



Children, Families and Education Select Committee

Councillors on the Committee

Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair)
Councillor Ekta Gohil (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Kishan Bhatt
Councillor Peter Smallwood OBE
Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)
Councillor Tony Gill
Councillor Narinder Garg

Co-Opted Member

Tony Little, Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative

Date: THURSDAY, 25
SEPTEMBER 2025

Time: 7.00 PM

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM 5 -
CIVIC CENTRE

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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:

Portfolio(s)	Directorate	Service Areas
Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education	Children's Services	Children's Social Care (incl. safeguarding & corporate parenting)
		Corporate Parenting Panel
		Prevention & Youth Justice (incl. youth services, stronger families and adolescent mental health)
		Education & SEND (incl. Adult & Community Learning, Skills, Lifelong Learning, Music Services and School Travel)
	Adult Services & Health	Children and Families Support Services (incl. Early Years and Children's Centres)

Corporate Parenting

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
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting 1 - 8
- 4 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
- 5 Budget & Spending Report 9 - 20
- 6 Fostering review - Scoping report 21 - 28
- 7 Corporate Parenting Panel minutes 29 - 34
- 8 Forward Plan 35 - 42
- 9 Work Programme 43 - 46

Minutes

CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE

30 July 2025



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

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair), Councillor Ekta Gohil (Vice-Chair), Councillor Peter Smallwood OBE, Councillor Kishan Bhatt, Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead), Councillor Raju Sansarpuri, and Councillor Narinder Garg</p> <p>Co-Opted Member Present: Mr Tony Little</p> <p>Officers Present: Abi Preston (Director of Education & SEND), Dominika Michalik (Assistant Director for SEND & Inclusion), Kathryn Angelini (Assistant Director for Education), Gary Binstead (Senior SEND & Inclusion Commissioner), Michael Hawkins (Head of Education & Lifelong Learning), Ryan Dell (Democratic Services Officer) Naveed Ali (Democratic Services Apprentice)</p>
15.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Councillor Tony Gill with Councillor Raju Sansarpuri substituting.</p>
16.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
17.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed</p>
18.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p>
19.	<p>THE PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE HAREFIELD INFANT SCHOOL AND HAREFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Officers presented the report on the proposal to amalgamate Harefield Infant School</p>

and Harefield Junior School, from April 2026, in line with the new financial year.

This matter had first been considered in 2009, when a consultation took place and it was decided that this should be considered at a later date.

In 2022, an amalgamation policy was created and approved. This was important at the moment with falling school rolls and it was also important for schools to be more sustainable.

Officers had met with the Heads of the Infant and Junior Schools in summer 2024 to discuss the proposal.

Each school currently received a £159,662 lump sum. Amalgamation would lead to the loss of one of these sums. It was noted that where there were two head teachers, often the loss of funding coincided with the new school needing one head teacher rather than two. This case was slightly different. However, the funding drop would be gradual over a number of years, and not all in one go. The amalgamated school would also be in line with the same funding formula as all the other primary schools in the borough.

It was noted that there had been a reduction in pupil numbers over recent years. It was difficult for schools to be sustainable with small numbers. Looking at projections, this trend was not likely to change.

It was noted that efficiencies could be made elsewhere, such as through shared contracts, staffing and resources. School outturn positions suggest primary schools were more sustainable than separate infant and junior schools.

Members highlighted the large size of the SLT, compared to other schools. (Councillor Smallwood noted that he was a governor at another Infant School in the borough). There was currently an Executive Headteacher and a Head of School. This structure was more common in academy trusts. The financial benchmarking tool suggested Harefield had a relatively large SLT compared to similar schools. It was noted that decisions on SLT structure were for the school to decide. Harefield Infant School had 46.71 pupils per senior leadership role while other schools had up to 324 pupils per senior leadership role, according to the national benchmarking data.

Members asked about the impact on funding for children with SEND, noting some concerns from parents. Officers clarified that the direct funding change would be the removal of one lump sum only. Funding such as EHCP and pupil premium were linked to individual pupils and would not change as a result of an amalgamation. Any changes to funding would generally be as a result of changes to pupil numbers, which would also not be affected by the amalgamation.

Members asked for further information on funding and efficiencies. Officers noted that operating as one school can lead to more efficiencies than operating as two schools, such as one Ofsted registration and one inspection, one set of contracts (e.g. maintenance), and one officer manager, for example. Primary schools were generally more financially stable than infant and junior schools.

Members asked about amalgamations in Hillingdon compared to other authorities. Officers noted that many other authorities had moved the amalgamation policy forward, sometimes with forced amalgamations in other boroughs, and there were benefits to young people such as having a consistent journey from reception/ nursery to Year Six.

Officers were of the view that now was the right time to take this forward.

Members asked why the Council was pursuing an unpopular proposal, noting that 97% of 552 responses to the informal consultation were in opposition. Officers responded noting that it was the role of Cabinet to make a decision on the proposal, and there would be improved financial sustainability and benefits to pupils. Amalgamation was expected to provide a consistent educational journey from Reception to Year Six. While the schools had made efficiencies, more could be made as one school. There were also benefits for young people including not having to transition from one school to the other and having consistent staffing and curriculum.

It was acknowledged that there had been concerns over selling buildings/ land or reductions to SEND funding. These were not part of the proposals.

Members asked about the timing of implementation. Officers noted that it was planned to implement in line with the financial year. Maintained schools work on a financial year from April to March and so it would be more challenging financially to convert in September. As the schools were already federated, the changes for pupils and families in becoming one primary school would be comparatively minimal for Harefield schools compared to others.

Members asked about pupil numbers and financial sustainability. Officers confirmed that amalgamation did not increase pupil numbers but improved financial sustainability.

Members noted the speed of the proposal and suggested deferring the item until the results of the formal consultation were known. Officers noted that there had been discussions ongoing since 2009, at which point it was decided to reconsider at a later date. That later date was now. It was reiterated that the final decision would be made by Cabinet. It was the role of the Committee to provide comments on the proposal.

Members asked how stakeholders were engaged in the consultation process. There had been three online events for the first informal stage. The formal stage included two face-to-face events and two virtual events.

Members asked about the link to falling rolls. Officers noted that amalgamation was not seen as a fix to falling rolls and was more about financial sustainability. Smaller schools were much harder to make financially sustainable. Some families may also prefer an all through school as there was no need to reapply for the Junior age and consistency in staffing, curriculum, and policies.

Members asked if the potential for efficiencies would outweigh the loss of one of the lump sums. Officers noted that decisions on staffing were up to the school, but there were the opportunities to make savings.

Members asked about support for the school post-amalgamation. Officers confirmed ongoing support from the Council and HR providers.

