



London Borough of Hackney  
Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission  
Municipal Year 2018/19  
Date of Meeting Tuesday, 30th April, 2019

Minutes of the proceedings of the  
Children and Young People  
Scrutiny Commission held at  
Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street,  
London E8 1EA

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<b>Chair</b>	<b>Councillor Sophie Conway</b>
<b>Councillors in Attendance</b>	<b>Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair), Cllr Katie Hanson, Cllr Ajay Chauhan, Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr Clare Joseph, Cllr James Peters, Cllr Clare Potter and Cllr Caroline Woodley</b>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<b>Cllr Soraya Adejare</b>
<b>Co-optees in attendance:</b>	<b>Graham Hunter, Michael Lobenstein, Jo Macleod, Ernell Watson, Shuja Shaikh, Sevdie Sali Ali, Jodine Clarke and Maariyah Patel</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</b></li><li>- <b>Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cabinet Member for Early Years and Play</b></li><li>- <b>Cllr Aron Klein</b></li><li>- <b>Anne Canning, Group Director, Children Families and Community Health</b></li><li>- <b>Annie Gammon, Director of Education and Head of Hackney Learning Trust</b></li><li>- <b>Andrew Lee, Assistant Director, Hackney Learning Trust</b></li><li>- <b>Jim Gamble, Independent Chair, CHSCB</b></li><li>- <b>Rory McCallum, Senior Professional Adviser, CHSCB</b></li></ul>
<b>Members of the Public</b>	<b>3 members of the public were in attendance.</b>
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	<b>Martin Bradford</b>  020 8356 3315  martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk

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## Councillor Sophie Conway in the Chair

### 1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from:
- Cllr Soraya Adejare
  - Jane Heffernan

- 1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from:  
- Cllr Clare Potter

## **1 Declarations of Interest**

2.1 The following declarations were received by members:

- Cllr Chauhan was a teacher at secondary school in another London borough and a member of the NEU.
- Cllr Peters was a governor at the Garden School.
- Jo Macleod was a governor of a local primary school.

## **3 Urgent Items / Order of Business**

3.1 There were no late or urgent items of business.

## **4 Review Update - Unregistered Educational Settings**

4.1 The Commission completed a review of unregistered educational settings in January 2018 which made a number of recommendations to help bring such schools into regulatory compliance. This item was a progress report on the recommendations of that review which were agreed by Cabinet in July 2018. The Chair welcomed presenters for this item Anne Canning, Andrew Lee, Jim Gamble and Rory McCallum.

4.2 It was noted that this remained an important piece of work for the Council. The Council and other regulatory and enforcement partners continued to work in partnership to ensure that the places where children congregated were safe, structures were sound and that safe recruitment practices were being followed.

4.3 Whilst it was acknowledged that whilst there had been some local progress, the paucity of regulatory legislation in this area remained a significant barrier to addressing the concerns presented by unregistered educational settings. Since the Commission's report had been published however, there had been a significant amount of media interest which kept unregistered educational settings in the national spotlight, which was positive.

4.4 The government had recently published the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper which had set out a range of developments for unregistered settings, out of school settings and home education. Whilst problems around the legal definition of a school and curriculum remained, there had been some positive advancement in 3 areas:

- Proposed tighter controls on the requirements for school registration;
- Launch of a consultation on voluntary safeguarding code of practice;
- Planned introduction of compulsory register for home educated children.

4.5 The introduction of a register for home education represented a significant development in the regulatory framework. Given the number of local children that were home educated however, this would be a major piece of work and which would require additional resources. It was still unclear however, how local education officers and regulatory partners could use the planned home education register.

4.6 It was noted that officers from Hackney Learning Trust and the Children and Families Service had met with representatives from the orthodox Jewish community (OJC), from which it was reported that the community were keen to develop local safeguarding arrangements across out of school settings. Whilst it was acknowledged that there had been improved engagement, a forum to discuss the establishment of basic safeguarding protocols in unregistered educational settings, had not yet been established. Discussions were however continuing.

