

Minutes

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

8 September 2010



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

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Catherine Dann (Chairman), Judith Cooper, Brian Crowe, Peter Curling, John Hensley and Kuldeep Lakhmana.</p> <p>Representative Member from Roman Catholic Diocesan: Tony Little.</p> <p>Apologies: None.</p> <p>Officers: Anna Crispin (Deputy Director Learning, Effectiveness & Major Transformation, Education and Children's Services), Merlin Joseph (Deputy Director Children & Families, Education and Children's Services), Venetia Rogers (School Organisation Manager, Education and Children's Services) and Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager, Deputy Chief Executive's Office).</p> <p>Witnesses: Jo Harper (Principal of Rosedale College), Peter Sale (Hillingdon Training Ltd) and Laraine Smith (Principal of Uxbridge College).</p>	
11.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Judith Cooper declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 7 – School Places – Verbal Update as she was a Governor of Charville Foundation Primary School and St Andrews C of E Primary School. She remained in the room during the item and took part in the discussion.</p> <p>Councillor Peter Curling declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 7 – School Places – Verbal Update as he was a Governor of Mellow Lane School and Harefield Academy. He remained in the room during the item and took part in the discussion.</p> <p>Councillor Catherine Dann declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 7 – School Places – Verbal Update as she was a Governor of Newham Junior School and Bishop Ramsay C of E School. She remained in the room during the item and took part in the discussion.</p> <p>Councillor John Hensley declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 7 – School Places – Verbal Update as he was a Governor at Breakspeare Junior School and Abbotsfield School. He remained in the room during the item and took part in the discussion.</p>	<p>Action by</p> <p>Gill Brice</p>

	Councillor Kuldeep Lakhmana declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 7 – School Places – Verbal Update as she was a Governor of Cranford Park Primary School, Wood End Park Primary School and Harlington Community School. She remained in the room during the item and took part in the discussion.	
12.	EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>) It was agreed that all items of business were considered in public.	
13.	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2010 (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>) Agreed as an accurate record subject to the inclusion of Tony Little in the list of attendees.	
14.	MAJOR REVIEW - 14-19 EDUCATION AND TRAINING (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)	Action by
	<p>Members were reminded that the aim of the review was to look at aspects of the 14-19 curriculum, in particular Diplomas, and look at the impact the introduction of Diplomas had had on 14-19 Education.</p> <p>The Deputy Director of Learning, Effectiveness & Major Transformation informed Members the aim of the changes to 14-19 education was to address criticism of existing qualifications around the lack of rigour felt to be inherent in GCSEs and A Levels and the need for a more vocational qualification to improve pupil's skills and training.</p> <p>The following witnesses attended the meeting and provided the review with the following information:</p> <p>Laraine Smith – Principal Uxbridge College</p> <p>Uxbridge College offered an Engineering Diploma which was taught at Level 3. The first Cohort had finished and all 10 students had been successful. There were so many different elements to the qualification and students had to pass all elements to gain the Diploma.</p> <p>The retention rate on this qualification was 90%, but it was difficult to evaluate as Diplomas were new qualifications. Support was expected from awarding bodies and some elements of the material for this qualification was not always of the highest standard.</p> <p>A first Cohort of Students for the Business School had started last year. The College had attempted to recruit students for the Hair and Beauty Diploma but had been unsuccessful.</p> <p>The development of Diplomas was the last Government's attempt to bridge the divide between vocation and academic education and was an attempt with time to replace other tried and tested qualifications. The development of Diplomas had now been stopped by the new Coalition Government.</p>	<p>Anna Crispin Alison Moore Gill Brice</p>

Members were informed that the present numbers taking Diplomas was sustainable but if the numbers dropped it would not be sustainable for the College.

Diplomas were an alternative to GCSE's and were beneficial for those students who were more practical than academic

The original intention for Functional skills was for them to be compulsory for all students at Key Stage 4, and their purpose was to address concerns from employers that young people were not numerate, literate or proficient in IT, in spite of achieving GCSEs in English, Maths and IT. This had now been reversed leaving the Diploma as the only qualification which required the extra hurdle of all three Functional Skill qualifications to be passed in order to achieve a Diploma. This had caused concern to the College.

Reference was made to Apprenticeships which were on the increase. Apprenticeships were work based qualifications and they were offered at two levels:

- Level 2 qualification, comprising National Vocational Qualification, technical certificate and key skills
- Advanced Apprenticeships were Level 3 qualifications.

