

## Minutes

**Education & Children's Services Policy Overview  
Committee  
Thursday 22 October 2009  
Meeting held at High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW**



### **Members Present:**

Councillors Catherine Dann (Chairman), Brian Crowe (Vice-Chairman), Judith Cooper, Tony Eginton, John Hensley and Anita MacDonald.

**Officers Present:** Natasha Dogra, Debbie Haith and Pauline Nixon.

**Others Present:** Cllr Allan Edwards.

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Curling and Anthony Little.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTER COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING**

Councillors Catherine Dann, Judith Cooper, John Hensley and Anita MacDonald declared personal interests in all items on the agenda due to their roles as school governors. Cllr Tony Eginton declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda due to his role on Schools Forum.

### **3. TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND ALL THOSE MARKED IN PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE**

All items were Part 1 and were considered in public.

### **4. TO RECEIVE AND AGREE THE MINUTES OF 9 SEPTEMBER 2009**

The minutes were agreed by the Committee.

### **5. REVIEW 1: DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSION IN HILLINGDON SCHOOLS – DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

Action By:

The Chairman introduced the Committee's final report on the Development of Inclusion of Special Education Needs children in mainstream schools. The Committee were pleased with the report and were invited to propose recommendations. The Committee discussed the following ideas:

1. The Secondary Transfer is developed to ensure a smooth transition between primary and secondary phases.
2. A capacity is built in mainstream schools so they are confident in their ability to support children within the mainstream setting.
3. A Robust Parent Participation Forum is activated
4. Encourage schools to have systems in place to ensure the pupil voice is heard

5. Develop a common framework for engaging parents in AEN.
6. Put systems in place to engage hard to reach families
7. Improve quality of information provided to parents and carers
8. Train and develop a skilled workforce to work with children with additional needs.

The Committee discussed inputting a recommendation regarding the safeguarding of children who may be vulnerable to bullying. Members said children with special education needs may benefit from further safeguarding against bullying in school. Officers said this recommendation could be monitored through the Disabled Children’s Strategy, which would be sent to Cabinet in December.

Some Members of the Committee expressed reservations over the use of one very successful school as best practice and as an example for other schools in the borough. Due to varying financial resources and staff levels between different schools in Hillingdon, some Members did not agree that this school should set the precedent against which all schools should compete. Therefore, the Committee requested this comment to be included in the final report.

Members enquired about an idea tabled at the recent Schools Forum for every school in the borough to include an SEN unit to hold up to 10 children. Officers informed the Committee that this idea would not be implemented soon.

Members expressed concerns over whether Government resources allocated to the Building Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century programme would still be available in the current economic climate. Officers informed the Committee that if a large sum of resources was not obtainable, the available resources would not be used to erect new buildings, but would be put towards refurbishing current SEN schools in the borough.

**Agreed:**

**The Committee agreed the final report would include a recommendation regarding the safeguarding of SEN children in borough schools.**

*Natasha  
Dogra,  
Democratic  
Services*

**6. REVIEW 2: CHILD TRAFFICKING – SCOPING REPORT**

The Chairman invited Officers to present the scoping report on Child Trafficking. The Committee discussed the aim of the review and decided they would review the statutory safeguarding duties of the Council and other agencies with regard to young people who arrive unaccompanied and to review current practice in the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Members discussed the possibility of a site visit to Heathrow Airport. However, Officers suggested that a site visit may not be particularly fruitful during this review, as immigration laws would not allow Members to visit the port of entry. Officers suggested that evidence from a wide range of witnesses would suffice during this review.

Action By:

<p>Members suggested inviting the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to attend a meeting to provide evidence to the Committee. Officers advised the Committee that the CPS may not be able to provide in-depth evidence regarding Child Trafficking, as they were involved in prosecuting the criminals, and not safeguarding children. Officers suggested inviting the UK Border Agency and the Metropolitan Police to provide the Committee with evidence. Other Local Authorities such as Kent, Hampshire and Surrey could also act as witnesses during the review.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b>  <b>The Committee agreed the scoping report.</b></p>	
<p><b>7. TO CONSIDER THE FORWARD PLAN</b></p> <p><b>To Note:</b>  The Committee noted the Forward Plan.</p>	Action By:
<p><b>8. TO CONSIDER THE WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10</b></p> <p>The Chairman invited Members to consider the updated version of the Committee's Work Programme. Members asked Officers who would be providing the Quarterly Audit Update 2009/10 and what they would be presenting to the Committee. Officers informed the Committee that Debbie Haith (<i>Head of Safeguarding</i>) would be presenting evidence of how data regarding children in the safeguarding system is stored.</p> <p>Members asked Officers to bring a blank copy of a Child File as an example for the Committee to the next meeting.</p> <p><b>To Note:</b>  <b>The Committee noted the Work Programme.</b></p>	Action By:  Debbie Haith, EYL

The meeting closed at 21.00