



HILLINGDON
LONDON



Children, Families and Education Select Committee

Councillors on the Committee

Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair)
Councillor Becky Haggart OBE (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Kishan Bhatt
Councillor Tony Gill
Councillor Rita Judge
Councillor Peter Smallwood
Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)

Co-Opted Member

Tony Little, Roman Catholic Diocesan
Representative

Date: TUESDAY, 09 JANUARY
2024

Time: 7.00 PM

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM 5 -
CIVIC CENTRE

**Meeting
Details:** Members of the Public and
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this meeting

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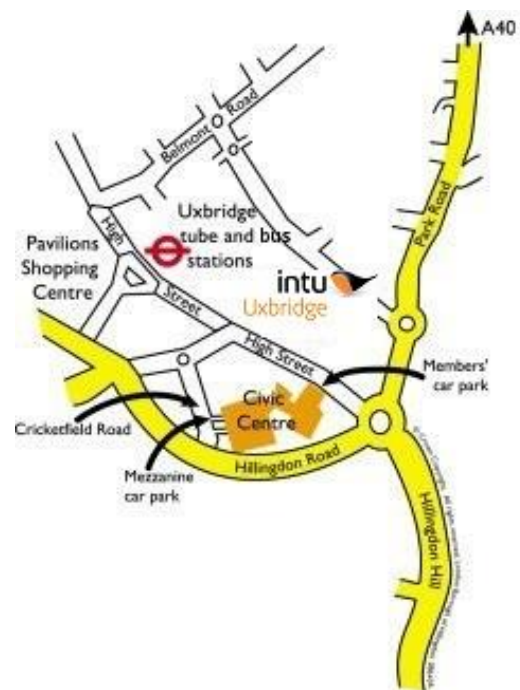
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Terms of Reference

Children, Families, & Education Select Committee

To undertake the overview and scrutiny role in relation to the following Cabinet Member portfolio(s) and service areas:

Cabinet Member Portfolios	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
Relevant service areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Children's Services (including corporate parenting)2. Children's Safeguarding3. Youth Justice4. Youth Services5. SEND6. Education7. Children and Families Development8. Skills & lifelong learning

This Select Committee will establish a Panel to support strong oversight of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. The Committee may appoint 3 Members to this Panel based on political balance. Membership may include non-Cabinet Members not on the Committee. The Committee may also appoint relevant Council officers and other external stakeholders to the Panel and agree its chairmanship and operation. In agreeing its operation, the Committee will provide for the Panel not to be able to establish any other sub-group or body to carry out its responsibilities.

Agenda

- 1** Apologies for Absence
- 2** Declarations of interest in matters coming before this meeting
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Minutes

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE

15 November 2023

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

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair), Councillor Becky Haggar OBE (Vice-Chair), Councillor Peter Smallwood, Councillor June Nelson, Councillor Kamal Kaur, and Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)</p> <p>Co-Opted Member Present: Tony Little</p> <p>Officers Present: Julie Kelly (Corporate Director of Children's Services) Kathryn Angelini (Assistant Director for Education and Vulnerable Children) Poppy Reddy (Assistant Director, Permanence and Specialist Services) Tehseen Kauser (Director of Service Delivery - Children's Social Care) Abi Preston (Director of Education and SEND) Kat Wyatt (Assistant Director Prevention and Youth Justice) Ryan Dell (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
39.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Rita Judge with Councillor Kamal Kaur substituting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Tony Gill with Councillor June Nelson substituting.</p> <p>Apologies were also received from Councillor Kishan Bhatt.</p>
40.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
41.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Members commended the minutes.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed.</p>

42.	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>)
43.	<p>REVIEW TOPICS (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Members heard from a number of senior officers on the topics of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court system/ social work: The Children’s Court and Legal System • County Lines and Youth Justice • Communication with schools • The number of children arriving in the country and staying in hotels and how their access to education is impacted • Absenteeism in schools: statutory school age children in Hillingdon <p>The Chair thanked officers for attending the Committee to help Members to gain a further insight into each of the topic areas. Members were asked to note that some of the briefing notes were marked as confidential.</p> <p><u>Children's court system</u></p> <p>The Assistant Director for Permanence and Specialist Services noted that the court system falls within this remit.</p> <p>As a Local Authority, Hillingdon had a statutory obligation in terms of safeguarding children, assessing risk, and putting support in place. The process started with early intervention, and then progressed as the risk escalated. If services were not working in the intended manner, legal proceedings were the last resort option where all other possibilities had been exhausted.</p> <p>The process would start with early intervention, move to a Child Protection (CP) plan if necessary, and then through the legal route via the Public Law Outline (PLO) if the risk could not be managed.</p> <p>There were pre-proceedings and care proceedings. Pre-proceedings were where families were given the opportunity to work with officers to try to avoid final escalation into the court arena/ legal proceedings. This also allowed parents to get legal representation in order to try to reduce the risk that had been identified. Pre-proceedings also involved detailed assessments and work expectations from both the social services department as well as parents/ family members. Involving all family members helped to explore other possibilities, not just alternate care, but also in terms of support. Assessments may include specialist assessments such as psychological assessments, parenting assessments. Parent Assess was a new assessment which helped families where there was an element of learning needs or disabilities.</p> <p>Generally, a Public Law Outline (PLO) would last around three months, pre-proceedings would be around three months. There was a possibility for ‘purposeful delay’, but this needed to be planned and focused.</p>

Before moving into the court arena/ legal proceedings, a meeting was held with parents and their representatives to inform them what the Local Authority's intentions were, what their rights were and what the remit of the proceedings were. This involved the Local Authority pulling together all the information and assessments and presenting this in a statement to the court. This needed to evidence the risk, the harm, what support had been put in place, and where the gaps were. The Local Authority had to consider what was the best option to safeguard children and will look at the Nolan Principles in terms of the Childcare Act.

The Local Authority could ask for a supervision order where children remained within the family home if the risk was not imminent. The Local Authority could ask for an interim care order which would look at children being cared for away from the family home. Wider family and friends would be looked at in the first instance.

The guidance says that care proceedings should last 26 weeks from the date of issue to the time care proceedings are concluded. Given difficulties such as COVID-19 this timescale was not currently being met and was currently sitting at 48-50 weeks in Hillingdon. This was below the national average.

During proceedings there would be the opportunity for other assessments such as independent assessments, drug and alcohol testing, depending on the risk.

In Hillingdon there were two court teams due to the extent and intense nature of the work – two Team Managers, Advanced Practitioners, 11 social workers and one permanence worker. The permanence worker provided support as a direct service to parents around boundary setting, school attendance, and practical skill assistance. This has been highly commended by both the courts and guardians. The primary focus of the courts is where the Child Protection Plan had not worked and the case requires escalation. Social workers were experts in their field. Training had been provided on, for example, Parent Assess. This minimised the need to use independent social workers and helped to continue the relationship between families and social workers. Officers worked with young people from the time that the matter was first notified, through assessments and up until the point of order. This helped to maintain consistency. If the care plan was adoption, officers kept the case open until the adoption order was granted. It was noted that care proceedings could last 50 weeks; it could take three-six months to identify an adoptive family; and then a minimum of 10-13 weeks before an application order could be made. This was a significant length of time in a child's life.

Members thanked officers for the report. Members further noted that as the service was performing well, there may be limited use in a major

	<p>review on this topic at this stage. Officers concurred but noted that one possible area of future focus could be 'repeat care proceedings', which could work as a means of prevention.</p> <p>Members noted the previous major review into the Stronger Families Hub and noted the likely tie in with the court system/ social work service area.</p> <p>Members asked about the numbers of cases dealt with in a year. In the last financial year there had been approximately 158 legal planning meetings, which was where consideration was given to whether the legal threshold had been met, or what other support could be put in place. There were 101 young people who went through the care proceedings route in the last financial year.</p> <p>Members referenced the challenges noted in the briefing note such as court delays and costings to the Council. It was noted that there was an extensive project on placement sufficiency. Members asked how the service area was looking to the future. Officers noted that cases were taken to court at the right time which meant that pre-proceedings work was really strong. It was thought that Hillingdon had fewer court proceedings than other Local Authorities.</p> <p>Members noted that this topic area was very broad. It was further noted that if it was narrowed down around the challenges, the Committee may end up attempting to review something on which it had little to no control.</p> <p>Members noted the possibility of receiving future updates on this topic.</p> <p>Members asked officers to inform them if there was anything that the Council could do to improve the service. Members further suggested that it may be possible to invite specific external stakeholders to a future meeting. It was noted that a lot of the challenges were not specific to Hillingdon but were national issues.</p> <p><u>County Lines/ Youth Justice</u></p> <p>The Committee congratulated the Youth Justice Service who had recently been recognised for providing a quality service to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Hillingdon was one of four Local Authorities nationally to be awarded the Youth Justice SEND Quality Lead Status with a Child First Commendation.</p> <p>The Assistant Director Prevention and Youth Justice presented a briefing note on three areas within the Youth Justice remit.</p> <p><u>Prevention and early intervention</u></p>
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	<p>The first area was around prevention and early intervention, and what programmes were in place for at-risk young people, with specific reference to County Lines.</p> <p>It was important to recognise that County Lines was a thread of Child Criminal Exploitation.</p> <p>Hillingdon's AXIS Service started in 2018 on the back of local and national recognition of the increasing number of children coming to the attention of statutory services nationally for serious offences and significant safeguarding concerns around exploitation. This was with a view to identifying children at risk much earlier.</p> <p>AXIS started as an excel spreadsheet in terms of information received through police partners, schools, Hillingdon's Youth Justice service and very quickly evolved and escalated.</p> <p>Subsequently a comprehensive analytical software system had been set up to triangulate the information received and support identification of Children at Risk as early as possible. The system was also able to identify areas and locations and postcodes and was able to link to schools. This meant that in addition to identifying children as risk, it was possible to identify locations and areas which helped in deployment of resources, not just within the Local Authority but across a partnership with police.</p> <p>AXIS had four key strands: serious youth violence; possession with intent to supply (linked to County Lines); sexual exploitation; and children going missing. All these threads were interlinked.</p> <p>AXIS evolved into a service roughly 18 months ago and was funded through both the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and public health funding so it was well supported. It had four full-time access workers and two Network Crime practitioners which managed the information and carried a case load of between 15 and 20 children. In 2020 a short OFSTED inspection described AXIS as 'everything that everything else isn't'.</p> <p>There had been lots of contact from other Local Authorities about how AXIS was delivered. AXIS did not work in isolation, and worked closely with other services across early intervention, and pre-prevention such as Stronger Families, Brilliant Parents and the voluntary sector. The 'Your Life You Choose' programme was delivered across secondary schools and was about educating and raising awareness. It was noted that many</p>
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	<p>staff within the Youth Justice service had lived experience which was invaluable.</p> <p><u>Diversion from the Youth Justice System</u></p> <p>The second area was around diversion from the justice system and how often diversionary options were used instead of formal prosecution.</p> <p>There was a strong focus both locally and nationally around diverting young people from the Youth Justice system. In Hillingdon this was predicated on collaboration and partnership working. Recently, the service had received funding for the Turnaround Programme which was funded through the Ministry of Justice. This programme was about recognizing children who may be receiving bail or might be released under investigation by the police or might have received an NFA (no further action). This was an opportunity to identify these young people early and to offer a voluntary intervention. Hillingdon had a multi-agency panel which met on a monthly basis and could review 30-70 young people.</p> <p>The Engage Programme was a new programme funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime. This had been rolled out across London and Hillingdon was the lead authority covering Hillingdon, Hounslow and Ealing. Project Engage was about bridging the gap between police custody and the community and continuing working with young people for example when they are released on bail. Hillingdon had just recruited an Engage Coordinator and were in the process of recruiting Engage workers.</p> <p>Out of court disposals were a framework whereby if a child came into contact with a criminal justice system for a relatively low-level offense the police, in conjunction with the Youth Justice service, could consider whether or not to divert them and consider an out of court disposal. When a young person was diverted for an out of court disposal, a comprehensive assessment would be undertaken in order to make an informed decision about what was the right outcome for that child and what was the right intervention. There would then be a multi-agency decision-making panel with partners from the police, youth support services, and Stronger Families, to discuss the case and what would be the most appropriate outcome. There were three options for what could be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triage – a voluntary intervention for between four to six weeks. This was about recognising that an offense had been committed but supporting the young person to access support services. • Youth Caution – this usually started at around three months and was administered by a uniformed police
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officer. There would have to be a set of agreed interventions that the young person would be expected to engage with. Should the child not engage, there was no substantial recourse so they could not be taken back and charged.

- Youth Conditional Caution – similar to a caution, but if the child did not engage with conditions the matter could be referred back to the police and the young person could be subsequently charged and taken to court for the offense.

Everything that the service did was about understanding the harm that had been caused and how young people could repair that harm. It was noted that no offense was victimless. For every child that came into contact with the criminal justice system, there was a dedicated restorative justice team who will work to reach out to the victims to gather their views.

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is work that was undertaken with all children who come into the youth justice system. It was the vision of the Youth Justice service that there be a Justice for All approach. This was about ensuring that there was justice for the victims and for communities. A number of victim conferences had been held with the young people. Restorative justice extended beyond youth justice. Officers noted work around reducing criminalisation of children who were looked after. There had recently been work undertaken with residential care homes regarding upskilling restorative justice skills. Similarly, training had been delivered to foster carers.

The Youth Justice team had worked with and delivered training to schools around the use of restorative justice techniques.

Members thanked officers for the briefing note and noted the fantastic service. Members also noted that as the service was working well, there may be little value in a major review. It was acknowledged that there was a strong partnership network.

Members asked about how Hillingdon compared to its neighbours. In terms of the response to children at risk of criminal exploitation, Hillingdon was awarded the national Municipal Journal award. Other local authorities also sought input from Hillingdon in developing their response to child criminal exploitation. With regards to diversion from the youth justice system, the Youth Justice service had three key national performance indicators. One of those was around first-time entrants coming into contact with the Youth Justice system. Historically and continually Hillingdon had one of the lowest in London and one of the lowest national rates of children coming into contact with the justice system in terms of diverting children at the earliest opportunity to stop

them coming into contact with the criminal justice system. In terms of restorative justice, colleagues from the Youth Justice Board attended the Youth Justice Strategic Management Board and commended how well Hillingdon was delivering restorative justice.

