

## Minutes

### RESIDENTS, EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

26 February 2019

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge



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|     | <p><b>Committee Members Present:</b><br/>Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman), Michael Markham (Vice-Chairman), Vanessa Hurhangee, Heena Makwana, Stuart Mathers, Paula Rodrigues, Jan Sweeting, Steve Tuckwell and Brian Stead (In place of Allan Kauffman)</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b><br/>Sarah Phillips (School Place Planning Project Manager), Anthony Oloyede (Building Control Manager), James Rodger (Head of PLanning and Enforcement), Dan Kennedy (Director of Housing, Environment, Education, Performance, Health &amp; Wellbeing) and Neil Fraser (Democratic Services Officer)</p> |
| 55. | <p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Kauffman. Councillor Stead was present as his substitute.</p>  |
| 56. | <p><b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>  |
| 57. | <p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT ANY ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items were marked as Part I and would therefore be considered in public.</p>   |
| 58. | <p><b>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Regarding Minute 52: Standards and Quality in Education 2017-18, it was suggested that the statement of “strong” academic performance within Hillingdon be amended to “improving”. This was agreed, and it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2019 be approved as a correct record, subject to the amendment as outlined above.</b></p>  |
| 59. | <p><b>BUILDING CONTROL IN HILLINGDON</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Anthony Oloyede – Building Control Manager, introduced a report detailing Building Control within Hillingdon. Anthony was supported by James Rodger – Head of Planning and Enforcement.</p>   |

Members were shown a slide presentation, which set out the Building Control regulations and process within Hillingdon. It was confirmed that Hillingdon was a part of several groups, including the London District Surveyor's Association (LDSA), who regularly met to discuss issues.

Hillingdon provided a quality service to residents, which included site visits, review of site plans, provision of approved documentation, and advice, for which it had won several awards.

Building regulations were currently being reviewed post-Grenfell, and Dame Judith Hackett had been commissioned to undertake a review of these regulations, which was ongoing now.

Members asked a number of questions, including:

**What was the criteria for site visits? Was it only large developments?**

Hillingdon's market share was 60%, with the remaining 40% being dealt with by private inspectors. Of that 60%, most enquiries related to housing extensions. Larger scale developments were more likely to be covered within the private sector.

**Was there any link between the Building Control teams and the Planning teams for enforcement action, in an instance when construction deviated from approved plans?**

Building Control had limited powers to take enforcement action, in most cases only when there was a dangerous structures issue. Building Control did not do compliance checks of plans approved by Planning to check there were no planning breaches. Nonetheless, serious breaches of planning control did get notified to the Planning Enforcement team.

**What was the Council doing to help keep the public safe from poor quality private inspectors?**

Some residents were choosing to use private inspectors to avoid alerting the Council to any breaches. However, when things went wrong, the Council often had to intervene. As confirmed, a review of current building regulations was underway, and the Council was marketing itself as an alternative to the private inspectors in an effort to increase use of the service. It was worth highlighting that all new school building projects were being conducted through Hillingdon Building Control.

**What were the advantages to using Hillingdon's service over private inspectors?**

The advantages were many. For example, private inspectors did not carry out site visits, so there was no oversight of the project. Hillingdon provided a text service, which had proved very popular with residents. In addition, Hillingdon checked plans and issued comments and advice where required.

**Were there any plans to increase market share?**

Hillingdon was always looking to increase market share. However, this was challenging as fees were often undercut by private inspectors. Residents were being sign-posted to use Hillingdon's service via the Communications team and the Hillingdon website, while all decision notices included a 'pitch' for further services. The use of social media could be increased moving forward.

**Were all LBH commissioned building work undertaken by Hillingdon's Building Control?**

As far as was known. Further information on this could be requested outside of the meeting.

**How did Hillingdon Building Control compare to neighbouring boroughs?**

Hillingdon compared favourably to neighbouring boroughs, with a similar market share to other West London authorities. Market share was greater than within inner London, where many projects were dealt with by private inspectors.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. That the presentation be forwarded to all Members;**
- 3. That further information on building projects commissioned by Hillingdon be forwarded to the Committee via the clerk.**

60. **QUARTERLY SCHOOL PLACES PLANNING UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Dan Kennedy - Deputy Director, Housing, Environment, Education, Health & Wellbeing, and Sarah Phillips – School Place Planning Project Manager, updated the Committee on the Council's School Places Planning.

The Committee was informed that following approximately ten years of growth in demand for school places within the Borough, recent years had shown a reduction in demand, which in turn had led to an increase in surplus places. These surplus places were more common in less popular schools, as parents exercised their right of preference for school places. To address this, conversations were ongoing between the Council and Head Teachers, and actions being considered included reducing the Planned Admission Numbers (PANs) at some schools.

This reduction in demand had a number of possible causes, including increased migration out of London, a change in exchange rate following the EU referendum (where UK earnings are in part sent elsewhere in the EU), and a slowing of the housing market. It was understood that surplus places could in some cases result in increased unit costs for schools, and so officers were working quickly to collect views from schools with the aim of recommending actions to Cabinet.