It was noted that the Committee would give comments to Cabinet, and it was for Cabinet to make the decision.

RESOLVED: That the Children, Families & Education Select Committee delegated comments for inclusion in the Cabinet report to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead

20. UPDATE ON THE DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (Agenda Item 6)

Officers introduced the update on the Dedicated Schools Grant, noting that this was a good news story.

The DSG was aligned to the SEND & Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-28, which was the driving force for change around the SEND improvement programme.

The High Needs Block finished the 2024/25 financial year with an in-year overspend of £14m, a significant improvement from the 2023/24 in-year deficit of £28.7m.

This had been achieved without cutting support, and instead achieved through improving services, improving outcomes and being more financially efficient.

Members commended officers for their work.

Members asked about the revised banding model, and its implications on funding. Officers noted that the previous system was no longer fit for purpose and the new model had started from scratch. The previous system combined mainstream and special schools into one, and there were occasions where children in special schools were being given less funding than children in mainstream schools. The biggest focus was about having a clear, fair, transparent funding system that meant that children's needs were met with that funding appropriately. This had been independently led and co-produced by schools. It would also allow a clear profile of children's needs. It was also noted that Hillingdon was aligned to neighbouring authorities, which allowed for the same kind of support for young people if they move.

Members asked about any savings made with mainstream schools and officers noted that not all children had transferred to the new system yet. This was aimed to be completed by the end of the financial year. However, officers were sharing with schools the data as plans were transitioned across to the new system.

Members asked about comparisons to other London Boroughs regarding the DSG budget position. Officers noted that there was less mention of Hillingdon in articles around the high needs deficit. There were some authorities that had seen large increases to their deficit, whilst Hillingdon had halved its in-year deficit. Officers had been focusing on early intervention and giving the right support at the right time, and improving outcomes for young people.

Members commended officers for their work in reducing the in-year deficit.

It was noted that as the financial year was different to the academic year, some savings impacted multiple years.

Officers had also completed a review of the early support funding in addition to the banding review to ensure a consistent approach.

Officers highlighted Aim High – a new forum for children and young people with SEND, which will help to shape Council services.

The DSG safety valve plan had been implemented into the SEND & AP Strategy.

Members asked for an update on the safety valve programme and what would come next. It was noted new local authorities were no longer being accepted onto the safety

	<p>valve programme. There were likely to be SEND reforms in autumn time and so it was not clear at this stage.</p> <p>Members noted that funding received from the DfE had been higher than expected, and asked how much higher it had been. Officers noted that while it had been slightly higher than expected, it was not as high as required to meet needs.</p> <p>Members asked if there were still some schools with high numbers of children with SEND. Inclusion was an important topic for officers and was regularly discussed with schools. Officers had reshaped support to schools that were not as inclusive to ensure the support was effective and meeting needs. Officer highlighted the PINS project and collaboration with the Centre for ADHD and Autism in secondary schools. Data was shared with schools around SEN support and EHCPs. The levels of EHCPs in mainstream schools had consistently increased term on term over the last two years. Officers also looked to consult with the nearest mainstream school where appropriate, as well as those schools chosen by parents.</p> <p>There was not currently a Hillingdon definition of inclusion and officers were working on an inclusion framework for all pupils, and would be working with schools on this.</p> <p>Members asked about adding a further update on inclusion to the work programme. Officers noted that there were yearly updates scheduled on related topics such as the SEND & AP Strategy and Education Strategy, and so there were multiple opportunities to update the Committee on this.</p> <p>Members suggested adding a third resolution to note the hard work of officers and the leadership of the Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education on this topic.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted the current improved DSG High Needs Block financial status; 2. Noted the DfE recognition of the SEND progress achieved; and 3. Noted the hard work of officers and the leadership of the Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education on this topic
21.	<p>CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL MINUTES (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the minutes</p>
22.	<p>FINANCIAL SCRUTINY TRAINING (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Officers noted that there was an upcoming training session on financial scrutiny, due to take place on 10 September at 6pm in the Council Chamber.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families & Education Select Committee noted the update</p>
23.	<p>POLICY REVIEW DISCUSSION & GUIDANCE (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>The Chair referenced a recent update from officers suggesting the topic of fostering and reiterated the preference for a shorter review that could be completed in the remainder of the municipal year.</p>

	<p>Some Members expressed that they would be happy with the topic of fostering, and that this would fit the proposed timescale.</p> <p>Other Members expressed a preference for third party/ voluntary groups and opportunities in Hillingdon, but would also be happy to look at fostering, as Members were all Corporate Parents.</p> <p>Members noted that it had been previously suggested that a topic on third parties/ voluntary groups would need to be narrowed down, and suggested tying this in with utilising spare capacity in schools, and how any spare capacity could be used by third parties.</p> <p>Members highlighted the possibility of an information item on digital exclusion and educational disadvantage and suggested that this be taken forward. Members further noted their support for a fostering topic, as this has not been looked into recently.</p> <p>Other Members expressed their preference for looking at utilising spare capacity in schools. If there were more young people requiring additional support, spare capacity could be utilised for this, and this would be beneficial to the Council and to schools. It was suggested that this topic would drive improvement, and it could potentially generate income for schools. It was suggested that there was a lot being done on fostering already. Other Members noted that spare capacity was a recurring theme.</p> <p>Members reiterated the need to progress the review quickly.</p> <p>Members asked and officers noted that information items could be added on topics that were not taken forward as a review item.</p> <p>Members questioned if spare capacity would have enough for a suitable review topic and suggested taking this back to officers for their input.</p> <p>Members were aware of the changes happening around fostering, including the Mockingbird project.</p> <p>Members suggested that spare capacity would be a weighty item that could involve asking schools about their spare capacity and what it could be used for.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussed the above noted topics, 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
24.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>Members considered the Forward Plan.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Forward Plan</p>
25.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>)</p>

	<p>It was noted that there was a need to amend the date of the September meeting due to the change in the date of the Full Council meeting.</p> <p>It was proposed and agreed that the Select Committee date change from 11 September to 25 September.</p> <p>Members addressed the recent update on transporter buses, which had been received from officers yesterday. This issue had come up two years previously via an update on the Youth Offer. It was noted that the proposed timeline for securing new transporter buses was long and that these buses were the only venue available in some wards. It was proposed that the Committee ask if the timeline could be sped up.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families & Education Select Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Considered the report and; 2. Agree to move the September meeting to 25 September 2025
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7:00 pm, closed at 8:20 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Ryan Dell, Democratic Services Officer on democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, officers, the press and members of the public.