Members were informed of the major Government drive to expand the Apprenticeship route, with employers encouraged to seek funding from the Government. Uxbridge College sometimes waived the employer's contribution to the Apprenticeships but the new Coalition Government may possibly take Apprenticeships away if employers did not contribute funding.

Reference was made to Foundation Learning and Members were informed that this could be taught at both Key Stages 4 and 5 and provided a mix of qualifications for learners of lower abilities. Skills taught included social personal development and team working, which were pre-requisites to prepare students to progress towards Level 1 and subsequently Level 2.

Discussion took place on elements of learning and teaching of Diplomas and Members were informed that courses on average consisted of 15/17 hours of teaching time. A large element of learning was for students to undertake independent learning with guided learning from teachers. E-Learning programmes were used by students.

Jo Harper – Principal of Rosedale College

Rosedale College had started planning for Diplomas in 2006. Construction and Engineering Diplomas were the first undertaken and involved a number of schools. Diplomas had brought practitioners closer together to ensure consistency of approach.

On the Level 2 Engineering Diploma there was confidence that there would be 80% success rate, but it was frustrating that a student would fail if one element of the Diploma was not passed.

With regard to Functional Skills, the College was looking closely at making teaching at secondary schools more personalised.

The point was made that the early success of Diplomas was needed to be built on. However, the qualification was too complicated and it appeared that the Coalition Government was not in favour of these qualifications.

Discussion took place around learning skills for Diplomas and how improvements could be made to the qualification. Members were informed that there was quality assurance in the College, with students being regularly communicated with external moderators and assessors working with the College to ensure the right units for the qualification were being adequately delivered. The quality of the qualification was not the issue, it was about making the Diploma more attractive to students. Greater publicity was needed on courses that were successful and this would increase the number of students.

Reference was made to the BTEC National qualification and the Principal of the College reported that this was a good qualification which the staff of the College were used to teaching and was a good alternative to a Diploma. Another option could be a combination of a BTEC and a Diploma qualification.

Reference was made to the Diploma Steering Group on Diploma development and the reporting structure for Diplomas. Members were informed that the Coalition Government had changed the rules with regard to 14-19 partnerships. In future the LEA would have freedom to decide on the direction of travel and would retain the 14-19 Strategic Group on Diploma development and have the authority to change the structure.

Discussion took place on Engineering Diploma students who travelled to learn at Rosedale College and the implications this had on the support they required within their own school for Functional Skills. Members were informed that the College working closely with the Diploma Steering Group and provided extra support for these students.

Peter Sale – Hillingdon Training Ltd

Hillingdon Training Ltd delivered high quality work-related training for the benefit of residents and employers in the Borough.

The organisation provided alternative curriculum training such as Apprenticeships and practically anything which involved 14-19 year olds. The Key Stage 4 Engagement Programme was provided by Hillingdon Training and was a short course designed to provide a programme of education for young people who had been identified as being at risk of dropping out of education. This programme involved a vocational element, basic skills, personal social and development units as well as enhancement activities. There were 10 schools involved in this programme and funding had been taken over by the LEA and the individual schools after the Government withdrew funding.

This year there were 125 students on this programme which included courses on Construction, Motor Vehicle, Children's Care, Sports and Retail and Business. Last year 60% of students achieved at least one qualification, with some students achieving four qualifications.

Hillingdon Training also provided the Young Apprenticeship programme which had 280 students on the programme. 80% of students achieved Young Apprenticeships and 90% achieved full qualification.

Foundation Learning had been a big change and Hillingdon Training provided this. From September 2010 work based learning providers and FE Colleges had to deliver Foundation Learning programmes in place of the existing Level 1 provision. A number of schools would also need to introduce Foundation Learning in partnership with Hillingdon Training and Uxbridge College through the Key Stage 4 Engagement Programme.

Members were informed that there was a drive from Government on promoting Apprenticeships and Hillingdon Training were hoping to have 135 Apprenticeships and were hoping to find employers who would employ Apprentices. Government funding had been diverted from Train to Gain into Apprenticeships. Reference was made to around 15 Apprentices who were employed by the Council and 13 of them had been trained by Hillingdon Training.

The Council and its partners had a key role in promoting key based learning and Apprenticeships as well as also promoting non-Apprenticeships such as work experiences.

The biggest obstacle to the success to Apprentices was the Partnerships and Consortia and the way to achieve the schemes aims. The Local Authority had an important role to play in terms of influencing its partners.

