



# HILLINGDON

LONDON

## Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee

**Date:** WEDNESDAY, 17 APRIL  
2013

**Time:** 7.00 PM

**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOM 5 -  
CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH  
STREET, UXBRIDGE UB8  
1UW

**Meeting Details:** Members of the Public and  
Press are welcome to attend  
this meeting

### Councillors on the Committee:

Catherine Dann (Chairman)  
Judith Cooper (Vice-Chairman)  
David Benson  
Lindsay Bliss  
Jazz Dhillon  
John Hensley  
Susan O'Brien  
John Riley

### Other Voting Representative

Anthony Little, Roman Catholic Diocesan

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further information.**

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<http://modgov.hillingdon.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=242&Year=2013>

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## **Terms of Reference**

**The Constitution defines the terms of reference for Policy Overview Committees as:**

**The Following Terms of Reference are Common to all Policy Overview Committees (referred to below as “The overview role”):**

1. To conduct reviews of policy, services or aspects of service which have either been referred by Cabinet, relate to the Cabinet Forward Plan, or have been chosen by the Committee according to the agreed criteria for selecting such reviews;
2. To monitor the performance of the Council services within their remit (including the management of finances and risk);
3. To comment on the proposed annual service and budget plans for the Council services within their remit before final approval by Cabinet and Council;
4. To consider the Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decision maker on Key Decisions which relate to services within their remit (before they are taken by the Cabinet);
5. To review or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken by the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, a Council Committee or an officer.
6. To make reports and recommendations to the Council, the Leader, the Cabinet, a Policy Overview Committee or any other Council

**This Committee performs the policy overview role outlined above in relation to:**

1. All of the functions of the Council as an education authority under the Education Acts, School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and all other relevant legislation in force from time to time;
2. Pre-school and the Council’s work with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
3. The Youth Service and the Council’s work with the Connexions Service and Partnership;
4. Social Care Services for Children, Young Persons, and Children with Special Needs.

# Agenda

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Declarations of Interest in matters coming before this meeting.
- 3 To confirm that all items marked Part 1 will be considered in Public and all Part 2 items will be considered in Private
- 4 Matters that have been notified in advance or urgent
- 5 To receive the minutes of the meeting dated 20 March 2013 1 - 6
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# Agenda Item 5

## Minutes

### EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE



HILLINGDON  
LONDON

20 March 2013

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

	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillors Catherine Dann (Chairman) David Benson Lindsay Bliss Jazz Dhillon John Hensley Susan O'Brien John Riley</p> <p><b>Other voting Representative</b> Tony Little – Roman Catholic Diocesan</p> <p><b>Witnesses Present:</b> Liz Horrigan, Head Teacher of Harlington Community School and Chair of the Managed Moves and Inclusion Panel Martin Rainsford, Head Teacher of The Douay Martyrs School and Chair of the In-Year Fair Access Panel</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Linda Sanders (Corporate Director of Social Care and Health), Julien Kramer (Interim Chief Education Officer), Merlin Joseph (Deputy Director Children and Families), Pauline Nixon (Senior Manager for Access and Inclusion), Steven Maiden (Democratic Services Officer).</p>	
59.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> <i>(Agenda Item 1)</i></p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Judith Cooper.</p>	<b>Action by</b>
60.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING.</b> <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 Lindsay Bliss declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor of Brookside Primary School. She 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>	<b>Action by</b>

	<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 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>	
61.	<p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND ALL PART 2 ITEMS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE</b> <i>(Agenda Item 3)</i></p> <p>It was noted that all items would be considered in Part 1.</p>	<b>Action by</b>
62.	<p><b>MATTERS THAT HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OR URGENT</b> <i>(Agenda Item 4)</i></p> <p>There were no matters notified in advance or urgent.</p>	<b>Action by</b>
63.	<p><b>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 20 FEBRUARY 2013</b> <i>(Agenda Item 5)</i></p> <p>The minutes of 20 February 2013 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	<b>Action by</b>
64.	<p><b>SECOND WITNESS SESSION - ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN</b> <i>(Agenda Item 6)</i></p> <p><b>Witnesses</b></p> <p>To assist the Committee with the review Mr Martin Rainsford, Head Teacher of The Douay Martyrs School and Chair of the In-Year Fair Access Panel and Ms Liz Horrigan, Head Teacher of Harlington Community School and Chair of the Managed Moves and Inclusion Panel were present to provide Members with information.</p> <p>A summary of the evidence provided by the witnesses is set out below.</p> <p><b>Fair Access and Managed Moves Panels</b></p> <p>The In-Year Fair Access Panel and the Managed Moves and Inclusion Panel met jointly every 3 weeks with the purposes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring that challenging pupils and those without a school place were allocated a place within the appropriate timeframe of 20 school days.</li> <li>▪ Allocating school places to pupils who had been excluded, those who had compassionate reasons for moving schools and</li> </ul>	<b>Action by</b>

- those who had decided to undertake a managed move.
- Ensuring that schools with vacancies were not overburdened with challenging pupils.

The witnesses noted that the Hillingdon Tuition Centre was a high-quality resource which was used, in part, to educate pupils with challenging behaviour. Certain pupils were placed at the Tuition Centre on a longer term basis because their behaviour was so problematic that a place in a Secondary School was unlikely to be successful. Other pupils were at the Tuition Centre on a shorter term basis pending assessment of their additional needs. Some students referred to the Managed Move and Inclusion Panel were not placed because incomplete paper work had not been submitted or there was a suspicion that children had been removed from a school by parents seeking to get past waiting lists. Pupils with no known behaviour issues were not placed at the Tuition Centre, but educated in the interim at Brookfields.

It was also noted that the Panels did not place Year 11 pupils seeking a place as it was too difficult to find an appropriate educational fit for these students given differing school curricula. This was also true for Year 10 pupils who also often struggled to integrate into a new school but the Panels did seek to place this group in-year. It was also noted that the panels gave top priority to cases where looked-after children were involved.

Both witnesses highlighted that these Panels were successful because they had buy-in from both the Primary and Secondary schools in the Borough. This was partly due to the fact that three Head Teachers sat on each of the Panels and also had a rolling Head Teacher position. Other strengths of the Panels were noted to be that they were seen to come to good, fair and compassionate decisions and that they had a workable turnaround period of 3 weeks.

It was noted that all school were necessarily part of the In-Year Fair Access process and the placement of previously permanently excluded pupils but that, as the Managed Moves and Inclusion process was not mandatory, only 16 of Hillingdon's 18 Secondary Schools took part.

### **The Bulge and Off Rolling**

Witnesses noted that the bulge in student numbers was already being experienced by schools in the Borough and that the issue did not seem to be diminishing. This could lead to schools beginning to get to maximum capacity in the near future. This was proving to be problematic for many children involved as growing class sizes and increased levels of mobility could be a disturbing factor to pupils' education.

Increasingly the issue of mobility was seen to be a barrier to schools making improvements in pupil attainment because, where they used to be in a single school of 5 years, many pupils were now staying for as little as 12 months before moving on. Members requested that officers provide a briefing on Primary School Mobility in the Borough.

Julien Kramer  
/ Dan  
Kennedy

Due to this bulge, both witnesses highlighted that the education provision provided at the Brookfield Adult Learning Centre or a similar, interim provision would certainly need to be in place in the short term and suggested that a similar provision might need to be implemented in the longer term.

With regards to the illegal off rolling of children from schools that had been discussed at the previous meeting, the witnesses suggested that this was not a major problem in the Borough. They both suggested that, where off rolling was taking place, schools should be named and shamed as this was an illegal activity for a school to undertake.

It was noted that Local Authority officers monitored the position closely and provided direct challenge where appropriate.

