

Minutes

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

9 September 2015

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



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Jane Palmer (Chairman), Nick Denys (Vice-Chairman), Teji Barnes, Duncan Flynn, Becky Haggar, Allan Kauffman, Tony Eginton, Peter Money and Jan Sweeting (Labour Lead).</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Nikki Cruickshank (Interim Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance), Dan Kennedy (Head of Business Performance, Policy & Standards), Tom Murphy (Head of Early Intervention Services), Andrea Nixon (Children and Young People's Services - Safeguarding Children), Ian Anderson (Complaints and Service Improvement Team Manager), Neena Singh (Business Manager - Technical and Business) and Deborah Mbofana (Health Promotion Manager)</p> <p>Also Present: Steve Ashley (Independent Chairman of Hillingdon Local Safeguarding Children Board)</p>
23.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Jem Duducu, with Cllr. Allan Kauffman substituting and from Anthony Little, Roman Catholic Diocesan representative.</p>
24.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THE MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>No Declarations of Interest were made.</p>
25.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all agenda items were Part I and would be discussed in public.</p>
26.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 JULY 2015 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Resolved: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

27. **MAJOR REVIEW - THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EARLY HELP TO PROMOTE POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES - WITNESS SESSION** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Head of Early Intervention Services and the Health Promotion Manager gave a presentation in support of their witness submission. The submission had been circulated to the Committee Members prior to the meeting.

The presentation had two key aims, to provide an understanding of early help available to families and to provide an understanding of the way in which these services were organised and coordinated.

The provision of early help was seen as being a high priority. This included prevention work to stop problems from arising in the first place and early intervention in order to identify action as soon as possible and tackle problems that had already emerged. Early intervention work was undertaken in collaboration with universal services and with individual families. The purpose of Early Intervention Services was to 'work together with families who need our support so that they may develop the skills, knowledge, resilience and capabilities required'. Negative family outcomes had associated costs, both financial and human and it was therefore important to take action in order to reduce these.

It was noted that a range of interventions were used with the aim being to improve health and wellbeing. For example, the provision of green spaces.

Four levels of early help were provided by the Council and partner organisations. Level 1 focused on prevention and was about providing universal services to all families in order to prevent problems from arising in the first place. Level 2, Early Intervention involved working with children and families that had additional or complex needs, while Levels 3 and 4 involved social care services for children and families with complex needs (Level 3) and children and families with acute needs (Level 4).

The Early Intervention and Prevention Services provided at Level 1 and Level 2 were outlined. Some of the Level 1 Services included schools, GPs, leisure services, libraries and Children's Centres, while Level 2 services included Youth Offending Services, Key-working Services, Targeted Programmes and counselling services. The aim was to use a joined-up approach when identifying families in need of additional support delivery in order to effectively prevent initial problems from escalating.

The majority of universal services e.g. libraries, sports development and family information were provided by the Council's Residents Services directorate. Children and Young People's Services were responsible for providing Early Intervention Services. These included Key-working, Children's Centres and youth offending services. These targeted services worked with specific families. Partner organisations, such as the NHS, voluntary sector, schools and faith groups also had a role to play.

A refreshed Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy was in the process of being developed. Good arrangements for collaboration and coordinating the the work of a range of agencies were being developed, along with clear 'step up' and 'step down' procedures to outline when services should be provided. The aim was to ensure the early identification of and engagement with, families in need of early help.

It was noted that The Hillingdon Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy Group had the following vision:

'Hillingdon families are safe, healthy, prosperous and self-reliant because they have

aspirations and means to succeed'.

The Group was developing the Strategy with a range of partners. This would be based upon the vision and a number of principles that aimed to help families prosper. A three stage approach would be adopted in order to understand needs and priorities and the role of each partner organisation; to embed principles and practice and jointly plan and; to jointly deliver, evaluate and commission.

Evidence from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and local intelligence had been used to develop four headline outcomes that work would be organised under. These outcomes included helping families to be strong, safe, healthy and economically prosperous. Key areas of concern had been mapped in relation to each of these areas and these would be used to enable partners to undertake work in relation to each theme. This was seen as an evolving document, which would be revised based upon future revisions to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and changing partner priorities.

