

Review of Support for Music Tuition in Hillingdon

Interim Report of the Working Group

May 2011



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Message from the Working Group

Cllr Judy Kelly (Chairman)
Cllr Peter Curling
Cllr John Hensley
Cllr Michael White
Mrs Lynne Kauffman

We are pleased to present our interim report on support to music tuition in Hillingdon. It is the first comprehensive review of the Hillingdon Music Service drawing on the analysis of a significant amount of information from both the Music Service itself and those involved with it.

From the outset, all Members of the Working Group have been fully appreciative of the hard work and high standards achieved by the Hillingdon Music Service and we are extremely aware of how playing a musical instrument provides unique opportunities for young people to enrich their personal development and learning skills

The Working Group is also aware that Hillingdon residents expect every Council service to operate effectively and provide value for money. Whilst we understand the uncertainty caused by this review, we hope that it will, in the future, be remembered positively as having been a milestone in both shaping the future direction of the Music Service and putting it on a firm financial footing.

The Working Group would like to thank all those who have participated so far in this review. In the longer term, we look forward to developing more innovative and sustainable proposals, in close partnership with the young people, parents and those involved in the service, to improve the access and take-up of music tuition alongside Hillingdon's wider cultural and arts activities.

Councillor Judy Kelly
Chairman and Hillingdon's Champion for the Arts

Background

For many years, the Council has provided borough-wide support for music tuition through the Hillingdon Music Service. It is highly regarded by its users and receives much praise and recognition for its ensembles, choirs and other enrichment activities.

In less austere times, the Council would not be faced with making as many difficult decisions about local services. However, the reality is that all public services have been asked to make savings to help reduce the national debt. For many years now, Hillingdon has gained an enviable reputation across the country of making services work more efficiently, whilst improving residents' experience, access to and use of those services. Residents have seen this demonstrated most profoundly in the total transformation of the Library Service.

The Hillingdon Music Service should be treated no differently to other local public services at this time. In addition to the pressures on local funding for music tuition, evolving Government policy is resulting in changes to national direct funding for music tuition presenting both opportunities and financial challenges locally.

Against this backdrop, on the 17th February 2011 Hillingdon's Cabinet considered the Council's budget proposals for 2011/12 and beyond. One of the many savings proposals put forward was a reduction in spend and change to the way Hillingdon Music Service operated. During the preparation of the budget report it was not possible to obtain a reliable breakdown of the current subsidy for the Music Service (something this review has now addressed). Accordingly, the budget proposal included funding to the current year in July whilst the situation was examined in further detail.

This proposal understandably attracted the attention and concern of people involved in the Music Service, including staff, parents and pupils. A number of petitions, letters and emails to the Council were received along with musical protests outside the Civic Centre.

In response to this and to listen to the views of those involved in the Service, the Leader of the Council chaired a public meeting before the Cabinet meeting. He indicated that time would be set aside for a review of music tuition by a Working Group reporting back to Cabinet before any final decision was made on the future of the Hillingdon Music Service.

On 24th February 2011, the Council established a Working Group to be led by Councillor Judy Kelly, to review support to music tuition in Hillingdon in two distinct phases. Firstly, to review the operation and value for money of the Hillingdon Music Service bringing forward interim proposals to Cabinet in May 2011. Secondly, the Working Group was tasked to develop longer-term proposals, which it will undertake in earnest over the summer and autumn of 2011.

Objectives of Phase 1 of the review

Following the Working Group's establishment on 24 February 2011, the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Councillor Judy Kelly, approved Terms of Reference and Operation of the Working Group.

This report covers Phase 1 of the review which has specifically looked at the operation and value for money of the Hillingdon Music Service, making interim recommendations to Cabinet.

The Terms of Reference for this phase were:

1. To review the delivery of music tuition in Hillingdon and whether it offers value for money and is cost effective;
2. To specifically review the structure, operating procedures, utilisation of staff and management (financial and general) of the Hillingdon Music Service;
3. To consider an interim structure to carry forward the delivery of music tuition in Hillingdon whilst a long term sustainable solution for the delivery of quality music tuition can be determined;
4. To present to Cabinet an interim report to ensure the continuity of music tuition, particularly related to those part way through an academic course, by the date of the May Cabinet meeting to enable Cabinet to determine how best to continue support for music tuition in Hillingdon;

To achieve the above objectives, Working Group Members met on a number of occasions, tasked officers from across the Council to provide it with a forensic overview of the service, received information reports, sought valuable evidence from external witnesses involved in the music service and reviewed in detail proposals for interim arrangements.

