

Minutes

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

11 January 2017

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Jane Palmer (Chairman), Nick Denys (Vice-Chairman), Jazz Dhillon (In place of John Oswell), Dominic Gilham, Becky Haggart, Judy Kelly (In place of Jem Duducu), Jagjit Singh, Jan Sweeting and Tony Little</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) and Tony Zaman (Corporate Director Of Social Care)</p>
44.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: To note that (1) apologies were received from Councillor Alan Kaufmann;</p> <p>(2) Councillor Jem Duducu would be substituted by Councillor Judy Kelly; and</p> <p>(3) Councillor John Oswell would be substituted by Councillor Jazz Dhillon.</p>
45.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THE MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>No interests were declared.</p>
46.	<p>MATTERS NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OR URGENT (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
47.	<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>
48.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2016 (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting; and</p> <p>(2) a Member wished it to be recorded that they considered the minutes to be "brilliant".</p>

49. **MAJOR REVIEW - WITNESS SESSION 2** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Chairman welcomed the witnesses representing Hillingdon schools' executive committees. It was noted that six executive committees had been invited:

- Primary Forum Executive
- Hillingdon Association of Secondary Headteachers Executive
- Schools Forum
- Schools Strategic Partnership Board
- Governor Executive Committee
- Regional Schools Commissioner

Of these, only the Regional Schools Commissioner had not been able to send a representative.

The terms of reference of the executive committees had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

Witness 1 - Representing Primary Forum Executive: Manjit Bringan (Chair of the PFE) and Veronica Shepherd (Member of PFE)

The following points were made by Manjit Bringan and Veronica Shepherd during their presentation and in response to questions from members of the Committee:

- The focus of the PFE was to get the best outcomes for all children, regardless of the type of school they attended. In general, parents did not understand the different school types.
- Headteachers of maintained schools considering conversion questioned "what's in it for us?" and were looking at whether they needed to formalise partnerships with other schools.
- Headteachers of academies represented on the PFE felt the relationship with the local authority (LA) was not as positive as it could be and would like the relationship to be closer. They used most of the services provided by the local authority, and considered Children's Centres, LADO and Safeguarding to be the most useful. They would like the relationship with the LA to be more than a statutory one. The greatest challenge they identified going forward was the financial constraints that all public sector organisations would be suffering.
- PFE members acknowledged that it was difficult for the LA to develop a strategy for supporting conversion when government policy changed and funding arrangements were unclear.

Witness 2 - Representing Hillingdon Association of Secondary Headteachers Executive: Kim Rowe (Chair of HASH)

The following points were made by Kim Rowe during his presentation and in response to questions from members of the Committee:

- 20 of the 22 secondary schools in the Borough were academies.
- There was a lot of interaction between HASH members and the LA. HASH described the current relationship between academies and the LA as "positive but arm's length". It acknowledged that the LA provided both statutory and non-statutory support that was vital to schools.

- As the LA's role in schools had diminished as a result of the government's academisation agenda, the Borough's secondary schools had become more collaborative. Working jointly, schools and the LA had developed innovation and improvement networks and tended to exchange expertise and experience rather than draw upon the LAs school improvement work. The level of support and challenge provided by the LA to HASH members was limited, which HASH felt was also due to all the schools being OFSTED good or outstanding.
- HASH concurred with the PFE's view that any school's primary consideration was the children it taught.
- Maintained schools needed support from the LA to convert. Some maintained schools perceived academisation as the school being 'taken over'.

Witness 3 - Representing Schools Forum: Jim Edgecombe (Chair of Schools Forum) and Phil Haigh (Deputy Chair of Schools Forum)

The following points were made by Jim Edgecombe and Phil Haigh during their presentation and in response to questions from members of the Committee:

- The Schools Forum was a statutory body which was mainly concerned with financial matters. Its members were from all sectors, with roughly half being from academy schools. There was no difference in the way different school types were treated.
- The LA had a duty to look after all children irrespective of their school type. It should be remembered that many of the children taught in Hillingdon's schools were not Hillingdon residents.
- A proliferation of free schools would have an impact on school place planning.

Witness 4 - Representing Schools Strategic Partnership Board: Andrew Wilcock (Member of the SSPB)

The following points were made by Andrew Wilcock during his presentation and in response to questions from members of the Committee:

- The SSPB described the relationship between academies and the LA as "a cordial partnership".
- The SSPB worked closely with the LA's school improvement team to support schools that were at risk and seeking improvement. No distinction was made between academies and maintained schools.
- There was significant partnership between the LA and schools which was not always recognised.
- The main issue facing schools was a lack of secure funding.
- If a school chose to become a grammar school, it would impact on all other schools.

Witness 5 - Representing Governor Executive Committee: Jo Palmer (Chair of Governor Executive Committee) and Graham Wells (Member of Governor Executive Committee)

The following points were made by Jo Palmer and Graham Wells during their presentation and in response to questions from members of the Committee:

- Some academy chains were working well but it was necessary to be clear where responsibility lay for identifying and dealing with failing academies. Regardless of

school type, the LA should be able to step in if concerns were raised about a school.