4.7 CHSCB also confirmed that progress had been made in developing safeguarding arrangements in local out of school settings within the OJC. There had been increased communication and engagement with the representatives of the OJC which was encouraging. CHSCB also noted however, that whilst there had been commitments toward establishing safeguarding arrangements in out of school settings, to date there had been no tangible developments within the OJC. The CHSCB remained optimistic however, that safeguarding improvements would be introduced.

4.8 It was understood that there was a safeguarding committee in operation within the OJC which had agreed in principle to new safeguarding procedures for recruitment and to work with the CHSCB to advise, help and support the community to develop other safeguarding measures in out of school settings. It was hoped that this would lead to the development of local safeguarding policies, which would be developed, trialled and audited procedures within out of school settings in the OJC.

4.9 At a recent meeting with representatives from the OJC, the Chair of CHSCB had visited an out of school setting and was given the opportunity to speak to young men that attended. The ability for CHSCB to engage and freely talk with young people in an out of school settings within the OJC was positive, and represented significant progress.

4.10 A member of the Commission and also representative from the OJC, confirmed that progress had been made in the development of local safeguarding arrangements at out of school settings and reaffirmed the commitment of the community to work with the CHSCB to improve safeguarding arrangements.

4.11 Council officers reported that they had continued to meet with Department of Education (DfE) and Ofsted to discuss technicalities within the regulations as well as broader policy issues pertaining to unregistered schools. It was noted that these meetings were ongoing.

#### Questions

4.12 Whilst it was encouraging to note that progress had been made in respect of safeguarding arrangements, the Commission sought to clarify what an agreement would look like between CHSCB and the OJC, what accountability measures would be put in place and how it would operate in practice?

- CHSCB reported that officers would support the safeguarding committee within the OJC to draft an appropriate safeguarding policy for yeshivas and other out of school settings. It would also help to structure safeguarding arrangements (including safeguarding audits) in the same

way as for any other children's setting in the borough. When the audit process had been established, the CHSCB would assess a sample of out of school settings in the OJC to determine if safeguarding procedures were being followed. This would be the same process used by CHSCB to assess safeguarding arrangements elsewhere.

- CHSCB also confirmed that any conclusions reached from these assessments would be included as part of the normal safeguarding report to the local authority. This objective was confirmed by LBH officers.

4.13 The Commission questioned officers present as to whether the safeguarding policy would be legally binding or enforceable in any way and what would happen if not all out of school settings in the OJC signed up to this policy?

- CHSCB reported that the safeguarding policies that would be set up would not be legally enforceable, which was the same for other institutions. As such, the safeguarding policies and processes that were developed would only be as strong as the commitment by the community to these processes. Once the policy was signed off, CHSCB would expect it to be implemented across all institutions and would test the application of this policy through local audit. This would allow CHSCB to make an assessment of how effective local safeguarding processes were within the OJC.
- CHSCB noted that there was a level of mistrust in national and local agencies by those who operate yeshivas, as they feared the 'state' would interfere in their religious customs and practices. It was acknowledged therefore, that confidence building measures were needed to help build trust, and to help stakeholders focus on those issues which keep children safe in out of school settings. It was hoped that as trust and confidence in developing local safeguarding arrangements grew, more yeshivas would sign up to this process.
- A representative of the OJC reported that the community would be content to go along with safeguarding proposals outlined by the CHSCB but would have serious concerns with any encroachment onto the curriculum taught in yeshivas or other out of school settings. It was therefore hoped that progress could be made in safeguarding if matters relating to the curriculum were kept aside. It was acknowledged that the curriculum was a stumbling block to being within regulatory compliance with Ofsted, but yeshivas would not allow their curriculum to be policed as this had been taught to generations of people in the OJC in Hackney and beyond. This commitment to yeshivas would not change. Therefore whilst the OJC was happy to go along with safeguarding improvements, it was however wary that this could be linked to required changes in the curriculum, particularly in relation to registration and regulation requirements of Ofsted.
- CHSCB reported that safeguarding and the curriculum were two different issues. In respect of the curriculum, this was the responsibility of the DfE and additional legislation would be required for there to be any further developments. The immediate local issue was to make sure children were safe and there was appropriate safeguarding policies and practice, irrespective of educational setting or beliefs.
- LBH officers reported that new safeguarding regulations would come into force in September 2019. Within these new regulations, safeguarding partners would need to develop a local list of all 'relevant agencies' which had a safeguarding responsibility. This was an acknowledgement by the DfE to extend safeguarding practice across all out of school settings. In

this context, all those 'relevant agencies' listed would be expected to comply with local safeguarding arrangements.

