



# Children, Families and Education Select Committee

## Councillors on the Committee

Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair)  
Councillor Ekta Gohil (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Kishan Bhatt  
Councillor Peter Smallwood OBE  
Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)  
Councillor Tony Gill  
Councillor Narinder Garg

## Co-Opted Member

Tony Little, Roman Catholic Diocesan  
Representative

**Date:** WEDNESDAY, 18 JUNE  
2025

**Time:** 7.00 PM

**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOM 6 -  
CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH  
STREET, UXBRIDGE UB8  
1UW

**Meeting  
Details:** The public and press are welcome  
to attend and observe the meeting.

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## Terms of Reference

### Children, Families, & Education Select Committee

To undertake the overview and scrutiny role in relation to the following Cabinet Member portfolio(s) and service areas:

Portfolio(s)	Directorate	Service Areas
Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education	Children's Services	Children's Social Care (incl. safeguarding & corporate parenting)
		Corporate Parenting Panel
		Prevention & Youth Justice (incl. youth services, stronger families and adolescent mental health)
		Education & SEND (incl. Adult & Community Learning, Skills, Lifelong Learning, Music Services and School Travel)
	Adult Services & Health	Children and Families Support Services (incl. Early Years and Children's Centres)

### Corporate Parenting

This Select Committee will establish a Panel to support strong oversight of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. The Committee may appoint 3 Members to this Panel based on political balance. Membership may include non-Cabinet Members not on the Committee. The Committee may also appoint relevant Council officers and other external stakeholders to the Panel and agree its chairmanship and operation. In agreeing its operation, the Committee will provide for the Panel not to be able to establish any other sub-group or body to carry out its responsibilities.

# Agenda

- |           |  |         |
|-----------|--|---------|
| <b>1</b>  | Apologies for Absence  |         |
| <b>2</b>  | Declarations of interest in matters coming before this meeting   |         |
| <b>3</b>  | Minutes of the previous meeting  | 1 - 12  |
| <b>4</b>  | Minutes of the AGM   | 13 - 14 |
| <b>5</b>  | To confirm that the items of business marked as Part I will be considered in Public and that the items marked as Part II will be considered in Private |         |
| <b>6</b>  | Overview of Corporate Parenting Responsibilities   | 15 - 22 |
| <b>7</b>  | Corporate Parenting Panel Membership 2025-26   | 23 - 28 |
| <b>8</b>  | Persistent Absenteeism review - final report   | 29 - 30 |
| <b>9</b>  | New review - Policy Review Discussion and Guidance   | 31 - 40 |
| <b>10</b> | Forward Plan   | 41 - 50 |
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## Minutes

### CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE

15 April 2025

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

	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair), Councillor Becky Haggard OBE (Vice-Chair), Councillor Peter Smallwood OBE, Councillor Kishan Bhatt, Councillor Tony Gill, Councillor Rita Judge, and Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)</p> <p><b>Co-Opted Member Present:</b> Tony Little</p> <p><b>Cabinet Member Present:</b> Councillor Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families &amp; Education</p> <p><b>Officers Present:</b> Alex Coman (Director of Children's Safeguarding and Care) Dettie Quirke (Team Manager – Children's Social Care) Julie Kelly (Corporate Director of Children's Services) Kathryn Angelini (Assistant Director for Education) Laura Baldry (School Placement &amp; Admissions Manager) Luisa Hansen (Head of Finance – Children's &amp; SEND) Monica Gaga (Team Manager – Children's Social Care) Tehseen Kauser (Director of Children's Social Care) Valentin Danciu (Assistant Director, Children in Need of Help &amp; Protection) Ryan Dell (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
77.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
78..	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
79.	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed</p>

80.	<b>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE</b> ( <i>Agenda Item 4</i> )
81.	<p><b>YOUTH OFFER UPDATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Officers provided an update on the Youth Offer, noted against the key priorities in the five-year strategy.</p> <p><b><u>Priority 1: Local Youth Offer</u></b></p> <p><b><u>1a: Publish and distribute a clear, accessible and informative LYO across the borough</u></b></p> <p>There had been a successful launch event in February held at Harlington Young People's Centre. There had been a new publicity campaign called #NextGen, created by young people for young people. The campaign included a TikTok channel, which was regularly updated to highlight services for children and young people.</p> <p>The care and support directory had been updated to be more user-friendly and went live at the beginning of March.</p> <p><b><u>1b: Develop plans for the continuation and evolution of the LYO beyond the current delivery period</u></b></p> <p>There had been an increase in sessions delivered across various localities, including new sessions for different age groups (primary and secondary) and partnerships with local organisations. Efforts were underway to secure two new transporter buses for outreach work, pending approval.</p> <p><b><u>Priority 2: Monitoring and evaluation</u></b></p> <p><b><u>2a: Assess and review all existing monitoring and evaluation systems and structures</u></b></p> <p>A quality assurance toolkit had been created and was being rolled out to standardise processes and enhance service delivery.</p> <p><b><u>2b: Develop a plan to establish a standardised approach to data collection throughout the Youth Offer</u></b></p> <p>Data collection efforts had been standardised using new templates and a Power BI dashboard for data analysis.</p> <p><b><u>2c: Create templates designed to capture the necessary insights to demonstrate impact effectively</u></b></p> <p>All teams within the Hillingdon Youth Offer had migrated onto the EHM data management system. A new document suite has been developed to standardise data collection.</p> <p><b><u>Priority 3: Youth Engagement</u></b></p> <p><b><u>3a: Co-create a Youth Participation Strategy for the Hillingdon Youth Offer in partnership with stakeholders</u></b></p>

A youth participation strategy had been created with the first draft approved. Children and young people were being involved in various activities and decision-making processes, ensuring the voice of the child was captured.

#### **Priority 4: Youth Work Curriculum**

##### **4a: Align the Hillingdon Youth Work Curriculum with the National Youth Work Curriculum**

The youth work curriculum had been aligned with the National Youth Agency's national curriculum.

##### **4b: Implement the new framework, providing regular feedback opportunities to assess impact and effectiveness**

This curriculum was being introduced to all new and existing staff through the Stepping into Hillingdon Youth Offer training sessions, with the third cohort scheduled for early April 2025. The implementation of the new framework had been incorporated into the induction training for all staff.

#### **Priority 5: VCFS engagement**

##### **5a: Develop a comprehensive volunteer strategy to encompass the entire borough**

A voluntary strategy has been created and changes were being implemented.

##### **5b: Establish a new Partnership Board to propel the implementation of the new Youth Offer. The Board will enlist representatives from charity, voluntary and faith sector organisations**

A partnership board had been established with local organisations. The first meeting with groups and charities across Hillingdon took place last month.

#### **Priority 6: Workforce Development**

Recruitment efforts were ongoing to fill vacancies within the universal team. Training programs, including youth mental first aid and educational visits, had been rolled out for appropriate staff.

Members acknowledged the excellent work being done within the service area and the dynamic and flexible approach being provided.

Members asked about vacancies in the universal team, and barriers to recruitment, and if these were affecting service delivery. New officers were currently being onboarded into the team. Internal recruitment can take time but these officers were onboard so there was currently no issue. The longest part of the recruitment process was obtaining the DBS.

Members commended the emotional health & wellbeing sessions, Link counselling and yoga for wellbeing, and the adaptation of the team to put on more sessions.

	<p>Members inquired about the multicultural intake and engagement of children from different cultural backgrounds. Officers noted that there was a diverse intake of young people which reflected the diversity of the borough. Officers highlighted a residential visit to a scout camp for young people whose first language was French. There was also diversity among officers within the team, which could help the young people to identify with them and feel represented.</p> <p>A lot of work was being done with asylum seeking children in hotels via the young enterprise programme.</p> <p>Members asked about an audit of available venues. Officers highlighted the upcoming West Drayton family hub, West Drayton young people's centre and the Skills Hub.</p> <p>Members highlighted the recently launched TikTok campaign and asked if there was any feedback on this. Informal feedback had been received via the Youth Council, and a formal survey was planned. On social media platforms it was easy to monitor interactions such as views and likes. The communications team assisted with monitoring feedback.</p> <p>Officers noted that using Power BI would assist with data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Members inquired about the volunteer strategy and engagement with scout groups, guide groups, and football clubs. Officers had launched a partnership board to enhance collaboration with partner agencies. This initiative built on the previous launch of family hubs. The board aimed to provide practical support by allowing partner agencies to utilise Hillingdon's space, staff, and resources. This collaboration included a session where about 140 agencies were brought together for an event which helped to raise awareness of the youth offer.</p> <p>Additionally, within the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, the budget had been used to employ local businesses to deliver some of the holiday offers. The involvement of the voluntary sector, including volunteers in our link counselling, mentoring, and specialist services, added extra value.</p> <p>Members noted a disparity between the number of sessions delivered by the South West locality team compared to others and asked for reasons why. One reason was around staffing, as recruitment can take time whilst waiting for DBS checks and so some sessions had started later.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the information presented within the report</b></p>
82.	<p><b>SCHOOL ADMISSIONS UPDATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Officers presented an update on school admissions including in-year admissions and an overview of primary and secondary allocations.</p>