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BUDGET & SPENDING REPORT - SELECT COMMITTEE MONITORING

Committee name	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Corporate Director(s) responsible	Julie Kelly, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Tables 1-8
Ward	All

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- 1. Note the 2024/25 outturn position; and**
- 2. Note the 2025/26 Month 4 budget monitoring position.**

HEADLINES

- This monitoring report provides an update on the 2024/25 outturn position and 2025/26 Month 4 budget position relevant to the Select Committee. The Corporate Director, supported by their Head of Finance, will attend the meeting to provide further details and clarifications.
- 2024/25 OUTTURN POSITION**
- Children, Families & Education** - The Committee is advised that the 2024/25 outturn position reflects an overspend of £2.5m against budget for the services within its remit.
- The pressure nearly wholly related to care provision to looked after children as a result of demand outstripping the budget strategy growth for the service. Further pressures are included within the position across income streams including room hire with further pressures being driven by the Early Years Centres, however, these have been mitigated by service underspends within the Children in Need & Protection service from staffing underspends. There are no material movements in this area, with the outturn update including a number of minor changes.
- Table 1 provides an overview of this Committee's 2024/25 outturn position by portfolio. It includes adjustments for Earmarked Reserves, Provisions and Transformation Capitalisation.
- Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of this Committee's outturn by service area. It also includes adjustments for Earmarked Reserves, Provisions and Transformation Capitalisation.
- Schools Budget** - The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) total Block for the Maintained Schools is reporting an in-year deficit of £15.0m at outturn, representing a significant improvement from the £28.7m reported at outturn 2023/24 as a result of a broad range of positive measures being deployed by the Council. The in-year deficit is largely driven by High Needs placement demand and cost pressures which continue to be significantly underfunded in the DSG settlement that the authority receives from the Department for Education (DfE). This position means that the cumulative deficit carried forward to 2025/26 is £65.6m.

10. There is currently a time-limited statutory override in place until 31 March 2028 effectively keeping the Schools Budget deficit behind a ringfence which ensures that this deficit does not impact upon general reserves, and the Council's General Fund budget strategy is predicated on the further continuation of this override throughout the life of the 5-year budget strategy. The Council is one of many local authorities managing a large deficit within the Schools Budget and this stood at £50.6m at 31 March 2024 and therefore exceeded General Fund reserve levels. Although ringfenced, this deficit is fully financed by the Council and thus impacts on our borrowing costs.

11. Table 3 provides an overview of the outturn position for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

12. 2024/25 SAVINGS

13. For the services overseen by this Committee, the savings requirement for 2024/25 was £1.643m, as set out in the Council's overall budget strategy.

14. At outturn, £0.286m (17%) of the savings and interventions are recorded as banked. A further £0.130m (8%) are on track for delivery, and another £0.462m (28%) are at the initial stages of delivery and have carried forward to 2025/26. Where appropriate, alternative delivery methods are being used, and it is still expected that the savings will be delivered in full in 2025/26. A further £0.765m (47%) of savings have been written out of the Council's budget from 2025/26 and now form part of the Corporate Items in the budget strategy approved by Cabinet and Council in February 2025.

15. Table 4 provides a detailed breakdown of the 2024/25 savings position by portfolio.

16. 2025/26 MONTH 4 BUDGET MONITORING POSITION

17. **Children, Families & Education** – As at Month 4, the forecast for service operating budgets within the remit of this Committee indicates an overspend of £3.9m, representing an adverse movement of £0.2m from Month 2. The pressure in this area is driven by additional demand for care, with this position being in part impacted by the Temporary Accommodation pressure leading to a lack of General Needs properties within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), meaning that the service are supporting vulnerable adults in supported accommodation that are ready to move on to more appropriate tenancies of their own, however, the supply is not there to enable the service to step down these individuals.

18. Table 5 provides an overview of this Committee's Month 4 budget monitoring position by portfolio. It includes adjustments made to the forecast for Earmarked Reserves, Provisions and Transformation Capitalisation.

19. Table 6 provides a detailed breakdown of this Committee's Month 4 budget monitoring position by service area. It includes adjustments made to the 2024/25 outturn for Earmarked Reserves, Provisions and Transformation Capitalisation.

20. **Schools Budget** – As of Month 4 (July 2025), the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is forecasting a deficit of £12.5m with no change from Month 2, representing an improvement from the £15m outturn for 2024/25. This in-year shortfall is entirely driven by continued demand and cost pressures in High Needs placements, which remain significantly underfunded in the DSG allocation from the Department for Education (DfE). These pressures are not unique to the local

authority; nationally, local authorities are facing similar challenges. Rising demand for specialist provision, a shortage of maintained special school places, and increasing reliance on costly independent non-maintained placements are contributing to widespread overspends in the High Needs Block. Despite efficiency targets and mitigation efforts, the structural underfunding of High Needs provision continues to place significant strain on DSG budgets across the country. The table below provides a summary of the Schools Budget and the current forecast.

21. Whilst the Safety Valve funding with the Department of Education (DfE) is currently suspended, work has continued and the Council are very successfully taking control of the market, managing unit costs down and beginning to see a significant reduction in the in-year deficit as a consequence.
22. A core target for the DSG Recovery Plan is to actively reduce unit costs by concentrating SEN support in-borough within our maintained schools and thereby reduce dependence on high cost independent and out-of-borough placements. Trend data shows clear evidence that the approach is now beginning to have a positive impact on spend.
23. The mounting DSG deficits remain a significant national issue, with projections indicating a substantial funding gap for English councils. Specifically, English councils face a £2.3 billion funding gap in 2025/26, rising to £3.9 billion by 2026/27, creating a £6.2 billion shortfall over two years, according to the Local Government Association (LGA). This deficit is primarily driven by increased demand for services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
24. Table 7 provides an overview of the Month 4 position for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

25. 2025/26 SAVINGS

26. For the services within the remit of this Committee, the savings requirement for 2025/26 is £4.998m, as set out in the Council's budget strategy.
27. As of Month 4, £2.372m (48%) of the savings and interventions are being recorded as banked or on track for delivery, with a further £2.459m (49%) being at initial stages of delivery. In addition, £0.167m (3%) are being reported as having potential challenges in delivery, with alternative delivery methods being considered in-year where appropriate, with the savings ultimately expected to be delivered in full.
28. Table 8 provides a detailed breakdown of the 2025/26 Month 4 savings position by portfolio.

PERFORMANCE DATA

29. N/A

RESIDENT BENEFIT

30. Regular monitoring of financial performance is used to assess whether spending and savings targets are being met, thereby supporting the efficient delivery of services to residents. By closely tracking expenditure and identifying variances, the council can take timely corrective actions to address overspending and mitigate risks. This also enhances public transparency and accountability, providing residents with confidence that their Council is managing finances

prudently and prioritising their needs. Overall, regular monitoring supports safeguarding the Council's finances and the delivery of quality services to residents.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

31. This is primarily a finance report and the implications are set out in the main body of the report above.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

32. There are no direct legal implications arising from regular monitoring of the council's finances by select committees.

