

Minutes

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

17 April 2013



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

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Catherine Dann (Chairman) David Benson Lindsay Bliss John Hensley Susan O'Brien John Riley</p> <p>Other Voting Representatives: Tony Little – Roman Catholic Diocesan</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Merlin Joseph (Deputy Director, Children and Families), Pauline Nixon (Senior Manager for Access and Inclusion), Paul Hewitt (Senior Service Manager, Safeguarding Children and Quality Assurance), David Fry (Service Manager, Children's Resources), Meng Pocock (Corporate Parenting Manager), Kevin Jones (Service Manager, Family Support), Sarah Henshaw (Team Manager, Family Support), Steven Maiden (Democratic Services Officer).</p>	
68.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE <i>(Agenda Item 1)</i></p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillors J. Cooper and J. Dhillon.</p>	Action by
69.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING. <i>(Agenda Item 2)</i></p> <p>Councillor David Benson declared a general non-pecuniary interest as he was a Governor of Uxbridge High School and lectured at further and higher education colleges. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.</p> <p>Councillor John Riley declared a general non-pecuniary interest as he was a Governor of Field End Infant School. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.</p> <p>Councillor Catherine Dann declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor of Newham Junior School and Bishop Ramsay C of E School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.</p> <p>Councillor Susan O'Brien declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic School and was working at Ruislip High School. She remained in the room during the</p>	Action by

	<p>meeting and took part in the discussions.</p> <p>Tony Little declared a general non-pecuniary interest as he was a Governor at Pinkwell Primary School and Hartlington Community School. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.</p>	
70.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND ALL PART 2 ITEMS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (Agenda Item 3)</p> <p>It was confirmed that Item 11 – Quarterly Social Care Audit Update 2012/13 (including Pod update) would be considered in Part 2.</p>	Action by
71.	<p>MATTERS THAT HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OR URGENT (Agenda Item 4)</p> <p>There were no matters notified in advance or urgent.</p>	Action by
72.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 20 MARCH 2013 (Agenda Item 5)</p> <p>The minutes of 20 March 2013 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	Action by
73.	<p>MAJOR REVIEW: DRAFT FINAL REPORT - ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR HILLINGDON'S VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (Agenda Item 6)</p> <p>Officers presented the draft final report into access to education for vulnerable children and young people and asked for comments from Members.</p> <p>A Member raised concern that the use of the term “illegal off-rolling” in the report could worsen relations between the Council and schools in the Borough.</p> <p>Officers advised that this was a generally accepted term that schools would be familiar with and that it would therefore not serve to worsen relationships.</p> <p>Members asked that Recommendation 3 be extended to include an endorsement of the ongoing efforts to establish best practice in the new relationship between schools and the local authority.</p> <p>Officers noted that Recommendation 3 would be reworded with the Interim Chief Education Officer and circulated to Members for agreement.</p> <p>Members asked that the section on off rolling in the report be reworded to clarify that schools and the Council held differing views of the extent of the practice. Although witnesses had suggested that this practice was not a major problem in the Borough, officers advised that, with their cross-Borough perspective, they could confirm that off rolling was still a significant problem. It was requested that these conflicting views</p>	<p>Action by</p> <p>Pauline Nixon / Julien Kramer</p>