The information, evidence and findings of the Working Group are set out in the next sections under the following headings:

1. Information and analysis
2. Evidence and enquiry
3. Interim proposals

The conclusions and recommendations to Cabinet are set out at the end of this report, followed by relevant appendices referred to herein.

Information and analysis

The Working Group held its first meeting on 12th April 2011. This was an important scene setting meeting so that Members could fully understand the current state of play of the Music Service.

Members reviewed a comprehensive Information Report (Appendix 3) which contained information about the service, the way in which the service was managed, its current state of finances and fees and information on how music tuition was provided elsewhere along with the latest national policy context.

Much of this information had been gained through interviews with those involved in the Music Service, data provided by the service, investigative work, research and a forensic financial analysis by Officers from across Council departments.

Members appreciated that despite the considerable effort taken in getting this information, in some instances information about the service had either been hard to find or had sometimes offered up conflicting data. However, Members were reassured that considerable care had been taken to ensure that the information was as accurate as possible.

In reviewing the information about the Service, Members noted some of the following key facts and figures, which are set out in more detail in Appendix 3:

- Group and Individual Instrumental Tuition was the core activity of the Hillingdon Music Service, taking place at schools across the Borough
- 1,934 pupils across Hillingdon were receiving Group or Individual music tuition out of a potential market of 26,332 pupils across Hillingdon. Of those approximately:
 - 87% were residents of Hillingdon
 - 13% were non-residents (of which all bar 2% go to Hillingdon schools)
 - 10% of lessons were subsidised for pupils whose families are on benefit
 - 44% of all pupils were from Black and Ethnic Minority backgrounds
 - 1.4% of pupils were children with Statements of Educational Needs.
 - 60% of pupils were girls compared to 40% boys
- The vast majority of pupils taking up music tuition were from the north of the Borough compared to the South (9.6% were from the Ickenham Ward compared to 2.2% from Pinkwell Ward in Harlington).
- 273 pupils were working towards Grade examinations next term, 58 Year 10 pupils were receiving support for GCSE exams and 10 Year 12 pupils were receiving support for A-Level exams

- The role of the Saturday Music Centre to provide young people with the opportunity to take part in orchestras, string groups and choirs as well as attend further music theory classes.
- About 200 pupils participated in evening and after school activities.
- There were a number of enrichment activities providing value added learning for young people, including prestigious concert performances at home and overseas.
- The close working with schools to widen access to music as well as individual work commission by schools of the Music Service.
- The total expenditure of the music service in the 2010/11 financial year was £1,384,079
- The net cost to the Council of the Music Service in 2010/11, once corporate overheads were taken into account, was £705k.
- Without the use of the National Standards Fund, the estimated subsidy by the Council on Group Tuition was 58% of the cost of provision, 67% for Individual tuition, 76% for the Saturday Music Centre and 71% for Evening Activities.
- National Standards Fund and Instrumental Grant funding ended in 2010/11 and were replaced by a new Music Grant from the Federation of Music Services. Hillingdon was allocated £347,566 from this new grant for 2011/12.
- Fee levels were low in comparison to neighbouring local authorities and that there was a non-collection rate of fees from parents of an estimated 8%.

As set out in detail in Appendix 3, the Working Group also reviewed the following historical aspects of the Music Service:

- Management and staffing of the Music Service
- Corporate, audit and financial compliance
- Governance arrangements and their effectiveness
- Marketing and promotion of the Service

Members noted that the Music Service had traditionally been managed both financially and operationally at arm's length from the Council. It had therefore been long perceived as a separate entity and had not benefited from strong accountability and oversight.

Evidence and enquiry

The Working Group held its second meeting on the 28th April 2011. This meeting gave Members the opportunity to question invited external witnesses, hear from the Cabinet Member responsible, seek further advice from officers and also discuss some of the areas where Hillingdon Music Service could start to make improvements to the way it operated.

Members heard from a variety of external witnesses who provided their views on the Hillingdon Music Service:

- Andrew Sears, Yvonne Tarrant and Christian Halford - Pupils in receipt of music tuition
- Mrs Maxine Goswell – Parent of a child undertaking music tuition
- Mrs Angela St John – Co-Chairman of the Friends of the Hillingdon Music Service
- Mr Mike Whitlam CBE – Supporter of the Music Service and Member of the Friends of the Hillingdon Music Service

Themes emerging from the above witness sessions are set out in Appendix 1.