- School improvement was very important to ensure best outcomes were achieved for children.
- Schools converting to academy status should do so for the right reasons, because they want to. Some schools may choose never to convert.
- It was essential that governors were trained in their roles, as effective governance was key to a school's success. Members stated they would be interested to know which school governors attended training sessions to see if there was a correlation between academy, free school and maintained school governors.

The Chairman thanked all the witnesses for their valuable insights and advised that a copy of the final report would be available on the Council's website after the major review had concluded.

RESOLVED: That (1) the witness sessions be noted and recorded for collating into the Major Review Draft Report;

(2) the representatives of the Governor Executive Committee be requested to send information on governor training attendance to the Clerk to the Committee;

(3) it be noted that a questionnaire would be sent to headteachers seeking their views, and a representative cross section of headteachers would be invited to attend the third and final witness session, on 14 February 2017.

50. **BUDGET PROPOSALS REPORT** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Committee considered a report on the draft revenue budget and capital programme of the Children, Young People and Learning Services for 2017/18, along with indicative projections for the following four years. The proposals had been considered by Cabinet on 15 December 2015 and were under consultation. The Cabinet would consider the budget proposals again on 16 February 2017 and the report would include comments from the Policy Overview Committees. Following that meeting of Cabinet, full Council would meet on 23 February 2017 to agree the budgets and Council Tax for 2017/18.

Members were reminded that the report set out the headline draft proposals, which were under consultation. Where savings to existing services were proposed, alternative service delivery models would be worked up and impact assessed before Council confirmed the budget.

It was reported that:

- The Council had entered into a multi-year settlement which would require the Council to find savings of at least £15million per year. However, the Council still received a number of external grants, which could be reduced and therefore could have an even further impact on the budget. The consultation was on a tough financial settlement with significant challenges.
- The majority of the senior management team for Children's Services had been appointed.
- Recruitment of social workers was still a significant national challenge, although there had been successful recruitment campaigns in South Africa with a plan to change focus to Canada. The cost of agency staff continued to increase and direct recruitment would produce savings.

- The Council had improved its predictions for the number of children coming into the system. Numbers has stabilised and reduced slightly.
- There were approximately 100 unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the Borough and these numbers were increasing slightly. Hillingdon had taken children from Calais. London was above the government's National Transfer Agreement cap and should not take any more children, but in practice this was not happening.
- The Council was looking at recruiting in-house foster carers which cost around half the cost of using agency carers.
- The pupil population had gone up by around 850. One primary school was seeking to convert to an academy. The Borough had a healthy mix of school types with some more successful than others.
- The Council would be implementing the government's increased early years childcare of 30 hours per week and had been allocated £3 million to support this.
- The national funding formula was being introduced in April 2018. Some schools stood to lose significant funding, although overall it appeared that Hillingdon would benefit.
- The Council had received further information that day on School Improvement Grants. The Council was currently consulting schools on a number of proposals within a very short timescale on the cessation of the Education Services Grant (ESG).
- From 1 September 2017, the ESG would cease. The Council currently received in excess of £2.5 million. The finance model was complex and would have an impact on Council and school funding.
- An area review of adult learning and further education colleges was taking place. The main focus was on Further Education Colleges, where a number of colleges would be taken over and supported by other colleges.
- A review of the Adult and Community Learning Fees identified that Hillingdon's charge rate was significantly below the benchmark and that there was a proposal to increase them from the start of the 2017/18 academic year to bring Hillingdon into line with other LAs.
- There were three areas of risk and contingency: £1.6 million for asylum seekers; £5.2 million for Looked After Children; and £277K for agency staff.
- There was nothing specifically for Children and Social Care in the capital programme. However, the Council remained committed to significant school expansion and £89 million would be spent on this over the period of the capital programme, of which the Council would receive £26 million in grant funding, with the remainder having to be funded by taxpayers.
- The free school agenda could be very positive for the Council, as the Council would not be required to fund the school building costs.

The following points were made by Members during discussion:

- Members had received emails from residents concerned about the proposed savings for Children's Centres and whether this would mean service reduction.
- The proposals were still under consultation and all residents were encouraged to put forward their views.

It was moved and seconded that the Committee's support of the budget proposals be noted and recommended to Cabinet. Having been put to a vote, this was agreed.

Mr Anthony Little wished it to be noted that he had abstained from voting.

The Labour Members wished the following statement to be recorded:

"The Labour Group on the CYP&L POC does not support the budget for 2017/18 as presented at the POC on 11 January 2017. We believe that the cuts to the budget, including those affecting Children's Centres in Hillingdon, will mean a reduction in services, activities and programmes which these Centres now offer. We further believe that the CYP&L POC has been presented with no evidence to confirm that the cuts will not result in a diminution of the excellent support which these Centres now offer to some of our youngest and most vulnerable residents as well as evidence to confirm that the other 'savings' will not mean a dilution of some vital services".

RESOLVED: That (1) the Committee's support of the budget proposals, and the comments contained within these minutes, be forwarded to Cabinet.

51. **CABINET FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 8*)

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

52. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 9*)

The Committee considered its Work Programme for the remainder of the 2016/17 Municipal Year. Members observed that the agenda for the 14 February 2017 meeting looked very full, given that the meeting would also include the third witness session for the major review.

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

(2) officers, in consultation with the Chairman, identify agenda items to move from the meeting on 14 February 2017 to later meetings in the Municipal Year.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.54 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.