Services provided would be targeted by age group, including Early Years (0 - 5), Early Childhood (6 - 12), Adolescent (13-19) and Transition to Adulthood (19-25). There would be a particular focus on Early Years as intervention at this stage could help to prevent or reduce problems in later years. There was particular concern about dental health and obesity, with dental health of young children being among the worst in London. It was anticipated that two new NHS dentists in the Borough would help to address the issue, as would the various activities being undertaken with local primary schools.

Members reflected that improvements to early intervention and early help were only likely to be effective if they were based upon robust data. It was questioned how outcomes were monitored and what they told the Council about the effectiveness of service delivery. Officers advised that a number of performance indicators were used but that these needed further development. A scorecard was being developed to enable the effective rating and comparison of services.

A Member asked what work was being undertaken prior to a child being born in order to identify potential problems. For example, where the expectant mother was drinking alcohol, smoking, was in poor housing or was not emotionally ready to be a mother. Officers advised that maternity and health were part of early intervention, alongside a variety of other preventative work. It was important to host such sessions at facilities where people would feel comfortable, such as local libraries or Children's Centres. It was noted that Members would hear from persons responsible for the delivery of such services at future witness sessions.

It was questioned how the vision to ensure that families were prosperous, self-reliant, safe and healthy would be realised, given that these were not always mutually exclusive. It was also questioned what steps were being taken to ensure that data was shared more effectively with Children's Centres. It was confirmed that the vision statement was a working vision that could be revised if alternative wording was considered more appropriate. It was acknowledged that the information provided to Children's Centres was not comprehensive enough. Some improvements had already been made and work was ongoing to address the issue, including the development of an action plan for use by the Council and partners.

A Member expressed concerns that although schools could be quite proactive in contacting parents with concerns about their children, they did not often share concerns with the Council or other partners. In specific relation to the 6-12 age group, it

was questioned how early intervention issues would be picked up and how cooperation would take place with GPs and schools. It was felt that cooperation with schools could present a challenge as the majority were not controlled by the local authority. Officers advised that schools were being encouraged to share more general information about issues requiring potential early intervention and that the situation was felt to be an improving one. Efforts were being made to strengthen working relationships with schools.

There was a discussion about the capacity of existing services, such as Children's Centres, to provide the targeted support required by families, especially given that some wards lacked children's centres or early years facilities. It was acknowledged that capacity would need to be considered as part of the developing strategies and that both qualitative and quantitative analysis would be required of relevant data.

Concerns were raised by the Committee that although there were a broad range of facilities in the Borough, such as libraries, youth centres and children's centres, these were not necessarily being used as effectively as they could be or to full capacity. It was questioned how these services were being promoted. Officers advised that a number of information raising activities were undertaken through the Team Around the Family and that consideration was being given to how information could be shared with other organisations more effectively. This information sharing was governed by various protocols and agreements.

A paragraph in the supporting officer report talked about the need to foster a culture of shared learning across agencies and the need to invest in learning fully about the role of these partners. It was questioned how this would be achieved in practice. It was confirmed that staff training and workshop sessions would have a role to play and that the need to better share intelligence was further emphasised.

Members asked what the expected timescales were for the proposed changes. Officers advised that changes were already being realised and that the long term objective was to ensure partner buy in. It was anticipated that in three years time, all partners would be fully aware of their responsibilities and that they would have a full suite of data available to support their work.

The Committee thanked officers for their informative presentation and requested that any similar presentations in the future be provided to Members in advance of the meeting. The Chairman reflected that there was a need for a firm evidence base in order to move forward effectively with improving service provision.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The evidence provided be noted.

28. HILLINGDON LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 15 (Agenda Item 6)

The Independent Chairman of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) introduced the 2014/15 Annual Report. This highlighted the main achievements, in addition to current and future priorities. It was noted that publication had been delayed while the verification of performance data took place, but that it was the intention for the report to be published by the end of May in future years.