	<p>Members noted that Year 7 numbers had reduced compared to previous years, resulting in some unfilled places.</p> <p>Members asked if there was pressure in new areas such as in the north of the borough, and if this was due to a drop in first preferences (noting that Hillingdon was 23rd out of 32 London boroughs for first preferences in secondary schools). Officers explained that parental preferences played a significant part in admissions. Parents sometimes chose schools that were not their closest, affecting the number of children receiving their first preference. Some grammar schools had tightened their admissions criteria, which also impacted the number of first preferences offered. It was important for parents to make realistic choices.</p> <p>Members noted that 5.88% of the cohort (over 200 young people) had been offered none of their preferences and asked if there were any patterns. Officers noted that this was evenly spread across the borough. There were a range of vacancies across the north and south and so officers were able to offer alternative schools that were a reasonable distance from home. A number of schools allocated to children were their closest school, even if they were not one of their preferences. Many of these offers were made to families that did not put realistic preferences on their applications or only put one or two preferences. The number of young people who did not receive one of their preferences was generally higher for secondary schools than primary schools.</p> <p>Members asked about the categorisation of move-in applications, noting that the report stated that only approximately 200 secondary applications out of 902 were from people moving into the borough. Officers noted that this data relied heavily on information provided by parents on their application. Not all parents specified where they had moved from. Therefore 200 out of 902 was likely not an accurate reflection. Some families moved from one school to another within the borough.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families &amp; Education Select Committee noted the contents of the report</b></p>
83.	<p><b>FAMILIES FIRST REFORMS AND CHILDREN'S WELLBEING &amp; SCHOOLS BILL</b> (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the Families First Reforms and Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.</p> <p>The 'Keeping children safe, helping families thrive' policy statement came out last year.</p> <p>These would lead to some significant changes to how some services were delivered.</p>

	<p>Officers noted that various reviews had influenced the current reforms. The focus remained on prevention, support, and improving the quality of care while implementing significant changes in service delivery.</p> <p>The Committee was reminded of the guidance from the Families First programme, emphasising key working teams and community-based work. The reforms aimed to align social work teams with stronger families teams in localities, moving towards a multidisciplinary team setting. This approach would involve children's assessments led by the most appropriate practitioner, not necessarily a social worker.</p> <p>The consultation process had begun, with a draft structure in place. Engagement with staff and partners was ongoing to ensure a smooth transition. The goal was to implement these changes by April next year, with a focus on supporting families through multidisciplinary teams.</p> <p>The programme continued to ensure families had access to good education, safety, and economic stability. The emphasis was on early intervention and prevention, with multidisciplinary teams addressing social care and housing. The integration of services on the same floor in the civic centre had positively impacted service delivery.</p> <p>The programme included targeted efforts to prevent repeat removals of babies from parents who struggled to care for their children. This involved dedicated coordinators and key workers to support vulnerable parents post-adoption, aiming to prevent future adoptions and reduce trauma.</p> <p>The family hub journey continued, ensuring integration across the family help spectrum. The focus was on planning and understanding the whole lead change, with key components of family help being implemented.</p> <p>Significant changes were planned for child protection, including the establishment of lead child protection social workers responsible for decision-making, investigation, and conferencing.</p> <p>The reforms would require close collaboration with key partners, including the Met Police, NHS, education and young people. The Committee acknowledged the challenges posed by restructuring and potential reductions in partner organisations. The aim was to ensure partners were engaged and supportive throughout the process.</p> <p>There had been a restructure at senior level, with three directors, and there was a lot of transformation underway.</p> <p>The programme was backed by £500 million, with Hillingdon receiving £1.3 million for transformation. This funding was ringfenced for early intervention and prevention projects, with approximately a third allocated to supporting partners. The Committee would monitor the use of funds and the impact on service delivery.</p>
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	<p>The Committee agreed to receive an update in nine months to review progress and address any emerging issues. The focus would be on the family health space, child protection work, and the overall impact of the reforms.</p> <p>Members expressed interest in the prevention of repeat removals and the challenges of multi-agency protection and how this would pan out.</p> <p>Members asked about the biggest differences families in need will notice and the potential challenges. Officers noted that there would be local delivery, less centralised and better relationship building. Families would feel more like partners and have more consistency in their contacts.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that there were going to be lots of new ways of working.</p> <p>Members acknowledged the challenges related to pace and capacity, managing staff anxiety, and ensuring a smooth transition, as well as whether new roles will be attractive.</p> <p>It was important to ensure that all team members were adequately trained and up-to-date with legislation.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Committee:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Noted the information provided, and asked question as required; and</b></li> <li><b>2. Agreed realistic timescales for how they wish to monitor progress</b></li> </ol>
84.	<p><b>BUDGET &amp; SPENDING REPORT</b> (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Officers presented the budget and spending report.</p> <p>Members focused on savings proposals, what they meant in practise, and the likelihood of them being achieved this financial year.</p> <p>Officers clarified that making savings did not necessarily mean overspending. Last year's data indicated that Hillingdon had the second lowest-cost children's services in London, with very good regulatory outcomes. The focus on prevention had been a key factor in maintaining low costs while delivering necessary services.</p> <p>Placement costs were a big pressure, particularly for looked after children. The market for residential care was expensive, the most expensive placement offered to Hillingdon was £28,000 per week. The high costs did not always correlate with better outcomes, highlighting the need for more cost-effective solutions. When young people had to be placed away from Hillingdon, the wraparound care element could be lost.</p> <p>Officers explained that the savings proposals were not new ideas but part of ongoing efforts to address identified pressures. The savings were linked to</p>

the care offer, fostering transformation, and the residential beds programme. The goal was to lower costs while improving outcomes for children.

Six new units had been completed in Charville, with plans to open them by autumn after the estate registration process. Staffing and recruitment were key risks, but experienced managers and deputy managers were being prepared to ensure smooth operations.

The focus was on using residential care as an intervention rather than a permanent solution. Trauma informed training for foster carers and residential workers was being enhanced to support children locally and prepare them for foster placements or returning to their families.

Officers discussed the joint efforts in recommissioning supported accommodation and working with housing colleagues to address homelessness pressures. The aim was to ensure proper pathways for young people transitioning to independence. It was reiterated that all Members were corporate parents to Hillingdon's young people. A recent acquisition guaranteed 19 places for young people. Officers had looked at the entrants into care at different levels over recent years to predict the numbers over the next five years and also met with practitioners in different parts of the system. Officers were working with procurement on a new tender process for new contracts for providers. When talking about children's care it was important that all parts worked together. The aim was to ensure that young people were ready for independence by the age of 18, and if not, other routes such as Staying Close were available. All strategies for housing included young people and vice versa. Staying Close can accommodate up to 45 young people. Officers were also exploring rent guarantor schemes and Council Tax exemptions.

The social care delivery model aimed to reduce repeat removals of babies and improve outcomes for families. The restructuring included efforts to manage agency costs and convert agency staff to permanent contracts.

Officers highlighted the efforts to reduce agency costs, particularly for educational psychologists, social workers, and SEND officers. The goal was to offer competitive permanent pay and conditions to retain staff. This saving had been delivered. It was noted that recruitment and retention can be difficult. There was a disparity between agency costs and permanent costs.

Savings had been achieved through the work of keeping families together and supporting special guardianship orders. This saving had been delivered.

Reducing repeat pregnancies this was likely the biggest risk but there was enough knowledge and understanding of this. Last year there were eight repeat pregnancies and this would be monitored.

Officers explained that the savings in post-16 transport were linked to promoting independent travel and using personal budgets. This approach supported preparation for adulthood while managing costs. Members asked

	<p>how the savings would be made. This involved providing young people with financial assistance rather than paying large contracts. This would enable independent travel and preparation for adulthood.</p> <p>Members asked if any of the £5.2 million savings were looking vulnerable. There was currently no vulnerability, but this would be monitored. There was no cutting or stopping services, but there would be transformation. It was important not to do things at the risk of outcomes for young people.</p> <p>Officers noted that they were awaiting a response from the DfE regarding the DSG. Officers were hoping for feedback shortly which would hopefully mean the release of £7.5 million funds from the DfE towards the cumulative deficit.</p> <p>Members asked about tracking outcomes against financial investment and ensuring alignment with our corporate priorities. There were a range of KPIs as well as clear qualitative measures. Hillingdon had the lowest rate of care proceedings in the country. There were good gatekeeping processes in place to look at cost, benefit and expected outcomes.</p> <p>The Committee agreed on the importance of regular updates and the involvement of senior team members in future meetings.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report, and agreed the proposed approach to financial monitoring at this Select Committee as set out in this report</b></p>
85.	<p><b>PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM REVIEW: RECOMMENDATIONS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>The Chair introduced the item, with the aim of finalising the recommendations.</p> <p>Members questioned the effectiveness of the draft recommendation on an Attendance Awards scheme, particularly for younger students. The concern was that at younger ages, attendance was often dictated by parents rather than the children themselves. For older students, there may not be any additional motivation to attend school for small rewards such as certificates. It was agreed to remove this recommendation. Schools already did significant work around attendance and punctuality, and it should not be seen as the local authority imposing additional measures.</p> <p>Members noted the importance of including information in the final report on Hillingdon's current context, work already done and improvements in attendance.</p> <p>The data and monitoring theme was considered light, and there was a suggestion to include more detailed recommendations based on witness sessions and feedback from schools and parents. Members highlighted the need to heal the contract between parents and schools, which has been strained post-COVID.</p>

