

## Minutes



### FAMILIES, HEALTH AND WELLBEING SELECT COMMITTEE

8 September 2021

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

	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillors Philip Corthorne (Chairman), Heena Makwana (Vice-Chairman), Judith Cooper, Becky Haggart, Kerri Prince (Opposition Lead), Paula Rodrigues and Jan Sweeting</p> <p><b>Co - Opted Member:</b> Tony Little</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Anisha Teji (Democratic Services Officer), Darren Thorpe (Head of Business Delivery &amp; Support), Vikram Hansrani ( Director of Service – SEND), Dominika Michalik (Service Delivery Manager for SEND) and Ian Anderson (Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries)</p>
27.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
28.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
29.	<p><b>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Members queried whether the report due to go to Cabinet on 14 October 2021 on the reduction of published admission numbers could be made available to the Committee. It was explained that only the draft report for consultation was going to Cabinet in October 2021 and Members would have an opportunity to consider and make comments on the report in January 2022 as per the Committee's work programme. It was questioned whether any information could be provided to the Committee before this stage and it was agreed that a request would be made.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes from the meeting on 27 July 2021 be approved subject to the addition to the following additions:</p> <p><b>Minute 20 to include -</b></p> <p><b>Questions were raised on how lessons learnt from the incidents in Rotherham 2014, involving young vulnerable girls, had been applied to Hillingdon's</b></p>

approach to child safeguarding. It was confirmed that learning was captured from both a national and local level and various areas of practice were reviewed through the development forum. A national panel had also been introduced that considered areas of concern across the country, capturing information and publishing national reports and ongoing feedback.

**Minute 26 to include -**

**It was noted that the Committee asked for specific information in relation to Education Health Care Plans.**

30. **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.

31. **MAJOR REVIEW - WORKING TITLE: ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGIES REVIEW** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Committee heard an update on the witness session programme for the Assisted Living Technologies (ALT) review. It was noted that due to scheduling, it had been difficult to secure the attendance of a service provider witness at the meeting.

#### **Site visit to Park View Court**

The Head of Business Delivery & Support provided an update following the Member site visit to Park View Court on Wednesday 11 August 2021.

The Committee Park View Court was an extra care facility in the south of the Borough. As part of the session, Members were provided with a tour of the facility where they viewed an empty flat containing ALT equipment, common areas including a bath facility with reflective lights, a relaxation area and a treatment room. Following the tour, Members met with a range of staff that worked at Park View Court including the Head of Home and Extra Care.

General questions were asked around service users' thoughts and the feedback was generally positive. Park View Court reported that they had moved all their systems online making it easier to record and follow up actions. Care plans could be updated in real time to record prescription changes and family visits. This had previously been done through manual care records.

In terms of system failures and backups, it was noted that if a service user was not wearing their pendant, this could cause issues. The Committee heard that service users were sometimes unwilling to ask for assistance to avoid any inconvenience and work had been done to educate service users about the technology. Service users were encouraged to ask for assistance when required.

It was confirmed that training for staff was part of their contractual obligations and they needed to comply with Care Quality Commission requirements. The Council also provided training to staff.

The Committee raised some concerns with the gaps with online services, particularly in

domiciliary care, where the systems were not always accessible. Questions were raised on how users with dementia would be able to update care providers and elderly residents who were not familiar with smart phones and Alexa. The concerns were noted and Members had an opportunity to ask these questions directly to families and carers at the informal witness session arranged with service users.

Following service user feedback, it was noted that there had been adequate demonstrations of the technology and users were comfortable.

### **Witness session programme**

The Committee had regard to the witness programme which provided details of upcoming witness sessions. A session had been arranged open to all the Committee for Monday 13 September 2021 at 2 pm, involving various representatives from:

- Hillingdon Autistic Care & Support;
- Carers Trust Hillingdon;
- Hillingdon Mind;
- Alzheimer's Society; and
- a service user that lives in a supported living service.

Although the witness session had been arranged at short notice, it was noted that the session had been set around the availability of service users in an informal setting to enable an open environment.

The Committee was informed that a virtual headset training session was also being proposed for Tuesday 26 October 2021 and Democratic Services would finalise details in due course.

