

Minutes



HILLINGDON
LONDON

SOCIAL CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

11 April 2019

Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Jane Palmer (Chairman), Judith Cooper, Ian Edwards, Tony Eginton, Becky Haggar, Paula Rodrigues, John Morse and Simon Arnold (in place of Alan Deville)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Anisha Teji (Democratic Services Officer) and Kate Kelly – Talbot (Assistant Director Adult Social Work)</p>
79.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies received from Cllr Duncan Flynn and Cllr Alan Deville, with Cllr Simon Arnold substituting.</p> <p>Apologies also received from Cllr Janet Gardner, with Cllr John Morse substituting.</p>
80.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Cllr Haggar declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 due to her role as the Carers Champion. She remained for the discussion of the item.</p> <p>Cllr Edwards declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 due to his work with the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) H4All. He remained for the discussion of the item.</p> <p>Cllr Cooper declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 as she had a relative who was applying for Universal Credit. She remained for the discussion of the item.</p>
81.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from 18 March 2019 be approved subject to adding the following to the item in relation to the Establishment of a Corporate Parenting Panel:</p> <p>“Concerns were also raised in relation to how meetings would be managed with children present, particularly when discussing sensitive information.”</p>

82. **TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE** (*Agenda Item 4*)

It was confirmed that there were no Part II items and that all business would therefore be conducted in public.

83. **CARERS STRATEGY - AN UPDATE ON WORK TO SUPPORT CARERS IN THE BOROUGH** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Assistant Director of Adult Social Care presented the report on the Carers Strategy and provided an overview of the achievements and the contribution the Council had made to the delivery of the strategy. The key findings from the Carers Survey 2018/19 and the draft Delivery Plan 2019-20 outlining the work plan for the coming year were also provided to the Committee.

In summary, it was noted that 74% of carers were satisfied with the support and care services they received for themselves and the person they cared for. There had been fewer carer complaints, there had been a focus on improving carer engagement, carer assessments and carer recognition events. There were positive results however it was acknowledged that there was still work to be done.

Members commented that the report was good and welcomed the fact that it had been presented to the Committee for comments to be submitted to Cabinet. It was also acknowledged that the Carers Champion worked hard to ensure that the voice of carers was heard. It was noted that there was no reference to domestic violence in the report and Members hoped that this would be addressed in any future reports. Officers thanked Members for the observation and assured Members that this would be taken forward with the relevant bodies.

During Member discussion, it was noted that 74% of carers reported that they had no concerns about their own personal safety. Members considered that everyone ought to be aware of personal safety as it was an important matter, regardless of their role. As a result of a lack of personal safety, there could be pressure on personal relationships and lifestyle.

Members commended the 'tremendous' amount of work that has been undertaken and welcomed the achievements of the Carers Partnership. This included 8000 active carers being registered and 295 new young carers in the New Year. Members considered that this demonstrated the work being done to make it more accessible for Carers.

It was recognised that not all carers could be supported. It was confirmed that the carers' survey was sent to people who had undertaken assessments.

Members noted that the Carers strategy also went with this report and that it covered mental health aspects. It was acknowledged that Hillingdon was the first borough with the venture of double/sandwich carers.

Concerns were noted in relation to:

- 51% of carers spend over 100 hours a week caring;
- 49% of carers are aged over 65; and
- 8% of people looked after by carers are aged over 85.

Overall, there was a lot of positive work being undertaken and the achievements were recognised. The concerns were noted.

RESOLVED –

That the Committee:

1. noted the work that the Council does to support those with caring responsibilities in the Borough.
2. noted the key findings of the Carers Survey 2018-19.
3. noted the Carers Strategy delivery plan activity for 2019-20.
4. delegated authority to the Chairman to agree suitable wording to be submitted to Cabinet.

84. **COMMITTEE REVIEW: UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND OTHER WELFARE BENEFIT CHANGES** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Committee noted the draft report on the review on Universal Credit and Other Welfare Benefit Changes.