	<p>Members acknowledged the extensive work already done by officers. Initial drafts of the recommendations had included vast amounts of ideas which had been narrowed down as actions were taken. It was reiterated that the final set of recommendations needed to be concise and specific.</p> <p>Members noted the need to address the impact of delays in mental health and wellbeing services on absenteeism, and that this needed to be communicated to relevant agencies. It was noted that while this Committee did cover mental health, a lot of this came under the remit of the Health &amp; Social Care Select Committee.</p> <p>Members referred to a government initiative of mental health mentors in schools. Any progress on this would be looked into.</p> <p>It was noted that officers would share a draft final report.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families &amp; Education Select Committee:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Agreed the revised recommendations to be included in the final report; and</b></li> <li><b>2. Agreed to delegate approval of final report and its submission to Cabinet, on behalf of the Committee, to the Democratic Services Officer, in conjunction with the Chair, and in consultation with the Opposition Lead.</b></li> </ol>
86.	<p><b>CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL MINUTES</b> (<i>Agenda item 10</i>)</p> <p>Members considered the minutes of the previous Corporate Parenting Panel meeting.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the minutes</b></p>
87.	<p><b>FORWARD PLAN</b> (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>)</p> <p>Members considered the Forward Plan.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Forward Plan</b></p>
88.	<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME</b> (<i>Agenda Item 12</i>)</p> <p>Members considered the Work Programme.</p> <p>Members suggested adding consideration of the next review topic to the Work Programme.</p> <p>Members asked for confirmation of the dates of future meetings. These would be shared.</p>

	<b>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families &amp; Education Select Committee considered the report and agreed any amendments</b>
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.05 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information of any of the resolutions please contact Ryan Dell at [democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk). Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

**The public part of this meeting was filmed live on the Council's YouTube Channel to increase transparency in decision-making, however these minutes remain the official and definitive record of proceedings.**

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## Minutes

### CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE

08 May 2025



Meeting held at Council Chamber

	<b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair), Councillor Peter Smallwood, Councillor Kishan Bhatt Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead), Councillor Tony Gill, and Councillor Narinder Garg
1.	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> ( <i>Agenda Item 1</i> )  Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ekta Gohil and Mr Tony Little.
2.	<b>ELECTION OF CHAIR</b> ( <i>Agenda Item 2</i> )  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Heena Makwana be elected Chair of the Children, Families & Education Select Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026.
3,	<b>ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR</b> ( <i>Agenda Item 3</i> )  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Ekta Gohil be elected Vice-Chair of the Children, Families & Education Select Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026.
	The meeting, which commenced at 20:55, closed at 21:05.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Ryan Dell, Democratic Services Officer on [democratic@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@hillington.gov.uk). Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, officers, the press and members of the public.

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## OVERVIEW OF CORPORATE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES

<b>Committee name</b>	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Poppy Reddy, AD Care, Support and Transition Donna Hugh, AD Care Provision Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	The Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

This report provides a comprehensive briefing to the Children, Families & Education Select Committee on Hillingdon Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities. The report reaffirms the collective responsibility of the Council across elected members, officers, and departments to act as effective corporate parents and ensure the best outcomes for children and young people, who are looked after or care experienced.

Corporate parenting is not the sole responsibility of the Lead Member or Director of Children's Services; rather, it is a shared moral and statutory obligation across all functions of the Council. Championing the rights, needs, and voices of our children and young people and embedding Corporate Parenting principles throughout the organisation is fundamental to delivering high-quality, impactful services.

In Hillingdon, we understand that being in care can be a life-altering experience, shaping the trajectory of a young person's life. We acknowledge the importance of creating an environment that fosters stability, empowerment, and a sense of belonging for Children Looked After. We aim to ensure that every individual in our care can flourish, grow, and achieve their aspirations.

Services for children in care form part of a comprehensive continuum of support for children and young people who may be facing difficulties at home. These range from family support to intensive community interventions or seeking permanent alternative care. In taking this approach, we remain committed to ensuring that children only enter care when it is necessary for their safety and wellbeing. When we must exercise our powers to remove children from their homes to protect them, we seek to ensure that care proceedings are timely, and our planning is robust to achieve permanence for every child. Our priority will always be to achieve permanence for children in their extended family or network wherever possible.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Committee:**

- 1. Note the developments and achievements outlined in this report;**
- 2. Endorse the continued embedding of corporate parenting principles across all services; and**
- 3. Support ongoing efforts to prepare for the expanded statutory duties from 2025.**

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

1. When a child or young person enters the care of the Council, the role of being a parent is shared by the local authority with the parents. This is known as Corporate Parenting. Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility the Local Authority has towards children and young people in care. It is our responsibility to be loving, caring and aspirational for all children in our care and care experienced young people.
2. Working together with partners like health, education, housing and other partners to ensure that services are appropriate and meets the needs and improves outcomes for our children.
3. Above all else, it is about protecting children and young people from harm and keeping them safe whilst helping them to thrive and reach their full potential.
4. The Council has a statutory responsibility to children looked after until they are 18 years old and then as young adults until they are 25 years old. (These young people are known as Care Experienced Young People).
5. At end of March 2025 Hillingdon Council was corporate parent for 330 children under the age of 18 and 766 young people who are eligible for care leaving service of which 602 are aged between 18 to 25.
6. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined in law the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing, and positive experiences for our children and care experienced young people.
7. The statutory guidance identifies a critical question that Local Authorities (officers and elected members alike) must ask themselves in adopting a corporate parenting ethos: 'would this be good enough for my child?'
8. In Hillingdon, the way in which these duties are discharged is regularly reviewed and scrutinised by the Corporate Parenting Panel which is co-chaired by an elected member and one of our children who is a member of the Children in Care Council.
9. Our 5 Desired Outcomes for our Children were co-designed with our children and are:
  1. To be the best version of themselves
  2. To enjoy good physical and mental health
  3. To have pride in their unique identities
  4. To live somewhere where they feel they belong
  5. To be and feel safe

## **RESIDENT BENEFIT**

Hillingdon Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy places our children at the centre of all we do, ensuring that we are not only meeting our statutory duties but actively working to improve the life chances of our most vulnerable residents. These strategies are well-aligned with national guidance and forthcoming legislative reforms, positioning the Council as a committed, forward-thinking corporate parent.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None at this stage.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

This report is in line with the existing legislation relating to children in care. The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Working together to safeguard children, Department of Education, 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

The Children and Social Work Act 2017

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted>

## **APPENDIX**

The Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities

## The Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities

1. Hillingdon's Corporate Parenting responsibilities outlines the Council's approach to fulfilling its duties towards our children and care experienced young people. It provides a framework for delivering consistent, high-quality support that is shaped by the views and experiences of our young people. This briefing aims to re-iterate to the Committee the Council's role in safeguarding and caring for our children and young people who cannot remain safely at home.
2. Our Core strategic commitments include:
  - **Youth Voice and Participation** – Actively involving our children and young people in shaping services, ensuring they are heard, respected, and empowered.
  - **Multi-Agency Collaboration** – Working across partners in health, education, housing, and employment to deliver holistic, joined-up care and support.
  - **Continuous Quality Improvement** – Using performance data, audits, and feedback to drive innovation, accountability, and service enhancement.
3. This approach reflects a whole-council ethos, with elected members and officers serving as champions for children's rights, stability, and opportunities.

### Who are Looked After Children?

1. Throughout this document we shall refer to children and young people who are looked after or leaving care as "our children and care experienced young people." This is fundamental to our vision and values in supporting our children.
2. Our children can become part of the care system at any point in their lives and stay in care until they turn 18 years old, they can also be reunited with their birth family, extended family or be adopted.
3. Our corporate parenting responsibilities extend beyond a child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, continuing until they are 21 and up to 25 if they request or consent to support.
4. As part of Pathway Planning for our children transitioning to adulthood, we support their transition into adulthood by actively promoting their mental wellbeing, education, training, and employment, whilst always maintaining high aspirations and ensuring they have access to safe and appropriate housing options including 'staying close' and 'staying put.'
  - **Staying close:** is designed for young people moving across from residential care or foster care. It provides an enhanced package that includes move-on accommodation, practical and emotional support.
  - **Staying put:** allows our young people who were in foster care to continue living with their foster carers after they turn 18. The support continues until they are 21, thereby providing stability and continuity during their transition to adulthood.
5. Our children may enter care for various reasons, often due to abuse or neglect. In Hillingdon, we also have a significant number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in our care. To provide context 22% of our children are UASC, compared to our statistical neighbour's average of 9%. We have an Unaccompanied Children's Assessment Team (UCAT) specifically dedicated to supporting our UASC, ensuring their needs and age assessments are completed promptly to prevent delays and gaps in meeting their care needs.

