

Minutes

FAMILIES, HEALTH AND WELLBEING SELECT COMMITTEE

2 February 2022

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



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Philip Corthorne (Chairman), Heena Makwana (Vice-Chairman), Judith Cooper, Shehryar Ahmad – Wallana (substitute), Kerri Prince (Opposition Lead) and Jan Sweeting</p> <p>Co - Opted Member: Tony Little, Roman Catholic Representative</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Anisha Teji (Democratic Services Officer), Darren Thorpe (Head of Business Delivery & Support), Dan Kennedy (Corporate Director for Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services), Claire Fry (Head of Child and Family Development Service), Priscilla Simpson (Sport and Physical Activity Team Manager), Julie Kelly (Director of Service Delivery - Children and Young Peoples Services) and Kathryn Angelini (Head of Education for Vulnerable Children)</p>
69.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Becky Haggar with Councillor Shehryar Ahmad – Wallana substituting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Paula Rodrigues.</p>
70.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
71.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from the meeting on 5 January 2022 be approved as an accurate record, subject to the suggestions to be agreed between the Chairman and Labour Lead.</p>

72. **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** (*Agenda Item 4*)

It was confirmed that all items would be heard in Part I.

73. **SERVICE UPDATE ON EARLY YEARS & CHILDREN'S CENTRES** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Head of Child and Family Development Service introduced the report and provided an update following the BID review at the end of 2019 and subsequent staffing restructure of the Child and Family Development Service.

It was reported that consultation with staff on the proposed restructure commenced in January 2020 however the review was put on hold due to the pandemic. Consultations had now concluded and work to recruit the new structures was nearing conclusion. The report highlighted the work underway to evolve the childrens centre delivery offer in line with national agendas of the Best Start for Life and Family Hubs. It was noted that one of the main reasons for the restructure was to make the service more modern and efficient and allow nurseries to compete in the financial sector. The impacts of the pandemic and practice highlights were also outlined to the Committee.

In response to Member questions regarding performance indicators, it was noted that nurseries that were registered with Ofsted were provided key performance indicators that had four different grades. All three Council early years centres in the Borough currently had a good grading from Ofsted and that was used as a performance indicator.

In terms of staffing restructure, it was explained that key roles across the Council were increased and their job scopes were broadened to include both family support work and running groups. It was also clarified that Ofsted registration required a certain amount of level 2 and 3 qualified workers in nurseries per child ratio and unqualified workers were usually apprentices whilst they were completing training. Members welcomed further information on the staffing restructure both pre and post restructure.

It was explained that in order to reach out to residents in terms of universal and targeted services, timetables of groups and activities were published on the Council's website, there were active Facebook pages for childrens centres and service users were signposted to relevant activities and opportunities. There was outreach in the local community through events and awareness was raised by leaflets. The Council had contact details for previous service users and often contacted them via email or text about potential services of interest. It was highlighted that a benefit of hosting midwifery and child health services was that families were encouraged to register when they first attended events therefore enabling the Council to keep these details on their records and contact them regarding upcoming events. There was also ongoing work with partners who were able to raise the profiles and awareness of different services.

During Members questions, it was noted that the number of early years places had been streamlined across all three sites in the Borough to meet staffing ratios. Although there was capacity for fee paying places, families that were deemed vulnerable were prioritised. It was explained that the three early years centres had to compete with the private sector and, although occupancy had increased, this needed to be balanced

against staffing costs to meet commercial viability.

In regards to changes to childrens centres post restructure, deprivation and the funding of additional capacity, it was explained that childrens centres were now managed by the local authority and all three localities had a similar level of funding. There was however capacity to move locality budgets arounds to meet the need and demand of parents living in those areas.

The Committee heard that the family hub model was one of the latest government initiatives and the idea was to bring services together to support children and families at the earliest opportunity.

Members commended officers for their work and were impressed by the way services were focused on preventative action. It was acknowledged that market management was challenging. The Committee considered that it would have been helpful to receive statistical information to make assessments on how the service was performing and agreed that it would be useful to receive a follow up report.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee noted the information presented in the report**
- 2. That the Chairman and Labour Lead would agree areas of focus for the follow up report.**

74. PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES (SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY)
(Agenda Item 6)

The Sport and Physical Activity Team Manager introduced the report and provided an overview of the Sport and Physical Activity Team programmes and activities in 2021. The report also highlighted the forthcoming Hillingdon Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.