Members further commended officers on Hillingdon being a lead authority. Members asked about the response from school children when officers presented to them. Officers noted that the 'Your Life, You Choose' program was delivered alongside colleagues in the police and was about trying to start the conversation about child criminal exploitation because and providing a safe space to have those conversations. There was follow up through PSHE lessons and schools had followed up with officers around referrals to AXIS. This was all about conveying accurate information and holding important conversations.

Members noted the possibility of inviting stakeholders to a future meeting.

Communication with schools

The Director of Education and SEND introduced a briefing note on communication with schools, particularly in light of the academisation agenda. There were 99 schools within Hillingdon and roughly half were academies. This created opportunities for working with schools but also presented some challenges with this. It was noted that the picture had been relatively stable recently.

In Hillingdon there were 12 multi-academy trusts (MATs), most academies were in the secondary sector. Two secondary schools were maintained and the rest were academies.

There were various areas where the Council looked to engage with head teachers such as the annual Head Teacher Conference for key areas of strategic development. The Council had linked meetings with the primary and the secondary sectors which included both maintained schools and academies. There were termly head teacher meetings and a weekly briefing that was sent to all schools and governors.

Working with schools had been aided by the recent development of the Hillingdon Learning Partnership. This was a vehicle for professional development and support for schools and was shaped around the needs across the Borough to further develop strong practice across Hillingdon schools. This partnership was in its second year and was growing.

There were challenges in the system regarding children with SEND and this was about working with schools, listening to where there were challenges and seeing how the support could be shaped, whilst also making sure there was a level of challenge for those schools. The School Improvement support was for maintained schools but there was

an element where some of this support was offered to academies. Overall, communication with schools was an ongoing development area.

Members noted that this was a potentially very interesting topic for a major review. There had been a mixture of engagement from schools. It would be interesting to look at the difference between academies and maintained schools in the level of engagement on various topics. Another area to look at could be if/ how other local authorities had found ways of engaging, whilst noting individual differences.

Members noted that this was an area of concern and suggested that the history of this issue may have dated back to the time of grant-maintained schools. Members noted that this topic may be better suited to a future part two agenda item whereby the Committee could invite head teachers. It may be useful as a major review in the future. It was noted that the Committee had difficulty in engaging with schools as part of the previous Stronger Families Hub review.

Members asked whether there was more of an issue with Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) than with Single Academy Trusts. Members also asked, given the demand on head teachers' time, whether the Council's offer to them was advantageous enough. Officers noted that there was a range of Multi-Academy Trusts and some Single Academy Trusts, which created different dynamics. There were different levels of independence with schools in terms of working with the Local Authority and also working with each other. There were lots of positives, for example working with the CEOs of academies. There was good engagement with Multi-Academy Trust CEOs across the Borough. It was noted that there was now more of a one-Council approach under one directorate. Part of the challenge historically may have been that the services within education were more segregated. It was acknowledged that there were lots of challenges with being a head teacher and lots of pressures on their time. This may have meant that head teachers had to be selective over what/ how they engaged with the Local Authority.

Members asked what the Committee could bring to help with engagement, and also what Ward Councillors could bring. Members referenced the different level of services offered by Hillingdon to other authorities and asked what this could look like. Officers noted that some of these services had not been offered for a long time and so schools/ academies made their own arrangements. Officers were open to changing this as it was important to have a flexible offer. As a Committee it could be interesting to find out more about schools' perspectives and if there were clear differences between types of schools whether it be maintained/ Academy, primary/secondary, North/ South and understanding how the Council can shape its offer further to support schools.

Members noted that officers were in the middle of seeking improvements and that there was a lot of work upcoming. Members further noted that this would not warrant a major review at this time.

Members noted the challenge of provision for children with SEND and asked whether this was a particular problem in the context of communication with schools. Officers referenced the different set up of services within Hillingdon compared to other authorities and so it was difficult to compare like for like. The individual levels of contact between teams and schools and the support and networks were generally positive. It was noted that when communication needed to improve, this was more on the high level, strategic aspect. This was more to do with the collective approach rather than individual schools, although there were always going to be challenges particular in relation to SEND.

Children arriving in the country, staying in hotels and accessing education

The Director of Education and SEND introduced a briefing note on children arriving in the country, staying in hotels, and accessing education.

The numbers had changed throughout the last couple of years. There were currently 17 primary aged children and 11 secondary aged children residing in hotels (since September 2023). This was significant below the number of children out of school in Hillingdon (primary: 80; secondary: 93; total: 173).

The asylum seeker project commenced in March 2020 and the Admissions Team have been aware of around 1,500 families with children seeking education across seven different hotels, predominately in the south of the borough. Many of those families transitioned to temporary housing, although this scheme had now ended.

Officers were working hard to ensure that educational placements were available, although this could be challenging because of, for example, access to transport, uniforms and resources. There were also challenges if those children moved as they were unable to be removed from roll until a new setting had been found. There was interim provision available to support children who were awaiting a school place. There was also an educational pathway that included ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) support. This was funded and eligible for children that were in year 11.

Overall, there had been a reduction in the numbers and lots of families were residing in temporary accommodation, either within Hillingdon or outside. In the most part, these children have had an educational placement found for them.

	<p>Members noted that some young people may be in placements with peers with a common language whereas some may not, and so their experiences would likely differ.</p> <p>It was further noted that this issue may be unique to Hillingdon as an authority. While it was noted that some port authorities in the south of England may face similar issues, Hillingdon may have a larger challenge than some other authorities. With this in mind, this may make a unique and valuable major review topic. Officers concurred that while not totally unique, there were particular pressures in Hillingdon and in the London context with, for example, the nearby airport. Officers further noted that this was a broad topic that encompassed not just school places but also quality of life and living, learning and thriving in that environment. There was ongoing work that spanned across a number of services as there were also adults without children in similar circumstances. It was also noted that there were related issues pertaining to children missing education, nutritious lunches, and differences between DfE requirements and Home Office expectations. With this in mind, it may be difficult to narrow down a specific focus to review. Members noted that it could be possible, with officer assistance, to narrow down to, for example, 'the experience of the young people once they are placed in schools'. Members noted that there needed to be consistency in the approach to considering which potential topics were too broad.</p> <p>Members noted that the figures presented in the briefing note brought up another issue of particularly secondary aged children who were not in school and the difficulties in finding secondary places for children from abroad. This could possibly be looked into as a future part two item. It was further noted that children from abroad not in school was part of the bigger issue of absenteeism. It was noted that there had been a national focus on this. Members further suggested that children missing education could be accommodated with the topic of absenteeism and suggested a focus at looking at schools' experiences and teachers' experiences, as opposed to the experience of young people themselves, which may be difficult due them moving in and out of the borough.</p> <p>Members asked officers for an update regarding hotels, and on the Council's ability to track the young people concerned. Officers noted that there were only a small number of families still in hotels. There were challenges in tracking children when they were moved on and understanding if they were still within the borough. This had been a developing piece of work over the last couple of years and officers had developed links with the Home Office and Border Force. Often children were moved in very swift circumstances and schools were not always made aware. These strengthened links would help to know if children had been moved. There was an expectation that schools would spend 10 days trying to locate the child through the contact details that they held. Once they had exhausted all reasonable measures, they would</p>
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make a referral to the children missing education team through the Stronger Families Hub. This would start a tracking system that would include a standard Home Office check if it was thought that the child had been moved by the Home Office, and then a further check with Border Force if it was thought that the child may have left the country.

Absenteeism

The Assistant Director for Education and Vulnerable Children outlined the issue of absenteeism and attendance in statutory school age children in Hillingdon.

It was acknowledged that absenteeism across the country was a huge issue and had been since the COVID-19 pandemic. In nearly every category of absenteeism and attendance there had been a doubling in the figures, which was a concern and had been recognised by the Department for Education (DfE).

It was noted that it was presently too early to compare Hillingdon to statistical neighbours. Broadly speaking, in the previous academic year (2022-2023), Hillingdon had performed similarly to national statistics. For the current academic year, albeit it very early, Hillingdon was again in line with national statistics, roughly 93-94% attendance, which was an improvement on the previous year.

Persistent absenteeism (referring to children with 90% or less attendance – equivalent to children missing one school day per fortnight) was starting to come down.

As of September 2023, the UK Government had released new guidance entitled 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'. This was on the national agenda and officers had been undertaking lots of work to align with this programme. Although this had only been in place since September, officers had spent the whole of the previous academic year preparing themselves and Hillingdon schools for the changes.

Hillingdon had re-branded the former 'Participation Team' to become 'Attendance Support' to bring this in line with the DfE's expectations. Attendance support was now offered to every setting including independent settings, which was a first for Hillingdon. Previously there was a traded offer whereby schools to choose whether or not to be brought into the service. Now, Hillingdon had to provide a core programme as a standard offer. This included termly meetings with Hillingdon's attendance officer, the school's attendance officer and a senior school staff member. These meetings would also look into persistent absenteeism (attendance at or below 90%) as well as severe absenteeism (attendance at or below 50%). As this progressed, officers would be able to identify if there were any particular cohorts (for example, children with SEND, children on free school meals, etc.)

	<p>Officers were looking to, by January, have a three-year strategy for attendance and absenteeism across the Borough and involving all stakeholders.</p> <p>There were a number of upcoming plans, particularly from January onwards, taking into consideration how the new guidance was working.</p> <p>Members asked what ‘severely absent’ meant. Officers noted that this referred to under 50% attendance. Members also asked about children who were residents of Hillingdon but attended school outside of the borough. Officers noted that these figures would be recorded by the borough in which the school was located.</p> <p>Members asked what the Committee could add, should this topic be chosen as its major review. Officers further noted that they were still in the early stages, and so it would be difficult to identify where specific challenges lie at the moment and until it became apparent how successful schools had been in implementing the new guidance.</p> <p>Members suggested that this should be the major review topic – this was a sizeable project but there needed to be a starting point. Members noted their surprise at the high persistent absentee figures, and this could be a reason for the major review. The persistent absentee figures for 2022-23 were above the national average, and for the current academic year, the figure was 17.3% persistent absence.</p> <p>Members further asked how many children had been taken off roll. Officers noted that this was tracked as part of the attendance support team. Schools were required to inform the Council about a deletion from their roll on the day that they do it. This was done via an online form which included a set list of reasons including the child moving to another Borough, or to another school within Hillingdon. As of the week commencing 06 November 2023, the number was in the region of 600-700 since the start of the academic year. It was important to note that each of these had a known destination and so was different to those ‘children missing education’.</p> <p>Members asked about other Boroughs and whether they had strategies in place, and what methods they were using to tackle this issue. Officers noted that all boroughs were in a similar position because there was new guidance. Every Local Authority had been offered an attendance advisor from the DfE. Officers were due to meet with this advisor next week. The advisor would be able bring intelligence from other Local Authorities which may help to shape the three-year strategy.</p> <p>Other Members noted their preference for this review topic, and further noted that it had been picked up by central Government. Members referred to another Select Committee’s review into mental health. It</p>
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	<p>was suggested that it may be possible to invite young people, families and officers from other authorities as witnesses to any major review.</p> <p>Members asked if attendance officers at schools were engaging with attendance officers at the Local Authority. Officers noted that they were working well together. Under the previous traded offer, a significant number of schools were already engaging because they valued the service, so there was a strong relationship with attendance support officers in schools. Senior leads in schools had also been very supportive. Officers had offered schools a self-evaluation framework to drill down into attendance, their attendance policy, attitudes towards trauma responsive practices. There had already been good take-up of this.</p> <p>Members noted the importance of consistency in decision-making around which major review topic to pick. Members follow this up by noting that the briefing note referred to termly support meetings and this could also help to aid communication with schools.</p> <p>Members noted that the communication between attendance support officers could be a starting point for a major review in this area.</p> <p>Members highlighted the possible diverse range of reasons for persistent absence, and this could be one avenue of a major review.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussed the above noted topic ideas with officers, with a view to deciding on a review topic; and 2. Delegated to the Democratic Services Officer, in conjunction with the Chair (and in consultation with the Opposition Lead) any further agreement on review topic selection as required.
44.	<p>SEND STRATEGY (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>The Chair noted their appreciation for the document's comprehensive nature, emphasising the "how to achieve each ambition" section's effectiveness.</p> <p>The Director of Education and SEND presented the report, detailing its significance and importance, particularly regarding the review of feedback since the previous version was brought to the Select Committee in November 2022. The approach involved considering residents' and schools' input, indicating an attempt to address feedback constructively rather than in a tokenistic manner. It was highlighted that this was a local area approach, not a Council strategy.</p> <p>Officers highlighted a shift in the strategy's approach, aiming to be more ambitious and having listened closely to the voices of children, families, and professionals involved in SEND. Emphasising the importance of children's</p>