33. Democratic Services advise that effective overview and scrutiny arrangements require access to the information under the committee's purview and, in accordance with the 2024 Statutory Scrutiny Guidance, such information includes finance and risk information from the Council, and its partners where relevant.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

34. NIL

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Tables 1-8

Appendix 1 – Tables 1-8

Table 1: 2024/25 Outturn Position by Portfolio

Portfolio		Approved Budget	Underlying Forecast	EMR	Provisions	Transformation Capitalisation	Forecast Outturn	Variance	M10 Variance	Movement from M10
		(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Children, Families and Education	Expenditure	101,854	108,161	0	0	(4,521)	103,639	1,786	2,503	(718)
	Income	(24,326)	(24,008)	353	0	0	(23,655)	671	(374)	1,045
	Sub-Total	77,528	84,153	353	0	(4,521)	79,984	2,457	2,129	327

Table 2 – 2024/25 Outturn Position by Service

Portfolio	Service	Report Subjective	Approved Budget	Underlying Forecast	EMR	Provisions	Transformation Capitalisation	Outturn	Variance	M10 Variance	Movement from M10
			(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)
Children, Families and Education	R33 Head of Child & Family Development (CFE)	Expenditure	10,101	10,012	0	0	(214)	9,798	(302)	(141)	(161)
		Income	(949)	(1,704)	655	0	0	(1,048)	(100)	48	(148)
			9,152	8,308	655	0	(214)	8,750	(402)	(93)	(309)
	R3A A Head of Direct Care Provision (CFE)	Expenditure	15,421	14,133	0	0	(54)	14,079	(1,343)	(1,116)	(227)
		Income	(48)	(211)	0	0	0	(211)	(164)	(211)	48
			15,374	13,922	0	0	(54)	13,867	(1,506)	(1,327)	(179)
	R5C Director, Children Social Care	Expenditure	50,665	58,707	0	0	(1,425)	57,282	6,617	4,518	2,099
		Income	(12,947)	(13,633)	0	0	0	(13,633)	(686)	(209)	(477)
			37,718	45,074	0	0	(1,425)	43,649	5,931	4,309	1,622
	R5E Director, Education and SEND	Expenditure	13,440	13,270	0	0	(2,737)	10,533	(2,906)	(713)	(2,193)
		Income	(9,091)	(6,721)	(302)	0	0	(7,023)	2,068	598	1,470
			4,349	6,549	(302)	0	(2,737)	3,510	(839)	(116)	(723)
	R5S Director, SPQR	Expenditure	12,227	12,038	0	0	(91)	11,947	(280)	(44)	(235)
		Income	(1,292)	(1,739)	0	0	0	(1,739)	(447)	(599)	152
			10,935	10,299	0	0	(91)	10,208	(727)	(643)	(84)
	Total		77,528	84,153	353	0	(4,521)	79,985	2,457	2,130	327

Table 3: 2024/25 DSG Outturn Income and Expenditure Summary

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Blocks	Budget 2024/25			Outturn £m	Variance £m	Change from Month 10 £m
	DSG Settlement £m	Academy Recoupment £m	LBH Maintained £m			
Schools Block	279.6	174.9	104.7	103.9	(0.8)	0.0
Early Years Block	37.4	0.0	37.4	37.4	0.0	0.0
Central Schools Block	2.5	0.0	2.5	3.6	1.1	1.1
High Needs Block	56.4	0.0	56.4	71.2	14.8	(3.4)
Total	375.9	174.9	201.0	216.0	15.0	(2.3)
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2024					50.6	
Total Deficit at 31 March 2025					65.6	

Table 4 – 2024/25 Savings Position by Portfolio

Portfolio	Saving Description		RAG Rating 2024/25 & B/fwd savings							Total
		Total	B	G	A1	A2	R	W/O New	W/O Funded	2024/25
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Children, Families & Education	Corporate Director Adult Services and Health Fees & Charges	(145)	(145)							(145)
Children, Families & Education	Review of Early Years Operating Model	(130)		(130)						(130)
Children, Families & Education	Corporate Director Children and Young People's Services Fees & Charges	9	9							9
Children, Families & Education	Improving and Modernising the Fostering Offer	(462)				(462)				(462)
Children, Families & Education	Stronger Families Programme	(450)							(450)	(450)
Children, Families & Education	Create Availability of Registered Care Beds in Children's Services	(150)	(150)							(150)
Children, Families & Education	Head of Hillingdon Music Service F&C Proposals	(192)							(192)	(192)
Children, Families & Education	Review of Adult Education	(123)							(123)	(123)
Grand Total		(1,643)	(286)	(130)	0	(462)	0	0	(765)	(1,643)

Table 5 – 2025/26 Month 4 Budget Monitoring Position by Portfolio

Portfolio		Approved Budget	Underlying Forecast	EMR	Provisions	Transformation Capitalisation	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Forecast Variance Prior Month	Change in Variance
		(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Children, Families and Education	Expenditure	98,800	105,300	200	0	(2,500)	103,000	4,200	3,500	700
	Income	(22,500)	(22,700)	(100)	0	0	(22,800)	(300)	200	(500)
	Sub-Total	76,300	82,600	100	0	(2,500)	80,200	3,900	3,700	200

Table 6 – 2025/26 Month 4 Budget Monitoring Position by Service Area

Portfolio	Service	Report Subjective	Approved Budget	Underlying Forecast	EMR	Provisions	Transformation Capitalisation	Outturn	Variance	Forecast Variance Prior Month	Change in Variance
			(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)
Children, Families and Education	R33 Head of Child & Family Development (CFE)	Expenditure	8,500	9,100	0	0	0	9,100	500	500	0
		Income	(100)	(300)	(100)	0	0	(500)	(400)	(300)	(100)
			8,500	8,700	(100)	0	0	8,600	200	300	(100)
	R3A A Head of Direct Care Provision (CFE)	Expenditure	15,500	15,400	0	0	0	15,400	(100)	0	(100)
		Income	(300)	(300)	0	0	0	(300)	0	0	0
			15,200	15,100	0	0	0	15,100	(100)	0	(100)
	R5C Director, Children Social Care	Expenditure	52,000	55,300	0	0	0	55,300	3,300	2,900	400
		Income	(15,200)	(15,300)	0	0	0	(15,300)	(100)	300	(400)
			36,800	40,000	0	0	0	40,000	3,200	3,200	0
	R5E Director, Education and SEND	Expenditure	9,600	12,200	200	0	(2,400)	10,000	400	(2,600)	2,900
		Income	(5,500)	(5,400)	0	0	0	(5,400)	100	3,000	(2,900)
			4,200	6,800	200	0	(2,400)	4,600	500	400	100
	R5S Director, SPQR	Expenditure	13,100	13,400	0	0	(100)	13,300	200	200	0
		Income	(1,400)	(1,400)	0	0	0	(1,400)	0	(300)	300
			11,700	12,000	0	0	(100)	11,900	200	(200)	400
	Total		76,400	82,600	100	0	(2,500)	80,200	4,000	3,700	300

