

Minutes

RESIDENTS, EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

20 April 2021



Meeting held at VIRTUAL - Live on the Council's YouTube channel: Hillingdon London

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| | <p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman), John Morgan (Vice-Chairman), Allan Kauffman, Devi Radia, Paula Rodrigues, Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead), Colleen Sullivan, Alan Chapman, Kuldeep Lakhmana (In place of Stuart Mathers) and Tony Little (Co-opted Member)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Neil Fraser (Democratic Services Officer), Victoria Boorman (Flood & Water Management Specialist) and Debbie Scarborough (Adult & Community Learning - Service Manager)</p> |
| 60. | <p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Mathers. Councillor Lakhmana was present as substitute.</p> |
| 61. | <p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (Agenda Item 2)</p> <p>During discussion of Agenda Item 6, Mr Little declared a non-pecuniary interest, as he was a Governor of Harlington School.</p> |
| 62. | <p>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT ANY ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (Agenda Item 3)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all agenda items would be considered in public, but that the Committee would move into Part II at the end of the meeting to watch a brief video detailing the Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning Service's partnership working.</p> |
| 63. | <p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)</p> <p>Regarding minute 56, on the matter of special schools taking more pupils on roll, Councillor Sweeting clarified that the question related solely to Willow School, and requested further information on why Willow had 59 pupils on roll when its Planned Admission number (PAN) was 38. In addition, it was requested that officers advise whether, if this was to continue, when the PAN would be officially increased. It was agreed that the clerk would liaise with officers and provide the requested information following the meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.</p> |

64. **INFORMATION ITEM ON FLOODING (Agenda Item 5)**

Victoria Boorman, Flood and Water Management Specialist, introduced a report detailing the Council's roles and responsibilities as a Lead Local Flood Authority, its required actions during a major flood event, and lessons learned from recent flood events.

The Committee asked a number of questions, including:

Many flood events were caused by fly-tipped waste or vegetation blocking waterways. What was the Council doing to address these issues?

The Council was aware of such issues, and was attempting to review water catchment areas as a whole. The Council's Highways team was regularly clearing sites at least 3 times a week (or more during adverse weather conditions). All 32 thousand gullies within the Borough were cleared annually.

Vegetation blocking waterways included freshly mown grass clippings. Had the Council investigated the use of grass boxes to prevent this?

A review of the effectiveness and cost of using such boxes could be carried out.

Residents were regularly contacting their Ward Councillors regarding large trees in Yeading Brooke and other sites. Who should Councillors contact to arrange action to clear the sites?

Concerns that main rivers, such as Yeading Brooke, were at risk of imminent flooding should be notified to the Environmental Agency who had responsibility to clear such sites. Contact details were on the Council's website, though the officer could share the details with the Committee following the meeting.

Was there a record/audit of gullies and other sites cleared annually?

The Council's Highways team contracted a specialist service to carry out the clearing work, who then reported to Highways upon completion. Highways then maintained a report of sites cleared, and to be cleared.

The Council's flood officers published an annual report each year. Could Councillors be involved when officers were drafting this report?

Officers would happily receive any information that Councillors could provide.

Could the Council be more effective when challenging landowners or other agencies to carry out their riparian duties, potentially through new policy?

The Council carried out its riparian duties where it was landowner, through teams such as Highways or Green Spaces. For other sites, private landowners were expected to maintain their own areas. The Environment Agency take the lead on issues on main rivers such as the River Colne, and were now in the process of carrying out a survey of all their sites, and the trees therein, to determine those that posed a flood risk. This survey comprised over 200 locations, and Council flood officers were now in regular contact with the Agency to ensure this continued to be carried out as a priority. Canals

were often the responsibility of the Canal and Rivers Trust, though determining who owned each side of the canal or river was often challenging. Often private landowners were not aware that they should be maintaining their sites to prevent flooding.

The Council had no powers to insist that private landowners took steps to mitigate flood risks on their own property, though conversations with the Council's Antisocial Behaviour and Environment Team (ASBET) were currently taking place to determine the feasibility of the Council carrying out work on private land and then claiming back costs. However, such actions would require the landowner's permission.

Residents, in conjunction with Ward Councillors, had submitted a petition regarding flooding within West Drayton, which had included correspondence with the Chairman of the Environment Agency. However, despite repeated letters, no work to address problem areas appeared to have been carried out. Could flood officers provide any help in progressing this matter?

Flood officers had, in the past, also struggled to make meaningful contact with the Environment Agency. However, officers had now been provided with a specific point of contact within the Agency, and regular meetings were being held. Feedback from these meetings, and any subsequent actions, could be shared with Ward Councillors moving forward.

Ward Councillors had not always been advised of flooding events within their wards. Could this be improved upon?

Officers could review the communications process with a view to better informing Ward Councillors, especially during flood events occurring out of hours.

It was suggested that Members could provide detail of specific flooding areas to the officer outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

65.

THIRD WITNESS SESSION FOR THE REVIEW INTO THE ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE (Agenda Item 6)

Debbie Scarborough, Service Manager – Adult and Community Learning, provided information as part of the Committee's final information gathering session for its review into the Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning service (HACL). The officer highlighted key points from the meeting papers, including the newly completed Strategic Investment Pot funding project, Ofsted's report of its review carried out in 2019, and future challenges and opportunities.

Members asked a number of questions, including:

How would the service deal with a shortfall of funding, for example, should the current £470k funding not be repeated?

This project funding is unlikely to be repeated. A decision was made early on to manage the project in-house, to ensure skills and expertise developed was retained rather than lost through engaging with external contractors. Despite this funding stream ending, the service is well placed to continue to offer meaningful choice and effective courses, including offering free careers and education advice to adult residents.

Further to the report, did the officer have any further suggestions for recommendations to Cabinet as a result of the review?

Ofsted were keen to see evidence of scrutiny and oversight. To accomplish this, the Committee could be minded to recommend the creation an advisory board, or similar, attended by key stakeholders including senior Council officers, Councillors, partner agencies, local businesses, learners, etc.

In addition, a longer-term challenge to overcome would be the loss of the Harlington Centre as a service base. The Committee could consider recommending that officers explore the feasibility of using schools with classrooms currently unused as replacement sites.

Did the service work with local business to address their own staffing and training needs, with the aim of promoting the service's learners to employers?

The service did work with some local businesses, though this could be increased. The service had recently employed a manager to oversee vocational and employment partnerships, with the aim of furthering partnership working. This could include film and television based courses covering make up, special effects, costume design and creation, etc.

RESOLVED: That the information provided within the session be noted.

66. CABINET FORWARD PLAN (Agenda Item 7)

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

67. WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 8)

Consideration was given to the Work Programme. Members requested that the dates for the one-off items to be scheduled, such as Youth Services and Early Years Provision, be confirmed. The clerk advised that discussions were still ongoing with officers as to the most appropriate meeting dates for these items, and further detail would be forthcoming as soon as possible.

In addition, it was requested that the clerk confirm with officers that the next Standards and Quality in Education annual report would comprise of two separate reports, as requested at the previous meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

**68. PART II - PRIVATE
VIDEO DETAILING THE HILLINGDON ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING
SERVICE'S PARTNERSHIP WORKING (Agenda Item)**

The meeting entered Part II, to allow the Committee to view a brief video detailing the Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning Service's partnership working.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.19 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the

resolutions please contact Neil Fraser on . Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.