	<p>perspectives, efforts had been made to capture their experiences and opinions on early interventions and the flexibility of support within school settings.</p> <p>This strategy had been scrutinised and positively received by the SEND Executive Partnership Board, reflecting collaboration among various stakeholders (including Health and Social care, education, parents/ careers, and voluntary organisations). However, challenges arose from schools, citing concerns about increasing levels of inclusion and the pressures to adapt to varying needs, leading to a discussion about finding a balance between inclusive practices and acknowledging the challenges faced by schools.</p> <p>In summary, the five ambitions were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The right support, at the right time, in the right place: this was about early intervention and meeting need earlier. For example, young people fed back that they felt they should not need an EHCP in order to get support. Also, not all children wanted a Teaching Assistant supporting them. 2. Fully inclusive education for all 3. Provision meets the needs of Hillingdon's children and young people: this involved looking at the spectrum of provision – not just special school places, but also in mainstream schools, SRPs and designated units. It was noted that young people were positive about SRPs. 4. Children and young people live happy and fulfilled lives where they are included in the community: this referred to outcomes outside of education. It was typically quite difficult for families with children with particularly complex SEND to access clubs, and so this ambition aimed to assist with this. 5. There is a flexible offer and range of interventions available for children to access Alternative Provision: this was important because there was pressure on schools which could lead to disruption and exclusions, so this ambition aimed to avoid exclusions where possible. This would provide outreach and inreach as well as alternative provision places. <p>The discussion revolved around the SEND strategy's ambitious goals and the importance of translating these ambitions into tangible outcomes. Members highlighted the importance of monitoring the strategy's outcomes. Concerns were voiced about funding, suitability of placements, and varying percentages of EHCPs (Education, Health, and Care Plans) across schools. There was a shared consensus on the necessity to closely monitor the strategy's progress and outcomes.</p> <p>Officers acknowledged these concerns, assuring a monitoring system through priority groups around each ambition within the strategy. Regarding EHCP distributions across schools, efforts were underway to consult with schools that had lower EHCP levels, intending to foster more inclusive practices among all schools. The emphasis remained on the strategy's aim to support</p>
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	<p>children's diverse needs while addressing challenges faced by schools and parents in selecting schools.</p> <p>Members commended the report's comprehensiveness, in particular around the data representation and the holistic approach towards children's needs and emphasised the importance of not labelling children negatively.</p> <p>Furthermore, attention was drawn to a notable trend concerning higher percentages of children with primary needs in autism and language categories within the borough. Officers noted the rising national trend of ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) and attributed it partly to better access to diagnosis and the increasing complexity of ASD cases diagnosed at earlier ages, emphasising the necessity for early interventions. Efforts were ongoing to understand these trends further and ensure a more equal provision across different types of needs.</p> <p>The discussion highlighted the importance of a comprehensive strategy that addressed diverse needs while balancing the challenges faced by educational institutions, striving for equitable provision and support for children with special educational needs.</p> <p>Officers noted ongoing initiatives and projects aimed at various aspects of SEND support. Some projects, such as updating the banding model and matrix of funding for SEND, were expected to show progress sooner, while others, like developing increased inclusion, were perceived as longer-term goals requiring continuous collaboration with schools.</p> <p>Additionally, the discussion touched upon preparing children with special needs for adulthood, highlighting the challenges in providing experiences similar to those of children without SEND, such as managing budgets or using public transport. There was a recognition of crosswork among social care, SEND, education, and adult social care services, aiming to support the transition to adulthood, ranging from independent travel programs to employment opportunities. This collaborative effort aimed to strengthen the support network for children in fostering a seamless transition into adulthood.</p> <p>Members asked about benchmarking SEND outcomes against statistical neighbours and London boroughs rather than solely against national standards. Officer noted that this was possible, and that OFSTED tended to look at national figures as well.</p> <p>The conversation touched upon the SEND Inclusion Plan pilot of 31 local authorities, which did not include Hillingdon. Why certain local authorities were selected for the pilot and others not was uncertain.</p> <p>The conversation shifted to concerns about capacity and specialist staff to meet SEND needs. Efforts were discussed to enhance training and provide support to ensure staff confidence in catering to diverse SEND requirements. In addition, there would be support for the Council's different teams to act in a One Council approach.</p>
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	<p>Another topic discussed was the ongoing need for feedback mechanisms to drive continuous improvement in SEND provision. There were plans to encourage feedback through various forums such as the Child Voice Panel, Children in Care Council and Parent Carer Forum, to engage children with SEND, and efforts to share good practices and effective training methods across settings. It was important to share the child's voice with partners. It was also important that schools and teams could learn from each other.</p> <p>The conversation also addressed the quality of data tracking and funding issues within the SEND system. Challenges in managing data accurately were acknowledged. The potential for new systems to be used was being investigated. There was a continuous struggle to manage funding amid growing demands and pressures on resources with a fixed budget. There had been some inconsistency in the funding approach, and this was one reason for the banding review. This was also linked to ambition one and why early intervention was so important.</p> <p>Members highlighted past challenges in SEND provision regarding EHCP delivery and the shortage of local specialist provision, with a higher number of children placed in independent settings. Officers noted this was something that a lot of local authorities had struggled with and that Hillingdon had come a long way with EHCP compliance outcomes. On special school places, officers clarified that on one level it appeared that there were not enough places but actually the number of children in a specialist placement was above national levels in Hillingdon. The reason for that was because Hillingdon was placing more than double the national rate in independent settings that were high cost rather than in local provision. So as far as having a shortage, it was more around local specialist provision rather than not having enough places for children.</p> <p>Members raised concerns about delays in funding reaching schools for SEND support. Officers clarified that a number of schools experienced issues at the end of the previous financial year and beginning of the current financial year. Assurance was provided that efforts were underway to rectify configuration issues and only a small proportion of reconciliation was outstanding. New systems were noted to streamline the process for timely funding allocation.</p> <p>It was clarified that the Hillingdon PCF was the Parent Carer Forum.</p> <p>Lastly, the meeting concluded with gratitude for the dedication of officers in navigating the complexities of SEND provision and ongoing efforts to improve support and address various challenges faced within the system.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted the contents of the draft Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2023-2028 which outlines the strategic vision and priorities for the delivery of SEND Services across the borough; and
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	<p>2. Delegated to the Democratic Services Officer, in conjunction with the Chair (and in consultation with the Opposition Lead) comments for inclusion in the upcoming Cabinet Member report.</p>
45.	<p>DRAFT MINUTES FROM THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Officers informed Members that prior to the meeting, the Chair had agreed to defer this item to the next meeting, due to the short timeframe in between the Corporate Parenting Panel and Select Committee meetings. This would enable officers to receive feedback/ amendments to the minutes before they were presented to the Select Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee deferred this item to the next meeting.</p>
46.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Forward Plan.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the previous major review report on the Stronger Families Hub had been presented to, and recommendations agreed at, November Cabinet.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.</p>
47.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Members considered the Work Programme.</p> <p>Members noted that the possible review topic of engagement with schools could be a future Part II item.</p> <p>Members further noted that 'in-year admissions to secondary schools' and associated difficulties could be a future agenda item.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee considered the report and agreed any amendments.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9:25 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information of any of the resolutions please contact Ryan Dell at democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

The public part of this meeting was filmed live on the Council's YouTube Channel to increase transparency in decision-making, however these minutes remain the official and definitive record of proceedings.

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EDUCATION SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES (UKRAINE)

Committee name	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Daniel Kennedy – Central Services Directorate Tracie Bushell – Central Services Directorate
Papers with report	None
Ward	All

HEADLINES

This paper provides the Committee with an update on the support being provided to households who are living in Hillingdon who have been displaced by the conflict in Ukraine. Specifically, the paper provides the Committee with an update on the education support for children and how grant funding is being used to assist children settle and integrate into schools and their communities, and to improve their learning outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee notes the information presented within the report and asks questions about the support being provided to children.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Working with a range of public and voluntary sector partners, Hillingdon Council has and continues to provide leadership to co-ordinate arrangements with hosts and a range of support services to assist those displaced by the conflict in Ukraine. Partnership working with the voluntary sector is providing direct support to households who need it for a range of services. This includes applying for a school place for their child(ren), registering with a GP, information about accessing health care services, access to financial assistance where this is required, access to adult learning and employment, options for re-housing as well as assistance to connect with support networks.

Since the launch of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in March 2022, Hillingdon has received 368 guests, of which 118 are children under the age of 18 years old. As at the end of November 2023 there is now a total of 64 children living in Hillingdon under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme following some children and their families moving onto other accommodation and resettlement arrangements out of Hillingdon.

Hillingdon Council and voluntary sector partners maintain regular contact with those who have settled in Hillingdon.

In addition to the initial support to families upon arrival and subsequent support to settle into Hillingdon's communities, the government has provided local areas with funding for the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24. The funding has enabled us to provide a wide range of support.

Current Support

The current support offer is a broad package of support intended to support as many schools and families as possible. Schools were asked about their support needs 11 months ago and this led to some of the support outlined below. Other aspects of support, e.g., St Mary's Ukrainian school, have come from the feedback and experience of Ukrainian refugee groups, which schools in Hillingdon have not really been aware of. One reason for this is Ukrainian families have not flagged many concerns at school in terms of behaviour, requests for counselling and support. The arrival of our own Ukrainian support team is allowing families to communicate their needs, which they have not necessarily shared with their schools.

St Mary's Provision

St Mary's Ukrainian school have opened a supplementary school based at Oak Wood School with our support. They provide a range of support services for children and families, including ESOL, trauma and counselling support and a traditional supplementary school offer.

This also provides a focal point for the community to support any Ukrainian family. There are many more than the Ukrainian families supported under the Homes for Ukraine (HFU) scheme. The St Mary's team are working closely with Hillingdon Education, North West London Health Trust to ensure there are mental health, trauma and support pathways available.

The school was launched in September 2023. They currently have 38 Hillingdon young people. There is an expectation that more will join as word gets out from our Ukrainian education team and their marketing in Ukraine and English.

St Mary's are providing Hillingdon with 4 education support workers and a team lead. This team follow a model already rolled out in a few other London boroughs and they are all trained in a range of important skills, such as early trauma identification and support on school site. Hillingdon's own Ukraine Education Team and other front-line officers are being trained in their successful programme, so there is consistency of approach.

Ukraine Education Team (ESWs)

Hillingdon recruited 3 education support workers (including the programme manager) to support our schools and families. They are all refugees from the conflict and highly qualified professionals from Ukraine. They work closely with Hillingdon HFU Team and with St Mary's. The Programme Manager co-ordinates the work across both education teams and all schools have been contacted and ESWs have been meeting school leads, children, and families. The manager also co-ordinates the work with other Council and Health services.

The team all joined Hillingdon in October and have already had a big impact. Their successes so far:

- Helped to place children and young people in schools and college.
- Heard, assured, and recorded the stories of the trauma children, young people are living with and that their schools are unaware of.
- Supported family requests for children and young people to take up music again, to join after school clubs, to receive careers advice and guidance (post-16).
- Identified 148 children and young people in our schools, including the 64 children from HFU scheme. This number will grow as they get to every school.

- Liaising with organisations that support Afghan families, as some of our HFU families were originally refugees from Afghanistan. They are also supporting those who speak Ukrainian.

Educational Psychology offer

We have commissioned 32 days of Educational Psychology time to support the work with our Ukrainian children. This support includes:

- Support for health pathways for those identified with trauma.
- Support for schools with individual concerns.
- Assessing children with suspected undiagnosed special educational needs at different ages.

School Support Offer

The Education Improvement Team have been working with schools to support them with advice, guidance, and training. This has involved:

- Providing support resources and signposting who to contact for a range of issues on the Education LEAP pages.
- Direct support from the Ukraine Education Team
- Training advice and guidance from Education Improvement Advisors
- An Initial meeting for schools when the support was set out (January 2023) 7 schools attended.
- Regular updates through the weekly education bulletin and Headteacher termly events.
- Providing advice on how schools can get funding to support Ukrainian children directly from the HFU service. No school has undertaken this yet. We are repurposing the money to ensure schools get other type of support.
- Additional Education Psychology time as set out above.
- Training on EAL if requested.

Post 16 support

Funding has been set aside to support Ukrainian young people 16-19.

The Post-16 partnership co-ordinator has set up an additional careers information and advice scheme which will track and support young people when we find out they are not engaged in education, employment, or training.

The post-16 brochure is being translated into Ukrainian by our education team, so that all families know what is available at post-16.

We are working closely with 3 colleges, Uxbridge, West Thames, and Burleigh colleges, to place and find courses for all Ukrainians.

Hub school

To provide support around English as an additional language, we have identified 2 hub schools with strong EAL practice. We are reaching out to Minet Juniors and Harlington School to offer hub sessions for schools on teaching, learning, induction. This is currently in process.

Language Link Offer to Schools

Language Link is Speech, Language, Communication software. It is considered one of the foremost Speech and Language support tools nationally.

Schools can use it to assess large groups of pupils in Infant, Junior and Secondary stages. It provides a large toolkit and bespoke plans for children to ensure they improve the areas they are weak at. It also trains schools in how to address those needs. It has been used by many primary schools and is now being used by secondaries.

Language Link also has an EAL strand that does the same thing for EAL learners. The aim is to offer a Hillingdon wide licence for every school for 2 or 3 years. This is one of the ways to help extend the impact of the funding by offering something practical and useful for every school.

The Council, schools and voluntary sector partners are providing a range of support services to children who have been displaced by the conflict in Ukraine to resettle and integrate into Hillingdon's communities; to help them feel safe, welcomed and to achieve the best outcomes. In terms of support to children and young people this includes the following, which at school level is being progressed through close working with schools across the Borough.

Additional support has been provided to children under the age of 5 at Children Centres across Hillingdon. Families have attended 'Stay and Play', Musical Babies, Toddler Time, Let's Get Active and Small Talk sessions.

To complement the education support for children and young people, support is also being provided to families by commissioned voluntary sector services. This includes providing bespoke support to Ukrainian guests referred to the service living in Hillingdon. Working closely with the Council, the voluntary sector is assisting hosts and guests, and supporting guests and their families with their integration and adaptation to life in the UK and delivering ongoing support services where necessary. This includes, but not limited to, school admissions, accessing ESOL, welfare benefit applications and assistance with accessing Job Centre Plus.

Families are also able to access assistance from the Stronger Families team who ensure that children, young people, and their families receive tailored support at the earliest point, from the most appropriate service(s), to enable children and young people to achieve their full potential. The Stronger Families service works together with families to prevent difficulties from escalating and becoming more complex. It is consent based and time limited. Families have the option to self-refer and access the service without any restrictions.

Families are supported with complex and multiple difficulties which are preventing parents from adequately caring for their children e.g., lack of knowledge of positive behaviour management, routines and boundaries, mental health, substance misuse, disengagement with education and risk of homelessness.

Families requiring support with moving from hosts accommodation into private sector renting are being supported by a dedicated Housing Officer. The 'Move-On Plan' has successfully assisted 13 families into private sector housing, and we are working with a further 16. Over the coming year we anticipate approximately 50 more Ukrainian families will require support to find private sector housing accommodation.

PERFORMANCE DATA

There are currently 39 Ukrainian children attending Hillingdon Schools. A further 12 children are attending out of borough schools, 2 attending online Ukrainian studies, 7 attending College or University and 4 recently arrived children/ young people who are being supported by the relevant teams to find education placements within the London Borough of Hillingdon.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

The offer of a tailored holistic model is enabling Ukrainian children and families to make the transition into education within Hillingdon. This is being achieved by addressing the need to support children and families on an individual basis through a dedicated team of professionals along with targeted support for schools.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications from this report. This report is for information only.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications from this report. This report is for information only.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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PROPOSED CHANGES TO ADMISSIONS CRITERIA and PAN for COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Committee name	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Abi Preston – Director of Education & SEND
Papers with report	Proposed Change to the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School - Cabinet Report
Ward	All

HEADLINES

Hillingdon Council has a statutory responsibility to secure sufficient early years and school places for children resident in Hillingdon. Over the last ten years the Council has worked closely with schools in Hillingdon to successfully deliver an ambitious programme of school expansion to ensure every child living in Hillingdon can be offered a school place as close to home as possible.

