

Minutes

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE

4 January 2023

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Heena Makwana (Chairman), Kishan Bhatt, Tony Gill, Peter Smallwood, Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead), Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana and Jas Dhot</p> <p>Also Present: Mr Tony Little (Co-Opted Member)</p> <p>Officers Present: Iain Watters (Director of Strategic & Operational Finance), Kat Wyatt (Head of Service Youth Justice, AXIS, Adolescent Development and Youth Services), Jenny Chalmers (School Placement & Admissions Manager (Temp)) and Anisha Teji (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
47.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Roy Chamdal with Councillor Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana substituting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Rita Judge with Councillor Jas Dhot substituting.</p>
48.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Jas Dhot declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6: Youth Offer Update as he worked with young offenders. He remained for the discussion of the item.</p>
49.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from the meeting on 6 December 2022 be agreed subject to noting the Committee's request to hear from school representatives as part of the major review.</p>
50.	<p>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 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that agenda items 1 – 10 would be heard in Part I and agenda item 11 would be heard in Part II.</p>
51.	<p>BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR SERVICES WITHIN THE REMIT OF THE CHILDREN,</p>

FAMILIES & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE *(Agenda Item 5)*

The Director of Strategic & Operational Finance introduced the report detailing the draft revenue budget and capital programme for the services within the remit the Committee.

Key points from the report were highlighted, including details of the financial pressures generated by the ongoing inflation, legacy Covid – 19 impacts, cost of living crisis and the additional funding received from government, together with earmarked Council reserves, in order to manage such pressures. It was reported that the balance budget was set to be achieved through a combination of efficiency savings increases in Council Tax and Fees and Charges.

Budget proposals for 2023/24 had been prepared in the context of a wider strategy addressing the five-year MTF period. The latest monitoring position for the 2022/23 financial year reported a net underspend of £61k which would leave uncommitted General Balances at £26,780k entering the 2023/24 financial year.

The Committee noted that Cabinet would consider the budget proposals on 16 February 2023 and the report would include comments from Select Committees. Members were informed that Council would meet to agree the 2023/24 budgets and Council tax levels on 23 February 2023.

Although this had been a challenging budget to set, officers were thanked for providing the detailed and interesting report. It was confirmed that the provisional financial update from Central Government was released in December 2022 and the position was broadly consistent to what had been expected. The report provided an update on the schools budget and this had taken a different route via the Schools Forum in terms of budget setting. Members requested that this document be shared with the Committee.

In response to how confident officers were about being able to make savings of over one million pounds given that there were many demand led and 'volatile' areas within the remit of the Select Committee, it was explained that there was a savings and contingency plan in place. The Council had a solid track record of delivering savings in these areas and clear measures had been put in place. There was clear accountability on how savings were delivered.

It was noted that fees and charges proposals in the budget had followed a comprehensive benchmarking exercise and the impacts of what fees and charges could have on demand had been considered. All proposals for charges had been worked with relevant teams.

A Member of the Committee acknowledged that this was a good news budget in incredibly tough times and circumstances.

In terms of the impact of budget reductions on central education, it was explained that the only savings coming directly out of SEND and education services was to review the higher cost of transport where children were being transported out of the Borough. There would be no impact to education standards. The factors taken into account to decide the cost savings included an understanding of the average unit costs and previous experience.

It was noted that the budgeted subsidy for the early years centres coming from the General Council tax would be removed and additional income would be raised through

fees and charges. In setting the budget, inflation had been pitched at circa 5%.

Members questioned whether the proposed 30% increase in fees for Early Years Centres would have any bearing on the centres remaining open. Officers clarified that the proposed withdrawal of the subsidy for Early Years Centres did not pre-judge the decisions around the future of the centres

It was noted that the Council's capital programme would only include the schemes being implemented and the delivery of a new school in the North of the Borough would be done via the free school route.

The Committee noted that there was lot of pressure on the demand on children's services but recognised the importance of early help and prevention as a measure to support families and young people.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. noted the budget projections contained in the report.**
- 2. delegate to the Democratic Services Office in conjunction with the Chairman (and in consultation with the Opposition Lead) to agree comments to be submitted to Cabinet.**

52. **YOUTH OFFER UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Head of Service Youth Justice, AXIS, Adolescent Development and Youth Services introduced the report on the Youth Offer. A detailed overview of the report was provided and key aspects of the report were highlighted. A short video was played for the Committee that captured how a responsive, modern and dynamic youth offer could engage with children within the community.