**Agreed:** New safeguarding requirements, including the identification of relevant agencies, to be included within the 2019/20 CYP Scrutiny Commission work programme.

4.14 The Commission observed from the report that there had not been any progress against recommendation 9 (improvements in the curriculum), which would suggest that the authority was continuing to fail significant numbers of children by not equipping them with adequate education and skills, particularly in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths).

- Officers from LBH reiterated that there had been no progress in matters relating to the curriculum. Further guidance and legislation was needed from DfE as to how a curriculum was defined and the components of an 'acceptable education'.

4.15 The Commission enquired if any staff at unregistered settings were currently DBS checked and whether this would be instigated with the development of new safeguarding arrangements?

- A representative from the OJC responded that at the moment staff were not DBS checked at yeshivas or unregistered settings, but that under the new arrangements all staff would be DBS checked. All staff working at local registered independent schools were however DBS checked.
- LBH officers noted the distinction between yeshivas and other unregistered educational settings in that children attending the former could be classified as having 'education otherwise' which was considered to be a form of elective home education. If children were being 'educated otherwise', the local authority had a duty to satisfy itself that the children were in receipt of an appropriate education.
- A representative of the OJC noted that many unregistered settings were afraid to identify themselves to the local authority and other bodies, as they feared that this would lead to controls as to what was taught within these settings.
- LBH officers were required to notify the DfE of those settings where children congregated. Ofsted would inspect these settings to make a determination as to whether this was a school or not. Ultimately, any unregistered setting would need to make a choice to identify as a school and therefore comply with Ofsted regulatory framework or it can be a yeshiva and overseen within elective home education framework.

4.16 Officers present were asked to update the Commission on the number of unregistered settings and yeshivas in operation in Hackney and the number of children that attended. Had any progress been made identifying these settings?

- Officers reported that the number of children attending an unregistered setting or yeshiva was difficult to calculate. However, using demographic estimates where an equal number of males and female births in the OJC would be expected, it was calculated that approximately 1,500 boys aged 14-18 years currently attended a yeshiva or unregistered setting.
- Cllr Klein suggested that the reason why these children were unidentified was that they lived a crime free society, did not do drugs or get into trouble with the police.

4.17 As there were numerous services within the regulatory framework for the unregistered settings, the Commission wanted to know how well these agencies communicated and worked together to identify and regulate unregistered settings? The Commission also requested an update on the Cabinet agreement to establish a working party of local stakeholders to work collaboratively to respond to unregistered settings.

- Officers from LBH noted that if one agency goes into a setting and identified an issue of concern, then other relevant agencies would be notified. The threshold for involvement was however very high. For example, whilst the Fire Service may be notified of fire risks identified by Ofsted, its powers to intervene and close any establishment were limited.
- Officers from LBH reported that a defined working party had not yet been established, but key stakeholders continued to meet when necessary. As the regulatory framework had not been subject to any legislative change, the partnership could not further progress collaborative working at this stage.
- There was however good cooperation at the local level between statutory services, though it was acknowledged that further improvement would be welcomed in reporting mechanisms between Ofsted and local authorities, particularly the outcomes of any assessment of unregistered educational settings (e.g. is this to be determined as a school or otherwise).

4.18 What work had been undertaken to communicate and involve parents of children that might be attending unregistered settings?

- LBH officers reported that the recent deregistration of an independent school by Ofsted required the local authority to contact all parents to ascertain the schooling plans for their child after closure. Of those that responded, most reported that their child would be home educated. CHSCB produced a leaflet that highlighted key safeguarding and safety assurances that they should seek in selecting the next school for their child (e.g. DBS checked staff).
- CHSCB noted that the leaflet developed above, was now available on line and was used to inform parental assessments for other out of school settings.
- LBH officers also noted that whilst there had not been any engagement with parents from the OJC other to what was listed above, communication would generally be conducted through Interlink rather than directly through the local authority.