Following the paper presented at October Cabinet 2023, and subsequent to approval, the Council proposed to reduce the Published Admission Number for Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School from 120 to 90. This PAN reduction will come into effect from September 2025, and there will be sufficient places to ensure that local residents and siblings can access the school. This reduction in PAN will also reduce the distance priority radius from 1250m to 1000m in line with the Council's admissions arrangements.

The proposed changes to the school admissions criteria will ensure that we continue to provide fair placement and review the impact, so that priority is given to children to access places at schools as close to their home as possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

1. Review the proposed changes to Hillingdon's Admissions Arrangements detailed in the Cabinet report;
2. Note the NIL response from the consultation on a PAN change to a community primary phase school; and
3. Provide comments to be included in the Cabinet report which will be presented in February.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

There were no responses from the consultation carried out between Monday 23 October 2023 and Monday 18 December 2023, 12pm.

Due to no responses being received it is clear there are no objections to the proposed changes.

Despite consulting with the following stakeholders;

- a) Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;
- b) Other persons in the relevant area who, in the opinion of the admission authority, have an interest in the proposed admissions;
- c) All other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);
- d) Any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

An inclusive consultation programme has subsequently been delivered, including the following elements:

- 'Have your say' via the Council website.
- All Hillingdon schools were asked to include within their communications to parents i.e. newsletters and websites.
- All adjoining neighbouring local authorities were consulted.
- A questionnaire available on-line and in paper form (on request), with the additional option to contact the team to discuss.
- Invitations to submit a written response.

The consultation was widely advertised and had the potential to receive in excess of thousands of responses given the high number of children attending a school in Hillingdon. In excess of 50,000 children attend Hillingdon schools. There were 55 page views for the dedicated consultation web page. Given that there were no responses and the high number of potential consultees it is assumed that there is consensus to implement the proposals.

IMPLICATIONS ON RELATED COUNCIL POLICIES

A role of the Select Committee is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

HOW THIS REPORT BENEFITS HILLINGDON RESIDENTS

Over the past year, officers have reviewed all schools and discussed the proposal with the headteacher of both Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School. The Headteacher at both Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School had updated parents over the summer term in a newsletter that a reduction in PAN was being considered. This proposal would give stability to classes and benefit pupils, and that siblings and other local parents would still be able to access the school.

Once proposed changes are agreed it will ensure fair placement and that priority is continued to be given to children to access places at schools as close to their home as possible.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications are centred around staffing. The school is working with their commissioned HR provider to review the staff structure to reflect the PAN reduction. This will help in future planning to help reduce the financial pressure on the school and the risk of the school

running into deficit. The spare physical space can be used in future if rolls rise in the relevant areas and will be used by the school meanwhile.

It is important that the Committee considers cost effective proposals that benefit resident taxpayers in relation to this review, which would ultimately be determined by Cabinet as part of the Council's broader budget planning process.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposals for changes to the Council's admissions criteria, which the Cabinet have been invited to consider comply with the DfE School Admissions Code 2021. There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Consultation on changes to School Admissions Arrangements](#)

[Community School's Proposed Admission Arrangements 2025-26](#)

[October Cabinet Report Changes to Admissions Arrangements 2025-26](#)

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PROPOSED CHANGES TO ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Susan O'Brien
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
Officer Contact(s)	Abi Preston – Director of Education & SEND
Papers with report	School Admissions Code 2021

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>Hillingdon Council has a statutory responsibility to secure sufficient early years and school places for children resident in Hillingdon. Over the last eleven years the Council has worked closely with schools in Hillingdon to successfully deliver an ambitious programme of school expansion to ensure every child living in Hillingdon can be offered a school place as close to home as possible.</p> <p>Following review and discussions with the schools, the Council is proposing to reduce the Published Admission Number for Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School from 120 to 90. This PAN reduction will come into effect from 2025 and there will be sufficient places to ensure that local residents and siblings can access the school. This reduction in PAN will also reduce the distance priority radius from 1250m to 1000m in line with the Council's admissions arrangements.</p> <p>Cabinet is, therefore, asked to consider the proposed change to the PAN for Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School, to address the findings of the review to provide continuing access for residents to their local school and improve stability of pupil numbers and budgets.</p>
Putting our Residents First	<p>This report supports the council objective of: <i>Thriving, healthy households</i>. The recommended changes to the school admissions criteria contained in this report will support the aim that all children in Hillingdon can be offered a local school place as close to home as possible and ensure effective, and best use of the investment the council has made to expand primary schools across the Borough.</p>
Financial Cost	<p>There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, schools with excess places above the local demand can experience part-empty classes which are not</p>

	financially viable, stretching school budgets to cover the staffing and limiting resources available to all pupils. This can lead to an overall deficit and the school seeking a loan from the council Dedicated Schools Grant for maintained schools (community, foundation, and VA) or to their Academy Trust.
Relevant Select Committee	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Ward(s) affected	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. **Considers the proposal to reduce the Published Admission Number for Whitehall Infant School from 120 to 90 and Whitehall Junior School from 120 to 90 and authorises officers to undertake a full consultation exercise in relation to it.**
2. **Agrees to receive a further report at its 15th February 2024 meeting for the purpose of considering the consultation responses for a new Published Admissions Number for Whitehall Infant School and Whitehall Junior School which is set to take effect from 1 September 2025.**

Reasons for recommendation

1. As an education authority, the Council must plan for a sufficiency of places and efficient use of resources. There has been a slight decline in demand across the primary sector since 2018, with some fluctuations, but the overall level of primary surplus places continues to be too high and is pooling in a few schools. Each year the Council reviews the number of places against pupils rolls and projections and considers changing Published Admission Numbers (PAN) in some schools. Across the borough, small annual changes are needed to meet parental demand, up and down. This ensures schools and the authority best meet the needs of all pupils across the Borough and make effective use of resources in schools and between them. The PAN is the 'operating figure', and the physical building remains the same. Academy, Foundation and Voluntary Aided (VA) schools make their own decisions, and they must consult the Council and others on proposed reductions, but their Governors/Trusts can agree temporary or permanent increases. The review has included all primary and secondary schools. The Cabinet is the relevant authority for the community primary schools.

2. The Local Authority now recognise a need to reduce the published admission number in two of our community schools, each by 30 places. This is due to demographic changes leading to declining pupil rolls and Reception intakes, and into Year 3 into the Junior school, over the past few years which is projected to continue for another few years. There would be no difference for current pupils after the proposed change takes effect from Reception 2025, and there would be sufficient places to meet future demand from their siblings and other local parents.
3. Following a review of school places, it is proposed to consult to reduce the Published Admission Numbers for:
 - Whitehall Infant School - from 120 to 90 from 2025. All local residents will still be able to access places there. This reduction will also reduce the distance priority radius from **1250m to 1000m** in line with our admissions arrangements.
 - Whitehall Junior School - from 120 to 90 from 2025. All local residents will still be able to access places there. This reduction will also reduce the distance priority radius from **1250m to 1000m** in line with our admissions arrangements.

Alternative options considered / risk management

4. The proposals presented in this report are intended to be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair and comply with all relevant legislation to mitigate the potential future risk that a small number of children living in Hillingdon may not be guaranteed a school place as close to home as possible. Options have been considered to address this risk, some of which are specific to a location in the Borough. Where alternative options have been considered therefore, these are set out in the body of the report.
5. The proposals for a reduction in PAN are to improve schools' ability to efficiently plan their staffing and educational provision and not reducing could lead to schools suffering financial pressures leading to deficits, which in the community schools could then require a loan, further adding to the deficit in the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Select Committee comments

6. The Children, Families & Education Select Committee has scheduled this matter on its multi-year work programme and will consider the proposals as part of the consultation process, before a final report is brought back to Cabinet in February 2024 for decision.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Statutory School Admissions Code

7. The purpose of the statutory School Admissions Code is to ensure that all school places for maintained schools (excluding maintained special schools) and academies are allocated in an open and fair way. The Code contains mandatory requirements, such as setting a Published Admissions Number for each school. The admission arrangements to community schools are determined by the Local Authority as the 'admission authority.'
8. In drawing up the admission arrangements to schools, admission authorities must ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily how places for that school will be allocated. All schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted. The admission authority for the school must also set out in the arrangements the oversubscription criteria against which places will be allocated at the school when there are more applications than places and the order in which the criteria will be applied.
9. To ensure that the criteria applied in prioritising access to community schools which are oversubscribed remains procedurally fair, objective and clear, a review of the criteria has been undertaken using three four years of Hillingdon admissions data to primary school reception places. The focus of the review sought to identify any residual risk that the Council would not fulfil its statutory duty to ensure every child is offered a school place.
10. The review considered the following area:
 - Ensure there are sufficient school places in Hillingdon and eliminate financial constraints where evidence shows a continued and sustained reduction in admissions.

Reduction of Published Admissions Numbers

11. All community schools have a Published Admissions Number (PAN) in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021. This is the number of school places that the admission authority must offer in each relevant age group (Reception, Year 3 for Junior and Year 7 for secondary) of a school for which it is the admission authority. Admission numbers are part of a school's admission arrangements.
12. As an education authority the Borough must plan for a sufficiency of places and efficient use of resources. The demand and capacity across the primary sector have been variable from year to year since 2012. It is clear that the level of overall surplus places in the primary sector continues to be too high and is concentrated in a few schools. To ensure schools and the authority best meet the needs of all pupils across the Borough and make effective use of resources in schools and between them, this reduction of the PAN in two Community schools is proposed.

13. Currently there are 14.8% of vacant places across all primary schools (May Census 2023). Pupil numbers will always fluctuate but the aim is to have around 8% vacancies which will ensure there will be places to meet parental demand in each area and for those moving in mid-year, and secure stability for all schools. Having any schools with a PAN over 30 pupils above the level of their local demand, means some schools attract a few pupils from further away requiring more classes to be run, but they are not economic, with a risk that if pupils join or leave, a class may need to be opened or closed. This disrupts education for all the pupils in the year group. To balance school budgets, classes need to include 25 or more pupils. Schools with declining or volatile rolls face big changes in their annual budget, and consequent cuts in staff and risk financial deficit. The aim of PAN reductions is to match the operational level of schools to local demand and improve the focus of resources in each school on their pupils and reduce the risk of deficits. Meanwhile the physical capacity will remain available if demand rises, when it is possible to increase the PAN immediately, without consultation. It is considered prudent that in future PANs should be increased temporarily a year at a time, whilst parental demand is kept under review.
14. Both schools have raised concerns about changes in their local demand and the governing body supports the reduction since it will enable the school to focus their budget and resources better for pupils, so supporting school improvement. The governing body will agree an increase should local demand for places rise. Importantly, though the process to reduce PAN requires considerable data and consultation, it is easy to reverse, so admissions authorities can quickly respond to a rise in demand and decide to admit over PAN on a temporary or permanent basis.
15. Hillingdon has one of the largest pupil populations in London with growth in some areas and 53,307 pupils in the May 2023 census. The past few years of roll volatility now require annual review and regular changes in PAN, up and down, to adjust the 'operating capacity' of the schools since school finances are so challenging. Most London local authorities have agreed or are planning reductions in primary capacity and increases in secondary places. As the birth rate has slowed, reception numbers have plateaued since 2016 and new pupil roll growth will be from new housing and migration into various year groups, not just to reception. Over half of primary schools are full to capacity but the pockets of surplus places in a few schools continue to grow. The demographic changes in the Borough, short and long-term effects of Brexit, Covid and employment and affordability of housing are all factors being monitored.
16. The Headteacher has updated parents over the summer term in newsletters that a reduction in PAN was being considered, referencing that the school already have many year groups operating at the proposed lower PAN and this proposal would give stability to classes and benefit pupils, and that siblings and other local parents would still be able to access the school.

Next Steps

Proposals to reduce Planned Admission Numbers in 2 community schools.

- a. Whitehall Infant School from 120 to 90 Primary Planning Area 6 – Uxbridge
- b. Whitehall Junior School from 120 to 90 Primary Planning Area 6 – Uxbridge

17. The proposal for consultation is to reduce the Published Admission Number for Whitehall Infant school and Whitehall Junior School from 120 to 90, from 2025. The school is located close to the boundary with South Buckinghamshire and there are many primary schools within one and two miles walk. Rolls have fallen over the past few years with several year groups below the existing PAN. It is clear the school should have a PAN of 90, until local demand rises.

PRIMARY PLANNING AREA 6		CENSUS MAY 2023 ROLL										CONFIRMED RECEPTION/ YR3 NUMBERS IN SEPTEMBER 2023
SCHOOL	PAN	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	TOTAL	IF FULL	% vacant	
Cowley St Laurence	60	58	54	60	58	49	55	60	394	420	6.2%	60
Hermitage Primary	60	59	59	60	60	60	59	57	414	420	1.4%	60
John Locke Academy	90	88	88	89	90	90	73	69	587	630	6.8%	90
St Mary's	30	29	30	30	30	31	30	29	209	210	0.5%	30
St Andrew's	30	29	22	26	30	29	23	28	187	210	11%	26
Whitehall Infant School	120	104	104	92					300	360	16.7%	93
Whitehall Junior School	120				114	87	92	86	379	480	21%	87
Planning Area 6 Total	510	367	357	357	382	346	332	329	2470	2730	9.5%	446

Process For PAN Reduction

18. The process is statutory and must follow the Admissions Code, as amended in September 2021. It requires a six-week consultation between October and January. The Local Authority has reviewed the demand for the school within their local context and discussed with the school and meetings of their Full Governing Bodies will formally resolve they support the proposals.
19. Full Cabinet has to consider the proposal to reduce PAN in the community school as it affects residents access to local schools.
20. If Cabinet approves the consultation, it will then take place from 23rd October 2023 until 18th December 2023, a total of 8 weeks. Consultees will be invited to respond via a dedicated email address and online questionnaire. The statutory requirement for consultation in this case is a

minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1st October 2023 and 31st January 2024 for a reduction in the PAN to be published in March 2024 for applications for pupils to start in September 2025 in Reception (or Year 3 in Junior schools and Year 7 in secondary). The outcome of the consultations will be reported to Cabinet in February 2024 to take the final decision.