It was noted that a provider had been identified for another site visit to consider wider technology however the unit was not in the Borough. The Committee was also informed that extensive efforts had been made to secure witness attendance, however this was dependent on engagement.

Some concerns were raised that only three Members were able to attend the site visit on Wednesday 11 August 2021, that there was no service provider present at the meeting, that there had been a late notification of the meeting on Monday 13 September 2021 and the October meeting had missed out local authority exemplars. It was explained that given the nature of the settings and the Covid -19 pandemic restrictions, only a selected few Members attended. It was also confirmed that witness sessions had been arranged the availability of witnesses.

Contact had been made with the community engagement team in respect of an online surveys. Many local authorities were in the same stage of delivery as the London Borough of Hillingdon and efforts to find a suitable direct exemplar that would add value to the review would continue. Members were also keen on hearing from younger service users in addition to elder residents.

### **RESOLVED: That the Committee:**

- 1. noted the feedback from the site visit; and**
- 2. agreed the witness sessions arranged for Monday 13 September 2021 and Tuesday 26 October 2021.**

32. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED AND DISABILITY (SEND) PROVISION WITHIN HILLINGDON** *(Agenda Item 6)*

The Director of Service – Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and the Service Delivery Manager for SEND introduced the report on the SEND provision within Hillingdon.

An update was provided on the SEND provision within Hillingdon and on the support available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support.

It was noted that transformational work had continued to develop with more education settings now accessing pre statutory pathways despite financial pressures and the Covid 19 – pandemic. Although there had been an increase in early intervention and children accessing pre – statutory support, it was noted that there were still systemic funding pressures in SEND and these were being challenged both nationally and locally.

The Committee was provided with a context of the SEND reforms and it was highlighted that the London Borough of Hillingdon had seen a growth rate between 2014 – 2021 of 90% in comparison to London. The Committee heard information in relation to the impact of the pandemic, the SEND service, the SEND Advisory Service, the Educational Psychology Service and next steps.

The Committee noted the progress with Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) assessments. In response to questions around support packages available for residents and access to services, it was explained that success was measured through provision and how well the provision was delivered. Although there were six pupils out of provision through statutory school age, within that cohort pupils still had access to home education whilst the most appropriate provision was being sought. Once an appropriate setting had been finalised, the responsibilities were then discharged onto that provision. There had been recent development to expand the pre - statutory support available through the stronger families work where the most appropriate provisions could be triaged. Work was being done to address the identified gaps. It was agreed that further information would be provided in relation to performance indicators around how many people were looking for support packages and how many people were unable to access services.

The growth in the spending and the breakdown of SEN numbers by schools data was considered. Members enquired whether there were incentives in place for schools to have pupils with EHCPs. It was explained that the percentage of the pupils with EHCPs was against the percentage of pupils on that school roll and that data was used by the Council to consider how support could be best provided. Where there was a disproportionate number of pupils with ECHPs, work was being done to work with schools and representatives to address this. Support to all settings was provided by the SEND service and feedback was provided to schools and parents with follow up phone calls. A training plan had also been developed for SEND coordinators and SEND leads.

In response to questions around the support provided to pupils with EHCPs who home were educated, it was confirmed that a guidance had been developed with the Participation Team for parents who home educated children. There were home education officers to guide parents to ensure that the right provisions were provided. It was noted that electively home educated children with EHCPs were not provided with local authority funding as the local authority did not have a legal duty to arrange special educational provision, however guidance was provided. These EHCPs were also

reviewed more often.

The Committee heard what EHCP reviews involved and was advised that best practice learning and in-house services all played a significant role.

It was noted that there were some discrepancies in the audit of school's information that detailed the number of children with EHCPs. Officers were asked to review the statistics provided. Further information was requested on the number children waiting for placements to meet their needs and the most recent up to date information on the audit of school information. Members were informed that the data was obtained from the census earlier this year and it was accepted that there could be a difference in information before the Committee.

It was reported that the Council had implemented a scheme whereby schools that past the three percent threshold of their population of pupils with EHCPs or early support funding received funding of an additional £6000 per pupil. The engagement of governors was important and, since April 2021, a permanent team had been recruited to manage caseloads.