Table 7: DSG Income and Expenditure Summary

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Blocks	Budget 2025/26			Forecast £m	Variance £m	Month 4 £m	Change £m
	DSG Settlement	Academy Recoupment	LBH Maintained				
	£m	£m	£m				
Schools Block	299.4	187	112.4	112.4	0	0	0
Early Years Block	48.2	0	48.2	48.2	0	0	0
Central Schools Block	2.5	0	2.5	2.4	(0.1)	(0.1)	0
High Needs Block	84.1	8.7	75.4	75.5	0.1	0.1	0
Budgeted Use of Reserves	(12.5)	0	(12.5)	(12.5)	0	0	0
Total	421.7	195.7	226	238.5	0	0	0
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2025					65.6		
Budgeted Use of Reserves					12.5		
Pressure					0		
Total Deficit at 31 March 2026					78.1		

Table 8 – 2025/26 Month 4 Savings Position by Portfolio

Portfolio	Description				RAG Rating 2025/26 & B/fwd savings						Total 2025/26
		B/fwd	2025/26	Total	B	G	A1	A2	R	W/O	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Children, Families & Education	Review of Early Years Operating Model	(130)		(130)	(130)						(130)
Children, Families & Education	Child and Family Support Service Staffing Review		(182)	(182)	(182)						(182)
Children, Families & Education	Review and change in the catering services offer for Extra Care, Day Resources & Early Years services		(217)	(217)		(123)	(20)		(74)		(217)
Children, Families & Education	Review of Early Years Operating Model (Additional) - Lease Income		(93)	(93)					(93)		(93)
Children, Families & Education	Review of Early Years Operating Model (Additional) - Residual EY Budget		(94)	(94)	(94)						(94)
Children, Families & Education	Improving and Modernising the Fostering Offer	(462)		(462)	(245)		(217)				(462)
Children, Families & Education	New Care Offer - (Operating Model)		(273)	(273)				(273)			(273)
Children, Families & Education	Semi / Shared Accommodation		(2,156)	(2,156)	(1,191)		(965)				(2,156)
Children, Families & Education	Social Care Delivery Model - Social Care Delivery Model		(495)	(495)	(111)		(384)				(495)
Children, Families & Education	Social Care Delivery Model - Repeat Pregnancies		(600)	(600)			(600)				(600)
Children, Families & Education	Social Care Delivery Model - Special Guardianship Orders		(296)	(296)	(296)						(296)
Grand Total		(592)	(4,406)	(4,998)	(2,249)	(123)	(2,186)	(273)	(167)	0	(4,998)

REVIEW INTO FOSTERING:

Caring for Our Children: Enhancing Fostering Provision and Support

Committee name	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Scoping Report
Ward	All

HEADLINES

The Children, Families & Education Select Committee have agreed to undertake its next review into the topic of fostering.

The attached draft scoping report sets out initial aims, objectives and Terms of Reference of the review.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee agree this scoping report.

(Note: Terms of Reference/ timetable for review etc... can always be amended as the review progresses, if agreed by the Committee)

Terms of Reference

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

1. To understand the needs and experiences of children in foster care through examining demographics, underrepresented groups, placement types, placement stability, educational attainment, wellbeing and emerging trends.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of current recruitment and retention strategies, and support available to foster carers, including the impact of the new fostering offer.
3. To identify barriers to fostering for potential carers and children in care, and to identify opportunities for improvement.
4. To formulate recommendations to Cabinet aimed at strengthening Hillingdon's fostering provision, thereby improving outcomes for children in care.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

This review aims to assess the effectiveness of the new fostering offer in Hillingdon and will explore opportunities for improvement through a focus on recruitment and retention; support for foster carers; and outcomes for children in care.

The review will also assist in recruiting more foster carers; raising awareness of the benefits of fostering; and highlighting the positive outcomes it can have for young people.

The review also aims to ensure that the service is responsive, inclusive and aligned with Corporate Parenting responsibilities so that all children in care can live in stable, loving homes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

APPENDICES

Draft scoping report

Major Review Working Title	Caring for Our Children: Enhancing Fostering Provision and Support
Committee	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Review Year	2025/26 MY

1. OBJECTIVES

Aim of review

This review aims to assess the effectiveness of the new fostering offer in Hillingdon and will explore opportunities for improvement through a focus on recruitment and retention; support for foster carers; and outcomes for children in care.

The review will also assist in recruiting more foster carers; raising awareness of the benefits of fostering; and highlighting the positive outcomes it can have for young people.

The review also aims to ensure that the service is responsive, inclusive and aligned with Corporate Parenting responsibilities so that all children in care can live in stable, loving homes.

Terms of Reference

1. To understand the needs and experiences of children in foster care through examining demographics, underrepresented groups, placement types, placement stability, educational attainment, wellbeing and emerging trends.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of current recruitment and retention strategies, and support available to foster carers, including the impact of the new fostering offer.
3. To identify barriers to fostering for potential carers and children in care, and to identify opportunities for improvement.
4. To formulate recommendations to Cabinet aimed at strengthening Hillingdon's fostering provision, thereby improving outcomes for children in care.

2. BACKGROUND

Context

Foster care plays a vital role in providing a safe, stable and nurturing environment for children who cannot live with their birth families. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure high-quality care and support for both foster carers and children. Nationally, there is a shortage of foster carers, and local authorities are facing increasing pressure to meet the diverse needs of children in care.