The Working Group also took into account several petitions about the Hillingdon Music service submitted by Hillingdon residents and considered by the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services on 12 April 2011.

The full list of oral and written evidence provided to the Working Group as part of their deliberations is set out in Appendix 2.

In reviewing the Hillingdon Music Service with witnesses and advisers present, Members discussed a number of issues and themes including:

- The 'core' offer of music tuition in the Borough
- Whether the take-up of music tuition across the Borough was as accessible as it could be
- Accessibility of Evening / After School and Saturday Music Centre activities to wider range of children and young people
- The importance of ensuring continuity of support to pupils currently undertaking exams and grades
- Effectiveness of the current marketing of tuition services to increase pupil take-up

- The effective use of feedback from individual pupil groups and parents
- The current structure and the way professional music staff operated and whether this was the most effective and efficient model; business-like in nature
- The effectiveness of the governance arrangements for the Music Service through the Management Committee
- The important role the Friends of the Hillingdon Music Service plays
- How did the Service work with schools to deliver music tuition
- Whether the Music Service demonstrated value for money and were current subsidy levels justified
- The implications of the changes in national funding for Music Services and how the new Music Grant funding should be used in the future
- How parents pay for fees and whether there could be any process improvements delivering efficiencies within the Service.
- Appropriateness of fee levels were appropriate and comparisons with other local authorities

The Chairman of the Working Group thanked the witnesses for giving up their time to attend the meeting and their contribution to the interim review. It was suggested that they may like to become involved in Phase 2 of the review looking at the longer term options for music tuition.

Interim proposals

On 5th May 2011 the Working Group met for a third time to consider a number of interim proposals for the Hillingdon Music Service.

Notwithstanding the longer-term objectives of the Working Group's work, a key aim of this meeting was to review plans for the continuity of music tuition from September 2011 and early changes proposed in relation to the structure and efficiency of the Music Service.

In addition, the Working Group considered process improvements, the level of fees charged for tuition and an interim financial model.

Continuity

Members appreciated the need to give a level of certainty (and adequate notice) to pupils and their families in relation to music courses and tuition fees from September 2011, in particular for pupils who were part way through exams. Information on courses and fees are usually put together to be sent out in May / June.

The Working Group accepted that early actions needed to be approved swiftly by the relevant decision-making body. Cabinet therefore met on 14th April 2011 and agreed to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council to:

- Amend fees and agree music tuition courses for September 2011 onwards;
- Implement an interim structure for the Music Service, embedded within Education Services and introduce new flexible music service staff contract arrangements

The Working Group agreed that it was important to consider and understand the implications of the above decisions, whilst noting that staffing structure and contract matters were not within their constitutional remit and remained operational decisions taken by Senior Officers. As such, personal statements from staff received by Members of the Working Group relating to employment matters were carefully noted and referred to the relevant Officer.

Structure

It was considered that evidence from witnesses and officers, including details on the past practice of the service showed that changes to the structure of the Service were well overdue.

Members considered the move of the Music Service to what is currently the Adult Education Service (to be renamed Adult and Community Learning). As these two areas have similar ways of delivering services to residents, Members noted that there would be opportunities to streamline structures and processes to bring about better ways of working. The Music Service would therefore be located under the management of the Deputy Director, Education.

Staffing and Efficiency

The Working Group noted the change towards sessional music staff contracts. Members were aware that formal consultation had already taken place with Music Service staff, stemming from the earlier proposals relating to the Service put forward by the Cabinet. It was noted that in some cases there appeared to be spare capacity within the schedules of staff and to address this, changes could be made to the way existing contractual arrangements worked and the number of them in order to make efficiency savings. Members were keen to ensure contractual arrangements resulted in a more flexible service, ultimately benefiting users. Members also noted that CRB checks were critical and were reassured that these had been undertaken on all staff.

Working Group Members proposed to officers the idea of a higher rate of pay for advanced practitioners; those that were highly qualified and recognised in their field.

Improving processes

Another efficiency area Members considered was in relation to the income process. Having questioned officers about how current billing arrangements and fee collections worked and noted that at present there was an estimated non-collection rate of 8%, Members felt there was a need to explore improvements to such processes, as identified in previous audits of the Service. Witnesses also felt there would be benefits if payment options were more flexible. Members therefore considered the introduction of 24/7 self service payment options to improve the way parents could pay for Music tuition.

Fee Levels

A consistent theme which ran through the witness sessions was the perception that tuition and music activities, like the Saturday Music Centre, were very affordable when compared to other forms of cultural activities and also in comparison to those from other Boroughs.