### **Discussion**

A Member asked whether it would be possible for the disciplinary history of pupils to be shared as another school place was being sought. A further question was asked about whether the growth of Academy Schools and their differing curricula would make it increasingly difficult to find appropriate places for students in year.

Witnesses clarified that it would not be possible to share pupils' disciplinary history as protocols stipulated that only certain information could be requested. It was also noted that the support that the Council offered to the panels in finding alternative school places was invaluable and that the processes in place were workable even in the changing educational environment.

A Member asked why 2 Secondary Schools in the Borough were not taking part in the Managed Moves and Inclusion Panel.

Officers noted that this information was not known but noted that it could be investigated and an update provided to Members outside of the meeting.

A Member asked what arrangements the Council currently had in place to accommodate the specific needs of children of armed services personnel.

Members were informed that officers had met with Head Teachers to discuss the education provided to children with parents in the armed forces. Further work was currently being undertaken on this area by officers.

A Member asked how pervasive the problem of bullying was as a cause for children needing to move schools.

Witnesses noted that bullying was a cause for children moving schools although it was not one of the main causes. It was also noted that issues of bullying were now sometimes difficult to solve by the moving of schools due to the impact of social media.

Pauline Nixon  
/ Steven  
Maiden

In response to a Member's question, Witnesses advised that, once a pupil had passed through one of the panels, they were satisfied that they had been treated fairly. However, their experiences prior to coming to the panel were a different matter as they could have had bad experiences at their previous schools. It was noted that officers in the Council's Admissions Team would be best placed to comment on which schools were inclusive and which were not.

A Member asked whether it would be useful for parents to have assistance from the Council to guide them through the admissions process.

Officers noted that such support had been provided in the past but had ceased. It was also noted that providing such support in the current economic climate would be difficult.

A Member asked whether the flow of information had changed due to the changing relationship between local authorities and Academies.

Mr Rainsford noted that he was unable to speak for other Academy Head Teachers but his Academy elected to provide the Local Authority with the same information as it always had. However, he emphasised that there had been clear and significant Government change in this area and that Academies were not obliged to report to the Council as they had in the past.

Following the departure of the witnesses, further discussion took place around the education provided at Brookfield in which Members noted that:

- The education provision was not a full curricular offer due to the wide variety of ages and student needs.
- The provision was certainly needed in the short term and could need to be expanded in the future.
- The current site was not appropriate to offer a long-term solution to the growing need for such an interim education provision. The large number of adults at the site did not provide an appropriate space for children to be educated. It was suggested that the Borough's youth centres could be used as alternative spaces.
- The growing numbers of pupils at Brookfield were not due to behavioural problems but were due to schools not being co-operative in providing alternative places and the need to support and socialise pupils into the English education system.

Based on the evidence provided by all witnesses and discussions, Members suggested the following areas as those around which recommendations should be based:

- The investigation of the viability of using alternative spaces to provide the interim education currently taking place at Brookfield Adult Learning Centre. In particular, to investigate whether the Borough's Youth Centres would be more appropriate spaces for this provision.
- Undertaking research on how the Council could best support

	<p>and guide parents through the schools admissions process. The possibility of introducing Parent Champions as a means to meet this need should be investigated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To refresh the Council's website with information on the schools admissions process.</li> <li>▪ To review the arrangements for permanently excluded and referred pupils at the Hillingdon Tuition Centre. An update on the discussions that had taken place on this issue would be provided by Members outside of the meeting.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee requested that Officers formally thanked the witnesses for their contribution to this review.</p>	<p>Pauline Nixon / Steven Maiden</p> <p>Julien Kramer</p>
65.	<p><b>UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PAST REVIEWS OF THE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 7)</b></p> <p><b>Resolved: That the Committee noted the progress provided in the report.</b></p>	<b>Action by</b>
66.	<p><b>FORWARD PLAN 2010/2011 (Agenda Item 8)</b></p> <p><b>Resolved: That the Committee noted the Forward Plan and decided not to comment.</b></p>	<b>Action by</b>
67.	<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME 2010/2011 (Agenda Item 9)</b></p> <p>The Committee asked that an update on Special Educational Needs to include information on funding, the Green Paper and the Task Group be provided at a future meeting and that this be reflected in the Work Programme.</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the Committee confirmed the dates of the meetings.</b></p>	<p><b>Action by</b></p> <p>Steven Maiden</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.15 pm.</p>	

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Steven Maiden on 01895 250472. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

# Agenda Item 6

## **MAJOR REVIEW – ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR HILLINGDON'S VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS AND DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

**Contact Officer: Steven Maiden  
Telephone: 01895 250472**

### **REASON FOR ITEM**

To enable the Committee to consider recommendations for the final report.

### **OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE**

1. To consider the evidence which the Committee gathered during its review.
2. Highlight issues for further investigation
3. To consider the draft recommendations for the review for submission to Cabinet for consideration.

### **INFORMATION**

1. The last witness session of the Committee's review into Access to Education for Hillingdon's Vulnerable Children and Young People was held on 20 March 2013. Members asked that Officers produce a draft final report on the review, with some suggestion recommendations. This draft report will be circulated to Members directly prior to the meeting.

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# HILLINGDON

LONDON

## Education and Children's Services Policy Overview Committee Review Scoping Report 2012/13

### **OBJECTIVE**

#### **Short title of review**

Access to education for Hillingdon's vulnerable children

#### **Aim of review**

To review Hillingdon's current arrangements and future plans for ensuring that access to education for vulnerable pupils is timely and effective. The review will focus particularly on the key barriers facing vulnerable children and young people in accessing education outside of the normal admissions processes and, in so doing, will identify areas for improvement and future development.

#### **Terms of Reference**

- To review the process for in-year admissions to schools and learn about the In-Year Fair Access Protocol (IYFAP) and the Managed Move and Inclusion Panel (MMIP).
- To review local arrangements for pupils without a school place.
- To understand the local implications of statutory guidance relating to children's access to education.
- To understand pupil place planning in Hillingdon.
- To review the practice around pupils who are not admitted to a school within 20 school days.
- After due consideration of the above, to bring forward positive and practical policy recommendations (if needed), in relation to the Council's in-year admissions processes for vulnerable children.

## **Reasons for the review**

The Local Authority is responsible for ensuring every child of statutory school age (currently 5-16) is receiving full-time education (School Admissions Code).

The focus of this review will be on the admission of pupils to education outside of the normal admissions processes meaning that it will not focus on those pupils moving into infant, junior or secondary school at the normal transfer time.

## **Supporting the Cabinet & Council's policies and objectives**

The Council's practices and policies on access to education for vulnerable children will be reviewed and updated.

## **Definitions**

For the purpose of this review, the following definitions will be used:

**Vulnerable:** Children and young people who, because of their additional needs, disability or personal circumstances are at risk of disadvantage and barriers in securing a place of their choice in a local school.

**Access:** The ease of entering and remaining in a suitable education provision.

**Education:** A provision offering the statutory entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum including the National Curriculum suitable to the individual's needs and age.

## **INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **Key Issues**

A significant increase in the number of casual in-year move-ins to the Borough in the last few years has been noted. Most of these young people will apply for a school place through the normal admissions process and will be offered a school place accordingly. More vulnerable young people may require additional support to find a suitable placement. These include:

1. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), approximately 50-60 per year of which require an assessment and alternative provision in the first instance.
2. Pupils who, for a wide range of reasons, are not offered a place through the normal admissions process and are put forward to the Fair Access to Inclusion Panel, e.g those deemed to have behaviour difficulties, those who do not speak English (not UASC) and those with very difficult family issues (e.g DV or gang related behaviour in previous LA).