In response to queries in relation school places, the key challenges were explained noting that many specialist schools were close to being full. A strategy was being developed to focus on schools with high percentages. Surveys and annual review projects had been initiated to ensure that every EHCP had been reviewed and children and young people were placed in the right provisions.

Questions were asked around the action had been taken following the completion of assessments and what challenges were predicted for the future. Although 20 week performances looked positive and there was engagement with early support funding, it was acknowledged that there were still challenges in the context of policies and the growth of EHCPs. Engagement with school settings was significant. Further information regarding modelling growth, case load numbers and parent carer forums would be circulated to Members.

It was noted that in cases where early support funding was not appropriate due to complexity of the long term needs and waiting for assessments, exceptional funding could be considered as part of the process. There was a national shortage in educational psychology and ways on how to train and retain them was ongoing. The framework for local area inspections had not yet been published and it was conducted by the CQC and Ofsted and wider stakeholders. Further information was requested on short break services and what was being done to ensure that this was being offered to all children with additional needs.

The Committee welcomed the thorough and wide-ranging report. It was encouraged by how the service had transformed, particularly in light of the growth of numbers and ongoing challenges. For future reporting, figures and bar charts differentiating progress made and case studies were welcomed.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the contents of the report.**

33. **ANNUAL COMPLAINT & SERVICE MONITORING REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries introduced the report on Annual

Complaints & Service Monitoring Report for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and provided an oral summary of the key highlights.

It was reported that the Council focussed on trying to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of residents. Across the Council only 30% of informal complaints (2,587) had been escalated to a Stage 1 complaint (789) and only 5% of Stage 1 complaints had been escalated to Stage 2 (42).

It was noted that the Council had received a significant number of compliments (502) and the number of compliments recorded over the past 5 years had continued to rise from 76 in 2016/17 to 502 for 2021/21. Residents had been particularly complimentary about the wild flowers across the Borough.

The number of informal complaints recorded for 2020/21 of 2,587 was higher than the 2016/17 figure of 2,081. However, the number of formal complaints recorded (Stages 1, 2, and 3) was generally lower for 2020/21 than in previous years.

The number of Ombudsman Investigations was lower for 2020/21 than in any other previous years. This was because the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decided to pause their investigations for four months to allow local authorities to follow their Covid 19 response. It was also noted that the Council's corporate complaints procedure had been revised in 2017 which allowed a direct escalation of complaints to the Ombudsman.

The Committee discussed the options in place to manage complaints informally prior to them reaching a formal stage. It was explained that the volume of complaints were generally low in social care but higher in other areas such as waste and housing. It was agreed that good communication was highly valued in all complaints. A number of steps were taken at an informal level as complainants often preferred quick responses. Learning and feedback was identified and shared with senior management teams.

Concerns were raised in relation to the audit of Members Enquiries information. Although the main source of information was extracted from Members Enquiries data and from one source, officers were asked to review this information as there were discrepancies in the figures. Further information would be provided to Members.

It was noted that there had been complaints about trying to contact the relevant teams with concerns of long waiting times. Members heard that generally people contacted the contact centre with issues and these calls would then be filtered to the relevant teams. To make the complaints process easier for residents, there was also a form on the Council's website that was sent directly to the complaints team.

Further information would be provided in relation to highways complaints. It was noted that education complaints were low and many complaints were raised directly with the school.

The Committee discussed the importance of using officer resource sensibly and whether it would be possible for the digital agenda to provide better information to Members to reduce the number of Members' Enquiries. Members also asked what amounted to sufficient evidence in the complaints process and it was agreed that residents would benefit from better information on this.

Members thanked officers for the full and thorough report, that covered a wide range of services.

	<b>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the contents of the report and provided any comments to officers as appropriate.</b>
34.	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b> <i>(Agenda Item 8)</i>  <b>RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.</b>
35.	<b>CABINET FORWARD PLAN</b> <i>(Agenda Item 9)</i>  <b>RESOLVED: That the forward plan be noted.</b>
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.13 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji on Tel: 01895 277655 Email: [ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk). Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

**The public part of this meeting was filmed live on the Council's YouTube Channel to increase transparency in decision-making, however these minutes remain the official and definitive record of proceedings.**