Publication of the report fulfilled the Board's statutory obligation. The Board had also been required to develop an improvement plan by Ofsted as the Board had previously been identified as requiring improvement. However, although this was a requirement, it

was not seen as being particularly useful to enable the Board to make the improvements it required.

It was noted that the Board was not able to be assured that children and young people were as safe as they could be across the Borough. Further work would be needed by the Board and by partners before such an assessment could be made. It was acknowledged that this situation was unacceptable and assurances were given that it would not be repeated in the future. Much work to improve the Board had taken place since March 2015, including improvements to auditing and the provision of a clearer assessment of the effectiveness of the Board. It was also confirmed that the Chairman and other key staff were new in post and had been appointed since the timeframe covered by the report.

The 2015-16 proposed LSCB priorities were seen as being a start, but it was suggested that an additional five or six priorities could be included. Work would be undertaken in order to better evidence what the priorities should be in the future. The priorities also formed part of the Business Plan that the LSCB was required to produce. In response to a Member question, the LSCB Chairman advised that a list of the top three priorities for the Board would be developed and reported back to the Committee at a future date.

Children's Social Care was funding work being undertaken to put a business unit in place for the Board. This was seen as being critical to enable the Board to move forward with required improvements. The finances of the Board were also a cause for concern and it was noted that an Operations Group would be reviewing the various sub groups of the Board.

A Member questioned whether the budget provided in the report had incorrectly being labelled as being for 2013-14, rather than for 2014-15. It was agreed that this was a mistake and it was also noted that the Member had identified other mistakes within the report. Concerns were raised that the Council was contributing a relatively small amount to the Board, when compared to neighbouring London Boroughs. The contribution of £96k in 2014/15 compared to Harrow (£125k) and Hounslow or Ealing (each £160k). The LSCB Chairman confirmed that the 2014-15 Hillingdon contribution was an increase on the previous figure of 60k.

Concerns were also expressed that the Annual Report did not list all the Member organisations of the LSCB and also that it did not give the names of the person that represented each Board Member. It was requested that future reports provide attendance statistics for individual Members and that a glossary be provided. This had been included in previous annual reports but was absent from the 2014-15 report under consideration.

The Board thanked the Chairman of the LSCB for the honesty in admitting that significant improvement was required.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The report be noted.**
- 2. The top three priorities for the LSCB be developed and provided to the Committee at a future meeting.**

Officers provided an overview of the complaints and Members' Enquiries received by the Children and Young People's Services (including Education Services) for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. This satisfied the requirements to publish annual information about complaints.

Feedback in the form of complaints and compliments was seen as being an important source of information to enable the Council to improve services. The focus was on trying to resolve complaints informally. It was for this reason that the number of informal complaints about Children's and Young People's Services had increased from 26 in 2013/14 to 49 in 2014/15. It was envisaged that this would continue to rise in the year ahead.

Complaints made by children, or on their behalf, are governed by the Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1738). The Council operates a three stage complaint procedure. At Stage 1, a senior manager within Children's Services investigates and responds to a complaint within 10 working days. At Stage 2, complaint investigations are undertaken by an Investigating Officer (IO) and Independent Person (IP), not employed by the Council, with specialist knowledge of the Children's Act. At Stage 3, a panel of three people independent of the Council review what has happened and put forward options for resolution.

It was noted that all Stage 1 responses were seen by the Complaints and Service Improvement Manager prior to them being sent out. This was in order to ensure that a full response was provided to all the concerns raised.

The number of Stage 1 complaints received in 2014/15 was 30, which was a reduction when compared to the 2013/14 figure of 58. Two Stage 2 complaints had commenced in 2014/15 and would be concluded in 2015/16. One of the complaints related to allegations of historic abuse and the other to transport. No Stage 3 Complaints had been received during 2014/15.

There was a target of 10 working days for responding to Stage 1 complaints. During 2014/15, responses to 19 of the 30 complaints (63%) met this target. However, 13 Stage 1 complaints had been received since the start of April 2015. All of these had met the 10 working day target, with officers considering that there had been a cultural change. However, it was acknowledged that some improvement was required as complaint responses were not always clear or empathetic enough and there were also sometimes delays in communicating with members of the public.