The Chairman informed Members that after reviewing the first draft of the report, further information was required on how Universal Credit impacted claimants with mental/physical health issues and people with learning disabilities. The Chairman had been contacted by a representative at Hillingdon Dash who had experience in this area.

The Chairman suggested that another witness session take place in June 2019 inviting representatives from Hillingdon Dash, the Department for Work and Pensions and possibly the Hillingdon Citizens Advice Bureau to hear case studies and facts and figures.

It was noted that the Council had prepared as well as possible. However, there were still concerns about people “getting lost in the system” and Members were mindful that that better signposting and referrals was required. Members also emphasised the importance of partnership working and welcomed the witness session in June 2019.

RESOLVED: That the suggested witnesses be invited to the Committee meeting in June 2019.

85. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 7*)

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

86. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 8*)

Work programme

The work programme was noted.

Ofsted inspection of children’s home

Prior to the meeting, there had been a request to add an item to the agenda for the meeting. The Committee’s attention was drawn to the report of an Ofsted inspection that took place in March 2019 which highlighted failings in a children’s home. The children’s home had declined in effectiveness since the previous inspection in

December 2018. Members were reminded that corporate parenting was a personal responsibility of all Members and officers, and generally thought that corporate parenting should be cross party.

The following points resulting in the Ofsted Inspection failings were highlighted:

- Three out of four recommendations had not been addressed and more than half of the recommendations had been ignored.
- A series of issues were identified including poorly maintained stairs and unrepaired damage in living rooms.
- Issues were raised with the requirement to file monthly returns from independent monitoring.
- The home had not advised Ofsted of significant events.
- Four members of staff were on sick leave and there were four vacancies. The Manager had not been present at the home for a period of three months. Concerns were raised about poor staff morale.
- Staff had not been adequately supervised.
- Behaviour management issues were raised.
- No accessible recording mechanism for bedrooms searched was recorded.
- There had been reports of young people going missing without adequate monitoring the return to care.
- There were issues with the engagement of managers with young people and engaging young people during the day.

It was questioned whether the new system for corporate parenting posed risks as there was reduced oversight. Corporate parenting matters had been raised previously at two POC meetings.

The Chairman noted that the issues had been rightfully raised and that the results were unacceptable. However, the Chairman confirmed that this did not amount to special circumstances to allow the item to be added to the agenda at short notice. Following investigations into the matter, the Chairman had spoken with officers who confirmed to her that:

- Officers were working closely with both the local inspector and the regional and relationship managers at Ofsted to monitor and improve the service. Ofsted had expressed their confidence in the Leadership team and would monitor and inspect the service again shortly.
- The service had relocated to a new building and long serving staff members found the transition and increased complexity of the challenges they faced with the young people they were working with difficult, several were absent in the early part of this year.
- The majority of staff had returned to work and recruitment in this type of setting was challenging. However, there were now three new staff members in post.
- The Ofsted action plan had been implemented and a new line management structure was in place to support staff and improve practice.
- Senior Management oversight of the improvement plan was now in place and regular contact with Ofsted was maintained.

The Chairman explained that given the above actions over a period of time, an urgent review at the meeting (with less than 48 hours notice), would not enable the Committee to consider the matter in a comprehensive way, particularly given the short notice for all the necessary information and witnesses that would be required to do so properly.

The Chairman considered that in order to ensure that Members upheld the Committee's duty of monitoring the performance of statutory children's services, she had requested a comprehensive report to be prepared for the Corporate Parenting Panel in May and for the report to go to POC in June 2019.

The Chairman informed Members that a site visit to the children's home would also be arranged.

The Committee considered children's safety to be paramount and endorsed the Chairman's course of action. Members also requested the attendance of the Corporate Director of Adult, Children and Young People Services and Cabinet Member of Children's services at the meeting in June 2019. This was to ensure the transparency of the steps being undertaken.

RESOLVED –

That the Committee:

- 1) requested that an update report on the children's home in question be provided to the Corporate Parenting Panel in May 2019 and to the Committee in June 2019.**
- 2) requested that the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services and the Corporate Director – Adult, Children and Young People Services attend the POC meeting in June 2019.**

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 7.50 pm.

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