3. Pupils who are in Year 11 seeking a school place and are not placed in a school. These pupils often require assessments prior to placement.
4. Pupils who are 'off rolled' from Hillingdon schools, in particular from secondary academy schools, leaving the child without a school place and the parent with the responsibility to find one (this then requires LA support through the Children Missing Education statutory duty).
5. Pupils who are unsuccessful at obtaining a place in more popular schools in their area. There is significant pressure on places at the more popular schools and, in some parts of the Borough, parents will express a preference for up to six local schools but are unsuccessful as the schools are full.

Academy schools are responsible for their pupils' attendance. The removal from roll may only become apparent to the Council retrospectively, if at all, as the statutory duty for the LA to inspect school registers was removed in 2010. This raises safeguarding issues and a lack of knowledge about pupils without a school place.

Pupils out of school were raised and recognised as a safeguarding issue at the recent Local Strategic Children Safeguarding Board conference (it is a national issue).

### **Interim education arrangements**

In response to the rising demand and complexity of pupils without a school place, a short-term provision was established at Brookfield Adult Learning Centre in February 2012 to provide full-time education for pupils awaiting a school place through the Borough's Pupil Support Team. This provision is still required and is being extended to pupils of a younger age group.

In addition, a separate process has been agreed with Schools not to place any Year 11 move-in pupil in a school setting. They are instead assessed and placed according to their academic needs and education preferences where possible; this has included colleges of Further Education.

### **EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY**

The Policy Overview Committee will receive reports, data and hear from witnesses about the issues relating to vulnerable pupils who are unable to access a school place in a timely manner.

The review will cover the activities of the full range of school in the Borough as well as the external companies which provide those schools with services.

### **Witnesses**

The following is a list of witnesses that may be used to assist with this review:

- Council's Service Manager for Behaviour, Attendance and SEN
- Council's Interim Chief Education Officer

- Council's Performance and Intelligence Manager
- Head Teacher of a Hillingdon School
- Head Teacher of a Hillingdon Academy
- Chair of the Hillingdon Fair Access Panel
- Department for Education – policy expert

The above will include a site visit for a small number of members to Brookfield Adult Learning Centre to gather evidence from staff and children.

## **Intelligence**

On 15 November 2012 the Guardian ran the article, “Illegal school exclusions: how pupils are slipping through the net” from which the following quote is taken:

*[Councillor] David Simmonds, of the Local Government Association, estimates there have been 25% cuts to education welfare and admissions services.*

*“Despite a 25% reduction in government funding there has been no reduction in the statutory services we have to provide,” he says. “If anything, there is an increase as competing schools play pass the parcel with difficult children, with councils trying to ensure they get the education they deserve, which remains a core legal duty.”*

The article can be found in full here:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/nov/15/illegal-school-exclusions?INTCMP=SRCH>

Additionally, in Lord Carlile’s report on the Edlington case published 22 November 2012 following the serious case review from Doncaster, mention is made of the risks and dangers associated with children out of school. More information on this can be found via the following links:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/AllPublications/Page1/DF-E-00124-2012>

<http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/speeches/a00218062/david-laws-speech-to-the-lga-education-conference>

## **Key information required**

In order to provide a full picture of the range of pupils being admitted to the Borough’s Schools in-year, it may be helpful to be provided with a further breakdown of these pupils. Subject to the availability of this information, this may include - but not be limited to - data on pupils who have transferred from out of Borough, pupils who have been excluded and need to be re-placed, pupils who have been off-rolled and are seeking a re-placement, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, etc.

## **LOGISTICS**

### **Proposed timeframe & milestones**

<b>Meeting Date *</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Purpose / Outcome</b>
16 January 2013	Agree Scoping Report	Information and analysis Council's Service Manager, Access and Inclusion
20 February 2013	Witness Session 1	Evidence & enquiry Council's Service Manager for Behaviour, Attendance and SEN Council's Interim Chief Education Officer Council's Performance and Intelligence Manager Department for Education – policy expert
20 March 2013	Witness session 2	Evidence & enquiry Head Teacher of a Hillingdon School Head Teacher of a Hillingdon Academy Chair of the Hillingdon Fair Access Panel <i>(to include site visit to Brookfield Adult Learning Centre)</i>
17 April 2013	Draft Final Report	Proposals – To consider draft recommendations and draft final report

*\* Specific meetings can be shortened or extended to suit the review topic and needs of the Committee*

### **Risk assessment**

Failure to secure witnesses to provide evidence and advice to the Committee will impact on the thoroughness and completeness of the review.

This is an extensive area and the Committee may not be able to cover all the issues that they wish to examine within the time available.

### **Background Reading**

- School Admission Code:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/school%20admissions%20code%20february%202012.pdf>

- In-Year Fair Access Protocol 2012:

<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/media.jsp?mediaid=27377&filetype=pdf>

- Centre for Social Justice, “No Excuses: A Review of Educational Exclusion”:

<http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/publications/no-excuses>

- Children’s Commissioner: “They never give up on you” Office of the Children’s Commissioner School Exclusions Inquiry’:

[http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content\\_561](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_561)

# Agenda Item 7

## **FIRST MAJOR REVIEW 2013/14 – STRENGTHENING THE COUNCIL’S ROLE AS A CORPORATE PARENT**

**Contact Officer:** Steven Maiden  
**Telephone:** 01895 250472

### **REASON FOR ITEM**

To consider the draft scoping report on this Committee’s major review into strengthening the Council’s role as a Corporate Parent. This was noted at the last meeting of the Committee as a suggested topic for the first major review of 2013/14.

Officers will provide Members with a brief presentation on the topic of corporate parenting within Hillingdon which will give an overview of some of the key issues facing the Council as it discharges its duties as a corporate parent.

### **OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE**

1. To give consideration to the detail contained in the draft scoping report and to make comments and suggestions on the detail contained within.
2. To request clarification and further information from officers.
3. To agree the scoping report and the witnesses that will be required for the Committee to conduct its review.

### **INFORMATION**

1. At the 20 March 2013 meeting of this Committee, it was noted that the Committee would undertake its first major review of the 2013/14 Municipal Year on Strengthening the Council’s Role as a Corporate Parent. This will be the first EdPOC review to look exclusively at the Council’s responsibilities as Corporate Parent.
2. In the light of legislative changes being implemented by the Government’s Children and Families Bill (2013), this review will consider the role of the Corporate Parenting Board in discharging its duties in:
  - Monitoring the performance of permanency and care planning;
  - Regulation 33 inspections of its children’s residential units;
  - Monitoring the fostering service;
  - Children and young people’s participation;
  - The educational attainment of LAC and care leavers;

### **PART I – MEMBERS, PUBLIC & PRESS**

- The transition of care leavers into independence and adulthood; and
- The provision of health services. In particular, access to mental and therapeutic services should be looked at.

3. The aim of the review is to assess the Council's statutory duties as Corporate Parents and consider how well the full range of needs of Looked After Children (LAC) and young people are addressed corporately by the Council and to make recommendations on how this role could be strengthened.
4. The review will identify areas for improvement and future development and, if needed, will bring forward positive and practical policy recommendations.

## **PAPERS WITH THE REPORT**

Draft Scoping Report (Appendix A)

Hillingdon Corporate Parenting Board's Terms of Reference (Appendix B)

## **PART I – MEMBERS, PUBLIC & PRESS**

Education and Children's Services Policy Overview Committee



# HILLINGDON

LONDON

## Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee Review Scoping Report 2013/14

### **OBJECTIVE**

#### **Short title of review**

Strengthening the Council's Role as a Corporate Parent

#### **Aim of review**

To review the Council's statutory duties as Corporate Parents and consider how well the full range of needs of Looked After Children (LAC) and young people are addressed corporately by the Council and to make recommendations on how this role could be strengthened.

