of Allan Kauffman), Nick Denys (Vice-Chairman), Jem Duducu, Dominic Gilham, Becky Haggard, John Oswell, Jagjit Singh, Jan Sweeting (Labour Lead) and Tony Little</p> <p>Also Present:</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Laurie Baker (Interim Head of School Improvement/Education Quality & Strategy), Kate Boulter (Democratic Services Officer), Dan Kennedy (Head of Business Performance, Policy & Standards), Peter Malewicz (Group Finance Manager), Tom Murphy (Head of Early Intervention Services), Laura Palmer (Team Manager, Admissions) and Michael Rollin (Senior Admissions and Access Officer)</p>
23.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: To note that apologies were received from Councillor Alan Kauffman, who was substituted by Councillor Judith Cooper.</p>
24.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THE MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
25.	<p>MATTERS NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OR URGENT (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
26.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items were Part I and would be heard in public.</p>
27.	<p>FINANCE UPDATE (ORAL UPDATE) (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>In an oral report and in response to questions from Members, officers advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 2017/18 budget was in preparation and would be considered by Cabinet and then Full Council in early 2017.• The 2016/17 budget position was monitored in regular reports to the Cabinet.

- In the areas of Children's Services, staff recruitment remained a challenge. The position was improving with high levels of agency staff gradually being replaced by permanent staff. There had been overseas recruitment of social workers. A premium of around 10-20K per post was paid for agency staff.
- The number of Looked After Children had remained stable for the last year, in the range of 340-360 children. This included 100 unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The Council had targeted resources into reducing high-cost placements (up to 6K per week) and this had resulted in the number of high-cost placements reducing from 36 to around 23.
- An active in-house fostering campaign had targeted hard to place children and this was due to be repeated.
- There was a national transfer agreement under which asylum seeking children could be received by the LA then transferred to another. The Council forecast there would be no new entrants above the threshold.
- The budget for Looked After Children included savings of £1.9million. This would be achieved by identifying efficiency savings across the entire service including adult services.
- 58% of primary schools had not converted to academy status. The academisation agenda was unclear and further information was awaited from central government on how the funding formula would work through to LAs.

RESOLVED: That the oral report be noted.

28. **ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (EHE)** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Committee received a report on Elective Home Education (EHE), which provided an update on the responsibilities and powers the Local Authority (LA) has for EHE, developments since a previous review in 2012 by the Committee, and further action being taken.

It was reported that:

- Nationally, it was notoriously difficult to engage with families who opted for EHE. Hillingdon had a website with information about EHE and a strategy of making it very visible. This had been found to encourage EHE providers to engage with officers.
- Hillingdon had the second highest number of known EHE pupils across the London Boroughs, at 228 children. This was attributed to higher numbers of EHE providers in Hillingdon informing the Council that they were home educating.
- The actual figures of EHE pupils was unknown as there was no legal requirement for councils to be informed that a child was being home educated, or of the curriculum the child was following. When a child withdrew from a school, parents were required to provide a reason and one of these could be EHE. The parents of children moving from primary to secondary school would not need to provide a reason if the child did not start secondary school.
- The Council was forming links with groups known to have higher than average

levels of EHE, such as the Gypsy Roma and Traveller (GTR) community, of which 14 children were reported to be receiving EHE (all secondary). It was noted that around 80 of the 228 known EHE children were of unknown demographic.

- A questionnaire for parents of EHE children was being developed to help the Council to understand the area better and inform service development.
- Work was being under taken with the NHS to determine whether data about where a child was educated could be collected when children engaged with health services.
- Information obtained by the School Placement and Admissions Team regarding EHE children was cross-referenced with data held by Social Services for safeguarding reasons.
- The Council had not used any school attendance orders in the past three years.
- It was noted that central government was considering changes to EHE legislation in response to concerns about radicalisation and illegal schools.

The following points were made by Members during discussion:

- The Committee commended officers' success in encouraging engagement from parents of EHE children. A previous review carried out by the Committee suggested hostility from parents, and it was very positive that this had been improved.
- Consideration should be given to finding non-written methods of communicating with GTR groups. Members invited officers to attend surgeries in areas where there were higher numbers of GTR residents.
- In the sample letter text (Appendix 2), it would be preferable for the first two paragraphs to be swapped so that "we can provide..." came before "we will not provide...".

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) a breakdown of Gypsy Roma and Traveller (GTR) children who were EHE be provided to Members, to include primary/secondary and male/female numbers;

(3) officers from the School Admissions and Placement Team be invited to attend Member surgeries to provide information about EHE.

29. **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CAMHS)** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Committee considered a report on the current position of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), which had been requested by Members at the last meeting.

