

Minutes

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

13 April 2016

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



	<p>Committee Members Present:</p> <p>Councillors Jane Palmer (Chairman), Teji Barnes, Jem Duducu, Duncan Flynn, Becky Haggard, Beulah East, Tony Eginton, Carol Melvin, Jan Sweeting (Labour Lead) and Mr Tony Little.</p> <p>LBH Officers Present:</p> <p>Nikki Cruickshank (Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance), Sarah Hydrie (Assistant Internal Audit Manager), Dan Kennedy (Head of Business Performance, Policy & Standards), Tom Murphy (Head of Early Intervention Services), Ana Popovici (Assistant Director - Children's Social Care) and Jon Pitt (Democratic Services Officer).</p>
75.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Nick Denys, with Councillor Carol Melvin substituting and from Councillor Peter Money with Councillor Beulah East substituting.</p>
76.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THE MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no Declarations of Interest.</p>
77.	<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 agenda items 1 to 7 and 9 to 10 were Part I and would be heard in public. Agenda item 8 was Part II and would be heard in private.</p>
78.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2016 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The minutes of agenda item 5, the Single Meeting Review described there being pockets of deprivation in the Borough. It was agreed that the word 'pockets' should be changed to 'some areas.'</p> <p>It was agreed that reference should be made within the minutes for item 5 to the difficulties that children moving frequently between schools could cause for the schools themselves and the wider impact on the pupil's education. It was also agreed to note that the number of children receiving free school meals was falling in some areas and that eligibility for free school meals affected the amount of Pupil Premium funding that a</p>

school was able to draw down.

Resolved: That: Subject to the above changes, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2016 be agreed as an accurate record.

79. **SINGLE MEETING REVIEW - SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN** (*Agenda Item 5*)

Officers introduced the written submission that had been provided by Ann Bowen-Breslin, Headteacher at Hillingdon Primary School.

The following points were made in relation to Ms Bowen-Breslin's submission:

- The school was popular and over-subscribed and was located in an area that had some deprivation and pupil migration.
- Key Stage 1 attainment for phonics was above the national average for Pupil Premium pupils. Those eligible for Pupil Premium also performed above the national average in reading, writing and maths.
- At Key Stage 2, Pupil Premium pupils performed at or above the national average in all subjects.
- The ethos of the school was that expectations of achievement were high for all pupils, regardless of whether they were from disadvantaged backgrounds or not. The school aimed to recruit and retain high quality staff in support of pupil attainment.
- The school worked to ensure that staff were able to best meet individual pupil needs. This included the provision of one to one booster sessions for those at risk of not making good progress and the running of February and Easter schools. Tracking the attainment of pupils was key to the successful targeting of extra support, with all Pupil Premium children having targets that were approved by the headteacher and shared with parents.

It was also noted the Council's Key Working Service provided support, where required, to schools to help improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Some families had to move regularly due to high rents in the Borough, with this often having an impact on the achievement of pupils. Families being in temporary accommodation and the turbulence that it caused was also a cause for concern. There was some evidence that these problems were on the increase, with some landlords now being faster to take action to evict tenants who fell behind with rent payments.

The Council's Education, Housing, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding teams worked to try to ensure that pupils were not forced to move schools, but it was acknowledged that this was not always possible. The Council could make discretionary payments to landlords to close the gap between the value of benefit payments and rent owed. However, it was noted that the Council may not owe a duty of homelessness to re-house families that had been evicted due to non-payment of rent. It was suggested that the Council could audit where temporary accommodation was located in order to identify where there were specific problems. It was questioned how six month rental agreements, which had become the norm in the private rented sector, affected children. At the end of the tenancy or if conditions were breached, landlords were able to give 28 days notice and then apply for possession.

The Council encouraged schools to work together to tackle recruitment and retention issues, with it being acknowledged that schools needed to provide a good 'offer' to

staff. Pay levels were only one element of this. It was known that one school in the Borough was providing a year long support package for new teaching staff in order to help ensure that they remained within the profession.

The Committee felt that recruitment and retention of staff was a problem at both primary and secondary level and asked what the Council was doing to support recruitment. Officers advised that schools were being encouraged to work together to overcome recruitment issues. A strategy group had been set up, which had a membership comprising of local headteachers. The School Improvement Conference also considered a range of issues, such as innovation and succession planning.