Financial Implications

21. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, it will help reduce the financial pressure on this individual school and the risk of this school running into deficit. Additionally, it will also reduce the risk of maintained schools requesting contributions from the council to meet redundancy costs in relation to staffing restructures. The spare physical space can be used in future if rolls rise in the relevant areas, and will be used by the schools meanwhile, or kept empty.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

22. The proposals set out in this report will help to mitigate the residual risk of Hillingdon children not securing access to a place at a local school close to where they live. Local families can access primary places nearby. The rising vacancies in a few schools reflect residents are currently not choosing to fill the school to the level of the current PAN, so the places are not needed. The schools now risk a few more pupils turning up, from further away, requiring an additional teacher which destabilises school budget and staffing and affects all the pupils. The proposals will enable better targeting of resources to priorities to help pupils, in line with the Council's vision to put our residents first.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

23. The statutory School Admissions Code sets out that admission authorities must set ('determine') admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority must first publicly consult on those arrangements. If no changes are made to admission arrangements, they must be consulted on at least once every 7 years. For admission arrangements for entry to school in September 2024, consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1st October 2023 and 31st January 2024. The Code states that this consultation period will allow parents, other schools, religious authorities and the local community to raise any concerns about proposed admission arrangements.
24. To ensure compliance with the Code, the Local Authority will consult with:
- a) Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen:
 - b) Other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions:
 - c) All other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools):
 - d) Any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority:

25. Subject to agreement from the Cabinet, the proposals will be available through the Council's established communication channels for comment. It is proposed that the consultation will last from 23rd October 2023 until 18th December 2023.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and confirms that there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report.

Legal

If an admission authority of a mainstream school wishes to increase or decrease PAN, without increasing the overall physical capacity of the buildings, this would be classed as an admissions change. Admissions authorities must follow the processes set out within the School Admissions Code in order to make an admissions change. Details of the processes that must be followed are summarised within the body of this report. There are no other legal implications arising from the recommendations set out at the beginning of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[School Admissions Code 2021](#)



Briefing Paper: Dynamic Purchasing System for Alternative Provision

Kathryn Angelini

December 2023

Context:

The needs of most children and young people can be met through mainstream education provision, but a small proportion with the most complex needs require specialist support. This enables them to progress in their learning, going onto their next step towards a settled adulthood. Some children and young people however need education or training arranged outside a mainstream or specialist setting because otherwise they would not receive suitable education or training. This can be for a number of reasons:

- Children and young people who have been permanently excluded from their school.
- Children and young people who have medical and mental health needs preventing them from attending a school.
- Children and young people at risk of suspension, on a fixed period suspension, or directed by schools to off-site provision to support behavioural and emotional challenges.
- Young people aged 16 – 25 with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or other vulnerabilities needing additional support to progress to a settled adulthood.
- Children and young people unable to cope with a full-time curriculum, missing out on education, or who find themselves marginalised from mainstream schools because of behavioural or other challenges.

Services within Education utilise multiple providers to undertake the Council's statutory responsibility to provide education to all resident children and young people, which can include via an Alternative Provision if this is considered most appropriate to meet their needs.

The number of children requiring access to an Alternative Provision in Hillingdon fluctuates throughout the year. There are on average at any time approximately 100 children accessing Alternative Provision commissioned by the Council.

The majority of these places are commissioned by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team or the Exclusions and Reintegration team. In many cases this is because a mainstream or specialist setting cannot meet the child's current SEND needs, or they have been permanently excluded.

Some children's needs are being met in a group setting and others require 1-1 support. Hillingdon commissions from a range of providers, including Alternative Provision Free Schools, Further Education Colleges and Sixth Form Centres, Tuition Centres and Personal Tutors.

The demand for Alternative Provision is expected to increase over the coming years, in line with the expected growth in EHCPs. However, the additional specialist provision capacity that will be available in the Borough, and the work related to the Department for Education (DfE) safety valve programme are likely to mitigate any additional costs.

What is Alternative Provision?

The definition provided by the Department for Education (DfE) for Alternative Provision is 'education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour'. This is the definition which Hillingdon adopts.

Alternative Provision can take many different forms, depending on the individual needs of the child. It is important the service commissioning the provision is clear on whether the provision is a registered school with a DfE number, or an unregistered setting as this will have considerations regarding how many hours a pupil can access the provision. In all cases, the provision should be both efficient in its delivery of education and suitable to the child's age, ability, and aptitude; and to any special educational needs they may have.

Before considering alternative provision for a child, the Council needs to ensure both the quality of education and the safety of pupils within a setting. The DfE describes good alternative provision as 'that which appropriately meets the needs of pupils and enables them to achieve good educational attainment on par with their mainstream peers. All pupils must receive a good education, regardless of their circumstances or the settings in which they find themselves.'

Provision will differ from pupil to pupil, but there are some common elements that alternative provision should aim to achieve, including:

- good academic attainment on par with mainstream schools, particularly in English, mathematics, and science (including IT), with appropriate accreditation and qualifications;
- specific personal, social, and academic needs of pupils are properly identified and met to help them to overcome any barriers to attainment; and
- improved pupil motivation and self-confidence, attendance, and engagement with education; and clearly defined objectives, including the next steps following the placement such as reintegration into mainstream education, further education, training or employment'.

Alternative provision should be good quality, registered where appropriate, and delivered by high quality staff with suitable training, experience, and safeguarding checks. It should have clearly defined objectives relating to personal and academic attainment. Where an intervention is part-time or temporary, to help minimise disruption to a pupil's education, it should complement and keep up with the pupil's current curriculum, timetable, and qualification route.

Plans moving forward:

Use of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) will create a competitive environment for suppliers and ongoing assurance on value for money whilst also ensuring a breadth of provision will be available to best meet the needs of a diverse and fluid cohort of children and young people. There will be four Lots that Providers will be able to apply for:

- Lot 1: Full time education provision
- Lot 2: Part time education provision
- Lot 3: Bespoke provision
- Lot 4: Support for post-16 Education and Preparation for Adulthood

At the time of application, Providers will submit a Pricing Schedule for their range of services, which will be a maximum price for services, and will be used to award individual placements. Before an Alternative Provision placement award is successful, Providers may need to demonstrate they can meet the needs of the child or young person if further quality criteria are required from initial admission, that they have sufficient capacity, and the DPS call-off process is to the Providers who are the best value for money.

There will also be the ability to award contracts for a block of placements to Providers during the term of the DPS. The quality criteria will be set by the service area at the time of each block contract opportunity, and Providers will be able to submit a specific price for each opportunity and the successful Provider will be selected through a mini competition based on an evaluation process of 50% quality and 50% price.

The DPS allows for new entrants to join at any time, subject to them completing and passing the relevant qualification criteria. This ensures that there will be sufficient provision available to meet the needs of children and young people and will support high compliance standards. This also enables market development opportunities to keep up with changing demands pressure, and service development.

DYNAMIC PURCHASING SYSTEM: THE PROVISION OF ALTERNATIVE PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HILLINGDON

Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Susan O'Brien
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
Officer Contact(s)	Kathryn Angelini, Children's Services
Papers with report	N/A

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide education to all resident children and young people; in some instances, the education provided in a mainstream education setting is not appropriate and an Alternative Provision is required.</p> <p>The proposal is to establish a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), allowing Officers to create and maintain an approved pool of Alternative Provision providers to ensure market availability and best value to meet the needs of the children in the borough who require access to Alternative Provision. Approved providers will then be invited to bid for individual placements or for block placements through mini competitions (a 'call off'), thus offering assurance on compliance and value for money.</p>
Putting our Residents First Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: An efficient, well-run, digital-enabled council working with partners to deliver services to improve the lives of all our residents</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: Thriving, Healthy Households</p> <p>This report supports our commitments in our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-26.</p>
Financial Cost	The implementation of the DPS has no direct financial implications, but will be used to support service procurement and provision against an approved budget of £2.7m per annum.
Relevant Select Committee	Children, Families and Education
Relevant Ward(s)	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the implementation of the Dynamic Purchasing System for Alternative Provision to enable services within Education to effectively manage their significant procurement activity over the next 7 years commencing in 2024, ensuring that children and young people are able to receive appropriate education to meet their needs.**
- 2. Note the existing delegated authority to officers to approve Education placements at relevant establishments, under any new Dynamic Purchasing System.**
- 3. Instruct officers to provide regular monitoring of such expenditure to the Cabinet Member in pursuit of the Council's objectives.**

Reasons for recommendation

The needs of most children and young people can be met through mainstream education provision, but a small proportion with the most complex needs require specialist support. This enables them to progress in their learning, going onto their next step towards a settled adulthood. Some children and young people however need education or training arranged outside a mainstream or specialist setting because otherwise they would not receive suitable education or training. This can be for a number of reasons:

- Children and young people who have been permanently excluded from their school.
- Children and young people who have medical and mental health needs preventing them from attending a school.
- Children and young people at risk of suspension, on a fixed period suspension, or directed by schools to off-site provision to support behavioural and emotional challenges.
- Young people aged 16 – 25 with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or other vulnerabilities needing additional support to progress to a settled adulthood.
- Children and young people unable to cope with a full-time curriculum, missing out on education, or who find themselves marginalised from mainstream schools because of behavioural or other challenges.

Services within Education utilise multiple providers to undertake the Council's statutory responsibility to provide education to all resident children and young people, which can include via an Alternative Provision if this is considered most appropriate to meet their needs.

Use of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) will create a competitive environment for suppliers and ongoing assurance on value for money whilst also ensuring a breadth of provision will be available to best meet the needs of a diverse and fluid cohort of children and young people. There will be four Lots that Providers will be able to apply for:

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At the time of application, Providers will submit a Pricing Schedule for their range of services, which will be a maximum price for services, and will be used to award individual placements. Before an Alternative Provision placement award is successful, Providers may need to demonstrate they can meet the needs of the child or young person if further quality criteria are required from initial admission, that they have sufficient capacity, and the DPS call-off process is to the Providers who are the best value for money.

There will also be the ability to award contracts for a block of placements to Providers during the term of the DPS. The quality criteria will be set by the service area at the time of each block contract opportunity, and Providers will be able to submit a specific price for each opportunity and the successful Provider will be selected through a mini competition based on an evaluation process of 50% quality and 50% price.

The DPS allows for new entrants to join at any time, subject to them completing and passing the relevant qualification criteria. This ensures that there will be sufficient provision available to meet the needs of children and young people and will support high compliance standards. This also enables market development opportunities to keep up with changing demands pressure, and service development.

In respect of recommendations 2&3, currently, in the Officer Scheme of Delegations, as is the case with similar children, nursing and other disability placements etc..., Education and SEND placements can be approved up to £5000 per week (or max £190k per annum) by the Director of Education and SEND. Placements over £5000 per week are approved by the Corporate Director of Children's Services. The Cabinet Member will be updated by officers regularly on the cost of such placements and to ensure that the DPS contributes towards the efficiencies needed in support of the Council's Safety Valve Agreement.

Alternative options considered / risk management

One alternative option for procuring the services of Alternative Provision providers is to continue to follow the current process, which permits individual Officers to commission freely from the market based on the provider they consider can best meet the child or young person's need. This option is considered to place the Council at too great a risk as adequate processes for compliance, market engagement and quality assurance cannot be in place.

A further option for procuring the services of Alternative Provision providers is a 'closed framework' (once suppliers are designated, no new providers can join the framework). This option offers less flexibility to meet the dynamic nature of the Service and cohorts of children. This option can create a lack of competition and service continuity issues, where alternative providers could not be easily sought to meet increasing or changing service needs/provider shortages.

A DPS differs from a closed framework in that governing regulations allow the Council to advertise on an on-going basis for new providers to join the system at any point during the lifespan of the DPS.

Successful providers are invited to participate in a competitive process to deliver a range of services for individuals and groups of children, as and when required. Quality and compliance criteria are evaluated upon application to the DPS and will be monitored throughout. Providers cannot participate in this competitive process until they have completed and passed the DPS application process.

Democratic compliance / previous authority

Cabinet Member authority is required to agree strategic procurement arrangements amounting to such value of contracts. This will also support governance around such arrangements, as there is also no contract in place currently for the vast majority of alternative provision, which is currently commissioned on a spot purchase basis.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

What is Alternative Provision?

1. The definition provided by the Department for Education (DfE) for Alternative Provision is 'education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour'. This is the definition which Hillingdon adopts.
2. Alternative Provision can take many different forms, depending on the individual needs of the child. It is important the service commissioning the provision is clear on whether the provision is a registered school with a DfE number, or an unregistered setting as this will have considerations regarding how many hours a pupil can access the provision. In all cases, the provision should be both efficient in its delivery of education and suitable to the child's age, ability, and aptitude; and to any special educational needs they may have.
3. Before considering alternative provision for a child, the Council needs to ensure both the quality of education and the safety of pupils within a setting. The DfE describes good alternative provision as 'that which appropriately meets the needs of pupils and enables them to achieve good educational attainment on par with their mainstream peers. All pupils must receive a good education, regardless of their circumstances or the settings in which they find themselves.'
4. Provision will differ from pupil to pupil, but there are some common elements that alternative provision should aim to achieve, including:
 - good academic attainment on par with mainstream schools, particularly in English, mathematics, and science (including IT), with appropriate accreditation and qualifications;
 - specific personal, social, and academic needs of pupils are properly identified and met to help them to overcome any barriers to attainment; and
 - improved pupil motivation and self-confidence, attendance, and engagement with education; and clearly defined objectives, including the next steps following the placement such as reintegration into mainstream education, further education, training or employment'.

5. Alternative provision should be good quality, registered where appropriate, and delivered by high quality staff with suitable training, experience, and safeguarding checks. It should have clearly defined objectives relating to personal and academic attainment. Where an intervention is part-time or temporary, to help minimise disruption to a pupil's education, it should complement and keep up with the pupil's current curriculum, timetable, and qualification route.

Current Hillingdon Context

6. The number of children requiring access to an Alternative Provision in Hillingdon fluctuates throughout the year. There are on average at any time approximately 100 children accessing Alternative Provision commissioned by the Council.
7. The majority of these places are commissioned by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team or the Exclusions and Reintegration team. In many cases this is because a mainstream or specialist setting cannot meet the child's current SEND needs, or they have been permanently excluded.
8. Some children's needs are being met in a group setting and others require 1-1 support. Hillingdon commissions from a range of providers, including Alternative Provision Free Schools, Further Education Colleges and Sixth Form Centres, Tuition Centres and Personal Tutors.
9. The demand for Alternative Provision is expected to increase over the coming years, in line with the expected growth in EHCPs. However, the additional specialist provision capacity that will be available in the Borough, and the work related to the Department for Education (DfE) safety valve programme are likely to mitigate any additional costs.