6. Hillingdon, as a port Local authority continues to have a sizeable percentage of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Of those looked after at 31/03/2025, 22%. We have been utilising the NTS (National Transfer Scheme) with 19 young people moving to other Local Authorities between January 25 to March 25. New children arriving in the borough are now securing permanent moves through the scheme within one to six weeks.
7. Of all children and young people mentioned above, 45% arrived in Hillingdon seeking asylum and unaccompanied by an adult.
8. Our children are cared for in a range of settings:
  - living with foster parents
  - living in a residential children's home both outside and in the borough
  - living in semi-independent residential homes
  - living in residential settings like schools
  - living in secure settings because of being remanded to custody
  - living in staying put or staying close accommodation

## **Corporate Parenting Role**

9. 'Corporate Parenting' describes the collective responsibility of the Council and its partners to provide the same care and protection for our children as they would for their own children. Recent changes introduced under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill (2025) extend corporate parenting responsibilities to all public bodies for the first time. This significant development reinforces the whole-system approach by mandating that agencies such as NHS bodies, schools, the Youth Justice Board, and Ofsted share statutory duties to:
  - Be alert to factors that may affect the wellbeing of care experienced children and young people (up to age 25).
  - Assess and offer services that can promote wellbeing and life chances.
  - Enhance access to support, opportunities, and tailored provision.
  - Work cooperatively with local authorities and other partners in safeguarding responsibilities.
10. The Department for Education will manage the implementation, including regular reporting and ensuring guidelines are followed. These reforms come from direct feedback from care experienced young people, emphasising the need for support networks, accessible information, and chances to shape their future.
11. The statutory responsibilities for Councils are rooted in legislation. They are set out in the Children Act 1989, including through amendments made by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the Children and Families Act 2014 and The Children and Social Work Act 2017.

## **Corporate Parenting Principles**

12. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced seven corporate parenting principles that Councils must have regard to when looking after children in care:
  - Principle 1 – To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people

- Principle 2 – To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- Principle 3 – Take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- Principle 4 – To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- Principle 5 – To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- Principle 6 – For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- Principle 7 – To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

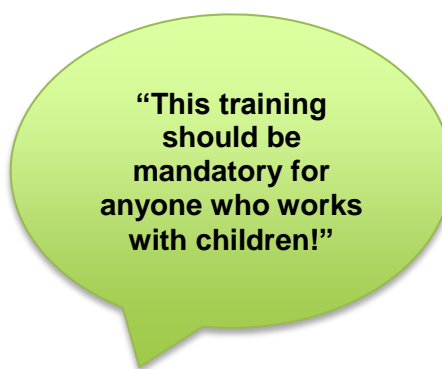
## **Corporate Parenting in Hillingdon**

13. In Hillingdon we are dedicated to supporting our children throughout their journey. We prioritise their safety and wellbeing by creating clear, co-produced plans that meet their needs. These plans are regularly monitored and reviewed by Independent Reviewing Officers (6 monthly). Additionally, our children build strong relationships with their social workers and personal advisors (PAs) who are assigned to them as they transition into adulthood.
14. Their education and ambitious achievements are promoted by their carers, by their social workers and a dedicated Virtual School team.
15. Our children and young people's progress and achievements are regularly reviewed and scrutinised by the Corporate Parenting Panel.
16. The Panel meets quarterly and scrutinises the delivery of services, receive annual and thematic reports from council officers and other agencies and most important put our children in the driving seat and enable them to take part in the scrutiny process and share their lived experiences with officers and elected members.
17. In Hillingdon we have an effective Children in Care Council which ensures that children have a say in the decisions that are made about them, and they are also involved in service planning and recruitment. The Children in Care Council (CICC) directly supports the Corporate Parenting Panel to measure and monitor the effectiveness and quality of Corporate Parenting in Hillingdon. Its purpose is to provide young people with a forum to collectively voice their ideas and views; to challenge our care and support; influence service improvements and drive change; contribute to the development of strategic plans and hold their corporate parents to account.
18. Hillingdon has three established and well attended Children in Care Council's (CiCC) Talkers, Step Up and Stepping Out who meet monthly and are part of the regional Children in Care Council Network. Our CiCC have a powerful collective voice, including having had input in the development on marketing materials within fostering recruitment, consultation on the licence agreements for staying put and development of a leaflet for Care Experienced Young People. Consultation with the CiCC resulted in Operation Makesafe, a joint social care/ police operation to make Hillingdon's high streets safer.
19. Young people participate in the recruitment of staff and foster carers and meet with the



directors on a quarterly basis.

20. In addition to this, unique to Hillingdon we have successfully embedded the “Choose your own Social Worker” approach that allows our children, wherever possible, to decide themselves which worker should be allocated to them and promotes the element of choice and collaborative working.
21. The children’s right to have a voice and to be heard is further supported by provision of Independent Advocacy commissioned from Coram. During the year more than 60% of our children using this service have accessed it themselves without professional support which evidences that they are informed of and know their rights.
22. For our children, permanency means having a framework of emotional, physical, and legal conditions that provide a sense of security, continuity, commitment, and identity. Consistency and continuity of care are essential to meet our children’s physical, emotional, and developmental needs, helping them reach their full potential. Our new fostering offer is positively impacting this by promoting permanency and ensuring children have stable, supportive home environments.
23. We achieve this by ensuring our carers are well trained and supported, including access to trauma informed parenting and PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) training. We aim to provide well-matched and suitable placements for our children. For our younger children, adoption is always considered when appropriate and we collaborate effectively with the Regional Adoption Agency Ambitious for Adoption to promote adoption and early permanency for our children.
24. **Walking in our Shoes training** – the successful and popular training programme written and facilitated by the Children in Care Council has continued to be delivered to multi-agency professionals throughout 2024 and 2025.
25. Over 1,000 professionals have been trained during the year via multi-agency partnership and bespoke sessions to social work students at Royal Holloway University, the Police, schools, and nursing teams. Following the training professionals have identified some key learning including:
  - The importance of listening, to be clear and always respectful
  - Don’t just ‘tick a box!’
  - Care experienced children and young people have hidden traumas that are not always easily identifiable on the outside
  - Work together and build relationships
  - Never give up
  - To be considerate and mindful of lived experiences, feelings, and barriers



These are a few examples of the achievements of our children supported by their corporate parents:

**Care experienced young person NF** – was recently honoured with a Jack Petchey Award, recognised for being motivated, resilient, and hardworking. She has proven herself to be a true role model to her peers, consistently going beyond in all she does. Attending a celebration event on 30 April 2025 and presented the award by the Mayor of Hillingdon NF travelled down from her accommodation at Liverpool University to attend the event and celebrate her well-deserved achievement together.

**Care experienced young person CMG** – has recently joined the "family business" in securing a role with Hillingdon as a Programme Delivery Worker within the youth offer team. Having been an active member of Children in Care Council stepping out and undertaking various volunteering roles with the children's participation team over the previous 5 year this part time post offers her valuable paid work experience and utilise her skills and experience gained.

As part of the **Making Hayes Safer Project 2 young people** with lived experience were appointed to deliver focus groups in 8 local secondary schools in Hayes. They engaged with 239 young people, ensuring their voices were heard, asking for their feedback on what is good about Hayes and what needs to be improved on, feeding back into the project design and planning. Sessions were interactive, engaging and included games, whilst capturing insight. They delivered this extremely well and got brilliant feedback, which resulted in the team securing £10,000 funding to continue the work with children and young people in schools from the community safety team. This money will be utilised to further deliver sessions in school and during half terms.

**Care experienced young person CM** – has navigated the complexities of the social care system, demonstrating unwavering determination and resilience. Her commitment to personal and professional growth led her to pursue higher education, culminating in a degree in Web and User Experience Design. This academic achievement laid the foundation for her successful career in the digital sector and secured her an internship where she played a pivotal role in supporting the e-visa mechanism within government offices. Her responsibilities included providing comprehensive training to employees, ensuring they were proficient in using this system.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL 2025-2026

<b>Committee name</b>	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A – Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel
<b>Ward</b>	N/A

### HEADLINES

The purpose of this report is to enable the Committee to update permanent and substitute Councillor membership on the Corporate Parenting Panel, following the AGM, for the 2025-26 municipal year.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Children, Families and Education Committee:**

- 1. Appoint Councillors Nick Denys, Heena Makwana and Jan Sweeting to be the permanent Elected Members on the Panel on the basis of political balance (2 Con: 1 Lab);**
- 2. Appoint Councillors Becky Haggar OBE, Peter Smallwood OBE and Tony Gill to be named substitutes on the basis of political balance (2 Con: 1 Lab); and**
- 3. Upon the recommendation of the Chair of this Committee, to confirm Councillor Nick Denys as the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel and Councillor Heena Makwana as the Vice-Chair.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### About the Panel

The Panel was established a number of years ago to support this Select Committee in championing corporate parenting across the Council, directly engaging children in the Council's care and care experienced young people in the democratic and decision-making process, working with them and partners to monitor relevant services and improve outcomes and life chances. The Panel can make recommendations to this Committee on any changes or improvements required, who in turn can formally present these to the Cabinet.

#### Membership

The Committee, under the Constitution, is required to appoint Councillors as permanent Elected Members on the Panel on the basis of political balance (2 Con; 1 Lab). The Committee is asked to confirm Councillors Nick Denys, Heena Makwana and Jan Sweeting to be the permanent Elected Members on the Panel.

Furthermore, the Committee is asked to confirm Councillors Becky Haggar OBE, Peter

Smallwood OBE and Tony Gill to be the named substitutes.

Permanent Members or substitutes can be any Councillor not in the Cabinet. However, it is useful to have some membership ties, where possible, with this parent committee.