The Working Group had received information earlier in their review about the level of fees in comparison to neighbouring local authorities. Members were informed that the main reason why fees levels had remained so low over recent years and had not risen significantly was due to the high levels of Council subsidy. It was considered that that fee levels may need to increase in order to help mitigate this and that the continued use of a subsidy to artificially lower fee levels was not a sustainable option for the long-term future of the Music

Service. Members also felt that clarity was needed in terms of the fee structure for those seeking to take-up the variety of tuition and services provided.

Members considered an increase in fees of 20% from September 2011 to bring them in line with those of adjoining local authorities. As such, the fees charged for group tuition would increase to £58.50 per term (£5.85 per lesson), and the termly charge for the Saturday Music Centre would increase to the same level. The fees for individual tuition would be £110 per term (£11 per lesson) on the same basis. Additional income delivered from this level of fee increase in a full year would be £63k.

The Working Group also felt that there was scope to investigate increasing fees levels further for out of Borough pupils. However, Members were of the view that it was important that reduced fees for disadvantaged pupils should remain unchanged.

External Grant

Members were aware that the Music Service had received Government grant funding in 2010/11 which was targeted at widening music provision at Key Stage 2 in schools but that it had not been ring fenced to particular activities within the Music Service and was applied generally across all activities that would otherwise be subsidised by the Council. In addition, the service had received a separate grant for instruments from the Federation of Music Services.

The Working Group noted that both these grant funding streams had ended in 2010/11 and were now replaced by a new Music Grant from the Federation of Music Services, of which Hillingdon has been allocated £347,566 for 2011/12. It was noted that whilst this grant would provide a significant contribution towards music provision that there had not been any guarantee to-date that this level of external funding would continue in future years.

Interim financial model

While the Working Group appreciated that an increase in fee income would reduce the level of subsidy, there would still be a reliance on the new external grant of £347k from the Federation of Music Services.

To take the service forward on an interim basis, Members felt that any financial model to deliver the service should focus on the core activities to be funded from the new external grant of £347k, with all other activities not funded from this grant being provided on a self-funding basis.

Members appreciated that such a financial model would require a careful trade off between the levels of funding for subsidised tuition, the Saturday Music Centre, Evening and After School Activities, fee levels, ensembles and other 'enrichment' activities currently provided by the Music Service.

In considering the above, the Working Group expressed the following views:

- That Individual and Group tuition services should still continue for those currently part way through exams in light of any interim financial model
- A further analysis could be undertaken to establish the precise pattern of subsidies across schools and instruments, in order to effectively target where provision should be reduced.
- That there could be some areas where there would be a high level of demand for courses (such as keyboard and vocals) where tuition could be extended over time.
- That a review of the viability of the minimum group size, where appropriate, may be required to eliminate the most heavily subsidised individual and group tuition.
- Changes in national music policy may need to be taken into account when determining the use of the external grant
- That an audit should be initiated of both the Council and community's music facilities and resources to assist in Phase 2 of the review.

With the combined savings from a new service structure, flexible staff contracts, process improvements, coupled with an increase in fee levels and the careful utilisation and rationalisation of the external grant, Members of the Working Group were confident that the Music Service would be able to move forward on a much firmer financial footing.

Members were keen to be fully involved in future decisions surrounding the implementation of an interim financial model and, in particular, in advising on the balance of music tuition and services making use of the external grant.

Music Service - Interim Business Plan

The Working Group met on 16th May 2011 to firm up its conclusions and recommendations to Cabinet. In addition, it noted an Interim Business Plan developed by some of the people involved in the Music Service which showed a recognition for radical change and shared the view that the Council was no longer in a position to fund the service to the level previously provided.

The Business Plan proposed a longer-term change programme for music tuition and the Working Group agreed to consider this as part of Phase 2 of its review.