Procurement approach

10. To contract with external suppliers, services in Education will be required to adhere and be compliant with all procurement legislation and regulations.
11. As mentioned above, a DPS differs from a closed framework in that governing regulations allow the Council to advertise on an on-going basis for new suppliers to join the system at any point during the lifespan of the DPS.
12. Successful providers are invited to participate in a competitive process to deliver a range of services for individuals and groups of children, as and when required. There will be the ability for Providers to bid for individual placements or block placements throughout the lifetime of the DPS. The scope of each referral or block contract will vary dependent upon the needs of the child or group of children.
13. Quality and compliance criteria are evaluated upon application to the DPS and will be monitored throughout. Providers cannot participate until they have completed the application process. There will be minimum requirements for providers to adhere to in a number of areas, including safeguarding and health and safety.

14. This approach will ensure that quality and value for money are considered for these services, and the flexible approach will allow the Council to develop the market, and services to respond to the changing demand and needs of the children and young people of Hillingdon.

Financial Implications

This report is requesting the approval for the implementation of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework for Alternative Provision for a period of 7 years, starting from April 2024.

The use of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) is being recommended as it creates natural competition, further enhanced by using mini competitions where the quality criteria will be set by the service area and awarded based on best value. This provides ongoing assurance on value for money and the needs of all children being met in the most appropriate way.

The cost of the DPS is expected to facilitate the efficient deployment of a currently budgeted £2.7 million approximate annual cost based on current expenditure, with a total of £18.9 million over the 7 years of the DPS with the cost of the DPS also being met from within this envelope. Running concurrently with the lifespan of the DPS will be the Council's Safety Valve agreement with the Department for Education. Through this agreement, it is projected that the SEND service will make an approximate saving to their budget for Alternative Provision of £750,000 across a period of 5 years through an increase in the use of group tuition rather than delivery 1-1 and an increase in the number of special school places available. The use of the DPS is expected to play a significant role in meeting this objective.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

The change in procurement activity will not affect service delivery to residents. It is expected that the quality and costs of services will be maintained and improve by using a DPS Framework.

Consultation carried out or required

During the spring term 2023, schools and internal colleagues in Hillingdon were asked to contribute to a survey based on Alternative Provision. The survey shared with internal colleagues across a range of teams in Children's Services, including Education, Social Care and the Youth Justice Service. The most notable findings from this survey were:

- Only 7% of survey participants feel there is enough Alternative Provision in Hillingdon
- When asked about concerns relating to alternative provision, responses included:
 - Limited offer - would be good to have some more vocational providers or outdoor education
 - We need to have resources available to review and challenge existing provision regularly
 - We sometimes have young people that pose significant risk to one another in the same provision or refusing access to education due to this risk

The survey shared with schools was completed with Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and included all schools in the borough. The most notable findings from this survey were:

- 37% of respondents have referred children to an alternative provision in the last 2 years
- 76% of participants said there is a gap in alternative provision. 36% of these said the gap was in social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) and 24% said there was a gap in primary provision.
- 59% felt there was not enough alternative provision on offer in the borough
- Only 10% of respondents felt the local authority does enough to meet the needs of the children in their setting.

Schools were also invited to attend a market engagement event in October 2023 to share their views. This event was attended by a range of providers, some of whom are already being commissioned by the Council. Attendees were provided with an overview of the plan for the DPS Framework and given the opportunity to share their views and suggestions. The feedback from this event was very positive with the majority of attendees expressing a keen interest in applying to the DPS.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed this report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations contained within this report. Furthermore, it is noted that the implementation of a Dynamic Purchasing System for Alternative Provision will enable the procurement and service provisioning against an approved budget of £2.7m and is expected to contribute towards efficiencies in support of the Council's Safety Valve Agreement.

Legal

Legal Services confirm that the Council is responsible for this function pursuant to section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

Regulation 34 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 provides that the Council may use a dynamic purchasing system (DPS) for commonly used purchases. The Regulation sets out the compulsory and elective features of a DPS and rules for its operation and use for competition, tender, and award. Provided that the DPS for alternative provision meets these statutory standards, there are no legal impediments to the Council following the recommendation set out in this report, namely implementing a DPS for alternative provision for use across the Council's services within Education over the next 7 years.

Any contract that is entered into, such as contract for alternative provision resulting from a provider's participation in the DPS, must comply with the Council's Contract & Procurement Standing Orders.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Statutory guidance: alternative provision](#)
- [Guidance on children with health needs who cannot attend school](#)
- [Reforming alternative provision](#)

- [Keeping children safe in education - statutory guidance](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [Hillingdon's policy for the alternative education arrangements of children who miss school due to health reasons](#)
- Hillingdon's Draft SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 23-26 (currently being issued for Cabinet Member approval)



Children, Families and Education Select Committee

Review Scoping Report - 2023/2024

Persistent Absenteeism: Statutory School Age Children in Hillingdon

1. OBJECTIVES

Aim of review

Following its meeting on 15 November 2023, the Select Committee agreed as its major review to consider the issue of attendance/ persistent absence of statutory school age children in Hillingdon, and how this has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This document serves as an introduction to the topic of persistent absenteeism and sets out in general terms the context within local government, the objectives, the challenges and offers a framework for any subsequent review.

It is intended that the review will support the work of the Attendance Support service in helping to shape its ways of working, identifying areas of weakness and how overall engagement with key stakeholders can be improved.

Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference are suggested for the review, subject to any changes agreed by the Committee:

1. To identify the prevalence and patterns of persistent absenteeism in statutory school age children in Hillingdon
2. To explore the root causes and contributing factors of persistent absenteeism in statutory school age children in Hillingdon
3. To consider the impact of persistent absenteeism on academic outcomes on statutory school age children in Hillingdon
4. To understand and explore the nature of partnership working in relation to persistent absenteeism in statutory school age children in Hillingdon

5. To review the effectiveness of existing interventions and policies in place for children and families struggling with absenteeism in Hillingdon
6. To explore the measures in place for child protection and safeguarding in relation to attendance
7. Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet

2. BACKGROUND

Attendance Support team

The Attendance Support team currently consists of eight officers.

Context and key information

Government statistics have shown that COVID-19 and its aftermath has had a damaging effect on school attendance, which has lasted longer than originally anticipated.

The rate of absence in schools in England has increased significantly since the pandemic. The most recent full-year statistics (which cover the 2021/22 academic year) showed an overall absence rate of 7.6%, up from around 4–5% pre-pandemic. Within this, 5.5% of missed sessions were authorised absences and 2.1% were unauthorised. Authorised illness was the main driver, at 4.4%, (whilst unauthorised holiday absences sat at 0.4%). 22.5% of pupils were persistently absent, which is around double the pre-pandemic rate, and 1.7% of all pupils were severely absent compared to less than 1% pre-pandemic.

Prior to the impact of the pandemic, absence and persistent absence had been gradually declining since 2010, but there is no sign of a return to this trajectory. Being in school is important to every child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Evidence shows that the pupils with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A-Level results. Research found that pupils who performed better both at the end of primary and secondary school missed fewer days than those who didn't perform as well.

In 2019, primary school children in Key Stage 2 who didn't achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths missed on average four more days per school year than those whose performance exceeded the expected standard. Similarly, in the same year, secondary school pupils who didn't achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths missed on average 10 or more days over the key stage than those who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure their child gets a full time-education. Usually, that means going into school from the age of 5 to 16. There are only a small number of circumstances where missing a school day is permitted. A child must attend every day that their school is open, unless:

- They are too ill to attend.
- Permission has been given by the school in advance for the child to be absent on a specific day due to exceptional circumstances.

- A child cannot go to school on a specific day because they are observing a religious event.

Relevant Legislation

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

External issues and risks

Persistent absenteeism can be impacted by a range of factors and challenges, including:

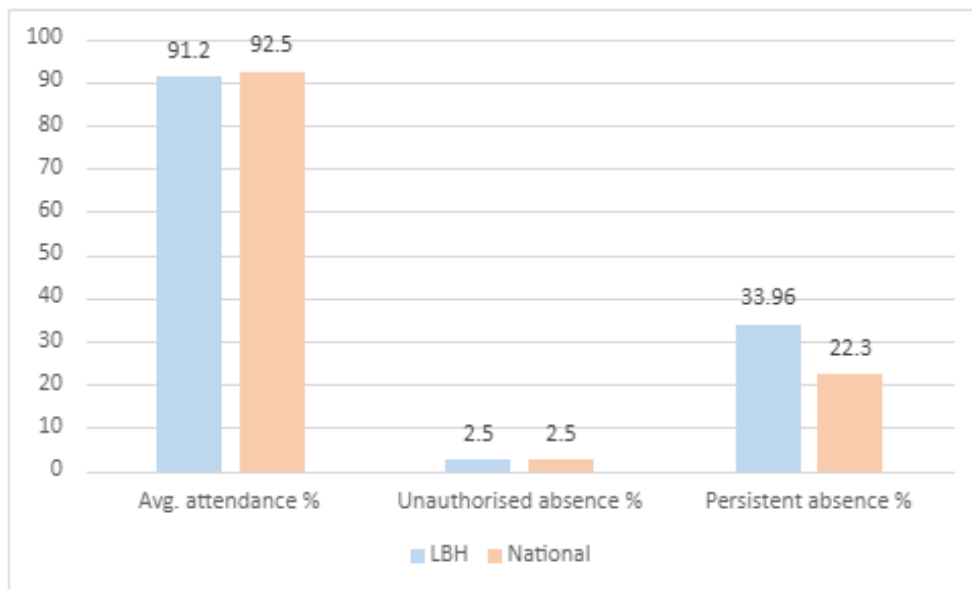
- **Health Issues:**
 - **Chronic Illness:** Children with long-term health conditions may face difficulties attending school regularly.
 - **Mental Health:** Mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, can contribute to school avoidance.
- **Socioeconomic Factors:**
 - **Poverty:** Families facing financial challenges may struggle to provide basic necessities, impacting a child's ability to attend school consistently.
 - **Housing Instability:** Frequent relocations and unstable housing situations can disrupt a child's education.
- **Family Dynamics:**
 - **Parental Involvement:** Lack of parental engagement or interest in a child's education can contribute to absenteeism.
 - **Family Issues:** Family conflicts, such as divorce or domestic violence, can impact a child's well-being and school attendance.
- **School Environment:**
 - **Bullying:** Instances of bullying or harassment at school may lead to a child avoiding attendance.
 - **School Culture:** Unsupportive or unwelcoming school environments can negatively affect student engagement.
- **Academic Challenges:**
 - **Learning Disabilities:** Undiagnosed or unaddressed learning difficulties can lead to frustration and avoidance of school.
 - **Lack of Relevance:** Students may disengage if they find the curriculum irrelevant or not challenging enough.
- **Transportation Issues:**

- **Lack of Transportation:** Limited access to reliable transportation can hinder regular school attendance.
- **Peer Influence:**
 - **Peer Pressure:** Negative peer influence or the desire to fit in may contribute to absenteeism.
- **Communication Barriers:**
 - **Language:** Language barriers, particularly in families with limited English proficiency, can hinder communication between parents and schools.

Current data, best practice and research

Attendance in Hillingdon

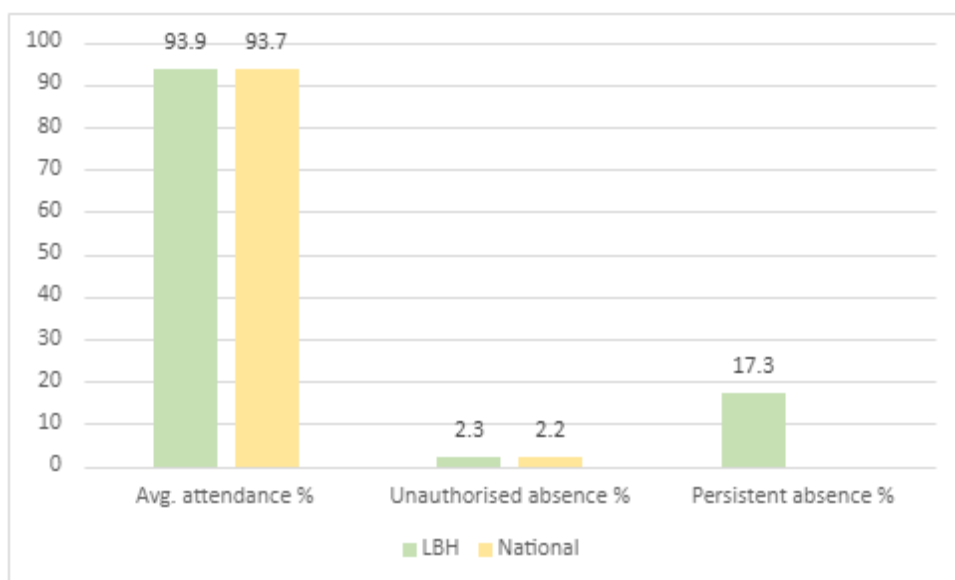
The graph below shows Hillingdon's Statutory School Age attendance rates during the last academic year (22/23) compared to those nationally. Data for statistical neighbours was not available to at the time of writing (Nov 2023).



Data: Department for Education Aug 23

The data shows that whilst Hillingdon's overall attendance and rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with figures recorded nationally, our rate of persistent absence is higher. A child who only attends school for 90% or less of the time is classed as a persistent absentee.

As we are at the start of the new academic year, there is limited data on attendance available. However, we are able to compare Hillingdon's rates of attendance and unauthorised absence with national figures.



Data: Department for Education 9 Oct 23

The data shows Hillingdon's overall attendance and rate of unauthorised absence remains broadly in line with figures recorded nationally. Whilst we are unable yet to compare our rate of persistent absenteeism, the figure above demonstrates an improvement on that recorded last year which is positive.

Further data and research will be identified as the review progresses.

Plan moving forward

In May 2022, the DfE published new guidance for attendance in schools 'Working together to improve school attendance' which came into effect from September 2022. Broadly speaking, it highlighted:

- Improving attendance is everyone's business. Attendance is never 'solved' and is part of a continuous process.
- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent or carer to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

Moving forward, the expectations of schools and local authorities have changed considerably. Under the new guidance, all schools are now expected to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.

- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Local authorities are now expected to:

- Provide all schools with a named contact in the Attendance Support Team. This includes independent and specialist settings.
- Create networking opportunities to share effective practice
- Hold termly targeted support meetings with all schools
- Be part of multi-agency efforts to improve attendance borough-wide with schools and other partner agencies
- Provide formal support to schools, including parenting contracts and education supervision orders
- Initiate legal action including penalty notices, parenting orders and prosecution.