Discussion took place on the initiative which the Council had introduced in relation to the use of Section 106 Agreements money. Some Planning permissions given by the Council's Planning Committees contained conditions relating to developers making a commitment to training as part of the Section 106 Agreements. Reference was made to the training of construction workers through Hillingdon Training. At Abbotsfield School 100 16 year olds were undertaking construction training.

An initial recommendation of this review could be to investigate further use of Section 106 monies in relation to Apprenticeships and other training / qualifications for young people.

The Chairman thanked the witnesses for the information they had provided the review.

Resolved –

- 1. That the information provided from the witnesses form part of the evidence for the review.**

	<p>2. That officers give consideration in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee to witnesses for the next meeting.</p>	
15.	<p>SCHOOL PLACES UPDATE (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Members noted the information which had been sent to them by email which provided details about the schools in the Borough which required additional classrooms to deal with the increase in the number of school pupils. The additional classrooms would be in the form of temporary mobile classrooms and teaching provision was in place for these.</p> <p>In addition Members were informed that Pinkwell Primary School was another school which would require an additional classroom to deal with increased numbers. The mobile classroom for this would be delayed until spring time and Members expressed concern at this delay.</p> <p>During discussions Members asked that a report be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee providing an update on the allocation of school places in the Borough and the provision the Council was making to accommodate the increased pupil numbers.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <p>That a written report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee providing an update on the allocation of school places in the Borough and the provision the Council was making to accommodate the increased pupil numbers.</p>	<p>Action by</p> <p>Venetia Rogers</p>
16.	<p>QUARTERLY CHILD SOCIAL CARE AUDIT (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>The Deputy Director Children & Families provided Members with an update on the audit of safeguarding children’s cases. Reference was made to a report which was considered at this Committee in December 2006 when it was recommended that managers should undertake random audits of safeguarding cases to ensure full compliance with the procedures and quality of recording.</p> <p>Members were informed that a procedure had been put in place and Members had been updated on progress in February 2008, November 2009 and January 2010. The Head of Safeguarding had updated the procedure for audits in Children & Families in June 2009 but since then there had been no progress reports submitted to the Committee.</p> <p>Members were informed that due to personnel changes within Children’s Services, the procedure had not been fully complied with other the last few months.</p> <p>The procedure had now bee re-instated and the importance of the audits had been reinforced. Monthly audit reports from randomly selected cases were to be returned to the relevant Services Manager and the Deputy Director.</p>	<p>Action by</p> <p>Merlin Joseph</p>

	<p>A report would be produced on the findings / actions to this Committee on a quarterly basis, starting with their next meeting on 21 October 2010.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <p>That the information provided be noted.</p>	
17.	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS REVIEWS UNDERTAKEN BY THIS POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Members were provided with a schedule which gave updates on the recommendations made by this Committee on their previous reviews.</p> <p>Officers were congratulated for the comprehensiveness of the information and Members asked that a short update report be provided at the next meeting of this Committee on the Review into Developing Short Breaks Provision.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <p>That the information report be noted.</p>	Action by
18.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>Members noted the item on the Forward Plan for Cabinet on 23 September relating to the Award of contracts for the appointment of a design team and quantity surveyor for developing the designs and expansion of Ruislip High School and it was agreed that information on this item be included in the School Places report which would be considered at this Committee's next meeting..</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <p>That the information contained on the Forward Plan be noted.</p>	Action by Gill Brice
19.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>)</p> <p>The work programme be updated to reflect the items added to the agenda of the next meeting.</p>	Action by Gill Brice
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 10.30 pm.	

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Khalid Ahmed on 01895 250833. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

Additional comments provided by Cllr Crowe to be included in the minutes.

The need for respect for a vocational curriculum with a practical route for example: drawing on Germany. The principal of Uxbridge College agreed that over the years a constant search had been conducted for a way of dealing with the 16-19 curriculum without huge success. The scale of curriculum change had been the largest ever known leading to a system that maybe too complicated. When asked about diplomas she felt that they would not be replaced but anticipated that they would be a niche market.

In relation to both the first and second witnesses there was discussion about consortia which might justify more emphasis. The relevant points were that there was a greater need for cooperation between institutions, provision of adequate support to pupils, the importance of time-tabling and travel arrangements. A member raised concerns about the viability of providing small sixth forms.

A member felt that given the new priority in regard to apprenticeships there should be greater importance on finding adequate employers.

It was asked whether it would be possible to provide a diagrammatical indication of the routes that are available for 14-19 education, if this was not possible a list or summary would be useful.