

Minutes

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

19 January 2012

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



HILLINGDON
LONDON

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Catherine Dann (Chairman) Judith Cooper (Vice-Chairman) David Benson Lindsay Bliss Peter Curling John Hensley Susan O'Brien John Riley</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Linda Sanders, Corporate Director – Social Care, Health & Housing Merlin Joseph – Deputy Director, Children & Families, Steve Cross – Head of Finance – Social Care, Health & Housing, Paul Malewicz – Finance Manager – Education & Schools, Tom Murphy – Service Manager – Early Intervention, David Fry – Service Manager - Children's Resources, Gill Brice – Democratic Services.</p>	
53.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Tony Little.</p>	
54.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING. (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Catherine Dann declared a general Personal Interest as she was a Governor of Newham Junior School and Bishop Ramsay C of E School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussion.</p> <p>Councillor Judith Cooper declared a general Personal Interest as she was a Governor of Charville & St Andrews Schools. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussion.</p> <p>Councillor Susan O'Brien declared a general Personal Interest as she was a Governor at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussion.</p> <p>Councillor David Benson declared a general Personal Interest as he was a Governor of Uxbridge High School. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussion.</p> <p>Councillor John Riley declared a general Personal Interest as he was a Governor of Field End Infant School. He remained in the room during</p>	<p>Action by</p> <p><i>Gill Brice</i></p>

	<p>the meeting and took part in the discussion.</p> <p>Councillor Peter Curling declared a general Personal Interest as he was a Governor of Hewens College and Harefield Academy. He remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussion.</p> <p>Councillor Lindsay Bliss declared a general Personal Interest as she was a Governor of Brookside Primary School. She remained in the room during the meeting and took part in the discussion.</p>	
55.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND ALL PART 2 ITEMS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be heard in public.</p>	
56.	<p>MATTERS THAT HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OR URGENT (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>There had been no matters identified in advance as urgent.</p>	
57.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2011 (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>(A member asked that the final report on the EHE Review should include reference to there being a pre-conceived perception that a home educated child was taught by a parent in isolation. The information that was provided by the witnesses giving evidence for the review indicated that where parents did not have an area of expertise, specialist teachers were brought in to teach a small group of home educated children. It was agreed that this be included in the final report.)</p>	<i>Gill Brice</i>
58.	<p>BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2012/13 (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the report informing the committee of the key issues for both the Education & Children Services Budgets. The Council was in a good financial position and there were no new savings being considered in the 2012/2013 budget.</p> <p>The committee asked a number of questions as follows:-</p> <p>From the information in the report smallest schools would be hit the hardest was that the correct analogy</p> <p>Officers advised that the funding for schools was complex, the review provided a formula that was transparent and looked at resources and need.</p> <p>Of the 3 additional staff within Children & Families, were these to</p>	<p>Action by</p> <p><i>Steve Cross</i> <i>Peter Malewicz</i> <i>Gill Brice</i></p>

replace agency staff and why had 2 agency admin staff not been made permanent.

Members were informed that there were still some temporary staff within Children & Families but the three staff was in addition to existing staff. In answer to the issue raised in relation to the admin staff, officers advised the committee that there was currently a major review of admin functions within Children & Families to redefine the tasks they undertake.

There were a number of issues raised in relation to the figures contained in the appendices in regard to savings.

Officers advised the committee that a number of packages providing services had been redefined and had now included some of those services identified as a saving.

In answer to a question raised in relation to Children's centres, officers advised the committee that in Appendix D the first column of the table was the action taken and the second column the planned reduction in 2012/2013. All savings had been through the Business Improvement Delivery (BID). This process had looked at each function in isolation along with the available resources and how functions could be improved to cut out duplication. A lot of detailed work had been undertaken on all reviews carried out by BID process.

A member identified a discrepancy in the figures in relation to the music services. Officers were asked to investigate and advise the committee of the correct figures.

The committee asked whether the schools budget could be provided to schools prior to close of play on the 31 March 2012. This had caused great concern to schools last year, as they were not provided until late on 31 March 2011.