Conclusions

As part of Phase 1 of the Working Group's review, Members reached the following key conclusions:

- 1. The Hillingdon Music Service is of a high quality and well regarded by everyone. The level of commitment by the 'Friends' in supporting the Service is greatly valued.**
- 2. There is a substantial need for improvements to the way Hillingdon Music Service operates and provides value for money, as clearly evidenced by this Working Group and leading people involved in the Hillingdon Music Service.**
- 3. A longer-term, more sustainable vision for music tuition in Hillingdon is an essential next step that is shared by both the Council and those involved in the Hillingdon Music Service.**

Recommendations to Cabinet

As part of Phase 1 of the Working Group's review, Members have reached the following recommendations to Cabinet for consideration:

Operation

1. **The Working Group endorses the decision made to move the Music Service to Adult and Community Learning, within Education Services, and the synergies that can be made therein;**
2. **The Working Group endorses actions to implement a more flexible service structure and staff contracts for the benefit of service users, in particular a high rate of pay for advanced practitioners;**
3. **Whilst the Working Group endorses bringing the Hillingdon Music Service properly back into the council structure making it more accountable and corporate, it recommends that the service maintains its unique identity, in particular through any marketing and promotional activities;**

Value for Money

4. **The Working Group endorses an increase in music tuition fees by 20% from September 2011 and recommends that both this, and the clarify of the fee structure, be reviewed as part of Phase 2 of the Working Group's activity;**
5. **The Working Group recommends that Cabinet consider a higher rate of fees for non-residents in line with the Council's 'Hillingdon First' Policy and recommends that reduced fees for disadvantaged pupils remain unchanged;**
6. **The Working Group recommends that an interim financial model is implemented consisting of the new Music Grant, with all other activities not funded from this grant being provided on a self-funding basis. Furthermore, that the Working Group is consulted on the priorities and balance of music tuition / services making use of the external grant;**
7. **Linked to recommendation 6, the Working Group recommends that the Management Committee be consulted on what enrichment activities should be prioritised;**
8. **The Working Group recognises the importance of continuity of provision for those pupils currently undertaking examinations;**

9. **The Working Group recommends that Cabinet modernise the payment and income collection processes, making it easier for parents to pay, specifically by introducing a 24/7 self service facility;**
10. **The Working Group recommends that Officers review the way in which user feedback is sought to improve the quality of provision;**

Marketing

11. **The Working Group recommends that in conjunction with Corporate Communications, officers be asked to undertake intensive marketing activities immediately to maintain and increase interest in music tuition following the recent uncertainty about the future of the Service;**

Governance

12. **The Working Group recommends that officers review the Terms of Reference of the Management Committee to ensure its powers and responsibilities are consistent with the Council's Constitution, consulting the Working Group and Management Committee and that delegated approval be given to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Planning, Environment, Education and Community Service in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to approve any changes.**

Looking ahead - Phase 2 of the review

Phase 2 of the Working Group's review will commence during the summer. It will review alternative methods of delivering music tuition in Hillingdon and produce a second report to Cabinet with options and recommendations as to how good quality music tuition can be delivered on a more cost effective, sustainable basis. The Working Group also waits with interest for any national changes in music policy.

A number of interesting themes and findings about how music tuition could be enhanced emerged out of our meetings and from witnesses, which will be picked up as part of Phase 2.

The Working Group will seek active participation, inviting experts and witnesses from a range of music and arts providers. At the same time, the Working Group will work closely with those involved in the Hillingdon Music Service, exploring some of the current proposals they have already put forward.

Summary of views from external witnesses

Young People's views on the Hillingdon Music Service (HMS) *

- The HMS allows young people to study as a community. There is no racism or bullying and it is gem of a service
- HMS allows users to make new friends and develop vital life skills e.g. social interaction.
- Several of the witnesses aspired to study music at University. The Saturday Music Service and the theory lessons provided by it had been invaluable in helping them with examination preparation.
- The witnesses became involved with the HMS through taster sessions when they were in Primary School
- Although it is important to be exposed to music early on, until the body has had time to develop some instruments cannot physically be played.
- Parents pay fees at the end of term by cheque. If fees are paid late then the Council sends reminder letters.
- In terms of feedback opportunities, at the end of each term, the music teacher writes a report on the student detailing progress. This report includes a feedback form. All the witnesses were very satisfied with the level of teaching they had received and so the feedback forms had not been used.
- One of the witnesses had devised his own questionnaire to try and ascertain feedback on the service. Of 350 questionnaires sent out, 30 had been received. All had been very positive.
- The witnesses also participated in orchestras and one had been invited to play in the Hillingdon Philharmonic Orchestra
- Marketing – there were further opportunities to link with youth groups.
- HMS website was very easy to find through Google but difficult to find on the Council's website

The Co-Chairman of the Friends of Hillingdon Music Service views on the Music Service

- Parents of students currently undertaking music tuition had approached the Friends of the Hillingdon Music Service with concerns. The witness explained that letters had been seen which referred to the Music Service as a "Community Service" under Adult Services and there was concern that this shift from Education to Adult Services might signal that music education was no longer considered a core element of the Council's Education provision.
- The mission of the Music Service currently is to deliver a first class music education, not to provide extra curricular or entertainment activities such as the letter from the Council suggests by referring to the service as a "Community Service" rather than a core education service.