4.19 The Commission was keen to understand if there was a role for local councillors to help build lines of communication and engagement with the OJC?

- LBH officers indicated that there had been some recent examples where there had been good communication and engagement with the OJC, particularly in relation to immunisation. This had presented new ways of working with the OJC which might be replicated in other service areas.
- The most important concern however was the need to raise awareness of safeguarding issues within the community, and to empower parents to make informed choices that ensure that their child is educated in a safe and protective environment.

4.20 The Commission requested further information about the Out of School Settings Project as noted in the submitted report.

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- This was a DfE funded project to work with out of school settings and include a range of settings such as Saturday schools, scouts, guides and yeshivas. The aim of the project was to promote the safeguarding in a wide range of settings. It was suggested that some of the funding received would be used to commission Interlink to promote safeguarding in the OJC, such as in yeshivas. This project would work with Young Hackney and CHSCB to promote safeguarding in out of school settings. Officers would be able to report back on progress in about 18 months-time.

4.21 In data submitted by CHSCB, the Commission noted that there had been a 20% rise in the number of children that were electively home educated in Hackney in the last year. What oversight did local services have of children who are home educated in relation to safeguarding and the appropriateness of the education they received?

- Given the inadequacy of respective legislation, it was noted that oversight of such children in elective home education was minimal. Parents had the right to home educate their children and the local authority had few powers of oversight in respect of the appropriateness of their education except to offer advice and support. There was no power of entry or inspection. Parents were not required to provide any information to the local authority on the whereabouts of the child or what the child was being taught.
- In respect of safeguarding, the local authority could only act on the basis of evidence presented on a case by case basis, and could not undertake and broader 'fishing exercise' to identify broader safeguarding issues.
- A consultation on elective home education had recently been launched which was broadly welcomed. There was concern however any new duties placed on local authorities would be resourced, particularly as this involved significant numbers of local children (about 350).
- It was noted that the consultation did not make any contribution as to what might be considered an 'appropriate home-schooled education'.
- It was suggested that the number of local children that were home educated would rise as the current figure above, did not reflect the recent closure of an independent school, after which it was suspected that many parents chose to home educate rather than send their child to another independent or maintained school.

4.22 In respect of elective home education, the Commission sought to ascertain what proportion might be SEND children, and what support was available for such children if they were home educated?

- LBH officers reported that unless the child had an EHC plan there was little understanding of SEND children who were home educated. For those children that do have an EHC plan, the local authority had to be sure that the parent could deliver the requirements of that plan or make arrangements for this.

4.23 The Commission enquired what the priorities would be for the next 6 months for working with unregistered settings in the OJC?

- LBH officers reported that it would be a priority to get a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the OJC and the CHSCB to establish safeguarding processes in unregistered settings.

- Both LBH and CHSCB would continue to work with Interlink to help engage and involve the OJC in respect of yeshivas and other unregistered settings.
- Similarly, LBH would continue to engage and involve headteachers in local independent schools to support the development of the curriculum in these schools and ensure that there was appropriate SEND support.

4.24 What work had been undertaken engage children who had attended local yeshivas or other unregistered setting to ascertain their views about their education?

- Whilst the local authority did have data on the experiences of past students, it was acknowledged that it would be more helpful, particularly in relation to safeguarding, to have further data in the experiences of students currently studying at yeshivas or other unregistered settings. Access was however limited and generally through an intermediary.

4.25 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from the Commission.

**Agreed:** In line with the recommendations from the review, the Commission agreed that a further update would be taken in the next municipal year.

## 5 City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Board

5.1 The annual report of CHSCB is presented each year to scrutiny. The independent Chair of CHSCB presented the annual report from 2017/18 to the Commission. A summary of the key points from this presentation are highlighted below.

