

Minutes

Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee
Wednesday, 5 January 2022
Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Philip Corthorne (Chairman), Heena Makwana (Vice-Chairman), Becky Haggart, Kerri Prince (Opposition Lead), Steve Tuckwell (substitute) and Jan Sweeting</p> <p>Co - Opted Member: Tony Little</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Anisha Teji (Democratic Services Officer), Darren Thorpe (Head of Business Delivery & Support), Dan Kennedy (Corporate Director for Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services), Sarah Phillips (School Place Planning Project Manager), Debbie Scarborough (Service Manager - Adult & Community Learning), Alex Coman (Director of Safeguarding, Partnerships & Quality Assurance) and Gemma McNamara (Head of Finance – Business Partnering and Transformation)</p>
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Judith Cooper with Councillor Steve Tuckwell substituting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Paula Rodrigues,.</p>
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</p> <p>None.</p>
3.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from the meeting on 30 November 2021 be approved as an accurate record.</p>
4.	<p>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</p> <p>It was confirmed that there were no Part II items and that all business would therefore be conducted in public.</p>

5. HILLINGDON ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING (HACL) SELF ASSESSMENT

The Service Manager - Adult & Community Learning presented the report on Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning (HACL) Self-Assessment which summarised the effectiveness of the service provided to residents by HCAL during the 2021 -21 academic year.

Annually, HCAL was required by the Department for Education (DfE), to produce a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) summarising the quality of the education provided to residents as a result of public funding. The report had been shared with the Cabinet Member for Families, Education and Wellbeing prior to being submitted to the DfE and Committee. The SAR outlined the areas of strengths, key improvements, the impact of what the service did and how money was spent. It was highlighted that 85% of learners were women who lived in the south of the Borough and the most disadvantaged people were targeted. The impacts of the covid pandemic were explained to the Committee and it was noted that older and vulnerable people with disabilities had found it particularly challenging to adapt to online resources.

Further information on the breakdown of course attendance and age groups of students would be provided to Members. It was noted that it was difficult to collect specific information due to GDPR restrictions however, on average, most learners ranged from 28 to 60. The eldest learner pre pandemic was 100 and elder learners mostly did non accredited courses. It was explained that the reason why students stopped courses was due to different circumstances and general life changes

During Member questions, it was highlighted that people with low basic and digital skills were targeted and digital inclusion was high on the list of priorities. There was a course available for students that delivered these essential skills.

It was recognised that the recommendations from the previous Resident, Education and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee's review of HCAL had helped the service. The review had allowed the team to identify what worked well and reinforced the need for accountability, the review had led to a rebranding of some of the services provided and generally increased awareness and engagement with Members and the public. It was confirmed that the Council was working on the recommendation to create a robust bid to the Greater London Authority for additional funding and data was being collated.

During Member questions, it was noted that staff and volunteers were encouraged to attend mental health courses to increase professional development. In previous years, HCAL had received funding which enabled staff to be paid and mental health and domestic abuse training had been delivered.

Although there were employability related training interventions for people with learning disabilities, employment was still an area of challenge and work was being done to develop relationships. There was a jobs board that was updated regularly, close liaison with representatives from the Job Centre Plus, online careers fayres both in person and virtually, strong links with the national careers service, workshops had been arranged and employability was embedded into all courses. It was explained that there had been a number of students that had trained as teaching assistants however obtaining work experience was challenging in the current

circumstances due to pandemic restrictions and the financial pressures.

The Committee considered that there were many strengths of the service and concluded that HCAL provided a good service that had risen to the challenges of covid. Members commended officers for their work in growing the offer and supporting vulnerable residents.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. reviewed and noted the report; and**
- 2. provided support and challenge to the service manager as a result of that oversight.**

6. PROPOSED CHANGES TO ADMISSIONS CRITERIA AND PAN FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Corporate Director for Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services and the School Place Planning Project Manager introduced the reports on the Proposed Changes to Admissions Criteria and PAN for Community Schools and Quarterly School Place Planning Update. These reports were considered together as they involved matters closely connected however Members made resolutions on each report separately.

It was reported that the census demonstrated a snapshot of every school and there had been a slight decline in primary school places and a continuing increase in secondary school places. The pandemic had led to greater pupil movements in all year groups and specific schools adding uncertainty to forecasting the need for school places. The Committee heard about how unfilled school places had impacted school financial plans, staffing and caused disruption to class sizes. Some schools had consulted on reducing the Published Admissions Number (PAN) to take effect from 2023 and schools, governing bodies, and parents had all been asked to take part in the consultation process. The consultation responses had been analysed and summarised for the Committee and Members were asked for their comments. The comments would be incorporated in the report that was due to go to Cabinet in February 2022.