It was noted that the report author was unable to attend the meeting and that Members' feedback and questions would be passed to them.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), the Council and partners had refreshed their

approach to CAMHS. The new system would be without tiers and focus on early intervention, effective support and prevention of unnecessary inpatient admissions. This would be achieved through a comprehensive programme of mental health promotion in schools and the community, a new model of care not based on tiers, encouragement of peer support and development of community services to deliver the new model with extended opening times and improved response and waiting times.

The following points were made in discussion:

- The Committee had been made aware of issues with the service through witness sessions and had requested the report to gain a better understanding of the service and planned improvements. The report provided contained insufficient detail and analysis to assure the Committee that issues had been identified and were being addressed. Members were aware that a lot of work had gone on in the CAMHS area but this was not reflected in the report.
- The Committee requested regular detailed updates, to include an action plan and indicative dates for implementation of the measures to improve the service. This would enable progress to be assessed and outcomes to be measured.

RESOLVED: That (1) the contents of the report be noted;

(2) the Committee receive further detailed reports and action plans in relation to CAMHS;

(3) the report author be requested to attend future meetings where reports are considered, to answer any questions.

30. **EDUCATION POLICY UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 8*)

The Committee considered an update on recent developments in Government policy on education, including the content of ministerial speeches.

It was reported that:

- The White Paper 'Education Excellence Everywhere' was published in March 2016 and since then further announcements by ministers had set out proposals for the education and skills sector.
- A new Green Paper 'Schools that Work for Everyone' had been published in September 2016. This acknowledged the need for more school places and set out an aim to improve accessibility to 'good' schools for all families including those from lower income households.
- The Green Paper also proposed the expansion of selective education, investment of £50million to expand existing grammar schools, the removal of the 50% limit for faith schools, and an expanded role for universities in sponsoring standards in schools.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Building stronger relationships with partners, such as universities, would be critical to creating a more resilient system. Schools could work together to share information and experience.

- It would be interesting to know the views of faith schools and universities in relation to the proposed changes which affected them.
- School expansion was expensive and £50million did not seem a great deal of money to support this.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

31. **MAJOR REVIEW SCOPING REPORT** (*Agenda Item 9*)

The Committee considered a scoping report for the 'Major review of the local authority's current and future relationship with academies and free schools'.

It was reported that:

- The government had an ambition for all schools to convert to academies by 2022. Strategy implementation guidance on how to achieve this was awaited from the Department for Education.
- Currently 52 of the 72 primary schools in Hillingdon were maintained. The academy figure for secondary schools was much higher, with only 2 of the 19 secondary schools maintained. Schools which had not converted had been asked to indicate when, and if, they expected to convert, with the vast majority being at the early stages of conversion. A few schools had reported they were not yet considering converting.
- There was a thriving group of academy schools, although the Borough had seen a slowing of pace with regard to conversion in recent years. There were a number of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) operating in the Borough. These MATs were generally small or medium sized. The larger national chains were not currently represented in the Borough.
- The Council provided a range of support services to academies and free schools, some of which were delivered through service level agreements. With regard to school improvement, general advice was provided, including headteacher induction, education improvement advice when needed, moderation and training, and school-specific performance reports.
- School headteachers identified primarily as 'Hillingdon Heads', with less distinction between academy and maintained status.
- It was proposed that the major review look at how the Council's existing resources would be used to work with schools to convert, and to continue to provide services to schools that were no longer maintained.
- The review would aim to engage schools, and the outcomes and recommendations of the review should clarify the Council's strategy for academy conversion, and for supporting maintained schools during a transition period in national educational policy.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Members thanked officers for providing a comprehensive report which gave a

useful overview of the current position.

- The impact of academy conversion on groups of vulnerable children, including Looked After Children in the Virtual School, should be mentioned for completeness.
- It would be necessary for the review to cover the financial position with respect to academisation.
- In response to a suggestion that the review include comparison with other local authorities, the Committee agreed that the review was already very wide-ranging and the primary focus should be on Hillingdon's position.
- Members requested that further details of the statutory position be provided to future meetings.
- It was agreed that the review would take place over three witness sessions.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) the terms of reference for the review be agreed.

32. **CABINET FORWARD PLAN - REVIEW FORTHCOMING DECISIONS** (*Agenda Item 10*)

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.

33. **WORK PROGRAMME - REVIEW THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE COMING YEAR** (*Agenda Item 11*)

The Committee considered its Work Programme for the remainder of the 2016/17 Municipal year.

RESOLVED: That (1) the work programme be noted;

(2) further updates on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services be added to the work programme.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.55 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Kate Boulter on 01895 556454. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.