The number of compliments received was increasing and exceeded the number of complaints. 47 compliments had been received in relation to Children's Services in 2014/15.

Complaints regarding education and schools were dealt with separately under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. This involved a three stage complaint procedure with escalation to the Local Government Ombudsman if a complainant remained dissatisfied.

During 2014/15, there were 17 informal complaints, 6 Stage 1 complaints, 1 Stage 2 complaint and 1 stage 3 complaint (subsequently withdrawn by the complainant) about education and schools. Most education and schools complaints were about school admissions. For 2014/15, six complaints had been referred to the Local Government Ombudsman of which five had complained direct to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman had found in the Council's favour in all six complaints.

A Member asked whether there was a pattern to the type of complaints that were dealt with informally. Officers advised that these tended to be the more simple complaints where customers were not happy with the service they had received, but that there were a few examples of more complex concerns being dealt with informally.

The Committee thanked officers for the report provided and the positive position that it presented.

Resolved: That:

- 1. The Report be noted.**

30. **QUARTERLY SCHOOL PLACES PLANNING UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 8*)

Officers introduced the Quarterly Schools Place Planning Update to inform the Committee about the demand for school places in Hillingdon.

The annual July 2015 school places forecast for Hillingdon had been submitted to the Department for Education. There had been no significant change from previous forecasts. This included no change in the Northwood and North Ruislip areas and a slight increase in Ruislip / South Ruislip. Increased demand for places in the north of the Borough was being caused mainly by children moving into the Borough from neighbouring Boroughs. Further expansion in the Hayes Wood End Park area may be required in the future. Members asked why proposed developments in the area did not include provision for a new primary school. It was noted that future requirements depended in part on the development of the former Nestle site.

Feasibility studies of three primary school sites to assess potential for expansion were underway. The findings were due to be discussed by officers in the week following the Committee meeting and would be reported for consideration by the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services.

With regard to secondary schools, the demand for additional places from 2016/17 onwards remained high and was likely to grow in future years. It was anticipated that an additional 24-25 forms of entry would be required between 2016 and 2020.

Officers had been investigating a range of options for the provision of additional school places. This included the possibility of expanding an additional five secondary schools in the Borough. All options were under consideration, including options for a new school.

The new school term had started in the week before the Committee meeting, with all children having been offered a place. There had been some late applications, due to children moving into the Borough, but there had been enough capacity to accommodate this. It was noted that St Martin's CE Primary School had opened on time for the start of the new term in September 2015.

A number of families in West Drayton had applied for places at schools outside their immediate area. For example, there were six children living in the West Drayton area whose parents had chosen John Locke Academy as their preferred school, which was in the Uxbridge area.

Work to rebuild and expand Northwood School had commenced and a planning application had been submitted for the expansion and rebuilding of Swakeleys and

Abbotsfield Schools. These expansions would add a total of 5.5 forms of entry.

A requirement for an additional five forms of entry had been identified in the south of the Borough. A new school may be required as existing schools in the area reached capacity, although it was noted that some pupils travelled to Swakeleys or Abbotsfield Schools or to schools outside the Borough e.g. to Grammar schools in Slough. This helped to alleviate the demand for places.

Members asked whether officers knew how many of the expected 180 places at the new Pinner High School would be allocated to children from Hillingdon. It was not possible to predict this, but it was noted that the school was expecting to serve a 1.5 mile radius area rather than basing admissions on administrative boundaries. The school would open for year 7 pupils only initially, with other years being established as the initial intake progressed through the school.

Resolved: That:

- 1. The Report be noted.**

31. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 9*)

Resolved: That:

- 1. The Forward Plan be noted.**

32. **WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16** (*Agenda Item 10*)

Resolved: That:

- 1. An update report or verbal update on the progress made by the Hillingdon LSCB be provided to the January 2016 meeting of the Committee.**
- 2. The Work Programme be noted.**

The meeting, which commenced at 7:00 pm closed at 9:00 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Jon Pitt 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.