The unprecedented levels of new applications for school places in all year groups was noted. In terms of how this demand was being managed, it was explained that every child that applied for a school place was offered a school place. Although there had been a stress on upper school places, schools were managing and received support and advice from the Council where it was necessary.

The Committee agreed that the Council needed to support schools and their governing bodies with the need to reduce PAN as there was a concern regarding unfilled places.

In response to questions around bulge classes and building repairs, it was explained recommendations were made based on forecasts for the next five – ten years and data collated. The recommendations for permanent buildings rather than bulge classes were made on the basis that there had been a much longer term demand. This demand had changed due to factors such as Brexit and the pandemic and it was

therefore necessary to adapt the admission numbers to ensure that capacity was available to meet the demand, without incurring extra costs for schools. Officers had worked with schools in cases where there has been predicted increased demands to put in places mechanisms such as budge classes without the need for extra accommodation.

It was noted that Hillside Infant School had a poor state of building and needed replacing. Both Hillside Infant School and Harlington School had a number of pupils that travelled from a distance and there were spaces to manage any overflow.

The Committee considered that a good consultation had been conducted and asked for some further context around the five different responses. It was explained that schools had already discussed the reduction in PAN informally with families over years. Letters had been sent to parents and information was placed on the school and Council website. There had also been a wider consultation with other schools in Hillingdon and neighbouring local authorities and these were all the responses received.

Members were informed that in the future it was hoped that the only pupils travelling out of borough were those that were need of a very specialist provision. Long term plans and discussions on how to reach this were taking place. The DfE had agreed that there was a need and demand for special school places.

It was confirmed that the DfE was managing the free school in West Ruislip and there was currently ongoing testing of the site. A planning application was due to be put before the Planning Committees in Summer 2022.

Members noted that the number of parents making first choices out of the Borough was over 25% and this was a significant figure. It was explained that the situation was being monitored as not all parents received their first and second out of Borough preference and this impacted school places planning forecasts.

Members thanks officers for the good and comprehensive report. It was acknowledged that it was difficult to look ahead in the current circumstances.

The Committee agreed the following comments for Cabinet:

The Committee recognises the challenges associated with school place planning, and the necessity for periodic reviews of admissions criteria and PAN numbers, to keep schools viable and on a sustainable financial footing. It therefore endorses the recommendations coming before cabinet. The committee believes it is important to take every opportunity to build flexibility into the school estates to help cater for fluctuating cyclical demand, and endorses officers' approach to this as well as the collaborative work undertaken with schools throughout this process and on an ongoing basis.

Resolved: That the Committee:

- 1. Reviewed the proposed changes to Hillingdon's Admissions Arrangements detailed in the Cabinet report.**
- 2. Reviewed the responses from the consultation on PAN changes to four**

	<p>community primary phase schools provided in the report.</p> <p>3. Provided comments to be included in the Cabinet report which will be presented in February.</p>
7.	<p>QUARTERLY SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING UPDATE</p> <p>The Corporate Director for Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services and the School Place Planning Project Manager introduced the reports on the Proposed Changes to Admissions Criteria and PAN for Community Schools and Quarterly School Place Planning Update. These reports were considered together as they involved matters closely connected however Members made resolutions on each report separately.</p> <p>RESOVLED: That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. noted the update presented in this report. 2. questioned officers about the update.
8.	<p>OVERVIEW OF CORPORATE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES</p> <p>The Director of Safeguarding, Partnerships & Quality Assurance introduced the report and provided an overview of Corporate Parenting Responsibilities. The report focussed on reiterating the role of the Council in looking after and protecting children and young people when they were unable to stay at home.</p> <p>It was reported that at the end of October 2021, the Council was a corporate parent to 383 children under the age of 18 and 508 young people aged 18 – 25. There were a variety of reasons why children entered care, but this was mainly due to abuse and neglect. The London Borough of Hillingdon had a significant cohort of children (27%) who were in care due to being unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). The average number of UASC for authorities was around 6%. The Committee heard information about the virtual schools team, the role and work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and case study examples of successes.</p> <p>In terms of risk and safeguarding, it was explained that officers always engaged with children, conducting safety assessments and the children were involved in co-producing looked after care plans which were then reviewed by Independent Reviewing Officers. Children were always invited to take part in meetings and their voices were taken into account. Plans were tailored towards each individual child and reflected how they felt.</p> <p>It was explained that the process of missing children was continuously reviewed with the introduction of return to home interviews. Information obtained at these interviews were used to assess and determine how safeguards could be put into place. It was reported that approximately 100 children had chosen to have interviews with allocated workers demonstrating the strong trust and bond in relationships. An initiative had also been introduced in Hillingdon whereby children could select their own social workers (using social worker profiles with pictures and hobbies) rather than being an allocated social worker leading to an increase in engagement. To further improve safeguarding the Safer Partnership Forum had been established and was attended regular and used as a robust learning mechanism.</p>