Along with the elected Members, the Panel also comprises the following as standing members:

- a) Up to 5 Children in Care Council Members (one of whom the Chair or Vice-Chair may ask to assist them informally in chairing a specific meeting)
- b) Senior Officer from Children's Services
- c) Participation Manager
- d) Assistant Director for Education and Vulnerable Children
- e) The Local Authority's designated Looked After Children Nurse or Doctor
- f) 1 x Foster Carer representative
- g) Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting and Fostering
- h) Advisors
- i) Relevant Council officers, e.g. from Social Care, Early Intervention and Prevention, Housing Service, along with external representatives, e.g. Department for Work and Pensions, may attend relevant Panel meetings as advisors. Council officers should attend the Panel to present any reports to the Panel regarding their service area.

In practice, the Panel is a private meeting and not bound by the same rules regarding formal committee meetings, however, the minutes are published and presented to this Committee for democratic record and transparency.

It is also common for one of the Children in Care Council members to act as co-chair and chair meetings of the Panel. This gives a great opportunity for a young person to get experience of assisting the Chair or Vice-Chair in the running of the meeting.

### **Implications on related Council policies**

The Panel enables direct consultation and engagement with young people and children in care/ care experienced young people in the Council's democratic and decision-making processes.

## **RESIDENT BENEFIT**

The Panel gives young people in Hillingdon a valued role within our democratic process and enables Councillors to work directly with them and hear their views.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL.

This Select Committee will establish a Panel to support strong oversight of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. The Committee may appoint 3 Members to this Panel based on political balance. Membership may include non-Cabinet Members not on the Committee. The Committee may also appoint relevant Council officers and other external stakeholders to the Panel and agree its chairship and operation. In agreeing its operation, the Committee will provide for the Panel not to be able to establish any other sub-group or body to carry out its responsibilities.

### **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Terms of Reference as approved by the parent Select Committee

The purpose of the Panel is to support the Children, Families & Education Select Committee in championing corporate parenting across the Council, directly engaging children in the Council's care and care experienced young people in the democratic and decision-making process,

working with them and partners to monitor relevant service and improve outcomes and life chances. Membership will comprise of:

### Voting Members

3 Elected Members, who be appointed by the Children, Families & Education Select Committee based upon political balance, one of whom to be appointed as Chair. A Vice-Chair may also be appointed. Elected Members do not need to be Members of the parent Committee but cannot be Cabinet Members. 3 named substitutes, appointed by the Select Committee may attend in the absence of the appointed Members of the Panel and that they need not be Members of the parent Committee but cannot be Cabinet Members.

### Non-voting Members

- a) Up to 5 Children in Care Council Members (one of whom the Chair or Vice-Chair may ask to assist them informally in chairing a specific meeting).\*
- b) Senior Officer from Children's Services
- c) Participation Manager
- d) Assistant Director for Education and Vulnerable Children
- e) The Local Authority's designated Looked After Children Nurse or Doctor
- f) 1 x Foster Carer representative
- g) Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting and Fostering
- h) Advisors
- i) Relevant Council officers, e.g. from Social Care, Early Intervention and Prevention, Housing Service, along with external representatives, e.g. Department for Work and Pensions, may attend relevant Panel meetings as advisors. Council officers should attend the Panel to present any reports to the Panel regarding their service area.

*\*This gives Children in Care Council representatives, in an informal capacity, a unique opportunity to get experience of assisting the Chair or Vice-Chair in the running of the meeting.*

### Meetings and Operation

- a) The Panel will meet four times a year and in private\*
- b) The Panel will have in place a work programme for its activity.
- c) The Chair of the Panel, in conjunction with other members, shall agree the dates of the Panel for the ensuing year, where possible.
- d) The Chair of the Children, Families and Education Select Committee should authorise any additional meetings that may be required or requested by the Chair of the Panel.
- e) The Panel will allow themes and agenda topics to be brought to them from the Children in Care Council (CiCC), with themes identified at each meeting.
- f) The Chair of the Panel will agree agenda items in advance of the meeting.
- g) The Panel cannot establish any other sub-groups or bodies to carry out its responsibilities.

*\*Unlike the parent Select Committee, the Panel is not required to operate under statutory procedures outlined in the Local Government Act 1972 and access to information rules do not apply. This allows the Panel to be conducted in a flexible way to suit the requirements of the Members and young people participating in it.*

### Terms of Reference

- a) To champion the seven corporate parenting principles introduced by the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- b) To support the work of the Children, Families and Education Select Committee overseeing the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities by providing a strategic overview and monitoring of the statutory services for Looked After Children (LAC) and care experienced young people across the Borough, reporting back to the Committee on any findings, as appropriate.
- c) To actively engage young people who are looked after by the Council, along with care experienced young people, in order to ensure they have an opportunity to influence the development of services, participate in the decision-making and democratic process.
- d) To receive annual reports of the work of the Independent Reviewing Officers, Looked After Children Health Team, Corporate Parenting Service, Virtual School and Fostering and Adoption Service.
- e) To consider the impact on outcomes for children on other relevant activities linked to Looked After Children and care experienced young people's lived experiences, e.g. emotional wellbeing.
- f) To undertake any associated activity, review or task as requested by the Children, Families and Education Select Committee, reporting back to the Committee if directed.
- g) That through the Chair of the Panel, to advise the Children, Families and Education Select Committee and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education on matters relating to corporate parenting.
- h) To present the minutes of the Panel to a subsequent meeting of the Children, Families and Education Select Committee, where the Chair of the Panel, along with any Children in Care Council Members, may attend to update the Committee on the Panel's work.





## PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM REVIEW

<b>Committee name</b>	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Ryan Dell – Democratic Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	Persistent absenteeism review – final report (to follow)
<b>Wards</b>	All

## HEADLINES

### Background

This report brings the final version of the review report to the Committee for noting, prior to its planned submission to Cabinet on 24 July 2025.

The final report has been approved by the Chair and Opposition Lead on behalf of the Committee.

### Summary

Following the conclusion of the witness sessions, the final report was drafted, shared with officers and Members, and presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel for consideration.

## RECOMMENDATION:

**That the Children, Families & Education Select Committee note the final review report.**

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Please see the attached final review report (shared separately).

## RESIDENT BENEFIT

It is intended that the review will support the work of the Attendance Support service in helping to shape its ways of working, identifying areas of weakness and how overall engagement with key stakeholders can be improved.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Persistent absenteeism review – final report

## POLICY REVIEW DISCUSSION & GUIDANCE

<b>Committee name</b>	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix 1 – Guidance on undertaking policy reviews
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

To discuss ideas on suitable review topics by the Committee. To assist, this report provides guidance on the Committee's remit, an overview of how reviews can be undertaken, potential new and previous review topics and a scorecard to use to assess.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Committee:**

- 1. Note the guidance on undertaking policy reviews in Appendix 1;**
- 2. Seek to make use of the scorecard attached in Appendix 1 (Annex A) to assess any policy review topic ideas;**
- 3. Develop a single or shortlist of potential topic ideas over the coming months or year for officers to scope further and report back to the Committee on feasibility.**
- 4. Delegate to the Democratic Services Officer, in conjunction with the Chair (and in consultation with the Opposition Lead) any further agreement on review topic selection as required.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

**The Committee's direct remit of activity**

This Select Committee's specific Terms of Reference are set out below. This sets the parameters (or service areas) in which the Committee can undertake a policy review, present findings, request reports and provide direct input on matters:

<b>Portfolio(s)</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Service Areas</b>
Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education	Children's Services	Children's Social Care (incl. safeguarding & corporate parenting)
		Corporate Parenting Panel
		Prevention & Youth Justice (incl. youth services, stronger families and adolescent mental health)
		Education & SEND (incl. Adult & Community Learning, Skills, Lifelong Learning, Music Services and School Travel)

	Adult Services & Health	Children and Family Support Services (incl. Early Years and Children's Centres)
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This Select Committee will establish a Panel to support strong oversight of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. The Committee may appoint 3 Members to this Panel based on political balance. Membership may include non-Cabinet Members not on the Committee. The Committee may also appoint relevant Council officers and other external stakeholders to the Panel and agree its chairship and operation. In agreeing its operation, the Committee will provide for the Panel not to be able to establish any other sub-group or body to carry out its responsibilities.

### Selecting a topic and undertaking a review

Appendix 1 attached provides detailed guidance on selecting topics and undertaking any policy review. A Scrutiny Topic Scorecard is provided to assist with this. Further guidance can be sought from Democratic Services.

### Previous policy reviews

It is advised not to review an area that has either been recently reviewed by a committee or is subject to internal review or planned service transformation to avoid duplication and additional resourcing. A list of past reviews over the last few years, pertinent to this Committee's remit is shown below for information:

2024/25

- Persistent absenteeism  
(due to be considered at the [Cabinet meeting on 24 July 2025](#))

2022/23

- [Stronger Families Hub](#)  
(considered at the [Cabinet meeting on 09 November 2023](#))

2021/22

- [Adult and Community Learning Service](#)  
(considered at the [Cabinet meeting on 11 November 2021](#))

2020/21

- [Making the Council More Autism Friendly](#)  
(considered at the Virtual [Cabinet meeting on 22 April 2021](#))

2019/20

- [Combating the homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying of young people in Hillingdon](#)  
(considered at the [Cabinet meeting on 20 June 2019](#))

2017/18

- [Supporting Children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities in their Early Years](#)  
(considered at the [Cabinet meeting on 15 February 2018](#))
- [Criminalisation of Looked After Children \(LAC\)](#)  
(considered at the [Cabinet meeting on 25 January 2018](#))

## **Possible topics under current consideration**

Members may wish to present their own new topic ideas at the meeting and provide details of what particular aspects merit a review to assist officers in any scoping exercise.