National Offer Day for places at secondary schools was 1 March 2019, and demand for these places had been seen to have increased. Officers were confident that all pupils would be offered a place for September 2019, and to accommodate this, several schools including Vyners and Ruislip High had increased their forms of entry. Therefore, very few surplus places were expected in Year 7 in September 2019, though a true picture would not be available until places were accepted and late applications were dealt with.

Members asked a number of questions, including:

**Feedback from some primary school Head Teachers was that the Council was making too many places available at their schools, which were not being filled. Was this the case?**

Places had been increased based on the information available at the time, two years ahead of the new pupil entry. Expansion had been seen at several primary schools, with quick completion. Forecasts had been seen to be mostly correct, though had been affected by the greater migration out of London, as well as the housing market changes and a lower 'yield' of children per household. Following discussions with Head Teachers, it had become apparent that the previously seen turnover within communities was no longer taking place to the same extent, house sales were down and new families not moving in as households remained for longer. Officers needed to plan carefully before any actions to avoid reducing PANs resulting in a shortage of places.

**The report listed a 2.5% overestimate for reception intake in 2018. Was anything being done to correct this for future years?**

Every year, officers undertake a review which assesses all actual intake vs. the forecasted intake, as well as 'soft' intelligence from meetings with the schools. This review results in refinements or tweaks for future modelling. The Department for Education (DfE) had commented that of the London boroughs, Hillingdon was one of the most accurate at forecasting demand for school places, however, it was important not to be complacent.

**How was the planning for secondary school places changing moving forward?**

Existing pupil numbers in primary schools were the key element in forecasts of secondary school places. Plans for secondary schools were under annual review. However, it was recognised that certain schools, particularly high achieving schools, were more popular and had more demand for places, and future modelling was accounting for this.

**Was there an even spread of vacancies within primary schools, or were the vacancies localised in specific areas of the Borough?**

Spaces were seen to be disproportionately high in a small number of schools. Evidence was showing that parents were prioritising popular, high achieving schools, and were not concerned by the distance between their homes and these schools. Demand was therefore greater in certain schools. In the north of the Borough, and close to the borders of Heathrow, some schools were seen to have vacancies. However, these schools were often situated close to a school that was full. It was worth highlighting that Hillingdon had some larger primary schools in comparison to other boroughs, and it would be normal for some of these schools to reduce their intake over the coming years, and be reviewed up and down.

**What would happen if Hillingdon pupil numbers exceeded the places available?**

A normal ratio was 30 pupils to 1 teacher per class. This could go up to around 32 pupils without issue (except in infant classes). If this was not sufficient to meet demand, further available options included the mobilisation of extra classes in certain schools, as and when needed.

**What contingencies were in place to ensure choice for parents and capacity across the borough?**

Plans in place included the expansion of schools such as Northwood, Swakeleys, Oakwood, Vyners and Ruislip High. In addition, the DfE had approved the creation of a new free school to open circa September 2022. Other options under consideration

included further school expansions, bulge classes, and temporary classrooms.

**Were Looked After Children an issue for the Borough's schools?**

The Admissions Code prioritised Looked After Children (LAC). Demand for places for these children still existed, though not all children entering the Borough would be educated within the Borough, as many would be placed outside of the Borough based on their specific needs.

**What was the Council doing regarding higher education?**

These places were outside of statutory school age, however officers tried to help and influence the take-up of higher education places, based on the local offer.

**Within the officer's report, table 2 showed that there would be insufficient capacity for Year 7 pupils in September 2019. Could the officers comment on this?**

Officers were confident that the demand for places would be met for September 2019. Figures would continue to be reviewed and refined based on the information available, including any increase in demand for independent schools and schools outside of the Borough. In addition, the DfE approved new school would be valuable, and the Council was pressing the DfE for confirmation of the site and the timetable for construction. Conversations with Head Teachers were ongoing, and schools had been asked whether they could help provide extra places, if and when required.

**How long would families have to wait for a place?**

National Offer Day would make places available for all pupils who had submitted a timely application. However, late applications were more complicated. The earliest the Council could make an offer for those pupils was the end of March, as places were dependant on the timely offers being accepted or declined. This was coordinated across London, and once offers were accepted, capacity could be assessed and further offers made.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

61. **REVIEW INTO PAYMENT MODERNISATION ACROSS KEY RESIDENT SERVICES: DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The clerk tabled initial draft recommendations which were based on the information received during the Committee's review.

Members discussed the recommendations, and were particularly pleased that the recommendations specified a need to retain a cash payment option for residents. Members agreed that the draft recommendations were appropriate to take forward as part of the final report to Cabinet.

62. **CABINET FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 8*)

**RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.**

63. **MULTI-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 9*)

Members discussed the forthcoming information items on Flooding and Highways Maintenance, to be brought to the Meeting on 16 April 2019. Members suggested topics to be addressed within the reports, which included:

Highways Maintenance:

- Dropped kerb enforcement
- Pavements, and how the Council determined which pavements were to be repaired
- Parking on roads with grass verges
- Traffic calming signage
- Pedestrian accessibility on roads/pavements
- Potholes

Flooding:

- Drainage in the event of flooding
- 3<sup>rd</sup> parties engaged by the Council, and what actions they take when reacting to flooding incidents
- Council learnings following previous instances of flooding

In addition, it was suggested that further information on Year 7 school placements be provided to the Committee.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.18 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Neil Fraser on 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.