In Hillingdon, we have already begun much of this work, and we have extensive plans for the academic year ahead. To date, we have:

- Rebranded our Participation service to Attendance Support
- Developed a new practice model to meet the revised guidelines from the DfE for allocated officers to use when conducting their termly meetings with schools. These meetings will focus on overall attendance and persistent and severe absence, as well having a greater emphasis on the attendance of vulnerable cohorts and those children placed on part-time timetables or in alternative provisions
- Published revised guidance on attendance for all schools
- Published revised guidance on the use of part-time timetables
- Published revised guidance on alternative provision
- Successfully delivered a series of webinars and provided training and resources to all schools in the borough to support with the implementation of the Working Together to Improve Attendance guidance for this academic year
- Created a more robust system to track and process unauthorised exceptional leave
- Engaged with the parents/carers of pupils that had one day of absence in the first week of term in the last academic year or pupils where they have been previously recorded as persistent or severely absent to encourage parents to prepare them for the start of the new term
- Created and shared an attendance self-evaluation form for schools to utilise
- Taken part in refresher training with legal colleagues in the use of Education Supervision Orders.

Over the coming year we have plans to:

- Publish a revised borough-wide protocol for the use of penalty notices
- Devise a three-year strategy for improving school attendance which utilises the support of statutory partners
- Work more closely with colleagues in the Virtual School to promote the importance of attendance of all children with a social worker

- Improve communication and advice with schools via virtual drop-in clinics for schools to attend to discuss any concerns regarding attendance. These clinics will be held fortnightly
- Invest in our Attendance Support service by providing increased training opportunities in key issues affecting attendance, such as Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA), working with children who have suffered complex trauma and working with families who have had negative experiences of education
- Develop attendance hubs in parts of the borough or with clusters of schools which may be struggling with particular aspects of attendance and to promote the sharing of good practice.

Executive Responsibilities

The Cabinet Member responsible is Councillor Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education.

3. EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY

Lines of Enquiry

Lines of enquiry can be expanded as the review progresses or included in relevant witness session reports. However, lines of enquiry may include:

- Establishing the historical background of persistent absenteeism in statutory school age children in Hillingdon.
- A focus on children and young people and how they have found the service in practice.
- Exploring what support functions are in place and whether these can be improved.
- The nature of partnership working and how it is combined in practice.

Potential witnesses

Witnesses will be identified by the Committee in consultation with relevant officers.

Surveys, site-visits or other fact-finding events

Such opportunities will be identified as the review progresses. A possible survey of suppliers will be considered to provide useful feedback and evidence for the Committee.

Future information that may be required

Further information may be identified as the review progresses.

4. REVIEW PLANNING & TIMETABLE

Proposed timeframe and milestones for the review:

Meeting Date	Action	Purpose/ theme	Witnesses/ officers attending
TBC	Agree Scoping Report	Information and analysis	Democratic Services/ Committee
TBC	Witness Session 1	Setting the scene	Officers
TBC	Witness Session 2	The voice of providers	Schools?
TBC	Witness Session 3	The voice of young people	Young people/ parents/ carers?
TBC	De-brief and emerging findings	To discuss key findings and identify potential recommendations	
TBC	Approval of draft final report	Proposals – agree recommendations and final draft report to Cabinet	

Resource requirements

None.

Equalities impact

None.

Background Papers/ further reading

- Briefing Paper: Statutory School Age Attendance in Hillingdon
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- [Persistent absence for unauthorised other reasons: who is at risk? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Persistent absence and support for disadvantaged pupils - Education Committee \(parliament.uk\)](http://parliament.uk)
- [Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Appendices

App A – TBC
App B – TBC
App C – TBC

Minutes

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Tuesday 07 November 2023

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



	<p>To Members of the Panel:</p> <p>Voting Members: Councillor Nick Denys (Chairman) Councillor Heena Makwana (Vice-Chairman) Councillor Barry Nelson-West</p> <p>Non - voting Members: Representatives of the Children in Care Council, and Care Leavers Helen Smith, Principal Social Worker Emma Kavanagh, Assistant Director Corporate Parenting and Fostering Kathryn Angelini, Assistant Director for Education & Vulnerable Children Alex Coman, Director for Safeguarding, Partnership and Quality Assurance Dr Kate Head, Designated Doctor for Children Looked After in Hillingdon</p> <p><i>Note: this meeting was co-chaired by a Children in Care Council member.</i></p> <p>Officers Present: Rebecca Reid, Democratic Services Apprentice Ryan Dell, Democratic Services Officer</p>
8.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jan Sweeting, with Councillor Barry Nelson-West substituting.</p>
9.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
10.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 25 July 2023 be approved as an accurate record.</p>
11.	<p>ANNUAL CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Director for Safeguarding, Partnership and Quality Assurance presented the Children's Safeguarding Partnership Report, which summarised the work undertaken by Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership to support and safeguard Hillingdon's residents, both adults with support and care needs and vulnerable children and their families.</p> <p>Members heard from officers that in respect of safeguarding arrangements, there was shared and equal responsibility for safeguarding between the three statutory partners –</p>

namely, the Local Authority, Metropolitan Police Service and NHS North West London Integrated Care Board.

This approach was reinforced by the rotation of chairing responsibility across the three senior strategic Boards – the Executive Leadership Group (ELG), Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

To develop the priorities, the safeguarding partnership had subgroups, each with a plan of work that sought to develop practice using a framework of prevention, identification, and response. These sub-groups were generally well attended across aspects of partnership work.

It was within the purview of the senior strategic Boards' responsibility to scrutinise the Safeguarding Partnership's dedicated sub-groups, recognise progress made and establish priorities.

Regular independent scrutiny was carried out to provide a holistic, independent critical challenge and appraisal into the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements that supported learning and future development for children and adults.

Officers highlighted that the Council's Independent Scrutineer had analysed the effectiveness of safeguarding practice and concluded that there were many strengths to the safeguarding arrangements for children and adults across Hillingdon, including a mature partnership open to scrutiny and challenge, and one that strived to continually learn and improve practice.

Prioritisation strategies included child sexual abuse and contextual safeguarding, including youth violence. Early intervention and the Stronger Families approach were monitored to prevent children from needing statutory services.

Attention was drawn by officers to a new Safeguarding group that launched at the beginning of the current financial year.

Questions were raised by the Chairman to the Children in Care Council Members about the extent to which young people felt safe and how they went about reporting safety concerns if they did not feel safe.

One Children in Care Council Member expressed some young people found it difficult to report a safeguarding issue for fear of what might happen if they did, but that they could feel comfortable talking to a friend about the issue.

Another Children in Care Council Member added the belief among some young people that if they were to open up to report a safeguarding issue, nothing would happen.

The Chairman questioned if there were different levels of reporting safeguarding issues. Officers responded there were numerous targeted support services in place to help improve the ease of reporting safeguarding issues, including counselling and alcohol support services.

For Local Authority (LA) children, officers concentrated focus on relationship-based practice to the effect that young people would open up more and communicate with a trusted adult, such as a social support worker, youth worker or justice officer.

Quality assurance audits were undertaken across children's social care including for Looked After children and Care experienced young people. The outcomes were consistently positive, providing assurance about the impact of safeguarding arrangements in practice in Hillingdon.

It was noted that there were strong relationships and a safe space for disclosures to be raised with regard to placements for older children.

There were far better outcomes when it came to return home interviews because young people were more likely to engage in dialogue with people who they knew.

There was an operationally good partnership with ICB colleagues, the police, and other partners.

Following consultation, the findings from the Children's Annual Report 2022-23 painted a positive picture that professionals were going above and beyond to help the children, and that many children were aware of the safeguarding services available to them. Concerns raised by the young people included worries about preparation for adulthood. Recommendations set out by the young people suggested enforcing mandatory attendance at Walking in Our Shoes training to support professionals to understand the perspective of the child, establish a mentoring scheme, and meet with senior leaders to find out more about the work they do.

Officers referred to the Voice of the Child Engagement Report, where children participated in LAC reviews every 6 months. Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) reviews would take place prior to the LAC reviews.

The take-up of Coram advocacy was high, and issues raised by the young people were treated as confidential and required their explicit consent to progress the matter. The Panel stressed the importance of the voice of the child.

The Virtual School Headteacher observed that school is the place where young people spent most of their time, felt safe, can make disclosures, and one where teachers can build relationships with the young people as trusted adults. This was supported from an ICB perspective and attention was drawn to the importance of being openly visible when it came to safeguarding approaches.

The Director for Safeguarding, Partnership and Quality Assurance shared a video produced by the Children in Care Council on group discussions that took place with the Safeguarding Partnership about their interactions with professionals that had supported them, and also expressed their lived experience and expert knowledge about what it felt like to be in receipt of a safeguarding service.

What went well across the Safeguarding Partnership in the view of the young people was workers going above and beyond their roles, visits in comfortable environments, fun activities, young people feeling safe in care, young people's requests being actioned, and awareness raising sessions.

However, worries of the young people related to crime, feeling unsafe in some parts of the Borough, being unable to trust some professionals, some children were not living in nice places or getting enough food, too many school exclusions and parents needing more help.

The Children in Care Council members shared suggestions on how things could be made better for young people in Hillingdon. Feedback included that professionals working with young people should attend Walking in Our Shoes training, services for children and young people should listen to them more, there should be help and support earlier rather than leaving things to become bigger problems, the duty system was unhelpful, better housing and support for young people leaving care and the community should be made better and safer.

Members sought clarification on what was meant by the duty system being unhelpful, to which the response by officers was that some young people did not know the duty workers well enough and therefore, struggled to open up and speak with them. This problem stressed a need for duty workers covering other staff to be continually kept abreast of young people's situations at all stages of support provided to children and young people.

The Chairman enquired about how officers were currently meeting the young people's requests to make the community safer.

The Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting and Fostering explained young people had access to find out who their allocated workers were and information about them. A profile of the allocated worker was available, which shared some information about them, and their photo.

There was a statutory responsibility for professionals to visit the young people every 8 weeks, though young people were sometimes seen more regularly than this. This approach helped to encourage independence which was unique to the young person and observed how they worked together with their personal assistant.

Officers noted the Care Leaver Local Offer was not well published but was currently being worked on to be more user-friendly for young people exiting care and transitioning into adulthood.

RESOLVED: That the Panel:

- 1. Is reassured that the partnership continues to provide leadership and scrutiny of the safeguarding arrangements for Hillingdon residents;**
- 2. Is updated regarding the way in which the partnership has responded to the challenges posed by changing local, national and international contexts; and**
- 3. Is informed of the strategic priorities for safeguarding for 2022-23.**

12. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE DATA Q2 (Agenda Item 5)

The Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting and Fostering presented the Children's Services Performance Data. There were 318 LAC reviews undertaken. It was noted that the wellbeing of care leavers was positive. Waiting lists were low for wellbeing support services.

There was a new Mental Health Pathway Lead whose role was centred on understanding how young people out of care could be best supported in their transition into adulthood. This was carried out through offering health passports for young people post-18 as well as giving advice on how to go to the doctors independently.

The *Ask Jan* service was, indeed, well subscribed, with very positive wellbeing support and access services face to face for young people.

It was reported that 89% of young people had up to date health assessments.

Identity and diversity statistics were promoted in the Children's Services Performance Data report. This was supported with recognition and celebration events.

52 young people in foster placements were placed within a 20-mile radius of the Borough. 10 young people were in *Staying Put* arrangements. Council officers were currently looking into the implementation of *Staying Close* placements within the Borough next month in December 2023.

Officers commented that there was a Social Work Apprenticeship Programme intended to enhance cross-service experiences and social work practice.

Fair access panel questions and questions about school places were raised by Members.

It was noted that attendance was higher with younger children than older children. Reasons for some young people dropping out of education included education courses not being suited to their interests. However, taster sessions were being offered to give young people a better insight into the educational courses best suited to their own personal interests.

Members proposed adding to the Work Programme an invitation to the Mental Health Pathway Lead to discuss their role and responsibilities in greater detail.

Members raised questions about how difficult it was for officers to find suitable accommodation for LAC and care leavers, to which the response was that LAC and care leavers were found accommodation but that the availability of accommodation was sometimes harder to source. However, *Staying Close* arrangements, shared housing and contracts with supported living providers were heavily used to better help young people transition into adulthood.

RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the contents of the report.

13. **UPDATE ON THE STAYING PUT PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting and Fostering provided a verbal update to Members on the Staying Put Programme.

It was reported that 10 young people were placed in *Staying Put* arrangements to stay with foster carers post-18 until the age of 21. Financial support was provided to the foster carers.

It was noted that a number of young people remained in family environments for longer periods of time before transitioning into adulthood.

There was demand for more *Staying Put* opportunities.

Careful considerations were made on how officers could recruit new foster carers through the transformation process regarding *Staying Put* arrangements.

Officers explained that in general, many people did not have a spare room for a younger child to move into. Additionally, post-pandemic, people who did have spare rooms were often using them differently as offices in working from home arrangements.

It was acknowledged that young people leaving care at the age of 18 and being fully independent was unrealistic, and that they required support beyond the age of 18 to stay in placements in the longer term.

The Chairman sought clarification on how *Staying Close* arrangements worked.

Officers referred to *Staying Close* as an arrangement for children who had been living in residential care or supported accommodation. It was for those children who had a connection to the Borough, with the aim of bringing children back to where their local community and identity was.

Staying Close arrangements did not involve placements in a family home but rather, a small, shared accommodation with 2-4 young people of a similar age and needs with holistic support that focused on health and wellbeing, promoting family and other relationships, identifying a network of support with an ex-social worker (or whoever the young person identified) and rebuilding fractured relationships.

There was an 'exit plan' in place to ensure that young people were supported to gain independent living, access to education and employment, and to find accommodation of their own. Young people were engaged in a network of support.

The Chairman asked further questions about the duration of *Staying Close* and *Staying Put* arrangements.

Officers responded that the *Staying Put* programme lasted until the young person turned 21 years old. The duration of the *Staying Close* programme for young people was 2-years and would end in March 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the contents of the verbal update.

14. **UPDATE ON THE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL PROJECT** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Director for Safeguarding, Partnership and Quality Assurance provided a verbal update to Members on the Children's Residential project.

Members were informed that there was currently a national shortage of residential placements.

At the time of writing, there were 3 in-house residential placement provisions. Different residential properties that could accommodate young people were being explored. Officers were currently looking into demolishing a 13-bedroom building so as to rebuild that plot of land as a 12-bedroom residence across 6 buildings (2x 3-bed; 2x 2-bed and 2x 1-bed). There would also be an education centre, activities and contact with family (family time) onsite – these had been through a consultation process and the Planning Committee, which gained approval 3 weeks ago. The building work was to commence on the site in mid-November.

