

Minutes

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

13 January 2016

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



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Jane Palmer (Chairman), Nick Denys (Vice-Chairman), Teji Barnes, Jem Duducu, Duncan Flynn, Tony Eginton, Manjit Khatra, Jan Sweeting (Labour Lead) and Mr Tony Little.</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Laurie Baker (Interim Head of School Improvement/Education Quality & Strategy), Susan Hynds (Manager - Early Years Advisory), Dan Kennedy (Head of Business Performance, Policy & Standards), Peter Malewicz (Group Finance Manager), Tom Murphy (Head of Early Intervention Services), Tony Zaman (Corporate Director Of Social Care) and Jon Pitt (Democratic Services Officer).</p>
52.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Becky Haggar and Cllr Peter Money (Cllr Manjit Khatra was present as his substitute).</p>
53.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THE MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no Declarations of Interest made.</p>
54.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items were Part I and would be discussed in public.</p>
55.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2015 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Resolved: That:</p> <p>1. The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2015 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
56.	<p>BUDGET PROPOSALS REPORT FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING SERVICES 2016/17 (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Officers provided a presentation on the draft revenue budget and Capital Programme of the Children, Young People and Learning Services for 2016/17. During the presentation it was noted that:</p>

- The draft budget proposals had been initially considered by Cabinet on 17 December 2015. Cabinet would next consider the proposals on 18 February 2016. The proposals would then go to Council for approval on 25 February 2016. This report would include comments made by the Policy Overview Committee. It was requested that the Committee agree a formal comment following the officer's presentation.
- The December Cabinet meeting had considered the budget prior to the Council having received notification of its Local Government Finance Settlement. The impact of the finance settlement was still being worked through as there were still a number of other funding streams where the Council had not yet received an update and the indication was that this was likely to take place in February 2016.
- The budget proposals had been compiled with the impact of the Government's deficit reduction programme in mind. This had seen a reduction of 56% (£67m) in Government funding to the Council since 2010/11, with indications being that the level of funding would continue to fall. The savings identified had taken into account the proposal to freeze Council Tax for an eighth successive year and funding the freeze for older persons into a 12th successive year. Balances and reserves had been maintained at well above the minimum recommended level.
- During 2015, the Council had agreed to provide significant additional resources for Children and Young People Services. This had included the continued use of agency staff at all levels. A structural review was undertaken to ensure that there was enough capacity to manage caseloads and that there were clear lines of management control and accountability. This resulted in a flatter management structure having being proposed.
- The structure for Children's Services had now been agreed and recruitment activity was being undertaken. Senior management posts had been filled first. Two service manager posts had been filled, leaving one that remained vacant. There were now only six vacancies remaining of 23 Team Manager posts across Children's Services.
- The recruitment of Social Workers had started in October 2015, with further recruitment activity due to be undertaken early in 2016. The recruitment activity was looking across the country and beyond in order to fill the posts.
- The total cost to the Council of Looked After Children (LAC) was increasing. This was due to some children having increasingly complex needs rather than it being due to the number of LAC increasing. The number of LAC was in line with expectations for a population the size of Hillingdon's.
- Around one third of Hillingdon LAC were unaccompanied asylum seekers, which suggested that the number of non-asylum seeker LAC was relatively low compared to other council areas. Asylum seeker LAC tended to be older teenagers in the 16-18 age bracket. The cost of looking after these children ranged from £3,400 to £6,000 per week (£176,800 per annum to £312,000 per annum). Members were informed that it is more cost effective to use in house Council provision rather than an external provider.
- The number of asylum seeker children arriving in Hillingdon was stable. In Kent and other areas with seaports, there had been significant increases in arrivals. This has not been seen in Hillingdon, despite Heathrow Airport being in the Borough.
- The Home Office had advised all councils that grant funding would be provided for eligible asylum seeker children at a rate of £114 per day for eligible under 16's, £91 per day for eligible 16 to 17 year olds and £150 per week for those eligible aged over 18. In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that Council was required to meet the funding shortfall in order to provide care to these groups.