It was questioned how schools were being supported to ensure that use of pupil premium funding was maximised. Officers advised that information was being provided to schools and that engagement with parents was being encouraged.

The Committee raised concerns that it did not have sufficient evidence to enable the review report to be drafted. It was agreed that further information would be requested from Laurie Cornwell, Executive Headteacher of The Skills Hub and Young People's Academy and / or from other local headteachers. This would be presented to the June 2016 meeting of the Committee, with an additional witness session also taking place at the meeting. It was also requested that statistics be provided to Committee in order to show outcomes for pupils. In response to a Member question, officers advised that figures for the number of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training in the Borough were relatively low.

Concerns were also expressed about Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision locally. The Committee had requested a review of CAMHS as part of its previous major review on youth crime and anti-social behaviour. It was hoped that this would be taken forward by the Council as soon as was practical.

Resolved: That:

- 1. Further information / witness statements from Laurie Cornwell and / or other local headteachers be provided to the June 2016 meeting of the Committee.**
- 2. The update provided be noted.**

80. **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Officers introduced an update on the status of the Children and Young People's Social Care Service Improvement Plan. The report provided a summary of the status of the Plan as of April 2016.

A total of 40 actions (77%) of the 52 actions within the Plan had been completed, as of 4 April 2016. 12 actions were currently in progress, with 0 actions being static.

The Assistant Director and Project Manager continued to meet with Service Managers on a monthly basis to update, challenge and track progress against the Plan. All remaining actions that had not been completed would be tracked and monitored as part of the 2016/17 service plan and it was anticipated that the remaining 12 actions would be completed during the year.

Progress was being made in transitioning out of the Skylakes contract, which currently provided some of the Council's social care staff. The Leader of the Council had agreed

an exit strategy and the target date for the end of the contract was 10 May. Figures quoted by Members showed that 71.20% of staff were provided through an agency, which was an increase. Officers advised that the figures would include Children's Services staff but that they would review the figures to better understand the trend.

In relation to Pathway Plans, progress made was considered to have been excellent, particularly given the significant changes that had been undertaken. 58% of Pathway Plans had been completed, with the others needing to be updated. All children with Pathway Plans had access to a social worker.

Members were concerned that additional data in relation to the number of social work cases audited had been presented at the meeting, rather than in advance. Officers advised that they aimed to provide data in advance of meetings, but that this particular data had not been available at the time of agenda publication.

There had been some fluctuation in the number of audits rated as good. The figures presented covered the period from April 2015 to March 2016. They showed that two cases were ungraded, 20 were inadequate, 39 required improvement and 38 were good. On average, three audits were being undertaken per manager, per month. No audits had been undertaken in August 2015. 100% of audits had been completed within 12 months. Thematic audits were being undertaken bi-monthly and these would be used to provide more comprehensive information to the Committee in the future. Officers also stated that they would be happy to answer, after the meeting if necessary, any follow up questions that Committee Members had in relation to the data presented.

In response to a Member question, officers advised that "ungraded" audits were caused by technical issues with the electronic audit tool used. It was in no way a judgement on the quality of work associated with the particular case. The Committee raised concerns with regard to the accuracy of some of the figures provided. Figures for September 2015 stated that 48% of audits were rated good or better, while a Member had calculated that this figure should actually be 43 or 44%. If this figure was accurate, it would be a cause for concern as it would indicate a fall in the percentage of audits rated good or better when compared to March 2015. Officers advised that they would check the figures for accuracy, while noting that a fall in the number of audits did not necessarily mean that the quality of work was deteriorating. This could instead be due to the auditing of cases having become more robust. Work that had previously considered to be good may no longer be considered to be so.

It was questioned whether case audits measured the quality of the social work delivered or merely the quality of recording. It was noted that there would be an element of the latter, but that efforts were made to ensure that audits reflected the quality of care provided, including Ofsted assessors sitting alongside social workers to ensure that the whole journey of the child was followed.

In response to questions from Members, officers advised that they would produce an audit report that provided the story behind the figures more fully and that this would be presented to Committee. It was agreed that this should include information in relation to training and mentoring, how good quality was ensured and how cases that were judged to be unsatisfactory were responded to. This could include the use of case studies.