The Committee was advised that a breakdown of the types of accommodation children were living in, whether in or out borough, would be provided to the Members outside the meeting. Most children were in foster placements however there were a large number of children living in independent residential homes. The Council tried to find accommodation locally to avoid disruption to lives however this was dependent on circumstances as some children needed to be placed further away to avoid criminal exploitation.

It was noted that the London Borough of Hillingdon was a port authority and there was a high number of UASC. Members were informed that the Council was well prepared to receive UASC, providing the right assessments, using translation services and close liaison with a Home Office officer that was based at the Council. It was acknowledged that housing placement could be challenging however social workers liaised closely with housing teams to identify the best solutions.

In terms of childrens' choices in schooling, it was reported that as per statutory requirements each child had a personal education plan overseen by the Council's virtual schools headteacher. Hillingdon had a dedicated virtual schools team and within ten days of a child becoming looked after, a personal education plan would have been developed detailing learning needs and ability. The Council tried to keep children in a London Borough of Hillingdon school if there were already placed in one to maintain stability and ESOL courses were offered to UASC.

The Committee welcomed the excellent report and interesting case studies. It was acknowledged that there was a collective responsibility for the children and young people and the corporate parenting pack for Members set a good understanding of the role. Officers were commended for their work.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- 1. noted the contents of the report.**
- 2. continued to embed the corporate parenting ethos in the workings of the Committee and champion them across the Council.**

9. 2022/23 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR SERVICES WITHIN THE REMIT OF FAMILIES, HEALTH & WELLBEING SELECT COMMITTEE

The Head of Finance – Business Partnering and Transformation and the Corporate Director for Planning, Environment, Education introduced the report detailing the draft revenue budget and capital programme for the services within the remit the Committee.

Key points from the report were highlighted, including details of the financial pressures generated by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the additional funding received from government, together with earmarked Council reserves, in order to manage such pressures.

Budget proposals for 2022/23 had been prepared in the context of a wider strategy

addressing the five-year MTTF period. The latest monitoring position for the 2021/22 financial year reported a net underspend of £419k which would leave uncommitted General Balances at £26,520k entering the 2022/23 financial year. Of the £10,416k savings within the 2021/22 budget, 79% were either already banked or track for delivery, with 12% at an earlier stage of implementation and potential risks on 9% - relating to the Leisure Centre management fee. Based on 1.8% per annum increases in the core Council Tax and 1% per annum increases in the Social Care Precept, funding available to support service expenditure was projected to grow by £32,034k to £270,279k between 2021/22 and 2026/27.

The Committee noted that Cabinet would consider the budget proposals on 17 February 2022 and the report would include comments from Select Committees. Members were informed that Council would meet to agree the 2022/23 budgets and Council tax levels on 24 February 2022.

Although this had been a challenging budget to set, it was the most robust and there was a strong understanding of the figures particularly on the social care side. It was noted that unknown at this time what the pattern in specific areas would be such as mental health and 11 million had been set aside for covid reserve for 2023/24. In relation to the volatility for covid recovery, the assumption was that this would start to decrease over time. A number of pressures in SEND transport had been covered with covid money.

Further information would be provided on how the borrowing requirements for the London Borough of Hillingdon stood compared to neighbouring boroughs. It was confirmed that the figure in relation to Harlington School had been included in the figures for secondary school expansion. It was noted that monies for youth provision was earmarked the construction of scouts and guides.

The proposals for the education budget were part of the DSG deficit recovery plan and it was not intended to impact directly on the services provided by schools. The schools forum supported the proposals.