Scope

The review will focus on:

- Council-run fostering services and commissioned providers
- Recruitment and retention of foster carers
- Placement stability
- Outcomes for children in foster care (including their transition to independence/ Staying Close/ Staying Put)
- Support services for children in foster care including social work, health and education
- Support services for foster carers (e.g. Mockingbird) including training, respite and financial packages

Known issues

- National shortage of foster carers
- Recruitment and retention challenges, particularly for carers of teenagers and children with complex needs, and the time needed to recruit new carers
- Limited awareness/ promotion of fostering opportunities
- Placement instability/ breakdowns
- Support and training for foster carers
- Transition planning for children leaving care

Connected matters

- Corporate Parenting – ensuring the Council meets its responsibilities to children in care
- SEND Strategy – supporting children with additional needs in foster care
- Youth Justice – links between care experience and youth offending
- Education – attainment and attendance of children in care
- Equalities – ensuring diverse and inclusive fostering provision
- Health & wellbeing – safeguarding children in care

Legislative context

Key Legislation and Regulations:

- [Children Act 1989](#): outlines the responsibilities of local authorities in providing services for children in need.
- [Children Act 2004](#): emphasises five key outcomes: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being.
- [Fostering Services \(England\) Regulations 2011](#): outlines the standards and requirements for fostering services.
- [Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#): focuses on the planning, monitoring and review of children's placements in foster care.
- [Care Leavers \(England\) Regulations 2010](#): covers arrangements for children leaving foster care.

- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#): establishes seven corporate parenting principles that local authorities must follow to ensure they act in the best interests of children in their care.
- [National Minimum Standards \(NMS\)](#): provides best practice guidance for fostering agencies, setting out the minimum expectations for their services and operations, [according to Simply Fostering](#).
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#): outlines essential guidelines for multi-agency collaboration to protect and promote the welfare of children.

Key Aspects of Fostering Legislation:

- **Safeguarding Children:**
 - A core principle of fostering legislation is the protection of children from harm and abuse. Foster carers are expected to provide a safe and nurturing environment, and fostering services have a duty to ensure the welfare of children in their care.
- **Support for Foster Carers:**
 - Fostering legislation recognises the vital role of foster carers and emphasises the need for them to receive adequate support, training, and information to enable them to provide effective care.
- **Placement and Review:**
 - Legislation outlines the process for placing children in foster care, including the assessment of foster carers, the development of care plans, and the regular review of placements to ensure they are meeting the child's needs.
- **Leaving Care:**
 - Legislation addresses the support and arrangements for young people leaving foster care, ensuring a smooth transition to adulthood.

Other Relevant Considerations:

- **Private Fostering:**
 - Separate guidance and regulations exist for private fostering arrangements, which involve children being cared for by someone who is not a close relative.
- **Health and Safety:**
 - Foster carers are expected to adhere to health and safety standards, including those related to fire safety, first aid, and medication management.
- **Behaviour Management:**
 - Fostering legislation and guidance address the management of children's behaviour in foster care, emphasising positive approaches and de-escalation techniques.

3. EVIDENCE GATHERING

Core intelligence required

- Number of foster carers and children in care
- Demographics of foster carers and children in care
- Information on recruitment and retention practices
- Data on placement types and stability
- Feedback from foster carers and children in care
- Benchmarking with other local authorities

Cabinet Members & Service relevant to this review

Remit

Portfolio(s)	Directorate	Service Areas
Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education	Children's Services	Children's Social Care (incl. safeguarding & corporate parenting)
		Corporate Parenting Panel
		Prevention & Youth Justice (incl. youth services, stronger families and adolescent mental health)
		Education & SEND (incl. Adult & Community Learning, Skills, Lifelong Learning, Music Services and School Travel)
	Adult Services & Health	Children and Families Support Services (incl. Early Years and Children's Centres)

This Select Committee has also established a Panel to support strong oversight of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. The Committee may wish to engage the Panel in its work.

Discussions on draft or emerging recommendations may be undertaken with relevant Cabinet Members as per the Protocol on Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet Relations approved by full Council.

Potential witnesses and site visits

Internal witnesses:

- Children's Social Care
- Fostering Team
- Virtual School
- Participation Team

External witnesses:

- Foster carers
- Care experienced young people

Site visits:

- Fostering events - <https://discover.hillingdon.gov.uk/fostering-events>

Initial Papers/ further reading

- Hillingdon Fostering Statement of Purpose ([Hillingdon Statement of Purpose Fostering update 2023 \(1\).pdf](#))
- Ofsted inspection reports
- Local Placement Sufficiency Strategy
- Case studies from other boroughs

Lines of Enquiry

Specific lines of enquiry will be worked up prior to witness sessions.

1. Context and current landscape
 - i. What are the current demographics of foster carers and children in care?
 - ii. Which cohorts of young people are underrepresented in foster care?
2. The new fostering offer
 - i. What does the new fostering offer consist of?
 - ii. How does the new fostering offer compare to the previous offer?
3. Recruitment and retention
 - i. What are the current recruitment and retention strategies?
 - ii. What are the key challenges in recruiting and retaining foster carers?
4. Support and experience
 - i. How are foster carers supported and trained?
 - ii. What are the lived experiences of foster carers and children in foster care?
5. Placement stability and outcomes
 - i. How effective are placement matching and stability efforts?
 - ii. How can we improve placement stability and reduce placement breakdowns?
6. Partnerships and cost effectiveness
 - i. How does work with the Foster with West London hub?
 - ii. What are the comparative costs and outcomes of in-house fostering vs independent fostering agencies and residential care?

Some early ideas to consider:

1. Enhanced training and wellbeing support for carers
2. Peer mentoring schemes
3. Digital platform for fostering information and applications
4. Community engagement campaigns
5. Flexible financial support packages

4. REVIEW PLANNER

Proposed timeframe & milestones for the review:

Meeting Date	Action	Purpose/ theme	Witnesses/ officers attending
September 2025	Agree Scoping Report	What do we need?	Democratic Services
November 2025	Witness Session 1	Understanding fostering in Hillingdon	Children's Social Care Fostering Team Virtual School

			Participation Team
December 2025	Witness Session 2 (Private session)	Foster carer and young peoples' experiences/ best practices	Foster carers Children in care/ care experienced young people
January 2026	Findings, conclusions and recommendations	Drafting recommendations	Democratic Services
February 2026	Approval of final report	Finalise proposals to Cabinet	Democratic Services
March 2026	Target Cabinet reporting		

Resource requirements

No financial assessment required at scoping stage. Any recommendations with budget implications will be discussed with Cabinet Members and the Leader.

Equalities impact

The review will consider how to ensure inclusive access to fostering and reduce disparities in outcomes for children in care.