Officers advised that last year this was due to the late receipt of information from the Government. This year the figures would be received earlier and it was hoped that the schools budget would be provided to them earlier.

Officers informed the committee about the Looked After Children (LAC) review and advised that the number of LAC, had not increased. A saving had been achieved by providing in house foster placements instead of external placements. This was an ongoing process. Officers were keeping a tight control on resources, examining and scrutinising costs effectively. This was enabling the Local Authority to bring children placed out of borough, back home to enable access to local service, the retention of school links and maintaining contacts.

Officers advised the committee that they had received additional funding to start the process for the Troubled Families Initiative. The initiative sought to identify troubled families where there were Anti Social Behaviour issues and parents were not in employment. This would be a challenging piece of work taking place over the next three years.

	<p>A member asked for officer's views on the new time limit being proposed as part of the Family Justice Review. Officers advised the committee that it was unlikely that the time limit in relation to care cases would be achievable, especially in relation to contested cases as there may be a 3 or 4 month delay where further reports were required.</p> <p>Resolved – That the committee welcome the Budget proposal and note with pleasure the overall stability of available expenditure. In challenging economic times it was noteworthy that the Education & Children Services Budget was clearly healthy and well managed and one that the committee continue to scrutinise.</p>	
59.	<p>SECOND MAJOR REVIEW - ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the report and advised the committee that the review being undertaken would need to take account of the Government initiated review and the national picture. The themes for the review would be to reduce delay in finding a family within the adoption process and providing a balance between safeguarding and permanency placements.</p> <p>A member identified three routes that could lead to a child being adopted and asked whether the review would focus on all these routes. The three routes were, adopting a step child, child given for adoption by birth mother and adoption of Looked After Children.</p> <p>Officers advised that due to the tight timescale for the final report the review would focus on the process for Looked after Children through to adoption.</p> <p>A member asked whether the review would include what support was provided to the birth parents, as this may cause an impact on the delay for a child being adopted.</p> <p>Officers advised that this was a different area of expertise and would require a different section of staff so would not be included as part of this review.</p> <p>The committee felt that the support for birth parents was important and should be referred to in the final report for the current review.</p> <p>A member suggested that as there were a number of other issues that would not form part of the current review that these be taken forward for consideration for future topics for review.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the information provided be noted. 2. That officers provide up to three witnesses for the next meeting. 	<p>Action by</p> <p><i>David Fry</i> <i>Gill Brice</i></p>

	3. That the other routes for adoption other than Looked After Children be considered as a future review topic	
60.	<p>FUNDING FOR UNIVERSAL CAREERS GUIDANCE UPDATE (Agenda Item 8)</p> <p>Officers introduced the report, which provided an updated requested by a previous meeting on funding of universal careers guidance. The committee was advised that changes in statutory duties as detailed in the Education Bill would led to a transfer of responsibility for securing impartial careers guidance. It is anticipated that from September 2012 schools will assume this responsibility and that a new 'all-age' careers service would be launched in April 2012.</p> <p>A member asked whether officers had been in discussion with schools to advise them of the change and that they would have to but in the services.</p> <p>Officers advised that discussions had been undertaken with schools with regard to the changes. Guidance had also been provided to them. It was the expectation that the similar guidance would be provided to Local Authority's (LA's) setting out revised statutory expectations which will focus on LAs providing support to vulnerable young people and monitoring and tracking their progress.</p> <p>Resolved – That the report be noted.</p>	
61.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME 2011/2012 (Agenda Item 9)</p> <p>The work programme was amended for the 20 March meeting to change the Second Review – Witness Session to '2' not '1'.</p> <p>Resolved – That the Work Programme be noted.</p>	<p>Action by</p> <p><i>Gill Brice</i></p>
62.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (Agenda Item 10)</p> <p>The committee received a report setting out the items on the Forward Plan relating to Education & Children's Services.</p> <p>Resolved – That the items on the Forward Plan be noted.</p>	
<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 p.m., closed at 8.55 pm.</p>		

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Gill Brice on 01895 250693. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.