- Hillingdon was seeing a growing number of over 18 asylum seeking children, compared to the number of those who were under 18. This was due to a high number of younger children arriving five to six years ago who were now becoming adults.
- The number of primary schools pupils was continuing to grow, with there having been an increase of nearly 850 pupils between October 2014 and October 2015. Growth at secondary level was much smaller, but it was anticipated that this would rise in the future as the extra primary pupils moved to secondary school.
- Conversion by schools in the Borough to Academy status continued. 38 schools in Hillingdon were now Academies. Two other schools were looking to convert to Academy status.
- The Government had confirmed that a National Funding Formula would be introduced from April 2017. This would cover all funding streams, including Early Years, schools and High Needs.
- The entitlement to free child care for three and four year olds would be increased for working parents from 15 to 30 hours per week.
- The Education Services Grant would be reduced by 75% and it was anticipated that this would eventually be abolished. It was noted that one school had stated that they would lose £170,000 of their budget as a result.
- The proposed capital programme reflected population growth within the Borough. Local authorities were obliged to fund capital programmes to enable the expansion of existing schools and the building of new ones. The successful programme of primary expansion had now largely been delivered with a residual forecast need for additional places in the north of the Borough. There was a need for additional secondary school places. Officers advised that pupil forecasts were kept under close review. The total cost of these programmes was approximately £200 million, with the Government funding approximately half the cost and Council Tax payers the other half.

Discussion

A Member reflected that, given the reduction in Government funding, he considered that officers had done a good job in developing a budget that addressed all relevant issues.

Another Member voiced concerns about the level of savings that the budget was proposing to make. These amounted to total savings of 12.1 million across the Council, with 3.6 million of this due to come from Children, Young People and Learning Services. The Member was concerned at the scale and depth of budget reductions to some of the most important services. Some services were still in need of further improvement and there was a danger that cuts would undermine the improvements made to date.

Reductions to the Troubled Families budget and to that of Business Performance and Intelligence were highlighted as being of concern. In the case of the latter, it was worrying that reductions were proposed in this area given that the major review on 'The Effectiveness of Early Help to Promote Positive Outcomes for Families' [due to be presented to the Committee later in the meeting] was proposing that the use of data and intelligence be further developed to enhance service delivery. The review had also suggested that Early Intervention and Prevention Services needed to improve promotion of its offer to ensure that the maximum number of families were aware of the provision and could benefit from it. The Member was not clear how this could be achieved against the backdrop of a budget reduction of £600,000 on a current service budget of £8 million.

In response to the concerns raised, officers advised that different ways of working were delivering efficiencies to enable the savings to be made without impacting on service delivery. Efficiencies would also be made through improving value for money. Savings were also being made through the negotiation of more efficient contracts and by increasing in-house foster care provision. Each in-house fosterer used saved £20,000 compared to using an external provider.

With regard to Business Performance and Intelligence, processes had been reviewed, with teams being brought together. The teams had been re-organised to deliver greater efficiencies and focused on corporate priorities. The restructured service was able to operate more effectively with a reduced budget.

It was questioned whether possible increased future demand for primary places had been taken into account. Officers stated that forecasts showed that primary school demand had been largely met in Hillingdon, although there was some residual demand in the north of the Borough. There could also be future additional demand in the Hayes area, in part due to continued investment in residential and commercial developments. The forecasts were reviewed annually. It was not anticipated that excess demand would be a significant issue. It was, however, anticipated that there would be a significant increase in secondary demand in the next five to eight years.

Members asked what action was being undertaken to deal with schools that had been identified as being at risk of coasting. Officers responded that such schools would be contacted for the concerns to be discussed and would be given the opportunity to work collaboratively with partners in Hillingdon and beyond.

A Member asked whether additional expenditure was incurred over and beyond the provision of the Troubled Families Grant, when supporting such families. It was also questioned whether the Council paid other organisations who took on aspects of this work and how Children's Centres could continue to provide the current range of services if the budget was reduced by 50%. It was confirmed that the Grant funded Council costs and was not passed on to partner organisations. The Council's Early Intervention and Prevention Service worked with partners to identify families in need of 'Troubled Families' support. 262 families were being targeted by this work in this year. With regard to Children's Centres, service provision was not being reduced, the 50% reduction related to a realignment of resources relating to delivery programmes, where the resources are managed across the Children's Centre Programme. The required savings noted were being found by working more efficiently, such as through collective buying by the locality groups.

