

Minutes

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE

3 November 2022



Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Heena Makwana (Chairman), Roy Chamdal (Vice-Chairman), Kishan Bhatt, Tony Gill, Rita Judge, Peter Smallwood and Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)</p> <p>Co-opted Member: Tony Little</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Alex Coman (Director of Safeguarding, Partnership and Quality Assurance), Vikram Hansrani (Executive Director, Education and SEND), Jayne Mumford (Head of SEND) and Anisha Teji (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
29.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
30.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
31.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman and officers were thanked for providing additional information as requested in respect of the Safeguarding report. Any outstanding information would be provided in due course.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from the meeting on 21 September 2022 be agreed.</p>
32.	<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 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be heard in Part I.</p>
33.	<p>OVERVIEW ON CORPORATE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Director of Safeguarding, Partnership and Quality Assurance introduced the report on the Overview of Corporate Parenting Responsibilities and provided a detailed update on the work undertaken to support children and young people in Hillingdon.</p> <p>The Committee heard about the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities, role</p>

and principles. It was reported that at the end of September 2022 Hillingdon Council was corporate parent for 339 children under the age of 18 and 575 aged 18 to 25. Examples of achievements were also provided. It was highlighted that as the London Borough of Hillingdon was a port authority 19% of Looked After Children (LAC) under 18 had arrived in the Borough as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). Through the Corporate Parenting Panel and Young People Council, ways were explored on how to improve aspirations and achieving good education. Opportunities such as day work experiences had been arranged to provide insight into different working environments.

The Committee was pleased to see that the London Borough of Hillingdon was the only local authority in London to have succeeded in achieving the full quality mark. Members also welcomed the case studies of achievements of children supported by their corporate parents and were keen to support children and young people with insight and opportunities into different working environments.

In response to questions around whether dispersal and funding arrangements in Hillingdon were still working well, it was explained that the Council had 10 days to move children and young people into permanent accommodation. The scheme had been mandated in December 2021 and the Council was working well with the Home Office. Transferring children in a supportive way to ensure that their needs were met was a priority and Hillingdon covered the cost of the process. It was also explained that there were various types of accommodation including foster carers, residential homes and semi-independent provisions. 52% LAC lived with foster carers some in Hillingdon and outside of the Borough. In terms of visiting some of these accommodation provisions, officers would explore this further and come back to Members in due course. It was noted that various mechanisms and quality checks took place in residential units.

The Committee noted the events that took place to celebrate LAC and young people and their achievements including the Kids in Care Awards which took place annually.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the contents of the report and embedded the Corporate Parenting ethos in the workings of the Committee and champion them across the Council.

34. **HILLINGDON DRAFT SEND STRATEGY 2022-2025** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Executive Director, Education and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Head of SEND introduced the report on the Hillingdon Draft SEND Strategy 2022 – 2025. The report provided the Committee with an update on the recently consulted draft SEND Strategy (the Strategy).

The Committee heard that the Strategy outlined the Council's plan to further develop the SEND offer in Hillingdon over the next four years. The aim of the Strategy was to improve outcomes and help raise the educational achievements, health and care of children and young people in the Borough. The Strategy set out the priorities and shared vision. The consultation period had taken place over the summer term and the report included both the quantitative and qualitative findings from the survey. There was a slight disappointment in the response rate however the Committee was assured that a number of pre-consultation engagement events had also taken place and stakeholders were involved in shaping and co-producing the document prior to formal consultation. There had also been a great deal of post engagement activity.

In response to Member questions regarding how the views and feedback of SEND students was collated, it was recognised through the consultation that the views of young people had not been fully ascertained and further engagement and contact had been made with the Youth Council, Young Peoples' Health Watch and school councils to gain insight. The Committee considered that the views of both education providers and parents ought to have been grouped and assessed separately to identify more accurate results. This feedback was taken on board for future consultations.

It was noted that the Strategy was a dynamic document and work had already been undertaken to meet priorities including the establishment of strong governance arrangements through the SEND Strategic Partnership Board and SEND Operation groups.

The Committee acknowledged the amount of work that had gone into the consultation. Although the feedback was limited, Member considered that it would have been useful to have information on the methods on how priorities would be met. It was explained that the Council had a good relationship with parent carer forums, and they had been involved in shaping the document through the formal consultation and other engagement events. This was an overarching Strategy, and the work was supported through the SEND workstreams and action plans in place. There was another document being worked on including the SEND Sufficiency Strategy that would also be consulted on in due course.

It was reported that the survey had been launched on the Local Offer website and the Corporate website. A number of communications had been sent to alert respondents.

Some concerns were raised regarding the timing of the consultation being over the summer term, that there had only been two headteacher responses and the general feedback received. It was noted that some mainstreams schools already had a huge number of SEND children and questions were raised on how the Strategy would be delivered without overwhelming mainstream schools. It was explained that nationally there was work being undertaken to increase inclusivity and it was recognised that some schools were going well beyond to meet needs of children. The Council was working closely with schools to ensure that they could self-assess their practice around SEND and get the best outcomes. Although there was no possibility to cap the percentage of SEND children at all schools, there could be further work to develop closer and stronger partnership working and communication.

If any further information was available on the number of surveys as part of the consultation, this would be provided to the Committee. Although there was disappointment about the low number of responses, the Committee was assured that there had been a lot of different engagement work undertaken. Lessons about consultation timings would be fed back and taken into account for future consultations.

The Committee was keen to hear about how the Strategy was progressing and requested that an update be placed on the work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- 1. noted the contents of the draft Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2022-2025 which outlined the strategic vision and**

	<p>priorities for the delivery of SEND Services across the borough.</p> <p>2. Delegated to the Chairman, in conjunction with the DSO (and in consultation with the Opposition Lead) to agree comments to submit to Cabinet.</p>
35.	<p>SCOPING REPORT FOR PROPOSED REVIEW 'THE STRONGER FAMILIES HUB: OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS - EXPLORING PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK TO IMPROVE SERVICE AND SATISFACTION' (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>The Committee considered the scoping report for the proposed review on 'The Stronger Families Hub: Our engagement with key stakeholders – exploring participation and feedback to improve service and satisfaction.'</p> <p>Members were keen to hear from a wider range of stakeholders including young people, parents and headteachers. It was agreed that the scoping report would be updated to reflect this and the first witness session would take place on 6 December 2022.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee commented on and considered the scoping report to initiate the review.</p>
36.	<p>VERBAL UPDATE ON YOUTH COUNCIL MEETING VISIT (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>On 26 September 2022, Councillors Bhatt, Sweeting and Gill attended a Youth Council meeting and the Committee was provided with an update of that meeting.</p> <p>Members were impressed with the students, and it was highlighted that they were keen to involve themselves with Council business, meet Members to raise issues and attend and observe meetings. There was a surprisingly lack of representation from the South of the Borough and ways that this could be improved was discussed at the meeting. It was noted that social media was great platform to promote the activities of the Youth Council however there were some challenges in this area. The students were described as an intelligent and refreshing group that were able to share what was working well and going wrong in addition to share the work of different Council activities.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the verbal update.</p>
37.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.</p>
38.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>Demcoratic Services would liaise with officers to arrange a suitable time to consider an update on the SEND strategy.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the updates and work programme be noted.</p>
39.	<p>PART II - OFSTED REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>)</p> <p>This item was deferred to the meeting on 6 December 2022.</p>

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.00 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji on ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk or 01895 277655. 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.