Scrutiny Benefit

This review will:

- Improve outcomes for children in care
- Strengthen support for foster carers
- Promote joined-up working across services
- Drive service improvement and innovation
- Support future external inspections
- Support strategic priorities for children and families

Author of Scoping Report	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services Officer Mark Braddock, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Date	16/09/25

Minutes

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

29 July 2025

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



	<p>To Members of the Panel:</p> <p>Voting Members: Councillor Nick Denys (Chair) Councillor Heena Makwana (Vice-Chair) Councillor Jan Sweeting</p> <p>Non-voting Members: Representatives of the Children in Care Council, and Care Experienced Young People Ash Knight, Participation Manager Bridget Owen, Designated Nurse Looked After Children (Harrow and Hillingdon) (NHS North West London ICB)</p> <p>Officers Present: Poppy Reddy, Assistant Director, Permanence & Specialist Service Lisa Steel, Virtual School Headteacher Naveed Ali, Democratic Services Apprentice Ryan Dell, Democratic Services Officer</p> <p>Also Present: Katie Randall, Clinical Services Manager, Harrow 0-19 Service, CCN Team, Special School Nursing and Looked After Children, CNWL</p> <p>* This meeting was co-chaired by a Children in Care Council member</p>
9.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Dr Kate Head.</p>
10.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
11.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 20 May 2025 be approved as an accurate record.</p>
12.	<p>UPDATE ON SAFER HAYES PROJECT (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Officers gave a verbal update on the Safer Hayes Project, which the Participation Team was involved in.</p>

The team had received funding through the Domestic Violence Reduction Unit (DVRU) for 20x young boys to go on a trip to Snowdonia.

During 2024/25, two young people had given talks in eight schools in Hayes to 287 students to discuss how to make Hayes safer. Following this, funding had been received for one of the young people to be employed in one of the schools.

One of the Youth Council's priorities concerned crime and safety, which was wider than just Hayes and included building relationships.

There was also funding for a job role recently advertised for a young person to join the Participation Team.

A recent survey had received over 100 responses on suggestions for how to make Hayes safer.

Activities for young people included 3x basketball groups and a group for young people to be training in hairdressing.

The Chair commended the Safer Hayes Project and that it had been led by young people, and asked about what lessons had been learned so far.

It was noted that a large police presence can make young people feel unsafe. Therefore, work on building relationships was important. For example, non-uniformed police officers attended the previous KICA.

It was noted that there was a lack of CCTV in certain spaces such as parks, and an issue of safety concerns at train/ bus stations. This had been fed back to the Community Safety team. It was suggested that this could also be fed back to local Ward Councillors who had good local networks.

It was acknowledged that the Participation team was part of a wide team on this project.

It was noted that sessions such as Goals can be expensive.

The overall theme was that young people do not feel safe in Hayes.

Members asked for further information on the 2x young people working in schools. Officers advised this involved going into eight schools in Hayes and delivering five or six 1-hour sessions in each school. The sessions involved discussions on shared experiences of what safety means, what it looks like, and any areas that felt particularly safe or unsafe. It also included games such as human bingo. Feedback from the schools had been phenomenal, and the young people were commended. One of the schools was trying to create a post for the young person. A follow up with the schools was planned for the end of the academic year.

Members commended the young people and the wider team and asked for a written update on this project in six months' time.

Members asked about utilising free public spaces such as parks to hold activities. Officers noted that there were free basketball sessions, though some locations lacked CCTV and were seen as unsafe.

	<p>Members noted that this was a very good initiative and asked if there were any plans to roll it out into other areas. There were no plans at the current time.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the update</p>
13.	<p>CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE DATA (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the report, noting that there were (as at 30 June 2025) 333 looked after children, and 770 young people eligible for leaving care services.</p> <p>Officers noted that attendance was better than the two previous academic years. Suspensions accounted for 1.7% of the statutory school age cohort, and all of whom attended schools out-of-borough. One of these young people had made good progress since. There had been no permanent exclusions in this period.</p> <p>Officers noted a recent theatre trip to watch The Lion King. The team were piloting evening classes, and some young people had recently sat exams.</p> <p>On exams, the young people noted that these were based at a children's centre, with two young people in a room with the invigilator. The setting was more fitting you the young people, who could take breaks as needed; they did not have to sit in row of large numbers of people; and they could leave as soon as they were finished. The young people noted that they were grateful to have the opportunity to sit exams again. Some of the young people had sat Functional Skills and were hoping to take GCSEs next year. The young people also noted that they could contact their maths tutor via WhatsApp. Officers noted that they wanted to make it different to the school experience and more of a safe space, and this was commended by Members. Officers also noted that the young people had given good feedback, which was useful.</p> <p>The young people noted that as they had been away from school for a number of years, this had been a daunting experience, but they were grateful for the opportunity. Members commended the young people.</p> <p>The Virtual School was commended for delivering tutoring sessions, which were tailored to the young peoples' needs, and the young people reiterated that this was a good opportunity for them to gain qualifications as college courses often had fees.</p> <p>Officers noted that there had been a reduction in the number of young people coming into care in the last six months, which highlighted the good work of officers. There were occasions of looking to the extended family to take in young people.</p> <p>There had been a slight reduction in the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children from the previous quarter. This was, in part, due to the ongoing transformation in social care. This work included efforts to reduce the number of changes young people's social workers.</p> <p>As part of a new model of delivery and service transformation the Corporate Parenting Service will be restructured into two areas: Cared for Children (under 18) and Transition to Adulthood (18 to 25).</p> <p>It was noted that Care Leavers' month was upcoming. Officers were meeting to discuss plans for events during this month. This would also be discussed with young people. Events would include a careers event and inspirational speakers.</p>

	<p>Officers would be launching a care strategy in November, which could be brought to the Panel.</p> <p>It was noted that, whilst outside of Care Leaver's month, KICA was upcoming.</p> <p>Colleagues from the health team noted that the newly appointed Transition Nurse had started three weeks ago. The new Named Nurse was due to start on 18 August. The health team were inundated with health assessments as all centres were full. There had been some issues with translators which had contributed to delays in assessments being carried out. Some translators wanted to do online assessments rather than face-to-face. It was noted that a small number of young people had declined health assessments. There had been some issues around consent which could cause delays in initial health assessments. Some foster carers did not bring their young people to initial health assessments, and some young people did not want an assessment.</p> <p>North West London ICB was due to amalgamate with North Central London ICB, which would create the largest ICB in the country. There was a new service specification for North West London ICB to ensure that all eight boroughs were working consistently, for example on travel distances for health assessments.</p> <p>Members noted that Hillingdon was reported to be below the threshold for referrals to the National Transfer Scheme. Officers noted that while Hillingdon had previously been above the threshold, it had dipped below at the time of writing, but was now above the threshold again. If the authority was below the threshold, they cannot transfer young people under the scheme.</p> <p>There had recently been lots of referrals from hotels for age assessments. There were short timescales of seven days to complete the assessment.</p> <p>Members noted that officers were actively developing six additional children's homes. Officers noted that this was in addition to the three current residential homes, and would assist in placement sufficiency. This would include two-bed and four-bed accommodations at the Charville site.</p> <p>Officers added that interviews for roles at the Charville site had commenced, with young people on the interview panels. There would be 70-75 staff across six houses.</p> <p>Members noted that Staying Close was a DfE funded project. Officers confirmed that DfE funding had been extended for an additional year.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the content of the report.</p>
14.	<p>WORKPLACE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Officers noted that they were recruiting a care experienced young person to the Participation Team. The Virtual School were assisting young people with employment skills. Officers were working with the apprenticeships team for opportunities. The Children's Centres team were offering work experience opportunities. It was suggested that Members could enquire about opportunities with their wider Member groups.</p> <p>Officers noted that there was a pan-London agreement over a standardised approach to opportunities for young people. More information could be provided at the next meeting.</p>

