

Minutes

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

20 February 2013



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Meeting held at Council Chamber - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

Committee Members Present:

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

Witnesses Present:

Pauline Nixon, Senior Manager for Access and Inclusion
Deborah Bell, Service Manager Behaviour, Attendance and SEN
Dan Kennedy, Performance and Intelligence Manager

LBH Officers Present:

Julien Kramer (Interim Chief Education Officer), Merlin Joseph (Deputy Director Children and Families), Steve Buckingham (Performance and Intransigence Manager, Residents Services), Steven Maiden (Democratic Services Officer)

49.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE <i>(Agenda Item 1)</i> There were no apologies for absence.	Action by
50.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING. <i>(Agenda Item 2)</i> Councillor David Benson declared a general non-pecuniary interest as he was a Governor of Uxbridge High School and lectured at further and higher education colleges. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions. Councillor Lindsay Bliss declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor of Brookside Primary School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions. Councillor Judith Cooper declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor of Charville, St Andrews and the Hillingdon Virtual School. She was also on the Children's Board at Charville and her husband was a Governor at St Mary's School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions. Councillor John Riley declared a general non-pecuniary interest as he	Action by

	<p>was a Governor of Field End Infant School. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.</p> <p>Councillor Catherine Dann declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor of Newham Junior School and Bishop Ramsay C of E School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.</p> <p>Councillor Susan O'Brien declared a general non-pecuniary interest as she was a Governor at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic School and was working at Ruislip High School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.</p> <p>Tony Little declared a general non-pecuniary interest as he was a Governor at Pinkwell Primary School and Hartlington Community School. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussions.</p>	
51.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND ALL PART 2 ITEMS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE <i>(Agenda Item 3)</i></p> <p>It was noted that all items would be considered in Part 1.</p>	Action by
52.	<p>MATTERS THAT HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OR URGENT <i>(Agenda Item 4)</i></p> <p>There were no matters notified in advance or urgent.</p>	Action by
53.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 16 JANUARY 2013 <i>(Agenda Item 5)</i></p> <p>The Minutes of 16 January 2013 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	Action by
54.	<p>STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN EDUCATION 2012 <i>(Agenda Item 6)</i></p> <p>Officers introduced the report which had been welcomed by Cabinet. It was noted that this was a retrospective report and that much of the information was historic. Officers reminded Members that simple assumptions should not be drawn from this report as it recorded a period in which the Council's education service was changing significantly.</p> <p>The report showed a service which was improving; with the gap in educational achievement between girls and boys narrowing and a general improvement in attainment across the board. However, it was noted that performance for Key Stage 1 and Foundation levels were not as encouraging as had been hoped for. Officer advised that challenges with Key Stage 1 were seen to be linked to the introduction of phonics test.</p> <p>Members raised concerns that teachers in the Borough's schools were failing to prepare Key Stage 1 pupils for the phonics test.</p>	Action by

	<p>Officers advised that it would not be possible to comment on individual cases but that discussions would take place with head teachers to ensure that pupils were adequately prepared for these tests.</p> <p>Members asked whether the Council had the ability to monitor the quality of the services being provided to schools by external organisations.</p> <p>Officers noted that there were only three secondary schools in the Borough still under the Council. It was noted that Local Authorities did not have full oversight of services being provided and that schools were not currently receiving systematic support.</p> <p>Officers advised that Ofsted had recently changed the "Satisfactory" rating to "Requires improvement" which could prove to be problematic for some of the schools in the Borough. Those schools rated as requiring improvement would be sent a formal warning by the Council. However, based on inspection results, Hillingdon schools were ranked in the 2nd quintile nationally and the intention was to move into the 1st quintile.</p> <p>Officers noted that work was currently being undertaken to start an education partnership which would help to ensure that the Council could monitor schools. Currently local authorities were not able to monitor effectively as Academy Schools were accountable to the Department for Education and were not required to report to the Council. The challenge for the Council in this changing landscape was to renegotiate relationships with schools effectively.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Report be noted.</p>	
55.	<p>EDUCATION RELATED COMPLAINTS 2011/12 (Agenda Item 7)</p> <p>Officers presented the report and advised that in the year ending 31 March 2012, the Council had only received 12 complaints relating to Education Services. These related to school admissions, Youth Services, school improvement, adult education, education psychology and a complaint about a specific school. It was noted that most of the complaints were related to process and admissions. Work had been undertaken to improve the admissions procedure which had proven successful and had resulted in less complaints being received.</p> <p>Members commended officers for resolving many complaints at Stage 1 of the Council's complaints procedure.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Report be noted.</p>	Action by
56.	<p>FIRST WITNESS SESSION - ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN (Agenda Item 8)</p> <p>The Committee was provided with an overview of access to education in the Borough by the Interim Chief Education Officer who outlined the changing landscape in the provision of education. He emphasised that</p>	Action by

a sea change was currently underway which would see the number of students in the Borough rise by roughly 6,000, an increasing proportion of students with Special Educational Needs and a major new schools programme being undertaken. It was noted that the Council faced many major challenges in accommodating these changes. One of these was continuing to ensure that the Borough's vulnerable children and young people were able to access high-quality education.

Witnesses

To assist Members with the review Pauline Nixon, Senior Manager for Access and Inclusion, Deborah Bell, Service Manager for Behaviour, Attendance and SEN and Dan Kennedy, Performance and Intelligence Manager were present to provide information to the Committee.

A summary of the evidence provided by the witnesses is set out below.