	<p>be reflected in the final report.</p> <p>Officers advised that this amendment could be made and circulated to Members outside of the meeting for agreement.</p> <p>Members discussed whether Recommendation 2 should request that not only alternative spaces be provided for interim education but also a new, more robust curriculum. Some Members were concerned that those children kept at Brookfield for longer periods of time might be left at a disadvantage for not having a more robust curriculum. It was noted that this was an important issue but it was agreed that it would not be included in the final report as it was feared that the unit would be seen as an interim school if a full curriculum was put in place. However, officers noted that work would be undertaken to investigate improvements to the current curriculum whilst a new space was sought.</p> <p>A discussion took place on whether an additional recommendation should be added to encourage the sharing of data between schools and the Council. It was agreed that this would not be included as a recommendation as it would not be enforceable.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the committee agreed the general content of the report; and 2. That the report be amended as per discussions and circulated via email to Members for final agreement. 	<p>Pauline Nixon / Steven Maiden</p>
74.	<p>SCOPING REPORT - STRENGTHENING THE COUNCIL'S ROLE AS A CORPORATE PARENT (Agenda Item 7)</p> <p>Officers presented the scoping report on Strengthening the Council's Role as a Corporate Parent and highlighted the following areas as key to the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whether children in care had an effective voice with regard to their care. ▪ Whether the Council worked well with partner organisations to ensure high-quality care for Looked After Children. ▪ Whether the Council effectively helped Looked After Children transition to adulthood. ▪ Whether Looked After Children were safe in the Council's care. <p>Members suggested that the most important issue for the review would be to assess why outcomes for Looked After Children were so much lower than for other children.</p> <p>Officers acknowledged that this was a major issue but noted that there were many factors outside of the Council's control that threatened outcomes for these children. Often Looked After Children had suffered trauma or abuse in early life and, from the age of 5, could already be playing catch up with other children. It was noted that the outcomes for Looked After Children in Hillingdon compared well with outcomes for</p>	<p>Action by</p>

	<p>children in other boroughs.</p> <p>Members discussed the witnesses that they would like for the review and agreed that there should be an additional meeting at the end of June 2013 to ensure that there was enough time to hear from key stakeholders. It was also decided that there would be an additional session prior to one of the meetings to speak informally with Looked After Children. It was agreed that the following witnesses would be invited:</p> <p><u>Witness Session 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head Teacher of the Virtual School ▪ LAC Health Nurse ▪ CNWL Commissioner – Health ▪ Sports and Leisure Manager ▪ Officer from Housing Services <p><u>Witness Session 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster Carer ▪ Participation Worker ▪ Senior Service Manager, Safeguarding Children and Quality Assurance / Member of Corporate Parenting Board <p><u>Witness Session 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service Manager, Children in Care and Leaving Care Service ▪ Service Manager, Children's Resources ▪ Registered Manager of a Children's Residential Unit ▪ Interim Head of Early Intervention <p><u>Informal Session</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Step Up Members ▪ Talkers <p>In addition to hearing from the above witnesses in these sessions, the Committee agreed that officers also request that they provide written submissions to guide discussions during meetings.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the draft scoping report be noted and updated to reflect the discussions of the meeting. 2. That officer ask witnesses to supply written submissions. 3. That an additional witness session be scheduled for the end of June 2013. 	Steven Maiden
75. ADOPTION INSPECTION REPORT (Agenda Item 8)		Action by

	<p>meet deadlines but that the main concern at Hillingdon would always be with quality.</p> <p>Alongside the report officers tabled an action plan that had been produced in response to the findings of the inspection.</p> <p>A Member asked whether the Government was moving towards using agencies more to provide adopters and what impact this would have on the quality of foster carers and adoptive parents.</p> <p>It was noted that the Council always worked hard to ensure that placements for children were of a high quality and that this would not be compromised. It was for this reason that the decisions of social workers were scrutinised by fostering and adoption panels.</p> <p>Members asked how confident officers were that the action plan would lead to the service being rated "outstanding" at its next inspection.</p> <p>Officers advised that they were confident that the Council would realise the objectives set out in the action plan but that it may not lead to an "outstanding" outcome. This was due to the Council focussing on quality more than timescales which could threaten future assessments.</p> <p>Resolved: That the report be noted.</p>	
76.	<p>FORWARD PLAN 2010/2011 (Agenda Item 9)</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee noted the Forward Plan and decided not to comment.</p>	Action by
77.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME 2010/2011 (Agenda Item 10)</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee confirmed the dates of the meetings.</p>	Action by
78.	<p>QUARTERLY CHILD SOCIAL CARE AUDIT UPDATE 2012/2013 (INCLUDING POD UPDATE) (Agenda Item 11)</p> <p>The report on this item was included in Part II as it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it (exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 as amended).</p> <p>Officers introduced the report giving a brief outline of the information contained in the report. Officers also provided an update on the Pod System being used by social workers in the Borough. Following discussion, the committee noted the report.</p> <p>Resolved: That Members noted the report.</p>	Action by

	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 10.00 pm.
--	--

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Steven Maiden on 01895 250833. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.