#### **Terms of Reference**

1. To gain an understanding of:-
  - i) The profile of children and young people looked after by Hillingdon Council.
  - ii) The role of each Elected Member as a Corporate Parent and how this can be enhanced.
2. To explore how the Council and partner organisations support looked after children / young people across all aspects of their lives which include:
  - i) how they are kept safe;
  - ii) how their views are taken into account;
  - iii) the educational needs of LAC and care leavers;
  - iv) the promotion of their health and well-being; and
  - v) their preparation for leaving care, including support for housing and training needs.
3. To explore the performance of the Council against national trends.
4. To understand the impact of recent legislative changes and judgements on the delivery of services to LAC and care leavers and the impact of these on current and future budget pressures.

5. To ensure that the Local Authority's pledges to LAC and care leavers are promoted and delivered.
6. To gain an understanding on early permanency planning for LAC
7. To make recommendations to Cabinet based on the outcome of this review.

### **Reasons for the review**

This review is set up to look at how well the needs of Hillingdon's children and young people in care are being addressed. In doing this, it will look in depth at the contribution of a wide range of services provided by the Council and its partners to the parenting of LAC and care leavers.

The Government's recent Children and Families Bill (2013) is transforming the system for children and young people. This will change the approach to planning and delivering services to Children in Care (CiC). It takes forward the Coalition Government's commitments to improve services for vulnerable children and it underpins wider reforms to ensure that all children and young people can succeed, irrespective of their background. The Bill will reform the systems for adoption, looked after children, family justice and special educational needs.

The role of long term fostering is also under review. The Children's Minister, Edward Timpson wrote to the Director of Children's Services (DCS) in December 2012 indicating that further examination and possible regulatory change will follow. This would mean that long term fostering would be seen as a positive permanence outcome for children.

In the light of the legislative changes, the review will consider the role of the Council as a Corporate Parent as it discharges its duties in:

- Monitoring the performance of permanency and care planning;
- Regulation 33 inspections of its children's residential units;
- Monitoring the fostering service;
- Children and young people's participation;
- The educational attainment of LAC and care leavers;
- The transition of care leavers into independence and adulthood; and
- The provision of health services. In particular, access to mental and therapeutic services should be looked at.

The intention is to provide a full review and reassurance to Members that Hillingdon is discharging its corporate parenting responsibilities well and making changes in line with relevant legislation. The review will also consider the associated costs in implementing the changes.

### **Supporting the Cabinet & Council's policies and objectives**

This report will examine the performance of the Council in relation to Corporate Parenting duties for all-looked after children and care leavers. It will review legislative changes and make recommendations to Cabinet on how to achieve the aims set out above.

## **INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **Key Issues**

#### ***Corporate Parenting Responsibilities.***

LAC and young people are children who are in the care of the Council through a care order made by a court or a voluntary arrangement. They can be looked after in a children's home or by foster carers or by other family members.

Care leavers are children who have been looked after by the Council and are still provided with assistance, advice and guidance.

The term "Corporate Parenting" is defined in the statutory guidance issued to support the role of the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Director of Children's Services and also in the statutory guidance issued to support the Care Planning Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010. This recognises that Councils and their partner agencies should share the role of corporate parent, to act as the best possible parent for each child they look after and to advocate on his/her behalf to secure the best possible outcomes by having the same interest in the progress and achievements of children and young people. This is what a good parent would want for their own children.

The responsibility applies across the local authority and not just departments directly responsible for delivering services to children and young people. It requires ownership and leadership at a senior level and includes a key role for elected Members. The responsibility is also shared with the local authority's partner agencies. However, Corporate parenting responsibility could be shared more equally across the Council and partners. Whilst Children and Families Services have the lead responsibility and will always have the greatest level of involvement, it does not mean that other services and partners should not make a significant contribution.

At any one time, there are 65,000 children nationally who are looked after. Hillingdon is currently responsible for 363 children (31<sup>st</sup> March 2013), down from 376 in 2011/12. This in part is attributed to the fall in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children coming into care. The figures for local children and young people have remained static. The largest group representing 62% of the LAC are those aged between 13-18.

#### **1. The review should look at how well the work of corporate parenting is disseminated across the Council and its partners.**

Whilst looked after children and young people have a right to expect the same life opportunities and outcomes as other children, they may nevertheless experience disadvantage. Research indicates that they experience significantly poorer outcomes across a range of measures, including health and education:

- Nearly 50% have a diagnosable mental health disorder compared to 10% in the general population. Figures for those in residential care are even higher.
- Between a quarter and a third of rough sleepers have been looked after by local authorities as children.
- Children who have been in care are two-and-a-half times more likely to become teenage parents.
- Young people who have been in care are disproportionately likely to become unemployed.
- Twenty-six per cent of prisoners have been in care as children, despite the fact that they make up just 2 % of the total population.

**2. This review should examine how well the Council and its partners support looked after children to help improve:**

- Their educational attainment and preparation for employment and further education;
- Permanency planning through either adoption or long term fostering and other options such as placements with connected persons and special guardianship orders;
- Their journey through care and their participation in decision making and planning;
- Their health and wellbeing;
- Placement stability through increased quality placements within the local authority; and
- Their transition to adulthood and independence.

***Health***

A report published in May 2012 (Royal College of Nursing, Paediatrics and Child Health) on the health care of LAC found that two-thirds of LAC have been found to have at least one physical health complaint, such as speech and language problems, bedwetting, co-ordination difficulties and eye or sight problems. Generally the health and well-being of young people leaving care has consistently been found to be poorer than that of young people who have never been in care, with higher levels of teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse clearly evident. The high geographical mobility of the looked after children population, linked with not being registered with a GP and often being educated outside of mainstream schools exacerbates these problems.

Local authorities and health care planners and commissioners have statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children that are in their care, including ensuring their health needs are fully assessed, that they have a health plan in place which is regularly reviewed and that they have access to a range of health services to meet their needs. These form key aspects within inspection processes for looked after children's service provision.

The 2012 Annual Health Report completed by the Hillingdon LAC Health Team found that while the completion and quality of health assessments have

increased and improved, more is needed to address the mental health of LAC. 48% of the sample of LAC that were audited were found to have mental health needs of some kind, with a high incidence of mental health problems in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). In some age groups across the LAC population (mainly 14-17 year olds) the incidence of mental health needs identified was more than half of the sample. In these age groups the needs were complex.

**3. One of the key areas for the review should be to consider the provision of health care, including access to therapy and mental health services.**

***Education***

In the Children and Families Bill 2013, the Government has prioritised the education of looked after children by a statutory requirement on local authorities to establish and maintain suitably robust Virtual School arrangements. The Government is committed to improving life chances for all looked after children. Their educational attainment, while improving, is not doing so fast enough. Two groups of LAC whose educational needs require targeted support are those with special educational needs/disabilities and children of post statutory school age (16). Whilst the Bill extends the SEN system from birth to 25, there needs to be improved co-operation between all services, particularly between local authorities and health authorities.

Given that the Bill has prioritised the education of LAC; the review may want to consider extending the Virtual School's scope to include young people aged beyond the current statutory school age of 16. This will ensure that the support needs of young people entering further and higher education are met. This is, however, currently limited by the capacity of Hillingdon's Virtual School.