The Committee asked whether officers were confident that the quality of work and leadership would be sufficient to ensure that a minimum of 50% of cases were graded as good. Officers were confident that the systems were now in place to enable achievement of this target by Autumn 2016.

Resolved: That:

- 1. Officers to review case audit figures for accuracy in response to concerns raised by Members.**
- 2. Future updates on the Children and Young People's Social Care Service Improvement Plan / Children's Social Care case audits to provide additional background information to put the figures in context.**
- 3. The report be noted.**

81. QUARTERLY SCHOOL PLACES PLANNING UPDATE (*Agenda Item 7*)

Officers presented the report to provide the Committee with an update on place planning for primary and secondary schools in Hillingdon. Forecasts previously presented to the Committee had confirmed that the need for primary places had been largely met through expansion and the provision of three new schools. There remained a requirement for an additional three to four forms of entry in the primary sector in the north of the Borough.

Some additional demand for primary places was also forecast in the south of the Borough. This was partly due to the suspension of reception intake at Nanaksar Primary School as the school did not have sufficient space. The school was working to resolve the issue but the Education Funding Agency was unable to fund expansion until issues connected to an outstanding loan had been resolved.

April 18 2016 was the offer day for admission to primary school in September 2016. It was anticipated that all pupils whose parents / guardians had applied on time would be offered a place.

At secondary level, there had been an 8% increase in the number of applications for a school place. All applications that had been received on time had been offered a place. There had been a slight fall in the percentage of pupils being offered their first choice, with 91% of children being offered a place at one of their first three choices. This compared favourably to Hounslow, Harrow and Ealing. Engagement work was undertaken with parents to encourage them to be realistic when deciding which schools to apply for as this made it more likely that their child would be offered one of their choices.

It was noted that there had been around 100 late applications received after the deadline last year. Late applications were most commonly caused by families moving into the Borough.

There was a forecast need for an additional 24.5 forms of secondary school forms of entry over the next five years. This demand mainly affected the north of the Borough. Plans were being progressed for an additional 5.5 forms of entry, with a further 19 required. A rebuilt and expanded Northwood School was due to add one form of entry in September 2016, while expansion at Abbotsfield and Swakeleys Schools was due to be completed by September 2017.

The Council had been informed of five expressions of interest to open free schools in the Borough. These expressions of interest were at an early stage and were subject to evaluation by the Department for Education and identification of sites.

Members were pleased with the figures presented, which it was considered represented a good achievement. However, feasibility studies had been undertaken in January 2015 and the Committee asked to be informed which schools would be

expanded. It was requested that an update be provided at the next meeting of the Committee in June 2016.

Resolved: That

- 1. An update on proposed school expansions in the Borough be presented to the Committee at the June 2016 meeting.**
- 2. The report be noted.**

82. **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) - UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 8*)

Resolved: That the meeting of the Committee moved into Part II, Members' only.

There was a discussion about why the report had been included in Part II, Members' only. Officers advised that this was due to the fact that the report named services and organisations that could provide services to victims of FGM and other crimes. It was considered important not to make such details available in the public domain as it was theoretically possible for victims to be identified.

The Committee Members were split, with some agreeing that the report should be kept in Part II, while other Members were unhappy that the report had been placed in Part II and requested that this be recorded in the minutes.

Members questioned whether the multi-agency approach highlighted by officers had improved reporting of FGM. It was not possible to answer this as there had not been any reported cases in the Borough, but there was anecdotal evidence that this approach was positive. The Council would encourage awareness raising of the issue, with an officer being available to deliver training in schools.

Overall, the Committee was pleased with the work undertaken to date and requested that a further update be provided in six months time.

This item is included in Part II as it contains information that is likely to reveal the identity of an individual and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it (exempt information under paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government [Access to Information] Act 1985 as amended.

Resolved: That:

- 1. A summary of the discussion be included in the Part I minutes of the meeting.**
- 2. That a further update on FGM be provide to the Committee in six months time.**
- 3. The report be noted.**
- 4. That the meeting of the Committee moved into Part I, Public.**

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

Resolved: that: The Forward Plan be noted.

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

It was confirmed that an update on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board had been added to the Committee's Work Programme.

Resolved: That:

- 1. An Update on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board be provided to the June 2016 meeting.**
- 2. The Work Programme be noted.**

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.40 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.