It was reported that the Sport and Physical Activity Team's programme offered a wide range of sports, physical activity and places for participation such as community halls, sport clubs, young people's centres, libraries, open spaces and parks. The team worked with residents, sports clubs and specialists, National Governing Bodies for Sport, local partners and services to ensure that opportunities were provided to meet local needs.

The current Sport and Physical Activity Team was established in 2017. Programmes and activities were overseen by the team and had been delivered through commissioning instructors and external operators. Programmes were developed in the context of other strategic plans including the Older People's Plan, the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Hillingdon Obesity Strategy. Regular performance updates were provided to monitor progress against the action plans supporting these strategies. Data drawn from the Active Lives Survey and the Public Health Outcomes Framework was used in the development of the programmes.

Following Member questions around data, it was explained that the Active Lives Survey was a Sport England survey and had been running for around 10 years. It was a random survey sent to people across the UK to complete and asked questions around

exercise and the types of exercise undertaken. For children, this was an online survey.

It was acknowledged that although swimming was provided through the operator GLL, further work needed to be done in this area to encourage more children in Hillingdon to learn to swim. It was noted that Mickersize was an exercise commissioned by the Council and was beneficial for people with dementia.

Members commented that it would have been useful to see data in relation to the number of people using gym equipment in parks. It was explained that discussions with colleagues in Green Spaces would be needed to identify if using monitors to capture footfall would be feasible and robust.

In terms of the introduction of the £5 charge at tennis courts in May 2021, it was noted that bookings were generally down. However, the introduction of the fee allowed the team to collect data where new users could be identified and the usage of the courts could be monitored. This data and income from fees and charges was then used to make improvements and renovations to increase the quality of the courts. It was confirmed that since the introduction of the charge, an income of £19000 had been generated and money was being used to clean and improve the sites. The Committee heard that it was challenging to find accredited tennis coaches to attend all sites across the Borough but that a tennis development plan is being considered to expand a range of community tennis offers across the sites.

During Members questions, it was explained that conversations to encourage activities for children diagnosed as obese was ongoing with the Hillingdon Public Health team

The Committee thanked officers for the uplifting and informative presentation and were impressed by the initiatives in place.

RESOVLED:

That the Committee:

- 1. Noted the current work programme of the Sport and Physical Activity Team.**
- 2. Agreed to review the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy at a future date.**

75. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION POLICY - UPDATE ON NEW POLICY IMPLEMENTATION (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Head of Education for Vulnerable Children presented the report on Elective Home Education (EHE) Policy and provided an update on the new policy implementation.

It was reported that Hillingdon's EHE policy was updated and published in February 2021, following the Department for Education EHE policy update in April 2019. The policy had been through consultation and received Cabinet approval in February 2021. The updated policy reflected a more balanced approach to both safeguarding issues and the rights of parents, as well as improved methods of information sharing and communication with parents and professionals. Over the last two years there had been a significant fluctuation in the numbers of parents choosing to home educate their children. It was highlighted that the pandemic had impacted the number of children who

were home educated and the report provided further data on this. It was noted that that there were unlikely to be key performance indicators in this area as it was difficult to measure factors such as academic attainment and progress. Soft targets such as engagement with parents and guardian and their experience with the local authority could be measured more easily.

In terms of assessments being done to ensure that EHE was the right option for children with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) or children requiring SEND support, it was explained that parents were unable to home educate children with EHCP without the agreement of the local authority. The local authority liaised closely with parents arranging cross professional meetings and discussing suitable options. Factors such as funding, access to therapies and interventions had to be taken into account, and after considering all the options available, many parents decided an education setting was better than home education. It was confirmed that there were no looked after children who were home educated.

It was noted that a mandatory register for all children who were home educated was needed to ensure that there was a record. The only way the local authority was aware of children who were electively home educated was if parents made the local authority aware or if children came into contact with services. If the local authority did become aware of a child who was home educated, contact would be made with the parent to ensure that a suitable education was in place. Any issues could be referred to the Children Missing Education Team who had statutory duties and would undertake checks. It was reported that 80 cases were referred to the Children Missing Education Team in 2021.