The education priority of the Hillingdon Virtual School is to support the progression of learning and attainment of children and young people through the provision of targeted services for access and inclusion. This is being achieved by the following:

- Improving Personal Education Plans
- Raising attainment of LAC through a focus on attendance, admissions, exclusions and pupils who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Promoting support to different groups of children to provide equality of access
- Provide a comprehensive training programme to schools, social workers and foster carers
- Ensure compliance with corporate priorities

**4. The review may want to consider:**

- **Whether the corporate parenting and governance arrangements are sufficiently able to support the virtual school while robustly holding it to account.**

- the range of support that is available for looked after children, including the dispensation of the Pupil Premium in schools (funding that is provided directly to maintained schools and academies to raise the attainment of LAC who have been in care for six months or more).

### ***Safeguarding***

Very recently there has been publicity on the need to protect vulnerable children in residential homes from sexual exploitation and going missing. In 2012 the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults and the APPG for Looked After Children and Care Leavers called a Parliamentary Inquiry to examine these issues more closely. Nationally 10,000 children are estimated to go missing from care in a year. When these children run away they are in great danger of being physically or sexually abused or exploited.

Children in care (whether in foster care or residential care) are three times more likely to run away than other children. Agencies' understanding of, and response to, this issue are therefore critical. In July-November 2012, the Policy and Overview Scrutiny Committee completed a review on safeguarding children who are missing from care. Recommendations from the review approved by Cabinet in March 2013 have been incorporated into an action plan and many of the actions have been implemented.

#### **4. The review should look into the standard and quality of care that is provided by the Council's residential children's homes.**

### ***Participation***

Children and young people in local authority care are greatly affected by the policies and decisions of the authority as their 'corporate parent'. Being able to influence those decisions is an essential right. They have a right to be informed about and participate in achieving their rights. The voice of the child and the experiences of children in care will form the central theme in Ofsted inspections. They will look at the 'journey of the child 'and how they inform and contribute to service development.

Hillingdon runs a range of participation activities that are facilitated and co-ordinated by the Participation Worker and the Children's Rights Co-ordinator.

#### **5. The review should consider the level of participation of its looked after children and care leavers in influencing the development of services and policies that impact on their lives.**

### ***Independent Reviewing Service***

Independent scrutiny of the care of LAC is carried out at statutory reviews by Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO). The 2008 Children and Young Person's Act extended the IROs' responsibilities from monitoring the

performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to a child's review to include monitoring the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to a child's case. The intention is that these changes will enable the IRO to have an effective independent oversight of the child's case and ensure that the child's interests are protected throughout the care planning process.

As part of the quality assurance function, the IRO also has a duty to monitor the performance of the local authority's function as a corporate parent and to identify any areas of poor practice. This should include identifying patterns of concern emerging not just around individual children but also more generally in relation to the collective experience of its LAC of the services they receive. An independent review of the IRO service is currently being carried out by the National Children's Bureau.

**6. The review may want to examine the Independent Reviewing Service to ensure that there is sufficient and robust quality assurance in place for the care planning of looked after children.**

**Summary of the scope of the Review**

- To examine the role of the Council and its partners as Corporate Parents with a view to making recommendations on how effective the current practice and procedures are;
- To investigate if the Council is clear about its Corporate Parenting responsibilities and how to implement them; and
- To improve Corporate Parenting awareness and service delivery for LAC.

The main services covered by this review would be those relating to looked after children and care leavers as set out below:

- Adoption & Permanence Team
- Fostering Service
- Children's Resources Service
- Children in Care and Leaving Care Social Work Teams
- Housing
- Adult and Community Learning
- LAC Health Team
- Central and Northwest London NHS Foundation Trust Services
- Education to include Special Educational Needs, Virtual School Schools/Academies
- Adult Social Care
- Leisure and Youth Services
- Independent Reviewing and Quality Assurance Service
- Children's Rights and Participation
- Elected Members
- Children's Commissioning Service

The review is within the remit of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for

Education and Children's Services.

### **Connected work**

In 2012 some of the Corporate Parenting responsibilities were reviewed by this Policy and Overview Committee. The Committee conducted reviews on Adoption and Permanence for children and the Leaving Care Grant for care leavers. The implementation and progress of the recommendations will be incorporated into the Corporate Parenting Board's work plan for 2013-2015.

Action arising from the Children and Families' Bill reforms related to Adoption and Permanence, LAC and SEN.

### **Key information required**

- Research documentation, national guidance and targets.
- Statistical evidence including relevant performance data and information on outcomes.
- Comparison with other areas such as statistical neighbours.
- Evidence from witness sessions with a range of stakeholders.
- The views and concerns of LAC, care leavers and foster carers.

## **EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY**

The review will gather evidence via the scrutiny of relevant research, reports and data and through 2 sessions with expert witnesses.

### **Witnesses**

The Committee could chose to invite witnesses from the following list:

- Senior Service Manager Safeguarding Children and Quality Assurance
- Foster Carer
- Virtual School Head
- Looked After Child/Children
- Participation Worker
- LAC Health Designated Nurse
- Service Manager for Children in Care and Leaving Care Service
- Service Manager Children's Resources
- Registered Manager of a children's residential unit
- CNWL Commissioner – Health
- Housing Services
- Step Up members
- Interim Head of Early Intervention
- Sports and Leisure Manager
- The Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services
- A member of the Corporate Parenting Board

### **Intelligence**

- National and local statistics on the profile of looked after children  
Dfe : Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England – year ending 31 March 2012  
<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001084/index.shtml>
- If This Were My Child – A Councillors Guide to Being a Good Corporate Parent – Department for Education and Skills/LGiU  
[https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/\\_arc\\_Parentscarersandfamilies/Page3/ITWMC](https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/_arc_Parentscarersandfamilies/Page3/ITWMC)
- Report from the joint enquiry into children who go missing from care (June 2012 – APPG)  
[http://s3.amazonaws.com/rccp/assets/attachments/1461\\_joint\\_appg\\_inquiry - report.. original.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/rccp/assets/attachments/1461_joint_appg_inquiry - report.. original.pdf)
- DfE (March 2010) The Children Act 1989: Guidance and regulations, Volume 2, Care Planning, placement and case review – London: HM Government  
<http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=children+act+1989+volume+2+care+planning>
- The Children and Families Bill 2013  
[www.education.gov.uk/childrenandfamiliesbill](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandfamiliesbill)

- Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Board
- Voice of the Child  
<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childrenincare/regs/b0074845/voice-of-the-child>
- NCAS – leaving care org. Corporate Parenting  
[http://leavingcare.org/what\\_we\\_do/corporateparenting\\_home](http://leavingcare.org/what_we_do/corporateparenting_home)
- Health of LAC – [www.rcpch.ac.uk/LAC](http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/LAC)

## **Consultation and Communications**

A conference/consultation for LAC and Care Leavers is planned for May/June 2013.

### **Lines of enquiry**

It will be important for Members to put questions to all the witnesses from statutory services about the quality, performance, experience and outcomes of corporate parenting, the statutory requirements for reporting this at both the national and local level and the implications for practice.

For LAC, Members may want to consider questions on the experience of being in care, the level of participation and how services can be improved.

For foster carers and the residential children's unit manager, questions on the level of support for LAC, understanding of the accountability of their roles/functions and measurement of performance, for example how do we know we are doing well and achieving the outcomes.

## **PROPOSALS**

Recommendations will be put forward following the witness sessions to Cabinet.

## **LOGISTICS**

### **Proposed timeframe & milestones**

<b>Meeting Date *</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Purpose / Outcome</b>
17 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	Agree Scoping Report	Information and analysis
4 <sup>th</sup> June 2013	Witness Session 1	Evidence & enquiry
30 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	Witness session 2	Evidence & enquiry
11 <sup>th</sup>	Draft Final Report	Proposals – agree

September 2013		recommendations and final draft report
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*\* Specific meetings can be shortened or extended to suit the review topic and needs of the Committee*

### **Risk assessment**

The resource implications will be mainly around making the expertise in the witnesses available to the Members.