	<p>The young people gave an update on the Youth Council. Recent topics had included a number of guest speakers; a restructuring of the music offer; and a trip to Sky TV.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the panel noted the update</p>
15.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Members considered the work programme.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Panel:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Considered the report; and 2. Added a further update on the Safer Hayes Project
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5:45 pm, closed at 6.35 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions, please contact Ryan Dell on democratic@hillingsdon.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 & 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>

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
OCTOBER 2025												
69	Contract variation - for Residential Capacity for Children	Cabinet will consider increasing the Multi-agency Psychological Support (MAPS) capacity to support essential therapeutic work for children placed at the new Charville lane homes.	N/A		23 October			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Alex Coman / Dale Hughes	Julie Kelly	Private (3)
32	The Annual Report Of Adult and Child Safeguarding Arrangements	This report provides the Cabinet with a summary of the activity undertaken by the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board to address the identified local priorities. The Cabinet will consider this report and approve the activity and the local priorities for the two boards.	N/A		23 October			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education / Cllr Jane Palmer - Health & Social Care	Health & Social Care / Children, Families & Education	Alex Coman / Susan-Sidonia Gladish	Sandra Taylor	Public
Page 37	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		23 October			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services	TBC	Public
	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		23 October			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services	TBC	Public
NOVEMBER 2025												
47	Pathways for Young People	Cabinet will consider procurement decisions regarding existing arrangements for Staying Close and Supported Accommodation Provision for young people.	N/A		20 November			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Alex Coman / Sally Offin	Julie Kelly	Private (3)
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		20 November			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
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		20 November			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services	TBC	Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
89	Determination of relevant area for admissions arrangements	The Cabinet Member will agree the relevant area in which the Council, as an admissions authority, must consult regarding its admissions arrangements, which is required under regulations. The “relevant area” is the area which describes the geographical area of consultation that any school proposing a change to admission arrangements must use.	All	NEW ITEM		November		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Laura Baldry	Julie Kelly	Public
23	Annual Performance Report	Subject to Cabinet recommending in September, Council will receive for information, the Council's annual report performance report.	All				27 November 2025	Cllr Martin Goddard / All Cabinet Members	All	Ian Kavanagh	Matthew Wallbridge	Public
DECEMBER 2025												
SI Page 38	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		18 December			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI 38	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		18 December			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	2026/27 Budget and Future Medium-Term Financial Strategy (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)	This report will set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2026/27 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration and may include Council Tax Reduction Scheme proposals. Cabinet will also consider the outcome of consultation on proposed mid-year changes to fees and charges.	All		18 December		26 February 2026 - adoption	Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance & Transformation	All	Andy Goodwin		Public
JANUARY 2026												
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		15 January			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		15 January			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Audit Committee Annual Report	The Audit Committee is required to submit an annual report to Council outlining the Committee's activities over the previous year. This report summarises the work of the Audit Committee and how it has undertaken its responsibilities in respect of: Internal Audit, External Audit, Counter Fraud, Risk Management and the Financial reporting process of the Statement of Accounts.	N/A				22 January 2026	N/A	N/A	Democratic Services	Matthew Wallbridge	Public
SI	Programme of Meetings for the next Municipal Year	Each year the full Council agrees the programme of meetings for the ensuing Municipal Year, setting out the dates and times of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings.	N/A				22 January 2026	N/A	N/A	Lloyd White		Public
SI	Council Tax-Base and Business Rates Forecast 2026/27	This report sets out the proposed Council Taxbase and Business Rates Forecast for the forthcoming financial year and in accordance with the legislation for approval by the full Council. The Council is required to calculate both its Council Taxbase as at 30 November 2023 and the Business Rates forecast for the forthcoming year by the end of January.	All				22 January 2026	NA	N/A	Andy Goodwin	Steve Muldoon	Public
FEBRUARY 2026												
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		19 February			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		19 February			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	2026/27 Budget and Future Medium-Term Financial Strategy (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)	Following consultation, this report will set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2026/27 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration and any proposals for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.	All		19 February		26 February 2026 - adoption	Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council / Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance & Transformation	All	Andy Goodwin	Steve Muldoon	Public
SI	Members' Allowances 2026/27	The Council is required to undertake an annual re-adoption of its Allowances Scheme and, in doing so give due regard to the recommendations made by the report of the Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors in London.	All				26 February 2026	N/A	N/A	Lloyd White		Public
MARCH 2026												
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		19 March			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		19 March			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
APRIL 2026												
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		23 April			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		23 April			TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	School Organisation Plan annual update	The School Organisation Plan, originally approved by Cabinet in 2024, sets out how the London Borough of Hillingdon in accordance with its statutory duty, seeks to ensure there are sufficient primary, The Cabinet Member will consider the annual update to the Plan.	N/A			April		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Nav Minas / Abi Preston	Julie Kelly	Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	Standards and quality of education in Hillingdon during 2024/25	The Cabinet Member will receive the Annual Report regarding children and young people's educational performance across Hillingdon schools, for publication.	N/A			April		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Abi Preston / Michael Hawkins	Julie Kelly	Public
Schedule of Individual Cabinet Member Decisions that may be taken each month (standard items non key-												
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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council	TBC	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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Helen Boundy		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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance & Transformation (in conjunction with relevant Cabinet Member)	All - TBC by decision made	various		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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		All	TBC	Democratic Services		Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker			Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	To approve compensation payments	To approve compensation payments in relation to any complaint to the Council in excess of £1000.	n/a			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		All	TBC	various		Private (1,2,3)
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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council OR Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance & Transformation / 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			Cabinet Member Decision - date 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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Abi Preston		Private (1,3,4)
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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC		All	TBC	various		Public
SI = Standard Item that may be considered each month/regularly												
The Cabinet's Forward Plan is an official document by the London Borough of Hillingdon, UK												

WORK PROGRAMME

Committee name	Children, Families & 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.

RECOMMENDATION

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
13 November 2025	CR6
07 January 2026	CR6
05 February 2026	CR6
12 March 2026	CR6
14 April 2026	CR6

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.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

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

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

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