In terms of the provision of semi-independent and shared accommodation, it was explained that once a child reached over 18 they would be placed in shared accommodation. The Council had block accommodation that was chargeable at close to universal credit rates, and this could lead to significant savings rather than having to purchase on the spot placements.

Concerns in relation to safety valves were noted and some Members considered that it was difficult to give comments to Cabinet when there was not enough information at this time. It was noted that the SEND transport demand was expected to grow but it was hoped that with the new provision the costs would decrease. Questions were raised regarding the national transfer team and USAC, and it was explained that the Home Office had increased funding on the asylum grant, and it was sufficient to cover the cost of placements. The proposals to library services had been subject to a bid review and there had been close liaison with the service.

The Committee noted the strong well-constructed proposals particularly around the investment in schools and infrastructure. Although there were some uncertainties, the 4.7 million at the MTTF period was welcomed. There were many positives around the

new mental health pathway, the major review and stronger families programmes. It was important to focus on how the Council changed the way services were delivered.

RESOLVED: That authority be delegated to the Chairman and Labour Lead in consultation with Democratic Services to agree comments to be submitted to Cabinet.

10. REVIEW: ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGIES - AGREE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to the proposed draft recommendations published as part of the agenda, revised recommendations with minor amendments were tabled for the Committee's consideration.

Members agreed the below recommendations for the major review on Assisted Living Technology (ALT):

1. That Cabinet welcomes the findings and recommendations from their review into the Council's offer of Assisted Living Technology (ALT) to residents.
2. That Cabinet:

Tailoring to residents' changing needs

1. Commends the work undertaken through the Telecareline Service to support over 70's residents live more independent lives.
2. That, in developing and reviewing social care packages for individual residents, officers implement a checklist in 2022 that takes into account both the current ALT offer but also allows for future refinements should the need arise and as technology develops.
3. That officers develop a narrative to support communications to tackle misconceptions about Assisted Living Technology and engender confidence in its usage on the part of service users and families; and that also identifies how barriers and costs to the take up to Assisted Living Technology may be managed.
4. Welcomes the feedback received as part of the Committee's review and recommends that the Council continues to listen to the views of service users families and carers, rather than during periodic reviews of the service, as a means of increasing confidence in residents and improving the ALT offer.
5. That officers conduct a training needs analysis in 2022 to identify relevant staff that may need to gain a greater understanding of ALT and how it works for users, including use of the Virtual Reality headsets and other appropriate training.

Looking to the future

6. Reviews its approach to Assisted Living Technology alongside the wider London Borough of Hillingdon's digital strategy and digital connectivity strategy, seeking out the future benefits to service users that full fibre, the "internet of things" and digital inclusion can offer.
7. That officers work with providers of ALT technologies to take a consistent approach in moving systems online to improve the effectiveness of service monitoring and delivery 'in sync' with health and social care partners.
8. Agrees to continued liaison with Brunel University and other sources of research and development to ensure the ongoing evolution of the Assisted Living Technology strategy continues to be informed by emerging good practice.
9. Notes that ALT can be an important preventative tool to a wider range of vulnerable residents, not only those in older years or with dementia.
10. Therefore, supports the principal that an ALT offer should be a consideration at all relevant major resident contact points with the Council, including universal services (not solely social care) and asks officers to prepare an implementation plan for this during 2022, for consideration by the Cabinet Member.
11. Recognises that ALT sits within a wide spectrum of services provided by LBH and partners. It forms an integral part of the broader support which is grounded in providing individual, personal-centred care, clearly tailored to the needs and preferences of the individual service user. ALT is an option to enhance rather than directly replace existing services, improving efficiencies in the delivery of resident outcomes.

It was explained that a draft report would be presented for the Committee's consideration at the February 2022 meeting.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations were agreed and a final report be presented to Members at the next meeting.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee was provided with an update further to the email sent by Democratic Services on 17 December 2021 regarding requests for further information.

Members were advised that given the current situation with the pandemic, Public Health had advised that the further information requested on Public Health Integrated Contracts would be presented to the Committee as part of a full report to allow proper scrutiny. This would most likely be added to the work programme for April 2022.

Democratic Services were liaising with officers to arrange a suitable time for Members to receive a brief update on the Covid situation in Hillingdon. This would most likely be provided to the Committee in March 2022.

RESOLVED: That the updates and work programme be noted.

12.	CABINET FORWARD PLAN RESOLVED: That the forward plan be noted.
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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@hillington.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.