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# HILLINGDON

LONDON

## London Borough of Hillingdon Corporate Parenting Board

### Terms of Reference.

#### Purpose :

The purpose of the Board is to oversee arrangements for the effective delivery of corporate parenting responsibilities to looked after children and young people and to its care leavers.

#### Objectives :

The key objectives of the Corporate Parenting Board are to:

1. Monitor the implementation of the corporate parenting strategy and work plan.
2. To maintain a clear strategic overview of the statutory services that are available for looked after children and young people across the borough and ensure that all parties take collective responsibility for promoting and ensuring positive outcomes for this group of children and young people.
3. Celebrate the successes of looked after children.
4. Promote awareness of the corporate parenting role within the Council and its partners
5. Support arrangements for Elected Members' information and training.
6. Receive regular analysis of key quantitative and qualitative data relating to looked after children and advise on action required.
7. Engage young people who are looked after by the Council in order to ensure they have an opportunity to influence the development of services.
8. Receive six monthly reports from the Independent Reviewing and Safeguarding Officer on trends and issues arising from statutory reviews.
9. Receive reports concerning the inspection of services for looked after children and care leavers, and of visits made under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001,

10. Review annually the Care Pledge made to looked after children to recommend any changes required to improve outcomes.
11. Advise the Lead Member for Children's Services on matters relating to corporate parenting.
12. Submit quarterly reports to the Joint Commissioning Board/Hillingdon Children and Families Trust on the progress of the Board's work plan and any other matters relating to LAC.
13. Contribute to the Hillingdon Children and Young People's Plan, Hillingdon Safeguarding Board annual report and business plan with regards to matters relating to children in care.
14. Submit an annual report to POC.
15. Review policies and procedures as and when required.

### **Membership**

The Board shall comprise the following Members:

1. Elected Members according to the usual appointment arrangements.
2. The Lead Officer for the Board will be the Deputy Director for Children and Families supported by the Corporate Parenting Manager. The Chair will be the Lead Member and Vice Chair will be Deputy Director of Children and Families.
3. Members of the Board will be required to attend appropriate training and be subject to a check by the Criminal Records Bureau.
4. The membership will consist of the chair of the children in care council, foster carer/s, representatives from a range of relevant services within the council and partner organisations.
5. Members should have sufficient authority to represent their service / organisation.
6. The membership of the Board will be reviewed every year in March to ensure they are valid and fit for purpose. Any amendments must be agreed at the following meeting.
7. Other members can be co-opted as and when and agreed by the Board.
8. A member shall cease to hold office if he/she fails to attend two consecutive meetings without explanation or discussion with the chair.
9. Members must disclose any interest and withdraw from the meeting where: (i) there is a conflict of interest (ii) they have a pecuniary interest in the matter.
10. Decision making and recommendations will be agreed through a consensus rather than formal voting.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

1. The Board will meet quarterly.
2. Meeting dates will be set for the year.
3. The agenda and briefing papers/reports will be distributed in advance (5 working days) of the scheduled meeting.

**These terms were agreed on .....**

<b>Name of Chair:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Name of Vice-Chair:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	

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# London Borough of Hillingdon Adoption Service

Inspection report for local authority adoption agency

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC055697
<b>Inspection date</b>	15/02/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Paul Clark
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full

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<b>Setting address</b>	London Borough of Hillingdon, Civic Centre, High Street, UXBRIDGE, Middlesex, UB8 1UW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01895 277 854
<b>Email</b>	dfry@hillington.gov.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	London Borough of Hillingdon
<b>Registered manager</b>	David Fry
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Merlin Joseph
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	18/11/2010

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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The adoption service of the London Borough of Hillingdon, known as the Adoption and Permanency Team undertakes all statutory work associated with adoption. It operates from the Civic Centre in Uxbridge. The duties it undertakes are as follows: the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approval of adopters; the matching, introduction and placement of children with adopters; the support of adoption placements; post-adoption support to those whose lives have been touched by adoption, including birth records counselling and intermediary work.

The authority have a service level agreement with an Adoption Support Agency to support the birth parents of children placed for adoption, or who have been adopted. The authority also have a service level agreement with a Voluntary Adoption Agency to carry out the preparation, assessment and approval of inter-country adopters.

There is a Team Manager and a Deputy Team Manager who supervise a team of 7.5 social workers who undertake the assessment of prospective adopters and one social worker who undertakes adoption support work. There is one Family Support Worker who oversees the 'Letterbox' system and direct contact arrangements between birth families and children. There is also a 0.5 Play Therapist.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

**Adequate:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The adoption service of the London Borough of Hillingdon provides a good level of care for adopted children. Children are kept safe by effective systems of recruitment and vetting of staff and of adopters and the exhaustive assessment of adopters. The adoption service have employed the management of the Safeguarding Children's services to deliberate in decisions about the recommendations about the approval of adopters where this has been thought necessary and further legal advice has been taken in such instances.

Adopters are well supported by good levels of preparation, matching and on-going support systems provided by specially trained staff and this has resulted in there being no disruption of adoption placements within the past two years. The service

has introduced plans to make service development planning more inclusive for children and adopters and the senior officers of the council and the management of children's services work in collaboration to produce service improvements.

To further improve the service the time taken to find an adopter for a child who has been recognised as being in need of adoption should be reduced and the time taken to conduct the assessments of adopters should also be reduced.

## **Areas for improvement**

### **Recommendations**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children are placed with 12 months of the decision of the agency decision maker that they should be placed for adoption NMS 13
- ensure that the adoption panel make a considered recommendation on the suitability of a prospective adopter to adopt within eight months of receipt of the prospective adopter's formal application to be assessed. NMS 17.7

### **Outcomes for children and young people**

Outcomes for children and young people are **adequate**.

Children for whom the best outcome is to be adopted, have clearly written Child Permanency Records and adoption plans in place. These plans identify how children's needs should be met and they are drawn up in collaboration between locality and adoption team social workers and signed off by the managers of the service and the decision that these children are in need of adoption is then ratified by the Agency Decision Maker. These plans ensure that children have clear plans of action in place intended to meet their future needs.

Due to the complex needs of some children and the agency's commitment to keeping sibling groups together 31% of children for whom the plan is adoption have waited longer than 12 months to be matched with an adoptive family. If children cannot be matched with adopters locally the service will seek a match with adopters recruited by the agencies from within the West London Adoption Consortium, of whom Hillingdon are a member. If a match has not been made within 4 weeks the children's profiles will be entered on the database of the National Adoption Network. These measures help to reduce the delays in matching children with adopters.

Adoption plans identify the courts decisions with regard to the necessary contact arrangements between children and their birth families, where appropriate. A Family Support Worker, who is a member of the adoption team has recently been recruited to oversee the letterbox system. Adopters report that in the past there have been some occurrences where letters have gone missing or not appropriately checked and

the appointment of this worker has been a positive action to address this.

There are good arrangements in place to support children's health and educational progress. A designated medical officer conducts children's initial health assessments and meets with the child's proposed adopters to make adopters fully aware of the child's known health history and their future health needs and how these should be met. The medical officer also acts as the vice chair of the adoption panel. There is also a member of the adoption team who is a qualified social worker and play therapist. This offers children and adoptive parents good levels of support in attending to children's needs related to issues arising from the attachment and loss they may have experienced. The service also has access to the local child and adolescent mental health services team. There is also a children's Looked After Children (LAC) nursing service who will support children's health needs up to the time of the Adoption Order being made.

The authority have a 'virtual school' arrangement in place to support LAC and this service extends to adopted children. The service is overseen by a 'Virtual Head Teacher'.

### **Quality of service**

The quality of the service is **adequate**.