The Committee heard about the Youth Offer Vision that encompassed services provided by the Local Authority, Universal and Targeted Services, work with uniformed, faith, sports and arts and culture groups. The Committee heard about the Summer 2022 Youth Offer and Holiday Activities Food Programme and had regard to the youth survey results from 2021. The survey was sent to all secondary schools across Hillingdon and there had been 600 responses.

It was noted that this was the first update in relation to the Youth Offer and the Committee would have an opportunity to comment further on this area once the consultation period had ended. The offer would also be presented to Cabinet in due course and the Committee would have an opportunity for further scrutiny.

Officers were thanked for the comprehensive report and welcomed the update and information on modernising the Youth Offer.

During Member discussions it was noted that the vision included a directory of opportunities and it was planned for this be digitally available for children, young people and families. The digital resource/app would enable residents to insert postcodes so that a list of all the opportunities available in different localities could be clearly identified.

It was clarified that the term youth work meant delivering programmes and supporting children and young people through volunteer and other opportunities.

In terms of the mobile delivery service and locations, it was noted that the hotspots were in Hayes and West Drayton with six out of 28 services in the North of the Borough. It was confirmed that the mobile detachment team was a discreet service and aimed to work with those children and young people who were the hardest to reach. A comprehensive software system was used to capture crucial information such as reports of child criminal exploitation and this information was shared across police, health, education and social care agencies and enabled the Council to identify those with the greatest need. As part of the Youth Offer there was an intention to ensure that there was a strong presence across the Borough and resource was maximised in the best way. The Youth Offer would help identify groups and how these arrangements could be facilitated.

It was reported that there was a need to increase digital visibility and make greater use of social media as this was used by children and young people. It was acknowledged that the way services engaged with young residents needed improving and this was still a work in progress.

It was requested that future surveys also captured data from local sports clubs and involve children and young people from these areas. The surveys were sent to all secondary schools and the Council fully engaged with schools in terms of the available offers and targeted programmes. Although at the present time there were restrictions around staffing resources, there was an intention to build on universal offers.

It was recognised that there were diverse communities across the Borough and programmes needed to be tailored to meet individual and local community cultural needs. This would include the need to have a diverse work force, cultural awareness and different methods of engagement.

During Member discussions it was confirmed that no youth centres had been permanently closed. There were some structural concerns and challenges around staffing. Whilst the wider asset transformation programme was undertaken the decision had been made to utilise alternative venues as a temporary measure. It was noted that there was a recommendation for a second bus to be carried and used as a transporter bus.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the update information.

53. **CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO SCHOOL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENT**
(Agenda Item 7)

The School Placement & Admissions Manager (Temp) introduced the report on the proposed changes to the Admissions criteria and PAN for Community Schools. An overview of the report was provided and key aspects of the report were highlighted.

It was reported that the Local Authority was proposing to reduce the PAN for Coteford Infant School from 81 to 60 to come into effect from reception 2024. The priority distance radius would also be reduced from 1000m to 750m in line with admissions arrangements. The consultation period took place between 24 October 2022 to 19 December 2022 and two responses were received. The reason for the reduction in PAN was based on projection and demographic changes leading to depleting pupils rolls in reception. The results from the consultation would be presented to Cabinet in February 2023.

	<p>It was noted that there was another school in the same planning area that had its capacity increased by 100% and this was based on the demand for the school.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviewed the proposed changes to Hillingdon's Admissions Arrangements detailed in the report. 2. Reviewed the responses from the consultation on a PAN change to a community primary phase school that are provided in the report below. 3. Delegated to the Democratic Services Office in conjunction with the Chairman (and in consultation with the Opposition Lead) to agree comments to be submitted to Cabinet.
54.	<p>CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL MINUTES (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>It was noted that there was typo with Cllr Heena Makwana's role as she was listed as Co-Chair. Members requested that the Corporate Parenting Panel considered the provisions and support in place for young people who wished to go to university.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting be noted.</p>
55.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.</p>
56.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>It was noted that Witness Sessions 2 & 3 the voice of parents and young people would take place on Wednesday 18 January 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the work programme and updates be noted.</p>
57.	<p>OFSTED REPORT - PART II (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>)</p> <p><i>This item was discussed as a Part II item without the press or public present as the information under discussion contained confidential or exempt information as defined by law in the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. This was because it discussed 'information relating to any individual and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual' (paragraphs 1&2 of the schedule to the Act).</i></p> <p>The Committee considered the Ofsted report – Part II. A list of questions would be sent to the report author for clarification.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the update and any clarification questions would be sent to the report author.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.13 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the

resolutions please contact Anisha Teji on 01895277655 or ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk.
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