

Minutes

**Education & Children's Services Policy Overview
Committee
Thursday 26 November 2009
Meeting held at High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW**



Members Present:

Councillors Catherine Dann (Chairman), Brian Crowe (Vice-Chairman), Judith Cooper, Peter Curling, John Hensley and Anita MacDonald.

Officers Present: Natasha Dogra, Pauline Nixon and Chris Spencer.

Others Present: Tony Little.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTER COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING

Councillors Catherine Dann, Judith Cooper, Peter Curling, John Hensley and Anita MacDonald declared personal interests in all items on the agenda due to their roles as school governors.

3. TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND ALL THOSE MARKED IN PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

All items were Part 1 and were considered in public.

4. TO RECEIVE AND AGREE THE MINUTES OF 22 OCTOBER 2009

The minutes were agreed by the Committee.

5. REVIEW 1: DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSION IN HILLINGDON SCHOOLS – FINAL REPORT

Action By:

The Chairman introduced the Committee's final report on the Development of Inclusion of Special Education Needs children in mainstream schools.

Members of the Committee expressed reservations about the "national context" section of the final report, which seemed to focus on the future Conservative agenda. The Committee agreed that the report did not benefit from the national context section and agreed to delete it in its entirety.

Following the above changed, Members changed recommendation 2.1 to read:
"That Cabinet are aware of changes which may occur at a national level that could affect the viability of the Inclusion policy in the future."

The Committee were directed to the conclusions and recommendations section of the report. The Committee discussed the following recommendation ideas:

1. The Secondary Transfer is developed to ensure a smooth transition between primary and secondary phases.
2. A capacity is built in mainstream schools so they are confident in their ability to support children within the mainstream setting.
3. A Robust Parent Participation Forum is activated
4. Encourage schools to have systems in place to ensure the pupil voice is heard
5. Develop a common framework for engaging parents in AEN.
6. Put systems in place to engage hard to reach families
7. Improve quality of information provided to parents and carers
8. Train and develop a skilled workforce to work with children with additional needs.

The Committee discussed inputting a recommendation regarding the practicality of expecting all schools to perform as successfully as one high achieving school in the borough. The Committee agreed that the following conclusion should be included in the final report: *“The Committee heard from competent staff from mainstream schools that are performing well and have fully embraced the Inclusion programme. The Committee cannot determine how practical it is to expect all schools to perform as successfully.”*

Following on from the above conclusion, the Committee recommended the following recommendation be included in the final report: *“That Officers are instructed to identify schools that may be challenged by the Inclusion agenda and report to the Cabinet Member implementation strategies that will be put into place to support these schools and the criteria used to measure their success.”*

Officers informed the Committee that criteria by which school success is measured is implemented by Ofsted, but the Local Authority had good intelligence of school achievements, including performance indicators in place to flag up any under achieving schools.

Members expressed concerns over whether Government resources allocated to the Building Schools for the 21st Century programme would still be available in the current economic climate. Officers informed the Committee that funding from the Building Schools for the 21st Century programme would not make a major impact on the Inclusion strategy – the Inclusion programme would continue with or without Building Schools for the 21st Century programme funding. Building Schools for the 21st Century programme focused on rebuilding schools in the borough, however the Inclusion service was not hinged on the rebuilding of schools and therefore would not be hugely impacted upon should Building Schools for the 21st Century programme funding not be fully available.

Officers informed the Committee that the support for Inclusion in the borough is good on the whole. However, there was a cultural shift which needed to be endorsed in schools to enable them to better address the changing ethos of the

<p>service.</p> <p>Agreed: The Committee agreed the final report.</p>	<p><i>Natasha Dogra, Democratic Services</i></p>
<p>6. UPDATE – SAFEGUARDING QUARTERLY AUDIT REPORT</p> <p>The Chairman directed Members to the Safeguarding Audit Report and invited Officers to present the report.</p> <p>Officers informed the Committee that they were unaware the update was a long waited requested from Members. Members had asked for an update in September 2006 but had not received an update until now.</p> <p>Officers said that Children and Families social care services had recently put into practice an Integrated Children’s System – an electronic system implemented in the past twelve months. The recent Ofsted inspection commented on the system’s ease of use and easy data retrieval system. The inspection stated that the system was a model for other Local Authorities to follow.</p> <p>The Integrated Children’s System was constantly regulated internally. The Director of Education and Children’s Services and the Chief Executive were able to access the system from their own desks, allowing them to retrieve any necessary files. It also allowed for a degree of supervision. Paper files had nearly all been transferred onto the Integrated Children’s System. Each case file included all important information such as case chronology and family trees – two aspects which were continually changing in many social care cases.</p> <p>Officers said the Integrated Children’s System was an excellent management tool which would be used to scrutinise the quality of records and evidence kept. The system was easy to navigate and therefore retrieving data was not a problem.</p> <p>Members asked Officers how quickly data could be transferred onto the system. Officers informed the Committee that the timeliness of updating and recording case work is good. The time lapse needed to be kept as short as possible whilst keeping the information as accurate and detailed as possible.</p> <p>Members asked Officers how long paper files were stored for and where they were kept. Officers informed the Committee that files were kept for 80 years in an offsite archiving facility. Files could be retrieved fairly quickly, with urgent files being more expensive to retrieve.</p> <p>Members asked Officers how frequently they performed a random check of the Integrated Children’s System. Officers said some managers performed it more frequently than others. The Integrated Children’s System was able to manage performance which was useful when measuring the performance of officers and their work.</p> <p>The Committee requested regular updates regarding child social care and</p>	<p>Action By:</p>

<p>educational attainment. Members asked that the update reports included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific figures regarding the number of cases audited • number of files which did not meet the standard required • when data was audited • How often files are scrutinised • How often do random checks take place • How feasible it would be to access files dated pre-1965 • Whether files go missing • Information regarding the security of the file storage facility <p>Officers were asked to circulate a very short update report to Members which would be considered at a special meeting on 11th January 2009.</p> <p>Noted: The Committee noted the update.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Officers would provide the Committee with Child Social Care and Education Attainment reports and present an update at a special meeting on 11 January 2010. 2. That the Committee would meet again on 11 January 2010 at 6 p.m. to discuss Child Social Care and Education Attainment reports. 	<p><i>Chris Spencer / Debbie Haith ECS</i></p> <p><i>Natasha Dogra, Democratic Services</i></p>
<p>7. TO CONSIDER THE FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>To Note: The Committee noted the Forward Plan.</p>	<p>Action By:</p>
<p>8. TO CONSIDER THE WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10</p> <p>To Note: The Committee noted the Work Programme.</p> <p>Agreed: The Committee agreed to conduct a special meeting on 11 January 2010 at 6.00 p.m. to discuss Child Social Care and Education Attainment reports.</p>	<p>Action By:</p> <p><i>Natasha Dogra, Democratic Services</i></p>

The meeting closed at 21.30