Potential adopters value highly the initial contact arrangements that the service have put in place. This includes initial enquiries being received by a specially trained contact team who will send out early information packs about adoption. A social worker from the adoption team contacts enquirers who are then visited at home also at an early stage. Enquirers are further supported by good quality information events which are held bi-monthly.

Adopters feel well prepared for the adoption task by their attendance at preparation groups which they also attend at an early stage of their assessment. These follow the format of a national adoption association. Adopters are introduced to all aspects of adoption both positive and negative and are enabled to make an informed choice about making a commitment to adopt a child.

Prospective Adopters Reports (PAR) are completed by the social workers carrying out the assessments of potential adopters. The authority have a service level agreement with a Voluntary Adoption Agency to conduct the assessment and approval of inter-country adopters. Following staff training and more effective monitoring the PARs undertaken by the adoption team are now generally of a good quality containing both descriptive and analytic accounts of potential adopters. Social workers PARs are signed off by the manager of the service before being presented to the adoption panel for recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker. These assessments are generally timely. However, in the past 12 months, 25% of approvals have taken longer than eight months from the time of potential adopters' formal application. Thorough oversight of PARs by the adoption panel has been affected by panel errors. On one occasion, this in part, led to one potential adoptive couple not being

approved and having to wait a further two months before the error was rectified. The effectiveness of the panel function has been improved by the recent rearrangement of the panel which has included a new panel chair.

Children are supported in gaining a good knowledge of their personal history by the provision of good quality life story work conducted by social workers, foster carers and adoptive parents who are working in collaboration under the guidance of skilled life story workers. Workers take time to consult birth parents about the content of life story work and later life letters and children are provided with these within 10 days of the adoption order being made.

Social workers produce comprehensive adoption support plans which give clear guidance on children's on-going needs and how these will be met. This includes the contact arrangements in place with birth families where this is considered appropriate. Adopted adults have good access to birth records counselling and intermediary services which are conducted by an identified specialist worker within the adoption team who is trained in this area of work.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Children spoken to reported that they feel safe and happy in their adoptive families. Social workers make regular visits to them during the early stages of adoption and they are always seen alone and asked if they are happy. Children are provided with clear information materials which give them the contact details of helping agencies should they have any concerns. These can be made available in their own language or in symbol form.

Adopters are recruited, vetted and assessed to ensure that they will present no threat or danger to children. In one instance concerns about a potential adopter was the subject of lengthy investigation, legal advice and attempts to establish more factual information about the adopter's history. The deliberations of the authority's Service Manager for Safeguarding Children were taken and used to support the social worker's recommendation that the potential adopter be approved. This deliberation was ratified by the panel and the Agency Decision Maker and the adopter approved.

Staff are appropriately recruited and vetted to ensure that they present no threat or danger to children. All managers, social workers and adopters undergo a high level of safeguarding children training relevant to their status and responsibility and this training is appropriately updated. Adopters are well trained and prepared to support children who have been subject to abuse and the safeguarding children policy is relevant to the needs of adopted children. The long term impact of previous abuse experienced by adopted children is made known to adopters by the provision of a good level of preparation training and on-going adoption support. This support is provided by an identified social worker and a specialist Play Therapist within the adoption team who will give further direct therapeutic support to adopted children and families where concerns have been raised. The availability of this additional

service mitigates any delay that children might experience in waiting to be seen by local children and adolescent mental health services.

An identified adoption support worker within the team has been specially trained to provide birth records counselling and intermediary services for those adopted adults seeking information about the circumstances of their adoption and this provides a good level of support to those individuals seeking this service.

## **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management of the local authority adoption agency are **good**.

The adoption service demonstrates a capacity for continuous development. This is achieved and implemented by collaborative monitoring and planning which takes place between the senior management group of children's services, the corporate parenting group of the council, and the local safeguarding children's board. Service development reviews are conducted within appropriate frequencies and plans implemented.

There is a clear and comprehensive statement of purpose and children's guide in place. These are appropriately reviewed. All documents relating to the adoption service will be made available in appropriate languages upon request, or if need is identified.

Although the numbers of children placed for adoption within the past 12 months has been slightly lower than its statistical neighbours, the service has conducted poster and recruitment campaigns aimed at providing adopters for those children who are more difficult to find adopters for. This has resulted in an increase in the numbers of potential adopters currently being assessed and this is a result of the planned and positive action taken.

The good recruitment and preparation of adopters, and early identification of children who need to be adopted being suitably matched, has resulted in there being no disruptions of adoption placements in the past two years and this provides children with stability and improves their prospects for the future.

The service is a member of the West London Adoption Consortium which gives children greater options in being suitably matched.

All social work staff are appropriately qualified and registered with the Health and Care Professions Council and the majority have a higher professional qualification. All managers and staff undertake an annual personal development profile which identifies their on-going training and development needs and have good access to training resources. Staff supervision and team meetings are undertaken at least within the required frequencies. These good levels of management, training and supervision ensure that adopted children and adopters will receive high levels of professional support.

All of the recommendations arising from the previous inspection have been fully implemented.



## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the inspection framework and the evaluation schedule for local authority adoption agencies.



## FORWARD PLAN 2012/2013

**Contact officer:** Steven Maiden  
**Telephone:** 01895 250472

### REASON FOR ITEM

The Committee is required by its Terms of Reference to consider the Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decision-maker on key decisions which relate to services within its remit (before they are taken by Cabinet or Cabinet Member).

### OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

- To comment on items going to Cabinet or Cabinet Member for decision.
- Or to note the items and decide not to comment.

### INFORMATION

1. The latest published Forward Plan is attached. Any additions to the current published Forward Plan will be provided at the meeting. The Committee may wish to consider the non standard items that fall within its remit.

### SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

To consider whether there are comments or suggestions that the Committee wishes to make.

Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Report to Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer further information	Consultation on the decision	New item	Private decision?
		Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC&H =Social Care & Health AD = Administration Directorate FD= Finance Directorate							
<b>909</b>	<b>Schools Places Planning Update (2013/2022)</b>	The demand for school places in Hillingdon has been rising, in line with national and London-wide predictions. In February 2013, Cabinet agreed to receive a report at a future meeting presenting options to meet the increasing need for primary school places in priority areas of the Borough. Cabinet have also agreed to receive further information about planning for early years places and the needs of children with special educational needs.	All	Cllr David Simmonds	RS - Julien Kramer & Dan Kennedy	New			
<b>908</b>	<b>School Condition survey works</b>	Cabinet will receive a report progressing a number of works to improve the condition of schools within the Borough.	Various	Cllr David Simmonds & Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Norman Benn	Private (3)			
<b>SI</b>	<b>School Capital Programme Update</b>	This report will update Cabinet and request any necessary decisions in order to progress the School Capital Programme in order to upgrade facilities and keep on track to deliver sufficient places for children educated in the Borough.	Various	Cllr Jonathan Bianco and Cllr David Simmonds	RS - David Murnaghan	Corporate consultees	Private (3)		
<b>SI</b>	<b>Academy Conversions</b>	A standard report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council granting a long leases to schools who wish to convert to Academy Status	Various	Cllr David Simmonds / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Michael Patterson	Private (3)			

Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	
		Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC&H =Social Care & Health AD = Administration Directorate FD= Finance Directorate		
<b>Cabinet Member Decisions - April 2013</b>				
914	<b>Proposals to change Fostering and Adoption Panel and decision-making processes</b>	Adoption Agencies (Panel & Contingency Arrangements) Regulations 2012 came into force from 1st September 2012 and are part of the Government's review of adoption. They present an opportunity to amalgamate and improve the Council's existing Fostering and Adoption Panels, which will reduce delays and refocus the process on the permanence planning for children. Cabinet Members will be asked to make a decision on this.	N/A	Cllr Ray Puddifoot / Cllr David Simmonds
905	<b>Breakspear Infant &amp; Nursery &amp; Junior Schools - Proposed Amalgamation</b> Page 45	The Governing Body has formally requested the Council commences the statutory process to amalgamate the two schools. An initial six week consultation will take place in February/March, following which a Cabinet Member decision will be needed to decide whether or not to proceed to the next stage - the publication of statutory proposals.	Ickenham	Cllr David Simmonds
				RS - Venetia Rodgers
				Statutory consultation

Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Report to Full Council	Cabinet member(s) responsible	Officer further information	Consultation on the decision	New item	Private decision?
		Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC&H =Social Care & Health AD = Administration Directorate FD = Finance Directorate							
888	<b>Hillingdon's Independent Fostering Agency Framework for the West London Alliance - Award of Contract</b>	The West London Children's Services Efficiencies Programme was launched in Spring 2011, comprising the 6 West London Authorities plus Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham and Barnet. Hillingdon's role as the lead borough in delivering this project was agreed by Cabinet in March 2012. It is anticipated the collective purchasing power will deliver significantly preferable rates for IFAs, with additional fee reductions and discounts. Cabinet authority is required to enter into agreements or arrangements with one or more local authorities. Following Cabinet approval of the report, the remaining eight London boroughs will seek authority from their respective Cabinets to access the framework during April 2014.	N/A	Cllr David Simmonds	FD / SC&H - Paul Feven / Merlin Joseph	London boroughs	Private (3)		
SI	<b>School Capital Programme Update</b>	This report will update Cabinet and request any necessary decisions in order to progress the School Capital Programme in order to upgrade facilities and keep on track to deliver sufficient places for children educated in the Borough.	Various	Cllr Jonathan Bianco and Cllr David Simmonds	RS - David Murnaghan	Corporate consultees	Private (3)		
SI	<b>Academy Conversions</b>	A standard report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council granting a long leases to schools who wish to convert to Academy Status.	Various	Cllr David Simmonds / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Michael Patterson	Private (3)			

Ref	Decision	Further information		Ward(s)	Report to Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private decision?
		Council Departments: RS = Residents Services	SC&H =Social Care & Health							
<b>Cabinet Member Decisions - May 2013</b>										
912	<b>Amberley Lodge, Percy Bush Road, West Drayton</b>	It is recommended that Members, in conjunction with the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Residents Services:		West Drayton		Cllr Ray Puddifoot / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Marcia Gillings / Richard Carden		<b>New</b>	Private (3)
		1. Declare Amberley Lodge surplus to requirements;								
		2. Authorise the seeking of planning consent for a residential scheme and;								
		3. Authorise the disposal of the site on the open market with planning consent.								
908	<b>Commercial Property Rent Reviews</b>	The report updates the Leader and Cabinet Member on the implementation of several rent reviews on commercial property where the Council has leased out property. The report seeks approval to formally complete four rent reviews, where the Council is landlord.		West Drayton, Viewsley, Manor, Hillingdon East		Cllr Ray Puddifoot / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Susan Williams-Joseph		<b>New</b>	Private (1,2,3)
SI	<b>Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.		Various		All	AD - Democratic Services		Various	

Council Departments - Tel: 01895 250470 or email: democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk  
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Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Council Department: RS = Residents Services SC&H =Social Care & Health AD = Administration Directorate FD= Finance Directorate
<b>Cabinet meeting - 20 June 2013</b>				
SI	<b>School Capital Programme Update</b>	This report will update Cabinet and request any necessary decisions in order to progress the School Capital Programme in order to upgrade facilities and keep on track to deliver sufficient places for children educated in the Borough.	Various	Cllr Jonathan Bianco and Cllr David Simmonds
SI	<b>Academy Conversions</b>	A standard report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council granting a long leases to schools who wish to convert to Academy Status.	Various	Cllr David Simmonds / Cllr Jonathan Bianco

Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Report to Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer further information	Consultation on the decision	New item	Private decision?
Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC&H =Social Care & Health AD = Administration Directorate FD= Finance Directorate									
<b>Cabinet meeting - 25 July 2013</b>									
SI	<b>School Capital Programme Update</b>	This report will update Cabinet and request any necessary decisions in order to progress the School Capital Programme in order to upgrade facilities and keep on track to deliver sufficient places for children educated in the Borough.	Various	Cllr Jonathan Bianco and Cllr David Simmonds	RS - David Murnaghan	Corporate consultees	RS - David Murnaghan	New	Private (3)
SI	<b>Academy Conversions</b>	A standard report to Cabinet to seek approval for the Council granting a long leases to schools who wish to convert to Academy Status.	Various	Cllr David Simmonds / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Michael Patterson			New	Private (3)

Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)
SI	School Governing Bodies and Governors	To approve appointments, nominate appointments and make reappointments of local authority governors and to approve any changes to school governing body constitutions. To also authorise any Officer or Member to be a Governor or Director of an Academy	Cllr David Simmonds
	Report to Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible Officer further information	AD - Democratic Services
	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	
	Private decision?		

## WORK PROGRAMME 2012/2013

**Contact Officer:** Steven Maiden  
**Telephone:** 01895 250472

### REASON FOR REPORT

This report is to enable the Committee to review meeting dates and forward plans. This is a standard item at the end of each agenda.

### OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

1. To confirm dates for meetings
2. To make suggestions for future working practices and reviews.

### INFORMATION

**Meeting Dates and Rooms - Meetings start at 7pm unless indicated below**

Meetings	Room
7 June 2012	CR5
30 July 2012	CR6
12 September 2012	CR5
10 October 2012	CR5
21 November 2012	CR4
16 January 2013	CR5
20 February 2013	CR5
20 March 2013	CR5
17 April 2013	CR5

## EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

2012/13

### WORK PROGRAMME

<b>7<sup>th</sup> June 2012</b>	School Admissions Update
	Major Review – To discuss agree topics for potential review topics for 2012/13
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

<b>30<sup>th</sup> July 2012</b>	Review Topics 2012/13 – Draft Scoping Reports
	Single Meeting Review – Leaving Care Grant
	Budget Planning Report for Education & Children's Services 2013/14
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

<b>12<sup>th</sup> September 2012</b>	Major Review - Witness Session 1
	Draft Final Report for Minor Review
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

<b>10<sup>th</sup> October 2012</b>	Major Review – Safeguarding Children Who are Reported Missing - Witness Session 2
	Local Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

<b>21<sup>st</sup> November 2012</b>	Safeguarding Children who go Missing - Draft Final Report and recommendations
	Topics for next Review
	Quality Assurance and Audit Framework – Children's Services
	Annual Complaints Report 2011/12 for Social Care, Health and Housing
	Cabinet Forward Plan
	Work Programme
<b>16<sup>th</sup> January 2013</b>	Draft Budget for Consideration
	Major Review – Draft scoping report on the Effectiveness of Local Arrangements to Ensure Access to Education for Vulnerable Children
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions.
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year
<b>20<sup>th</sup> February 2013</b>	Standards and Quality in Education
	Major Review – Witness Session 1
	Report - education complaints
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year
<b>20<sup>th</sup> March 2013</b>	Major Review – Witness Session 2
	Update on the Implementation of Recommendations from past reviews of the Committee
	Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
	Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year
<b>17<sup>th</sup> April 2013</b>	Major Review – Draft Final Report
	Quarterly Child Social Care Audit Update 2012/2013

Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee – 17 April 2013

Update on the POD system
Adoption inspection report
Scoping Report on Corporate Parenting
Cabinet Forward Plan - Review forthcoming decisions
Work Programme – Review the work programme for the coming year

# Agenda Item 11

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 as amended.

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