Context

Given the significant changes to education provision caused by national policy changes and the expected rise in primary school aged children in the Borough, the Council faced major challenges in adapting its education services during this period.

In the next years the Borough would see an estimated 6,600 extra pupils in need of school places. The Council had acknowledged this as a major challenge for the future and had committed £150m to the schools programme to begin to address this demand. Over and above this investment, there would need to be an additional 3,000 places provided over the next ten years to accommodate expected growth. Much of the growth was expected to be in the south of the Borough with some areas having had a 20% population growth in recent years.

A significant portion of the Borough's schools were currently either full or close to full. In the past, schools had worked with a 5-10% flex in numbers but, due to recent growth, this was now not possible. In some areas of the Borough this lack of flexibility was already proving to be problematic.

Statistics

Witnesses provided the Committee with a presentation on the current situation and forecasted developments. Statistics and key points from the presentation are set out below:

1. In October 2012, the number of pupils on-roll at primary schools was 24,362.
2. There had been a 20% increase in the amount of children missing education and a 20% increase in those electing to home educate.
3. There had been a 12% rise in children with English as a second language.
4. The Borough has seen 8 years of improvement in its education provision as highlighted in the Education Standards and Quality Report.

5. Foundation and Key Stage 1, 2 and 4 results were improving.
6. The Borough's Ofsted inspections compared well with the national picture.
7. 91 of 92 schools were deemed at least "satisfactory", with 70 being judged as "Good" or better.
8. There was expected be an 18% increase in demand for primary school places nationally between 2012 and 2020. Hillingdon had seen this growth slightly earlier than other London boroughs, although comparable growth was expected throughout London.
9. Since 2007 there has been a significant increase in children on-roll at schools in the Borough due to:
 - A rising birth rate,
 - An increase in people migrating into the Borough,
 - A reduction in people migrating out of the Borough, and
 - A significant increase in housing due to the area being in commuting distance of Central London.

In-Year Admissions

It was noted that it was already a challenge to secure school places in some areas of the Borough outside of the usual admissions process. Between September 2012 and February 2013, 99 children were considered by the In-Year Fair Access Panel (IYFAP) two-thirds of which were of primary school age and one-third of secondary school age. Some of these pupils had needed to be educated outside the traditional school setting and given alternative provision. This included children and young people being educated in Colleges, the Brookfield facility, Hillingdon Tuition Centre and through apprenticeships.

Witnesses reminded Members that the Brookfield Adult Education Centre was currently being used to provide pupils with an education as they waited to get another school place. Brookfield was established as a temporary measure for children who were nearing 20 school days without a school place. However, it had now been running for over a year due to demand.

An IYFAP agreement was in place which meant that an in-year school place would not be sought for those pupils who were in Year 11 as it was almost impossible to find them a place. These pupils were instead dealt with by the 14-19 Team. Those in this Group were seen to be extremely vulnerable.

It was agreed that the number of Year 11s trying to get a school place in-year would be circulated to Members by officers.

Pauline Nixon

Discussion

Members raised concerns about the use of the Brookfield Adult Learning Centre for educating vulnerable children. In particular, discussion took place around safeguarding children at the Centre. It was noted that the facility had been built for use by adults and not children.

Officers noted that Brookfield was not intended to be a long-term

	<p>solution and that pupils should be staying there for only a very short period of time. The staff-student ratio was also very generous with a full-time teacher and a teaching assistant for a maximum of 17 pupils. However, it was noted that safeguarding was a consideration especially when pupils, for a variety of reasons, remained at Brookfield for longer periods of time and when pupils as young as 11 were referred there.</p> <p>Members asked about the number of pupils who were being off-rolled by Academies.</p> <p>Officers advised that it was not possible to give an exact number for the amount of pupils who were being off-rolled but noted that, anecdotally, there was a rise in this practice. However, those schools which were no longer under the local authority were not required to report their attendance details to the Council. This meant that pupils could be off-rolling by a school without a challenge from the Local Authority. Whenever the Council was aware of a case of off-rolling it challenged schools all the way to the Secretary of State. Officers emphasised that this was not a local problem and that off-rolling was a national issue.</p> <p>It was noted that the Council found out that children had been off-rolled only when an application for a new school place was received, through a Police report or through health services. In some cases, the Council did not find out at all.</p> <p>Members requested for a total number of pupils passing through Brookfield over a year. Officers noted that this would be circulated to Members.</p> <p>Officers advised that future plans for the service included a children's pathway review, a major review of children's centres, a re-evaluation of the provision of education at Brookfield and scoping whether new schools could provide good sites for educating vulnerable children.</p>	
57.	<p>FORWARD PLAN 2010/2011 (Agenda Item 9)</p> <p>A Member noted that item 873 – School Condition Survey Works of the Forward Plan, which should have been considered at the February meeting of Cabinet, was not on the agenda.</p> <p>Officers were asked to follow up on this item and report back to the Committee.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee noted the Forward Plan and decided not to comment.</p>	<p>Action by</p> <p>Deborah Bell</p> <p>Steven Maiden</p>
58.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME 2010/2011 (Agenda Item 10)</p> <p>A Member asked when the Committee would receive an update on school places. This used to be considered but was no longer being reported.</p>	<p>Action by</p>

	<p>Officers advised that they would investigate why this was not being reported and update Members in due course.</p> <p>It was further suggested that the update on the POD system and the Adoption Inspection Report be added to the work programme.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Committee confirmed the dates of the meetings.</p>	<p>Julien Kramer</p> <p>Steven Maiden</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.00 pm.</p>	

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