It is important to differentiate between “information reports” you may wish to come before a committee to look at a service and then “review topics” which are more in-depth reviews resulting in a final report and the focus of this report.

As mentioned in Appendix 1, one way to ‘test out’ a potential policy review topic would be to add it as an ‘information report’ to an upcoming meeting on your work programme, to probe the matter further with Council officers or other stakeholders and ascertain whether it merits a fuller review – again perhaps running it through the Scrutiny Topic Scorecard provided.

## **Implications on related Council policies**

A statutory role of the Select Committees is to undertake reviews and make recommendations to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council’s policy and direction. Reviews selected should be consistent with the Council’s policy and budgetary framework.

## **How this report benefits Hillingdon residents**

None at this stage, pending any findings and recommendations devised in the final report.

## **Financial Implications**

None at this stage.

## **Legal Implications**

None at this stage.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL.

# Appendix 1 - Guidance on undertaking policy reviews

Over the years, Hillingdon's overview and scrutiny committees have undertaken successful in-depth reviews of Council services and policies. This has resulted in a number of positive changes locally, with some also affecting policy at a national level. Such committees engage Councillors in a wide range of Council activity and build a greater understanding about service provision to residents.

Policy reviews generally seek to:

1. Address a [significant] matter affecting the Borough
2. Seek to improve the delivery and/or efficiency of local services
3. Consider changes to policies or procedures to improve outcomes to residents/users

## REVIEW PHASES

The typical phases of a review are as follows and set out further below:

- 1 Selection of topic
- 2 Scoping the review / setting out objectives
- 3 Witness & evidence stage (this is the main activity)
- 4 Findings and Draft recommendations (possible early report draft)
- 5 Final report approved by Committee
- 6 Referred to Cabinet for consideration
- 7 Monitoring the implementation of recommendations once approved / amended by Cabinet at meetings, i.e. in six months

### 1. Selection of topic

It is always best to sound out and check the feasibility of potential review topics early on, as there will be lots of ideas coming forward and often knowing what topic will add most value will be difficult to gauge at this stage. It is important not to generalise, e.g. a review into waste services.

It may also not be known whether a topic is currently under review by the Cabinet or Council officers or part of a planned service transformation in due course. All of this and other factors need to be investigated and in particular, any duplication of review activity should not take place.

Whilst most policy reviews last a number of months, not all policy review ideas will suit this and may benefit from a single meeting review. It really depends on the scope of the review. If very narrow, i.e. a particular service policy, then a single meeting review may suffice. If a review seeks to look at an entire way a service operates then a number of months may be required to ensure you can undertake all your witness sessions and secure the necessary evidence and information before you formulate your findings.

Ideas for review topics can come from a number of sources including:

- Committee Members
- Cabinet Members
- Council officers
- External partners/ organisations
- Residents
- Ombudsman findings

When Councillors or the Committee itself considers a potential review topic, it is recommended running it through the Scrutiny Topic Scorecard (see Annex A). This gives you the opportunity to 'score' topics based upon their impacts under the following criteria:

<b>Resident focused</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Achievable</b>
<b>Correct remit</b>	<b>New</b>	<b>Wider support</b>
<b>Drives improvement</b>	<b>Drives transformation and efficiency</b>	<b>National impact</b>

Another way to consider a potential review topic, is to add this as an information item at an upcoming meeting on your work programme, to probe the matter further with Council officers and ascertain whether it merits a fuller review – again perhaps running it through the Scorecard above.

It is strongly advised that one review topic is undertaken at any one time, given resources.

## 2. Scoping report

Once a topic is agreed upon by the Committee, then officers will prepare a scoping report setting out the objectives of the review for your consideration. The scoping report will show how the review can be timetabled and structured, i.e. through themed witness sessions, along with details of potential witnesses and other contextual information to get the review started, e.g. lines of enquiry or questioning of witnesses.

The scoping report is a 'live' document owned by the Committee. Should the review's focus change mid-review, then the scoping document and its objectives can be adapted.

## 3. Witness and evidence stage

Ultimately, the Committee's efforts are at their best when external witnesses and residents participate, adding value to intelligence gathering and findings. In support of this, Committees have undertaken a variety of both formal and informal activity "in meetings" and "outside meetings". It is important to pull together a broad evidence based for any potential findings later on. Additionally, the ability for Councillors to bring their 'local' insight is highly valuable. Activities the Committee can undertake include:

- Surveys/ social media
- Promotion of review to seek views
- Invite the relevant Cabinet Member to attend for their views
- Question key council officers
- Hold informal workshops
- Networking events, e.g. with partners
- Have closed meetings, i.e. confidential, such as social care clients
- Commission reports from council officers / externally
- Request data and intelligence on the topic
- Visits to other local authorities
- Undertake site visits within the Borough or council facilities
- Appoint experts or advisors to join the Committee throughout its review
- Selecting the best range of witnesses to get a real user / resident perspectives
- Invite national experts in their field

Whilst information will be provided to Councillors, it may be helpful when preparing for this stage of a review, that Councillors:

- Prepare their draft questions for each witness in advance;
- Read a witness bio or find out more about their organisation;
- Do their own additional research on the topic - you may find something officers don't!
- Use their network of councillors in other local authorities to seek views;
- Tell residents at Surgeries / Ward Walks about your review, get their thoughts.

#### **4. Findings and draft recommendations & 5. Final Report**

After hearing from witnesses and receiving evidence, the Committee then will meet to pull together all the information and shape its collective findings, i.e. what needs to be improved or changed as a result.

The Committee will form 'draft' recommendations from this, which consistent with the Protocol on Cabinet and Scrutiny Relations, are usually shared with the Cabinet Member for their feedback and valuable insight.

In developing any recommendation, the Committee should bear in mind the following:

- Meet the initial aims / objectives of the review
- Be SMART, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
- Not be a short-term fix, but a lasting outcome
- Consider the financial aspect, e.g. cost neutral, provide savings or if at a cost, then affordable – and if possible aligned with the MTFF (budget planning process)
- Be based on a broad evidence base as possible and 'user or resident' insight
- Not create additional bureaucracy, e.g. if it relates to a policy, then to seek to review or amend existing policies (unless there is an absolute imperative for a new policy)
- If publicity or wider engagement or education is recommended, to target such communications as best as possible rather than generally
- Consider 'conclusions' as well as any specific recommendations.

Around this time, the Democratic Services Officer supporting the Committee will advise further on findings and drafting recommendations. Throughout this process, their role is critical to the Committee, to guide Members and secure the information and any witness activity that Members wish to undertake. They also work with the Chairman to bring the final draft report for the Committee to approve before it is scheduled to Cabinet.

#### **6. Referred to Cabinet & 7. Monitoring of recommendations**

The Committee's report will be shared with the Leader and Cabinet Member and scheduled to a Cabinet meeting as soon as possible. There is a legal requirement for any such report to be considered by the Cabinet.

Should Cabinet approve the Committee's recommendations, then they become official policy and officers are charged with implementing them.

A post report review is undertaken in say 6 months or a years' time to see how the Committee's recommendations have been implemented. This is scheduled on your work programme.

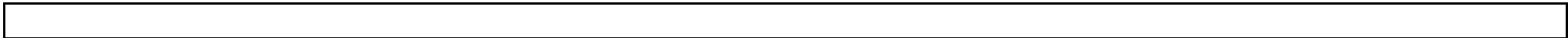


## Annex A – Scrutiny Topic Scorecard 2022-2026

Criteria scores showing 1-5 (5 being the highest, 0 the lowest). Then add up the total score. The higher the better review.										
Topic	Resident focused	Correct remit	Influence	New	Achievable	Wider support	Drives improvement	Delivers transformation and efficiency	National impact	Score

See criteria descriptions overleaf...

<b>Detailed criteria to assess review scoring</b> <i>(5 being the highest, 0 the lowest)</i>	
<b>Resident-focused</b>	– The topic will have high impact on residents and the community, with public interest and scope for making a positive difference (can be universal or a targeted group of people or an area of the Borough e.g. young people or a particular town centre)
<b>Correct remit</b>	– A topic that is clearly covered in the Committee's Terms of Reference and does it cut clearly into the domain of other Committees (unless a cross-cutting brief). If it does, then see if you can narrow the focus of the topic.
<b>Influence</b>	- A topic that relates to a service, event or issue in which the Council is in control of, has a significant stake in or influence over the matter, e.g. with partners.
<b>New</b>	- A new, fresh topic preferably. One which has not previously been reviewed by a Committee in the last 2-3 years, or which is not currently being reviewed by another Committee or internally by Cabinet Members and Officers, e.g. through service transformation.
<b>Achievable</b>	– A topic that is not open ended. One where the Committee's work programme can accommodate the review. Where there is likely to be a good level of expertise and information to draw on to complete. Does the topic need to be narrowed to make it more achievable?
<b>Wider support</b>	- A topic that is likely to receive buy-in from the Committee and wider Council, e.g. Cabinet Members, Officers. Or support is welcome from partner organisations to review the matter.
<b>Drives improvement</b>	- A topic where performance levels of a service have dropped on a consistent basis, or the contractor is not performing against agreed standards or there are significance (evidenced) complaints or feedback from residents on the matter.
<b>Delivers transformation and efficiency</b>	– a topic in support of the Council budgetary objectives, any areas where service re-modelling is under consideration in the <u>medium to longer-term</u> , that with Members' insight can help to deliver future savings, efficiencies and value for money services to residents. A topic where new ways of working could be adopted to benefit service delivery.
<b>National impact</b>	– A topic where emerging or recent legislation mean that it would be timely to review the matter to ensure Hillingdon Council is well prepared. Or a topic, that whilst Hillingdon focussed, could potentially be of benefit to other local councils or governmental authorities.