- There were concerns that some Primary schools were unable to deliver the national curriculum in music effectively as they had no musically qualified staff and would benefit from support from the Music Service to do so. This support to schools could be an area for development in the future.
- Instrumental Instruction – To ensure good progress was made, students needed to play in graded groups.
- Gifted and Talented students had the opportunity to have Special Place lessons at Saturday Music School and benefited from progression on musical ability rather than by age
- A number of students with Special Educational Needs had benefited greatly from participation in Music Service education. This was regarded as an important aspect of the work the Music Service does.
- It was suggested that providing music services for students with SEN should become a core business for the Music Service in the future.
- Music participation had a number of benefits for children with SEN including providing them with a sense of identity and increased levels of self confidence through self expression.
- The Music Service has fulfilled its Education mission well. However, if the Council wished to widen the scope of the remit of the Service it could do so. Suggestions for a future Music service with a remit beyond the education of children could include services for adults
- The service might also consider teaching a wider range of instruments and styles of music, including individual singing lessons and ethnic music.
- In response to a question about the existing arrangements to provide feedback on the service, the witness explained that she could do this either formally or informally. Informal ways included speaking to staff at the weekend as a volunteer working at the Saturday Music Centre or formally by attending the annual meeting of the Hillingdon Music Service Management Committee. An annual survey of parents views is undertaken by Music service staff.
- The witness explained that suggestions which had been made in the past had been taken forward.
- In response to a question about future development of the service, the witness explained that she had not seen an Action Plan or strategy document nor any targets from Council Officers. However, there was always a great deal of development and additional activity within the Music Service and parents did not perceive any lack of developmental activity.
- If formal planning were introduced, the witness thought that targets, and stretch targets would be the usual method of measuring planned activity.
- The witness would expect the targets to include participation levels and attainment at Key Stages, GCSE and A Level..
- In relation to attainment, it was noted that the Saturday Music Service provided a number of invaluable services such as musical theory and aural training for those students undertaking exams. It was noted that all instrumental, singing and theory examination passes at Grade 6 and above attracted UCAS points to support entry into Higher Education.
- The witness had no information on the formal relationship between schools and the Hillingdon Music Service. However it was thought that use of the service varied from school to school depending on the Head's commitment to music education.

- It was suggested that training in the delivery of the national curriculum in Music for KS1 and KS2 could be offered by the Music service.
- The witness suggested that the Music Service would benefit from additional marketing. The Service currently does not have the resources to undertake extensive marketing. Additional use of the Service would require more staff to meet the generated demand.
- It was suggested that HMS required more business expertise. Musicians were excellent at what they did but for the service to be sustainable in the long term a more commercial business centric approach was required.
- In response to a question about the Management Committee and the effectiveness of the corporate governance of HMS, the witness explained that she had no evidence or information to offer. The witness had perceived good communication between schools and the service and that the service delivered to children was very good.
- Asked if the witness thought HMS offered good value for money, it was noted that the only method parents had of obtaining information on this point was through Ofsted reports. All recent Ofsted reports stated that the Music Service delivered good value for money.
- In terms of developing the service in the future, it was suggested that considerably more children would take music lessons if there was more emphasis on music education in Primary Schools.
- In terms of fees and charges, the witness explained that these were very reasonable in Hillingdon and provided very good value for money. The witness acknowledged that charging structures in other Local Authorities were very different. For example Berkshire Maestros levies individual charges for different elements of the service e.g. charges for vocal classes, charges for bands and separate charges for theory lessons. Although the rationale for this was understood, the witness thought this excluded large numbers of children from less affluent families.
- The current affordability of HMS fees meant that many more children had the opportunity to take part. This was one its greatest strengths.
- The witness believed that parents of Hillingdon students would be prepared to pay more for tuition. Introducing direct debit or standing orders would be a good way to spread the cost of musical tuition. Although parents had not been formally canvassed on the issue of fees, informal feedback suggested that it would be useful to spread the cost of paying for tuition over 12 monthly instalments.
- It was noted that monies raised by the Friends of HMS were sometimes used to make use of match funding opportunities. Funds went towards the purchase of larger instruments or were used to support enrichment activities i.e. money towards transport costs to either perform or attend events. The Friends also support families who cannot afford Music service fees but do not qualify for Council support.
- In the past the Friends had supported music tours abroad – e.g. trip to Belgium
- The Friends of HMS have a firm grip on their finances. They have their own bank account managed by the Treasurer. Annual accounts are produced and made public at the Friends AGM. In addition the Friends have their accounts externally audited annually.

