

FOSTERING REVIEW: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee name	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Updated scoping report Appendix B – Guidance on undertaking policy reviews
Ward	All

HEADLINES

Background

As part of the review into fostering, Members are advised to consider finalising findings, conclusions and recommendations. These will be with the intention of improving the fostering offer for young people and foster carers.

The Committee has held a number of witness sessions, outlined below

Witness session	Purpose/ theme	Witnesses/ officers attending
Witness session 1 – 13 November 2025	Understanding fostering in Hillingdon	Director of Children's Safeguarding & Care Assistant Director of Care Provision Services Service Manager – Care Delivery Virtual School Headteacher Assistant Director for Education Fostering & Permanence Panel rep
Witness Session 2a – 16 December 2025	Young peoples' experiences/ best practices	6x Children in care/ care experienced young people Children's Participation Team Manager Children's Participation Officer Fostering & Permanence Panel rep
Witness Session 2b – 04 December 2025	Foster carer experiences/ best practices	3x Foster carers

RECOMMENDATION

That the Select Committee:

- 1. Agree findings, conclusions and draft recommendations in relation to the review; and**
- 2. Delegate final wording of the recommendations to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead**

Note: To assist Members, Democratic Services will share a draft set of recommendations for consideration. These will be circulated separately to the Committee when ready in advance of the meeting.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Scoping report – looking at the original parameters of the review

The updated review scoping report is attached so Members can be reminded of the original Terms of Reference as set out below, and whether the Committee has met these:

1. To understand the needs and experiences of children in foster care through examining demographics, underrepresented groups, placement types, placement stability, educational attainment, wellbeing and emerging trends.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of current recruitment and retention strategies, and support available to foster carers, including the impact of the new fostering offer.
3. To identify barriers to fostering for potential carers and children in care, and to identify opportunities for improvement.
4. To formulate recommendations to Cabinet aimed at strengthening Hillingdon's fostering provision, thereby improving outcomes for children in care.

2) Policy review guidance

Members are asked to consider whether draft findings and recommendations:

- Meet the initial aims / objectives of the review (as above)
- Be SMART, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
- Not be a short-term fix, but a lasting outcome
- Consider the financial aspect, e.g. cost neutral, provide savings or if at a cost, then affordable – and if possible aligned with the MTFF (budget planning process)
- Are based on a broad evidence base as possible and 'user or resident' insight
- Not create additional bureaucracy, e.g. if it relates to a policy, then to seek to review or amend existing policies (unless there is an absolute imperative for a new policy)
- If publicity or wider engagement or education is recommended, to target such communications as best as possible rather than generally
- Consider 'conclusions' as well as any specific recommendations.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

This review aims to help improve the fostering offer, to improve outcomes for young people and foster carers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage, pending any committee recommendations.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage, pending any committee recommendations.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Updated scoping report

Appendix B – Guidance on undertaking policy reviews