	<p>The site was developed with the aim of responding better to the type of provision needed for young people. A government grant was provided to fund the building works. The new buildings are scheduled for completion around December 2024.</p> <p>In response to Members' questions about the categorisation of need for young people, officers explained that a high level of need referred to behaviour, emotional regulation and the impact of abuse and trauma. This was not related to a high level of disability.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the contents of the verbal update.</p>
15.	<p>KICA FEEDBACK (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>The Principal Social Worker for Children shared a short video on the last KICA 2023 event, which noted great interactions between the young people and foster carers as well as sibling groups who were not living together. There was many heartwarming, shared moments of the event.</p> <p>Officers noted the KICA event was very well supported and had evolved to find a great balance between activity, food, and the recognition of achievements.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the contents of the video.</p>
16.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman noted that the Care Leaver's Offer would be considered at a future Corporate Parenting Panel meeting. It was noted that the Virtual School Annual Report was scheduled to be presented to the next Panel meeting. Although officers were awaiting the official Ofsted report around November 2023, the initial feedback from inspection was very positive. The Chairman invited the Mental Health Pathway Lead to attend a future meeting to discuss their role and responsibilities in greater detail in understanding how young people out of care could be best supported in their transition into adulthood.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Panel:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Considered the Work Programme report; and 2. Agreed the below amendments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To add an update on 'You Said, We Did', to take place in 6-12 months' time. b. To invite the new Mental Health Pathway Lead to a future meeting. c. To add the 'Care Leaver Offer' to the Work Programme for a future meeting.
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5:30 pm, closed at 6:55 pm.</p>

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

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CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Committee name	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Latest Forward Plan
Ward	As shown on the Forward Plan

HEADLINES

To monitor the Cabinet's latest Forward Plan which sets out key decisions and other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet collectively and Cabinet Members individually over the coming year. The report sets out the actions available to the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee notes the Cabinet Forward Plan.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Cabinet Forward Plan is published monthly, usually around the first or second week of each month. It is a rolling document giving the required public notice of future key decisions to be taken. Should a later edition of the Forward Plan be published after this agenda has been circulated, Democratic Services will update the Committee on any new items or changes at the meeting.

As part of its Terms of Reference, each Select Committee should consider the Forward Plan and, if it deems necessary, comment as appropriate to the decision-maker on the items listed which relate to services within its remit. For reference, the Forward Plan helpfully details which Select Committee's remit covers the relevant future decision item listed.

The Select Committee's monitoring role of the Forward Plan can be undertaken in a variety of ways, including both pre-decision and post-decision scrutiny of the items listed. The provision of advance information on future items listed (potentially also draft reports) to the Committee in advance will often depend upon a variety of factors including timing or feasibility, and ultimately any such request would rest with the relevant Cabinet Member to decide. However, the 2019 Protocol on Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet Relations (part of the Hillingdon Constitution) does provide guidance to Cabinet Members to:

- Actively support the provision of relevant Council information and other requests from the Committee as part of their work programme;
- Where feasible, provide opportunities for committees to provide their input on forthcoming executive reports as set out in the Forward Plan to enable wider pre-decision scrutiny (in addition to those statutorily required to come before committees, *i.e. policy framework documents – see para. below*).

As mentioned above, there is both a constitutional and statutory requirement for Select Committees to provide comments on the Cabinet's draft budget and policy framework proposals after publication. These are automatically scheduled in advance to multi-year work programmes.

Therefore, in general, the Committee may consider the following actions on specific items listed on the Forward Plan:

	Committee action	When	How
1	To provide specific comments to be included in a future Cabinet or Cabinet Member report on matters within its remit.	<p>As part of its pre-decision scrutiny role, this would be where the Committee wishes to provide its influence and views on a particular matter within the formal report to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member before the decision is made.</p> <p>This would usually be where the Committee has previously considered a draft report or the topic in detail, or where it considers it has sufficient information already to provide relevant comments to the decision-maker.</p>	<p>These would go within the standard section in every Cabinet or Cabinet Member report called "Select Committee comments".</p> <p>The Cabinet or Cabinet Member would then consider these as part of any decision they make.</p>
2	To request further information on future reports listed under its remit.	<p>As part of its pre-decision scrutiny role, this would be where the Committee wishes to discover more about a matter within its remit that is listed on the Forward Plan.</p> <p>Whilst such advance information can be requested from officers, the Committee should note that information may or may not be available in advance due to various factors, including timescales or the status of the drafting of the report itself and the formulation of final recommendation(s). Ultimately, the provision of any information in advance would be a matter for the Cabinet Member to decide.</p>	<p>This would be considered at a subsequent Select Committee meeting. Alternatively, information could be circulated outside the meeting if reporting timescales require this.</p> <p>Upon the provision of any information, the Select Committee may then decide to provide specific comments (as per 1 above).</p>
3	To request the Cabinet Member considers providing a draft of the report, if feasible, for the Select Committee to consider prior to it being considered formally for decision.	<p>As part of its pre-decision scrutiny role, this would be where the Committee wishes to provide an early steer or help shape a future report to Cabinet, e.g., on a policy matter.</p> <p>Whilst not the default position, Select Committees do occasionally receive draft versions of Cabinet reports prior to their formal consideration. The provision of such draft reports in advance may depend upon different factors, e.g., the timings required for that decision. Ultimately any request to see a draft report early would need the approval of the relevant Cabinet Member.</p>	<p>Democratic Services would contact the relevant Cabinet Member and Officer upon any such request.</p> <p>If agreed, the draft report would be considered at a subsequent Select Committee meeting to provide views and feedback to officers before they finalise it for the Cabinet or Cabinet Member. An opportunity to provide specific comments (as per 1 above) is also possible.</p>
4	To identify a forthcoming report that may merit a post-decision review at a later Select Committee meeting.	<p>As part of its post-decision scrutiny and broader reviewing role, this would be where the Select Committee may wish to monitor the implementation of a certain Cabinet or Cabinet Member decision listed/taken at a later stage, i.e., to review its effectiveness after a period of 6 months.</p> <p>The Committee should note that this is different to the use of the post-decision scrutiny 'call-in' power which seeks to ask the Cabinet or Cabinet Member to formally re-consider a decision up to 5 working days after the decision notice has been issued. This is undertaken via the new Scrutiny Call-in App members of the relevant Select Committee.</p>	<p>The Committee would add the matter to its multi-year work programme after a suitable time has elapsed upon the decision expected to be made by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member.</p> <p>Relevant service areas may be best to advise on the most appropriate time to review the matter once the decision is made.</p>

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Protocol on Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet relations adopted by Council 12 September 2019](#)
- [Scrutiny Call-in App](#)

Ref	Scheduled Upcoming Decisions	Further details	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorates: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services										
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 14 December 2023 (report deadline 27 November)										
149	DPS for Alternative Provision - Education and SEND	Cabinet will consider the establishment of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework for Alternative Provision for Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Alternative provision is education outside school arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would otherwise receive suitable education.	N/A		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS / R - R Verma / Kathryn Angelini			Public
110a	The Council's Budget - Medium Term Financial Forecast 2024/25 - 2028/29 (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)	This report will set out the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2023/24 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration.	All	Proposed Full Council adoption - 22 February 2024	Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance	All	R - Andy Evans	Public consultation through the Select Committee process and statutory consultation with businesses & ratepayers		Public
SI Page 67	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	TBC		Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - December 2023										
063	SEND Strategy	Following consultation, the Cabinet Member will consider approval of the Council's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy - a collaborative document outlining the vision and priorities for service delivery to children, young people and young adults in Hillingdon over the next few years.	Various		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Julie Kelly	Children, Families & Education Select Committee		Public
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public

Scheduled Upcoming Decisions			Further details		Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
Ref	SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorates: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services											
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 11 January 2024 (report deadline 11 December 2023)												
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services					Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	TBC				Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - January 2024												
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various				Public
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 15 February 2024 (report deadline 29 January)												
188 Page 68	Staying Close Support for Care Experienced Young People	Staying close is a programme of support for 18+ year old Care Experienced Young People. Staying close aims to support the independent living needs of this cohort of young people including their accommodation, independent living skills, health and wellbeing, education and employment and managing relationships. Cabinet approval will be sought for a contract award for the use of an independent living provider to deliver the support element of this programme; which is fully funded by Department for Education grant funding until 31 March 2025.	N/A		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Emma Kavanagh			NEW ITEM		Private (3)
110a	The Council's Budget - Medium Term Financial Forecast 2024/25 - 2028/29 (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)	Following consultation, this report will set out the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2024/25 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration.	All		Proposed Full Council adoption - 22 February 2024	Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council / Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance	All	R - Andy Evans	Public consultation through the Select Committee process and statutory consultation with businesses & ratepayers			Public
141b	Changes to school admissions arrangements	Continuous review of school places and Published Admissions Numbers ensures schools and the Council can best meet the needs of all pupils across the Borough, and make effective use of resources in schools and between them. Following consultation on proposals to reduce Published Admission Numbers (PAN) in some schools, Cabinet will receive the outcome of the consultation and make the necessary decisions.	All			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Laura Baldry / Hayley Murphy / Jenny Chalmers				Public

Ref	Scheduled Upcoming Decisions	Further details	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorates: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services										
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	CS - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	TBC	CS - Democratic Services	TBC		Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - February 2024										
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	CS - Democratic Services	Various		Public
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 21 March 2024 (report deadline 4 March)										
Page 69	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	CS - Democratic Services			Public
	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	TBC	CS - Democratic Services	TBC		Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - March 2024										
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	CS - Democratic Services	Various		Public
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 18 April 2024 (report deadline 1 April)										
187	School Organisation Plan	The School Organisation Plan, sets out how the London Borough of Hillingdon in accordance with its statutory duty, seeks to ensure there are sufficient primary, secondary and special school places to meet demand. Cabinet will be requested to approve it.	All		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Nav Minas / Abi Preston	Children, Families and Education Select Committee in March & Educational Stakeholders / Schools	NEW ITEM	Public
046	Standards and quality of education in Hillingdon during 2022/23	The Annual Report to Cabinet regarding children and young people's educational performance across Hillingdon schools.	All		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Abi Preston	Select Committee		Public

Ref	Scheduled Upcoming Decisions	Further details	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorates: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services										
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - April 2024										
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 23 May 2024 (report deadline 3 May)										
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - May 2024										
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
Cabinet meeting - June 2024 (date TBC)										
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - June 2023										
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All		C - Democratic Services	Various		Public

Scheduled Upcoming Decisions

Further details

Ward(s)

Final decision by Full Council

Cabinet Member(s) Responsible

Relevant Select Committee

Directorate / Lead Officer

Consultation related to the decision

NEW ITEM

Public or Private (with reason)

Ref

SI = Standard Item each month/regularly

Council Directorates: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services

CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS: Standard Items (SI) that may be considered each month

SI	Urgent Cabinet-level decisions & interim decision-making (including emergency decisions)	The Leader of the Council has the necessary authority to make decisions that would otherwise be reserved to the Cabinet, in the absence of a Cabinet meeting or in urgent circumstances. Any such decisions will be published in the usual way and reported to a subsequent Cabinet meeting for ratification. The Leader may also take emergency decisions without notice, in particular in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, which will be ratified at a later Cabinet meeting.	Various		Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council	TBC	C - Democratic Services	TBC		Public / Private
SI	School Governing Bodies, Instruments of Government and Governors / Authorising Academy Appointments	To approve appointments, nominate appointments and make reappointments of local authority governors and to approve any changes to school governing body constitutions. To also authorise any Member to be a Governor or Director of an Academy.	N/A		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Julie Kelly / CS - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Release of Capital Funds	The release of all capital monies requires formal Member approval, unless otherwise determined either by the Cabinet or the Leader. Batches of monthly reports (as well as occasional individual reports) to determine the release of capital for any schemes already agreed in the capital budget and previously approved by Cabinet or Cabinet Members	TBC		Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance (in conjunction with relevant Cabinet Member)	All - TBC by decision made	various	Corporate Finance		Public but some Private (1,2,3)
SI	Petitions about matters under the control of the Cabinet	Cabinet Members will consider a number of petitions received by local residents and organisations and decide on future action. These will be arranged as Petition Hearings.	TBC		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services			Public
SI	To approve compensation payments	To approve compensation payments in relation to any complaint to the Council in excess of £1000.	n/a		All	TBC	various			Private (1,2,3)

Ref	Scheduled Upcoming Decisions		Further details	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
	SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorates: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services										
SI	Acceptance of Tenders	To accept quotations, tenders, contract extensions and contract variations valued between £50k and £500k in their Portfolio Area where funding is previously included in Council budgets.	n/a			Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council OR Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance / in conjunction with relevant Cabinet Member	TBC	various			Private (3)
SI	All Delegated Decisions by Cabinet to Cabinet Members, including tender and property decisions	Where previously delegated by Cabinet, to make any necessary decisions, accept tenders, bids and authorise property decisions / transactions in accordance with the Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.	TBC			All	TBC	various			Public / Private (1,2,3)
SI	School Redundancy Payments	To consider requests for School Redundancy Payments and decide whether to approve them on behalf of the Local Authority	TBC			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Julie Kelly			Private (1,2,3)
SI	External funding bids	To authorise the making of bids for external funding where there is no requirement for a financial commitment from the Council.	n/a			All	TBC	various			Public
SI	Response to key consultations that may impact upon the Borough	A standard item to capture any emerging consultations from Government, the GLA or other public bodies and institutions that will impact upon the Borough. Where the deadline to respond cannot be met by the date of the Cabinet meeting, the Constitution allows the Cabinet Member to sign-off the response.	TBC			All	TBC	various			Public
The Cabinet's Forward Plan is an official document by the London Borough of Hillingdon, UK											

WORK PROGRAMME

Committee name	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Work Programme
Ward	All

HEADLINES

To enable the Committee to note future meeting dates and to forward plan its work for the current municipal year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee considers the report and agrees any amendments.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. The Committee's meetings will start at 7pm and the witnesses attending each of the meetings may include representatives from external organisations, some of whom travel from outside of the Borough. Forthcoming meeting dates are as follows:

Meeting Date	Room
01 February 2024	CR5
14 March 2024	CR6
18 April 2024	CR5

Implications on related Council policies

The role of the Select Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet, who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

Select Committees directly engage residents in shaping policy and recommendations and the Committees seek to improve the way the Council provides services to residents.

Financial Implications

None at this stage.

Legal Implications

None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

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