- The Friends of HMS have never found it difficult to find support for its work. Parents of music students regularly worked as volunteers at events: setting out chairs; doing parking duty and, selling raffle tickets and programmes. There was also a rota for volunteers to ensure the Saturday Music Centre tuck shop remains open.
- The witness was not aware of non-payment of fees issues.

A Parent's Views on the Hillingdon Music Service

- Musicians are passionate about their work but they are not necessarily as good at other areas (e.g. Administration).
- The parent had been involved with Hillingdon Music Service (HMS) for about 4 years, not on the Management side but had volunteered in the tuck shop
- A grave concern of the witness was that if staff were made redundant, there was a feeling that the service would lose valuable expertise which would be difficult to replace and the service would fail very quickly without a cross section of expertise in the staff.
- The current staff appeared to work well as a team and had a balance of quiet and outgoing staff. It is valuable to have a different mix of personalities as well as a wide range of instruments.
- In response to a question about the type of musical instrument her children learnt, the witness explained there was a shortage of pupils learning the French horn and one was readily available and her son had taken that on. The parent explained that they had not had to pay for the hire of the instrument but the parent thought that they should.
- The witness explained that they paid for insurance for their daughter's privately owned oboe, but felt that if any student used an instrument from HMS a deposit should be paid to the service.
- When asked about value for money, the witness explained that HMS did offer value for money but tuition could be more expensive. The rates for musical tuition did not appear to have increased (since their involvement)
- In this particular case, the witness had two children using HMS for lessons and playing in an orchestra which cost over £200 per term. Activities included choir, orchestra, theory lessons and wind band at the 4 hours each Saturday morning at the Saturday Music Centre. The other child had peripatetic lessons at primary school and had recently joined the junior band on a Thursday evening. This equated to a cost of only £20 per week for all these activities.
- The witness thought it would be useful if a monthly payment scheme was introduced.
- The witness explained that when a pupil started an instrument they only had to make a commitment for 1 term, which they felt was insufficient. The witness suggested that parents could be committed to pay one year's tuition fees.
- When asked about 'drop out rates' i.e. those pupils which received tuition and then decided to stop learning an instrument, it was acknowledged that if class sizes decreased, the music teacher would still have a commitment to teach but would be using staff time less effectively. This was especially the case in junior schools. The witness explained that drop out rates in the first year were significant and may be as high as 30% to 50%.

- When asked about the opportunity to provide feedback to HMS, the witness explained that they had not had an opportunity to do this. There had been no need to do this, as, as a user of the service, the witness had no reason to be unhappy.
- When asked about possible areas for improvements to the service and the benefits of measuring service improvements, the witness suggested the Administration of HMS could be improved, such as a clear instrument inventory and tracking system.
- The witness suggested one way of increasing take-up of the service might be an incentive scheme such as a 10% reduction in fees for early payment. The witness had never been chased for late payment but it was acknowledged that if late payments were significant, this could affect the cash flow of the service.
- A further suggestion to improve the take-up of music tuition included a discount scheme (applied to the second student) if more than one student per household used HMS.
- The witness felt that the management of HMS had not looked at what could be done better to improve the service as this was not in their psyche, but the musical achievement of the service was not in doubt. The streamlining of possible improvements in admin had never appeared to be an issue, the HMS staff did not seem to have ever been made aware by the Council finance group that there were issues with the financial situation.
- The Saturday Music Centre – this was invaluable, as the theory lessons provided helped those students undertaking GCSE and A level exams
- HMS offered lots of enrichment activities which included concerts, ensembles and trips abroad
- In response to a question about whether the concerts provided by HMS were profitable, the witness explained that tickets were not expensive (£4 per adult and £3 for concessions) and ticket sales might not cover the cost of the performance venue. The Friends of HMS usually hold raffles to contribute to sales but parents would probably be willing to pay higher tickets prices to support concerts.
- HMS offers students the experience of playing music with their peers and the opportunity to play with people of comparable ability. This cannot be achieved by private tuition alone and the whole service offering by HMS is what makes it so valuable.