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## CABINET FORWARD PLAN

<b>Committee name</b>	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A – Latest Forward Plan
<b>Ward</b>	As shown on the Forward Plan

### HEADLINES

To monitor the Cabinet's latest Forward Plan which sets out key decisions and other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet collectively and Cabinet Members individually over the coming year. The report sets out the actions available to the Committee.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee notes the Cabinet Forward Plan.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Cabinet Forward Plan is published monthly, usually around the first or second week of each month. It is a rolling document giving the required public notice of future key decisions to be taken. Should a later edition of the Forward Plan be published after this agenda has been circulated, Democratic Services will update the Committee on any new items or changes at the meeting.

As part of its Terms of Reference, each Select Committee should consider the Forward Plan and, if it deems necessary, comment as appropriate to the decision-maker on the items listed which relate to services within its remit. For reference, the Forward Plan helpfully details which Select Committee's remit covers the relevant future decision item listed.

The Select Committee's monitoring role of the Forward Plan can be undertaken in a variety of ways, including both pre-decision and post-decision scrutiny of the items listed. The provision of advance information on future items listed (potentially also draft reports) to the Committee in advance will often depend upon a variety of factors including timing or feasibility, and ultimately any such request would rest with the relevant Cabinet Member to decide. However, the 2019 Protocol on Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet Relations (part of the Hillingdon Constitution) does provide guidance to Cabinet Members to:

- Actively support the provision of relevant Council information and other requests from the Committee as part of their work programme;
- Where feasible, provide opportunities for committees to provide their input on forthcoming executive reports as set out in the Forward Plan to enable wider pre-decision scrutiny (in addition to those statutorily required to come before committees, *i.e. policy framework documents – see para. below*).

As mentioned above, there is both a constitutional and statutory requirement for Select Committees to provide comments on the Cabinet's draft budget and policy framework proposals after publication. These are automatically scheduled in advance to multi-year work programmes.

Therefore, in general, the Committee may consider the following actions on specific items listed on the Forward Plan:

	<b>Committee action</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>How</b>
1	<b>To provide specific comments to be included in a future Cabinet or Cabinet Member report on matters within its remit.</b>	<p>As part of its pre-decision scrutiny role, this would be where the Committee wishes to provide its influence and views on a particular matter within the formal report to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member before the decision is made.</p> <p>This would usually be where the Committee has previously considered a draft report or the topic in detail, or where it considers it has sufficient information already to provide relevant comments to the decision-maker.</p>	<p>These would go within the standard section in every Cabinet or Cabinet Member report called "Select Committee comments".</p> <p>The Cabinet or Cabinet Member would then consider these as part of any decision they make.</p>
2	<b>To request further information on future reports listed under its remit.</b>	<p>As part of its pre-decision scrutiny role, this would be where the Committee wishes to discover more about a matter within its remit that is listed on the Forward Plan.</p> <p>Whilst such advance information can be requested from officers, the Committee should note that information may or may not be available in advance due to various factors, including timescales or the status of the drafting of the report itself and the formulation of final recommendation(s). Ultimately, the provision of any information in advance would be a matter for the Cabinet Member to decide.</p>	<p>This would be considered at a subsequent Select Committee meeting. Alternatively, information could be circulated outside the meeting if reporting timescales require this.</p> <p>Upon the provision of any information, the Select Committee may then decide to provide specific comments (as per 1 above).</p>
3	<b>To request the Cabinet Member considers providing a draft of the report, if feasible, for the Select Committee to consider prior to it being considered formally for decision.</b>	<p>As part of its pre-decision scrutiny role, this would be where the Committee wishes to provide an early steer or help shape a future report to Cabinet, e.g., on a policy matter.</p> <p>Whilst not the default position, Select Committees do occasionally receive draft versions of Cabinet reports prior to their formal consideration. The provision of such draft reports in advance may depend upon different factors, e.g., the timings required for that decision. Ultimately any request to see a draft report early would need the approval of the relevant Cabinet Member.</p>	<p>Democratic Services would contact the relevant Cabinet Member and Officer upon any such request.</p> <p>If agreed, the draft report would be considered at a subsequent Select Committee meeting to provide views and feedback to officers before they finalise it for the Cabinet or Cabinet Member. An opportunity to provide specific comments (as per 1 above) is also possible.</p>
4	<b>To identify a forthcoming report that may merit a post-decision review at a later Select Committee meeting.</b>	<p>As part of its post-decision scrutiny and broader reviewing role, this would be where the Select Committee may wish to monitor the implementation of a certain Cabinet or Cabinet Member decision listed/taken at a later stage, i.e., to review its effectiveness after a period of 6 months.</p> <p>The Committee should note that this is different to the use of the post-decision scrutiny 'call-in' power which seeks to ask the Cabinet or Cabinet Member to formally re-consider a decision up to 5 working days after the decision notice has been issued. This is undertaken via the new Scrutiny Call-in App members of the relevant Select Committee.</p>	<p>The Committee would add the matter to its multi-year work programme after a suitable time has elapsed upon the decision expected to be made by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member.</p> <p>Relevant service areas may be best to advise on the most appropriate time to review the matter once the decision is made.</p>

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Protocol on Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet relations adopted by Council 12 September 2019](#)
- [Scrutiny Call-in App](#)

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
JUNE 2025												
23	Annual Performance Report	Cabinet will receive an annual report performance report, setting out how the Council is delivering on key service metrics and the Council Strategy.	All		26 June			All Cabinet Members	All	Ian Kavanagh	Matthew Wallbridge	Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		26 June			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services	N/A	Public
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		26 June			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services	TBC	Public
JULY 2025												
SI Page 43	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		24 July			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services	N/A	Public
	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		24 July			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services	TBC	Public
AUGUST 2025												
SI	Cabinet decisions by the Leader of the Council	As there is no Cabinet meeting in August, the Leader of the Council may take decisions on behalf of the Cabinet. These will be notified and reported for ratification and public record.	Various			Aug-25		Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council	TBC	Democratic Services		Public / Private - TBD
SEPTEMBER 2025												
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		18 September			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		18 September			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	
OCTOBER 2025												
SI	The Annual Report Of Adult and Child Safeguarding Arrangements	This report provides the Cabinet with a summary of the activity undertaken by the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board to address the identified local priorities. The Cabinet will consider this report and approve the activity and the local priorities for the two boards.	All		23 October			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education / Cllr Jane Palmer - Health & Social Care	Health & Social Care / Children, Families & Education	Alex Coman / Susan-Sidonia Gladish	Sandra Taylor	Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		23 October			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		23 October			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services	TBC	Public
NOVEMBER 2025												
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		20 November			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		20 November			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services	TBC	Public
DECEMBER 2025												
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		18 December			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		18 December			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public



Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	<b>2026/27 Budget and Future Medium-Term Financial Strategy (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)</b>	This report will set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2026/27 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration and may include Council Tax Reduction Scheme proposals.	All		18 December		26 February 2026 - adoption	<a href="#">Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance &amp; Transformation</a>	All	Andy Goodwin		Public
<b>JANUARY 2026</b>												
SI	<b>Public Preview of matters to be considered in private</b>	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		15 January			<a href="#">TBC</a>	<a href="#">TBC</a>	Democratic Services		Public
SI	<b>Reports from Select Committees</b>	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		15 January			<a href="#">TBC</a>	<a href="#">TBC</a>	Democratic Services		Public
SI Page 45	<b>Audit Committee Annual Report</b>	The Audit Committee is required to submit an annual report to Council outlining the Committee's activities over the previous year. This report summarises the work of the Audit Committee and how it has undertaken its responsibilities in respect of: Internal Audit, External Audit, Counter Fraud, Risk Management and the Financial reporting process of the Statement of Accounts.	N/A				22 January 2026	<a href="#">N/A</a>	<a href="#">N/A</a>	Democratic Services	Matthew Wallbridge	Public
SI	<b>Programme of Meetings for the next Municipal Year</b>	Each year the full Council agrees the programme of meetings for the ensuing Municipal Year, setting out the dates and times of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings.	N/A				22 January 2026	<a href="#">N/A</a>	<a href="#">N/A</a>	Lloyd White		Public
SI	<b>Council Tax-Base and Business Rates Forecast 2026/27</b>	This report sets out the proposed Council Taxbase and Business Rates Forecast for the forthcoming financial year and in accordance with the legislation for approval by the full Council. The Council is required to calculate both its Council Taxbase as at 30 November 2023 and the Business Rates forecast for the forthcoming year by the end of January.	All				22 January 2026	<a href="#">NA</a>	<a href="#">N/A</a>	Andy Goodwin		Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
FEBRUARY 2026												
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		19 February			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		19 February			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	2026/27 Budget and Future Medium-Term Financial Strategy (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)	Following consultation, this report will set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2026/27 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration and any proposals for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.	All		19 February		26 February 2026 - adoption	Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council / Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance & Transformation	All	Andy Goodwin		Public
SI	Members' Allowances 2026/27	The Council is required to undertake an annual re-adoption of its Allowances Scheme and, in doing so give due regard to the recommendations made by the report of the Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors in London.	All				26 February 2026	N/A	N/A	Lloyd White		Public
MARCH 2026												
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		19 March			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		19 March			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
APRIL 2026												
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		23 April			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	<b>Reports from Select Committees</b>	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		23 April			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	<b>School Organisation Plan annual update</b>	The School Organisation Plan, originally approved by Cabinet in 2024, sets out how the London Borough of Hillingdon in accordance with its statutory duty, seeks to ensure there are sufficient primary. The Cabinet Member will consider the annual update to the Plan.	N/A			April		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Nav Minas / Abi Preston	Julie Kelly	Public
SI	<b>Standards and quality of education in Hillingdon during 2024/25</b>	The Cabinet Member will receive the Annual Report regarding children and young people's educational performance across Hillingdon schools, for publication.	N/A			April		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Abi Preston / Michael Hawkins	Julie Kelly	Public
<b>Schedule of Individual Cabinet Member Decisions that may be taken each month (standard items non key-</b>												
Age 47	<b>Urgent Cabinet-level decisions &amp; interim decision-making (including emergency decisions)</b>	The Leader of the Council has the necessary authority to make decisions that would otherwise be reserved to the Cabinet, in the absence of a Cabinet meeting or in urgent circumstances. Any such decisions will be published in the usual way and reported to a subsequent Cabinet meeting for ratification. The Leader may also take emergency decisions without notice, in particular in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, which will be ratified at a later Cabinet meeting.	Various			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council	TBC	TBC		Public / Private
SI	<b>School Governing Bodies, Instruments of Government and Governors / Authorising Academy Appointments</b>	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 Member to be a Governor or Director of an Academy.	N/A			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Helen Boundy		Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	<b>Release of Capital Funds</b>	The release of all capital monies requires formal Member approval, unless otherwise determined either by the Cabinet or the Leader. Batches of monthly reports (as well as occasional individual reports) to determine the release of capital for any schemes already agreed in the capital budget and previously approved by Cabinet or Cabinet Members	TBC			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		<b>Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance &amp; Transformation (in conjunction with relevant Cabinet Member)</b>	<b>All - TBC by decision made</b>	<b>various</b>		Public but some Private (1,2,3)
SI	<b>Petitions about matters under the control of the Cabinet</b>	Cabinet Members will consider a number of petitions received by local residents and organisations and decide on future action. These will be arranged as Petition Hearings.	TBC			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		<b>All</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>Democratic Services</b>		Public
SI	<b>To approve compensation payments</b>	To approve compensation payments in relation to any complaint to the Council in excess of £1000.	n/a			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		<b>All</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>various</b>		Private (1,2,3)
SI Page 48	<b>Acceptance of Tenders</b>	To accept quotations, tenders, contract extensions and contract variations valued between £50k and £500k in their Portfolio Area where funding is previously included in Council budgets.	n/a			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		<b>Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council OR Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance &amp; Transformation / in conjunction with relevant Cabinet Member</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>various</b>		Private (3)
SI	<b>All Delegated Decisions by Cabinet to Cabinet Members, including tender and property decisions</b>	Where previously delegated by Cabinet, to make any necessary decisions, accept tenders, bids and authorise property decisions / transactions in accordance with the Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.	TBC			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		<b>All</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>various</b>		Public / Private (1,2,3)
SI	<b>School Redundancy Payments</b>	To consider requests for School Redundancy Payments and decide whether to approve them on behalf of the Local Authority	TBC			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		<b>Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families &amp; Education</b>	<b>Children, Families &amp; Education</b>	<b>Abi Preston</b>		Private (1,3,4)

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	External funding bids	To authorise the making of bids for external funding where there is no requirement for a financial commitment from the Council.	n/a			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		All	TBC	various		Public
SI	Response to key consultations that may impact upon the Borough	A standard item to capture any emerging consultations from Government, the GLA or other public bodies and institutions that will impact upon the Borough. Where the deadline to respond cannot be met by the date of the Cabinet meeting, the Constitution allows the Cabinet Member to sign-off the response.	TBC			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		All	TBC	various		Public
SI = Standard Item that may be considered each month/regularly												
The Cabinet's Forward Plan is an official document by the London Borough of Hillingdon, UK												

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## WORK PROGRAMME

<b>Committee name</b>	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A – Work Programme
<b>Ward</b>	All

## HEADLINES

To enable the Committee to note future meeting dates and to forward plan its work for the current municipal year.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee considers the report and agrees any amendments.**

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. The Committee's meetings will start at 7pm and the witnesses attending each of the meetings may include representatives from external organisations, some of whom travel from outside of the Borough. Forthcoming meeting dates are as follows:

Meeting Date	Room
30 July 2025	CR6
11 September 2025	CR6
13 November 2025	CR6
07 January 2026	CR6
05 February 2026	CR6
12 March 2026	CR6
14 April 2026	CR6

## Implications on related Council policies

The role of the Select Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet, who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

## RESIDENT BENEFIT

Select Committees directly engage residents in shaping policy and recommendations and the Committees seek to improve the way the Council provides services to residents.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL.



MULTI-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME 2022 - 2026

		2025/2026							
Service Areas	Children, Families & Education Select Committee	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
		No meeting	18	30	No meeting	11	No meeting	13	No meeting
Education and SEND	<b>Review: Persistent Absenteeism</b>								
	Policy Review Discussion & Guidance								
	Topic selection/ scoping stage								
	Witness/ evidence/ consultation stage								
	Findings, conclusions and recommendations								
	Final review report agreement		X						
	Target Cabinet reporting			X					
TBC	<b>Review: TBC</b>								
	Policy Review Discussion & Guidance		X	TBC					
	Topic selection/ scoping stage					TBC			
	Witness/ evidence/ consultation stage							TBC	
	Findings, conclusions and recommendations								
	Final review report agreement								
	Target Cabinet reporting								
Children's Social Care	<b>Regular service &amp; performance monitoring</b>								
	Reports/ minutes from the Corporate Parenting Panel			May mins		July mins			
	Corporate Parenting Panel Membership to agree + subs		X						
	Corporate Parenting Panel - update to Terms of Reference								
	Overview of Corporate Parenting Responsibilities		X						
Education and SEND	Learn Hillingdon Self-Assessment Review (annual)								
	School Organisation Plan inc. School Places Planning update								
	Annual Education Standards report								
	School Admissions update								
	Hillingdon Music Hub Annual Report			X					
-	Annual Performance Monitoring							X	
	Budget & Spending Report			X		X		X	
	Minutes of the AGM		X						
	Cabinet Forward Plan Monthly Monitoring		X	X		X		X	
Children's Social Care	<b>One-off information items</b>								
	Children's Centres delivery model and Early Years Nurseries - review of implementation of Cabinet's decisions Sept. 2023								
	Hillingdon's Youth Offer & Delivery Model - review of implementation of Cabinet decisions from Sept. 2023								
Education and SEND	Hillingdon Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy for Children and Young People 0-25 Years 2023-2028 (& update)							X	
	SEND Sufficiency Strategy							X	
	School Admissions Arrangements - Whitehall Infant/ Junior								
	Move-ins to the Borough (in-year admissions)								
	Ukrainian Children - how funding from Central Govt. has been delivered to schools/ "Ukraine Education support update"								
	DPS for Alternative Provision – Education and SEND								
	Outcomes of consultations regarding:								
	(i) Proposed closures of the Physical Disability (PD) Special Resourced Provision (SRP) at Coteford Infant School								
	(ii) Proposed increasing of the age range for the Assessment Base at Ruislip Gardens Primary School								
	(iii) Proposal for some community schools to lower their age range to take two year olds.								
	Draft Hillingdon Education Strategy 2024-2029								
	Outcome of the consultation for the proposal to amalgamate Grange Park Infant and Nursery School and Grange Park Junior School								
	The proposal to Amalgamate Harefield Infant School and Harefield Junior School			X					
Prevention and Youth Justice	Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029								
Children and Families Support Services	Early help/ support available to young people   Services available to low-income families								
-	Witness session on Higher Education - Orchard Hill College								
	Witness session on Higher Education - Uxbridge College								
	Witness session on Higher Education - Brunel University London								
	Families First Reforms and Childrens Wellbeing & Schools Bill								
	Council Strategy 2022-2026 consultation								
Democratic Services	Select Committee Terms of Reference update								
Democratic Services	Scrutiny Introduction (Democratic Services)								
	Place2Be (external witness session on children's mental health) - TBC								
Children's Social Care	<b>Past review delivery</b>								
	Stronger Families Hub 2022/23 - 2023/24								
	Adult & Community Learning Review - 2021/22								
Education and SEND	Persistent Absenteeism - 2024/25								

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