During Members questions, it was confirmed that the views of children were taken into account when making a decision for home education and this formed part of the suitability checker. In relation to the 17 children with EHCP that were home educated, further information would be provided on their reasons for choosing this route. Generally, it was explained that the vast majority of children with EHCP were home educated as parents preferred a holistic approach or routines and timetables in mainstream education settings did not suit children.

The Committee commended officers for their fantastic work and welcomed the mandatory register.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the update on the Elective Home Education Policy.

76. **UPDATE ON YOUTH SERVICES** (*Agenda Item 8*)

The Corporate Director for Planning, Environment, Education and the Director of Service Delivery - Children and Young Peoples Services introduced the report on Youth Services.

An overview of the different youth services was provided to the Committee covering activities from the Fiesta Programme, holiday and food programmes, CREST and Youth Services Programming. It was reported that although the last few years had been challenging with the pandemic, new ways to deliver services to young people had been identified including online programmes of engagement. The Committee also

heard about the targeted offer for young people and targeted intervention had been delivered to 2856 children this financial year. There was a focus on childrens emotional and mental wellbeing taking into account the impact of isolation and pandemic. It was noted that substance misuse was the most used service so far and this focussed on a lot of preventative education.

In response to Member questions around how the views of young people were considered in shaping services, it was explained that over the past year a survey involving young people had been conducted that sought their opinions on what services they valued, enjoyed, and gauged what fears there were. Feedback from the surveys was used to help shape services. It was noted that all programmes were subject to evaluation and feedback from young people and also their parents. A child voice panel had also been established to voice the opinions of all children that came into contact with Council services ranging from child protection processes, youth justice system or adolescent development services, not just looked after children. There was a variety of opinion as some children wanted online services and some preferred face to face.

Although the report was informative and contained some data, the Committee welcomed further detail about performance data and statistics detailing the amount of young people engaging with services both pre and post pandemic and results from the surveys undertaken. Further detail around youth centre opening houses would also be useful and Members requested that a follow up report be provided. It was suggested whether areas of focus could be agreed with the Chairman and Labour Lead for the follow up report.

In terms of targeted services and how children were identified, it was explained that data analysis but not profiling was used, however the information collated by AXIS from a range of different professionals and sources helped to identify vulnerable young people. This could come from a range of sources including schools, social workers and triage through the stronger families hub. Children and young people were also able to self-refer. Schools receive monthly AXIS bulletins that highlighted the services and programmes available and forums such as the Youth Justice Strategic Partnership Board or Safeguarding Childrens Partnership were used to raise awareness.

Members commented that the information available on youth centres was limited particularly around the hours of operation. Members welcomed further information on the specific services provided by the Council including details on the youth services budget, how many hours for delivery and how many children were being accommodated.

In response to Member questions around domestic abuse, it was noted that children could also be involved in domestic abusive intimate relationships. It was acknowledged that knife crime was a concerning issue and although it was minority more needed to be done to target this group. A thematic review was due to take place in Hillingdon looking at partnerships, focusing on what was being done in areas of childrens services, police, education and health. At least 80 children had been identified as being at risk of serious youth violence and criminal exploitation. This was a priority for all agencies..

In regard to the adolescent development service and how the dynamic flexible

responsive service worked in practice, it was explained that the pandemic had demonstrated how services could be delivered in a different way.

It was reported that an analysis of demographic data had identified areas where take up of services was low. Rather than having standalone youth services, encompassing a family approach is more beneficial. Work in this area had started with the introduction of Parent Champions. There had generally been a change in approach with a focus on how communities were engaging with services.

Members thanked officers for the presentation and the work that was being done to keep the service fresh and relevant for young people. The Committee considered that it would have been helpful to receive statistical information to make assessments on how the service was performing and agreed that it would be useful to receive a follow up report.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. noted the information presented in the report.
2. the Chairman and Labour Lead would agree areas of focus for the follow up report.

77. **MAJOR REVIEW - WORKING TITLE: ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGIES REVIEW**
(*Agenda Item 9*)

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

1. agreed the draft final report and recommendations in principle and endorsed its submission to Cabinet for due consideration; and
2. delegated minor drafting changes required prior to the report's submission to Cabinet to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chairman to agree, and in consultation with the Labour lead.

78. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 10*)

RESOLVED: That the updates and work programme be noted.

79. **CABINET FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 11*)

RESOLVED: That the forward plan be noted.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.22 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji on ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk . Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.