A Supporter's of the Music Service and Member of the Friends of the Hillingdon Music Service views

- The witness had been actively involved with HMS since 1985
- It would be a disaster if HMS is decimated. The witness expressed the hope that this high quality music service could be developed further, going forwards in the future
- The witness had attended various meetings with the Management Committee and parents about the service but expressed his concern that the meeting between HMS staff and Officers, held at the Compass Theatre on 27 April had

knocked staff confidence, by introducing a new structure for the service ahead of the Review Group and with no consultation with Stakeholders

- Fees might need to be increased
- Other solutions for HMS might involve taking HMS out of the Public sector and transforming HMS into a social enterprise which would allow more funding streams to be accessed.
- Another suggestion focused on the possibility of forming an independent Trust, with similar benefits to the Social Enterprise model. Bromley Music Service was quoted as an example
- It was also suggested that £5K funding from the Friends of the HMS, for students whose families could not afford the cost of lessons etc, could be increased
- The witness suggested that there was a need to set up an interim group while the long term options for the service were explored which would use Governance from The Management Committee 'to keep the service on the road' until it could be changed to something different.
- How could I do a self evaluation of the service when I do not work within it? I had considered the questions posed on the letter of invitation to the Review Group. As these were not asked of me I agreed that Angela St John, another witness should send our joint answers to those questions. She has done this. The witness volunteered that if he was running a comparable voluntary sector organisation he was confident that he could run the Music Service with two or three administrative staff, in place of the £263,000 Civic Centre Overhead Charge
- In terms of the management of the service, the witness explained that the management could be improved, as could the marketing and communication of the service to ensure the service engaged more efficiently with all schools. A key aspect for improvement would involve better 'two way' communications with schools.
- The issue of trust was important so all stakeholders felt engaged in the process. There had been action taken to create a new interim management structure, which ran counter to what Councillors and Officers had expressed in earlier meetings. A different interim arrangement would need to be put in place quickly.
- The witness suggested that a positive move would be to get a small group of stakeholders together to discuss an alternative interim structure, that would not decimate the service, prior to taking the service forward.
- Subsequent to the suggestion, he was part of a small group of Management Committee and friends who created an alternative interim structure and business plan, which has been given to the Leader and officers

** It should be noted that whilst sought, confirmation had not been received at the time of printing that the three young witnesses were content with the summary of their views given at the meeting.*

List of oral and written evidence received

Oral evidence or advice given at Working Group meetings:

- Councillor David Simmonds, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
- Anna Crispin – Deputy Director, Education
- Tricia Collis – Head of Adult and Community Learning
- Ben Lea – School Finance Officer
- Alison Moore – School Improvements, 14 to 19 Advisor
- Aileen Carlisle – Business Transformation Manager
- Mark Braddock – Democratic Services
- Charles Francis – Democratic Services
- Andrew Sears, Yvonne Tarrant and Christian Halford - Pupils in receipt of music tuition
- Mrs Maxine Goswell – Parent of a child undertaking music tuition
- Mrs Angela St John – Co-Chairman of the Friends of the Hillingdon Music Service
- Mr Mike Whitlam CBE – Supporter of the Music Service and Member of the Friends of the Hillingdon Music Service

Visits

- Officer visits to Schools
- Officer visits to The Hillingdon Music Service
- Officer visits to the Saturday Music Centre
- Officer attendance at the Hillingdon Music Management Committee
- Officer contact with the Friends of Hillingdon Music Service

Written Evidence

- Information Report B, appended to this review:
 - Appendix 1 - breakdown by instrument, individual/group activity and school
 - Appendix 2 - geographical spread of the take-up of instrumental tuition
 - Appendices 3 and 4 - take-up of instrumental tuition by ward
 - Appendix 5 - 2010 draft plan for the Music Service
 - Appendix 6 - 2008 internal audit review
 - Appendix 7– Management Committee Constitution report to Education Committee
 - Appendix 8 - Staffing, Non-Staffing, Overheads and Activity Costs
 - Appendix 9 – Fee details and comparisons to other Boroughs
 - Appendix 10 – Previous Internal Financial Review of the Service

- Appendix 11 – Corporate Finance review of the Music Service
- Appendix 12 – Government response to the Henley Review

- Website information on the Hillingdon Music Service
- Documentation prepared by Chris Simpson for the Review
- Interim Business Plan developed by the staff of Hillingdon Music Service with the Friends of Hillingdon Music Service by agreement with the Chair of the Hillingdon Music Service Management Committee.
- SWOT analysis
- Friends of Hillingdon Music Service – Response to Questions asked by the Working Group April 2011
- Equalities Impact Assessment