The Chairman felt that, based upon the evidence that she had seen, that the changes made within Children's Services would improve efficiency. Improved efficiency enabled budgetary savings to be made. Therefore, significant budget reductions did not necessarily mean a reduction in service provision.

Resolved: That:

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. The Committee noted the budget proposals submitted and acknowledges the work that has been undertaken in providing a working budget, noting constraints placed via external funding streams. Concerns were expressed by some Members about the level of saving that needed to be achieved and the effect on services. There was no consensus amongst the Committee Members as to whether reductions in funding would have an**

impact on the service delivered.

57. STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN EDUCATION IN HILLINGDON - 2014/2015 (Agenda Item 6)

Officers introduced the report to provide Members with an overview of the standard and quality of education within Hillingdon schools. The report focused on attainment and achievement for the academic year 2014/15. The information was being presented to the Committee for comment prior to it being considered by Cabinet on 18 February 2016. It was noted that The Hillingdon School Improvement Plan 2015-18, which had been approved by Cabinet in 2015, was also included in the information presented to the Committee.

Within Hillingdon, the overall attainment of early years and primary age pupils had risen in 2014/15. Most key measures of educational progress and attainment showed significant improvement compared to 2014 data. Results remained in line with or above national averages.

Overall performance of Hillingdon pupils at Foundation Stage for the seven key subject areas showed significant improvement. Levels of development were good, with significant gains compared to 2013/14. For Writing, outcomes were 2.2% above the national average, while Media and Materials was 2.6% above average. However, performance for Speaking was 1.9% below the national average, while for Managing Feelings and Behaviour, it was 2.6% below average. The percentage of pupils demonstrating an overall good level of development increased from 52% in 2013/14 to 65.2% in 2014/15, although this was still below the national average of 66.5%.

Also at the Foundation Stage, boys outperformed girls against most measures. For literacy, boys were 3.9% above the national average and 6% above the London average. For maths, the attainment of boys was 1.6% above the national average. The achievement of girls was slightly below the national average, by 1.2% for literacy and 1.9% for maths. Overall for the areas of Communication and Language; Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development, the attainment of pupils receiving Pupil Premium funding was 7% below that of pupils not receiving the funding. Performance of pupils receiving the premium was 15% below other pupils for Maths and 17% below for Literacy.

Priorities for the Foundation Stage included continuing to support teachers to make secure and consistent judgements and focusing moderation on the areas of Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language and Understanding the World. Work would be undertaken to ensure that girls made appropriate progress and strategies would be developed to help teachers to better support children whose first language is not English. Pupils receiving Early Years Pupil Premium would also be supported to help them make progress in line with their peers who are not in receipt of the funding. Finally, leadership and management skills of teachers of the Early Years and Foundation Stage would be supported in order to facilitate more effective monitoring and self evaluation.

In response to a Member question, officers advised that the 'Understanding the World' topic area covered the more traditional subject areas of geography, history and Information Technology.

A Member welcomed the progress made at the Foundation Stage, while noting that performance remained below the London average in all but one subject area. It was questioned why performance remained relatively low at the Foundation Stage,

compared to London overall. Officers advised that the Moderation Programme was three years into a four year programme. 75% of schools had been moderated, with 25% remaining. It would take the full four years to get a full picture of the progress made by Foundation Stage pupils in Hillingdon. It was anticipated that 12 of 17 Individual Learning goals would be achieved. The work being undertaken was making a positive impact, but it was acknowledged that there was still work to be done to improve pupil performance in this area. There appeared to be some resistance within schools to the moderation work being undertaken. Therefore, it was important to ensure effective engagement with schools to overcome barriers and to provide teachers with the support required. This was achieved, in part, through the hosting of moderation events that every Early Years Teacher was required to attend.

Members asked what role the Council could play in improving the performance of academies and free schools. Officers advised that schools would often voluntarily engage to seek advice and support and that contact would be made with schools where there were concerns about pupil attainment. Other measures could include the issue of warning letters to schools and reporting the school to the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Performance at Key Stage 4 was less strong, although the gap was closing between disadvantaged and non disadvantaged pupils. The percentage of children in Hillingdon obtaining at least 5 A* to C grades at GCSE (including English and Maths) had fallen 3% between 2014 and 2015, from 59% to 56%. This compared to a national decline of 0.5%, from 57% to 56.5%.

In response to a Member question, officers advised that the overall performance of Hillingdon schools at Key Stage 4 ranked 24th of the 34 London Boroughs. This was an improvement of four rankings compared to the previous year. Further work was needed in order to understand performance at Key Stages 4 and 5 and why there was a relative decline amongst Hillingdon pupils when compared to performance at earlier stages. This would involve working with schools and 14-19 providers to drive improvement and hold leadership teams to account, where appropriate. Schools liaised with governor committees with a view to improving performance and a School Strategic Partnership Board had been established.

Sixteen schools in Hillingdon had been inspected in 2014/15. Of these, six received an improved judgement, while ten of the sixteen had received a downgrade. Most of the decreased grades were schools previously judged as being good, which were now judged as requiring improvement. In many cases, these downgrades were linked to leadership, management and governance of the schools and/or to lower outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Concerns were raised by Members about grade inflation and how this was been addressed. Officers advised that schools had varying approaches, noting that some schools were part of the Early Adoption Scheme for core maths qualifications. Where there were specific concerns, these could be raised directly with the school and with the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Borough wide data had been utilised previously in order to challenge school performance. This exercise was due to be repeated in March 2016.

Resolved: That:

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. Early Years and Foundation Stage data be circulated to the Committee,**

broken down by educational planning area.

3. The following comment be submitted on behalf of the Committee for inclusion in the forthcoming report to Cabinet:

"The Committee is encouraged to see improvements made at the Foundation and Primary stages of education. However, it must be recognised that further work is required, particularly at Key Stages 4 and 5. Members were concerned by the level of progress of young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and of pupils who are able, but disadvantaged."

58.

SINGLE MEETING REVIEW DRAFT SCOPING REPORT - SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN (*Agenda Item 7*)

Officers introduced the scoping report for the proposed single meeting review by the Committee on 'Supporting Educational Aspiration for Disadvantaged Children.' The key aim of the review was to investigate the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and to identify what steps could be taken to improve this. Attainment of disadvantaged pupils was below that of their non-disadvantaged peers at all educational stages, up to and including Key Stage 4. Locally, the gap was closing at Key Stage 1 and 2, while there was a significant gap at Key Stage 3. There was a particular problem with regard to the attainment of white British boys who were from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the proposed Terms of Reference and also to the proposed list of witnesses for the review, both of which were contained within the officer's report. The Committee considered that the proposed list of six witnesses was too ambitious for a single meeting review. Accordingly, it was agreed that the number of witnesses would be reduced to four and that school governors would be removed from the list of potential witnesses.

Committee Members welcomed the proposed topic, noting that the review needed to consider existing examples of good practice and data to enable it to geographically identify where the most disadvantaged pupils were within the Borough. It was also requested that the review consider the impact of ethnicity, cultural diversity and gender on the performance of disadvantaged pupils.

Resolved: That:

1. **Subject to revision to the list of proposed witnesses, the Committee agreed the scoping report presented and instructed officers to make arrangements for a witness session to be held at the February 2016 meeting of the Committee.**

59.

MAJOR REVIEW DRAFT FINAL REPORT - THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EARLY HELP TO PROMOTE POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES (*Agenda Item 8*)

The Chairman introduced the draft final report of the Committee's review on 'The Effectiveness of Early Help to Promote Positive Outcomes for Families.' The Committee was satisfied with the recommendations proposed by what was considered to be a well written report that covered all the key concerns identified during the witness sessions.

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for the contribution they had made to the final report.

It was noted that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which had informed the review, would not include standalone recommendations. However, the data contained within it would enable individual services to make informed judgements about how service provision could be targeted. Reference was made to recommendation 2a of the major review, which recommended that the use and sharing of data and intelligence required for effective service delivery be developed.

Resolved: That:

- 1. The Committee agreed the draft report as presented by the Chairman.**
- 2. That the Chairman would present the draft report to Cabinet on 18 February 2016.**

60. **WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16** (*Agenda Item 9*)

Resolved: That:

- 1. The Work Programme be noted.**

61. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 10*)

Resolved: That:

- 1. The Forward Plan be noted.**

The meeting, which commenced at 7:00 pm, closed at 8:50 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Jon Pitt 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.