- A key objective for CHSCB for 2017/18 was the health and wellbeing of the workforce as this was an important part of safeguarding children. Feedback from this aspect of the work has been very positive, where the local safeguarding workforce indicated that they were well led and managed.
- Hackney continued to lead in the way that local authorities provide support to vulnerable adolescents, this was exemplified through the contextual safeguarding project.
- In 2017/18, two serious case reviews were published. The first resulted in the parents being sentenced for child cruelty. The second resulted in new systems for checking the unexplained absence of children from school. The latter had also resulted in new guidelines from the DfE.
- The local training offer available had been reviewed and attendances monitored. CHSCB would continue to appraise the training offer to ensure that it met the needs of local safeguarding practitioners.
- CHSCB acknowledged the importance of the local designated safeguarding Doctor and Nurse as the work of both had been exemplary.
- An audit was being undertaken by CHSCB to ensure that the safeguarding data being collected through Children Families Service (CFS) was correct and was producing correct evaluative data. Further discussions were being held with CFS in Hackney in this respect.
- CHSCB also continued to look at the safeguarding partnership and how effectively partners communicated and worked together to address local safeguarding concerns.



- CHSCB also paid tribute to the local leadership particularly at a time of immense transition.

### Questions

5.2 What work had been undertaken in relation to rough sleeping among the 15-24 year-old age group?

- It was reported that there had been no focus to date on safeguarding and rough sleepers. It was suggested however that this may be a line of work being pursued by the Safeguarding Adults Board or through another service within the council. Both the Child and Adult Safeguarding Boards had recently met to discuss transitional issues and this would be the type of issue that both boards would like to assess. It would be useful to identify early indicators and those measures that can be put in place to prevent young people ending up on the street.

5.3 In respect of domestic violence and abuse it was noted that whilst good work had been undertaken with local women, the Commission wanted to know what work had been undertaken with young girls who may be in equally abusive relationships. What was behind the 43% increase in referrals to the service?

- CHSCB noted that lots of work had been undertaken on this issue through many projects, for example the Coercion and Control and Contextual Safeguarding Project. It was suggested that the increase in referrals may in part be due to the increased activity and awareness of practitioners.
- The Board also noted that there were also issues around gangs and serious youth violence and how this had impacted on relationships within such affiliations.
- It was also suggested that many practitioners were now very alert to issues presented in the local Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy which may also have contributed to increased referrals.
- LBH officers noted that the Domestic Abuse and Intervention Service moved in to the Children and Families Service two years ago and that there had been a significant programme of work with their expertise being shared among local social work practitioners on issues of domestic violence.

5.4 Could the CHSCB outline how the Contextual Safeguarding project had contributed to improved safeguarding of local children and adolescents?

- Officers from LBH responded that to date very few assessments had been undertaken using the contextual safeguarding process. Therefore to date most of the development of this project had been in the academic theory which would underpin this new approach and in developing associated policies and procedures to support this model in practice. These policies and practices were now being live tested. Contextual safeguarding was therefore at a very early stage.
- It was suggested that those assessments that have used a contextual approach may provide better outcomes for keeping children safe as a far wider range of risks were assessed within this process, beyond traditional assessments of the child in its family setting. It was suggested that it would be worth assessing in the next 6-12 months to determine the effectiveness of this approach. This would be an interesting area for scrutiny to include within its work programme.
- The CFS would also be willing to provide training and an update on this project to members of the Commission.

5.5 It was noted that new arrangements for local safeguarding children boards need to be implemented by September 2019. The Commission requested officers to outline what these new arrangements would look like in Hackney?

- This was the responsibility of the local authority, and LBH officers responded. Safeguarding was the responsibility of 3 statutory partners, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Metropolitan Police and the local authority. Officers were working with colleagues in the City to develop new arrangements that maintained those safeguarding processes which worked well within the new system.
- Having an independent Chair and CHSCB was felt to be very beneficial within the current safeguarding process and it was expected that this would be retained within the new system. Therefore the new structure would be subject to independent review and it would retain a strategic group to maintain oversight. Political and lay membership would also be retained on respective boards. It was also noted that there was a new duty to list 'relevant agencies' that would need to comply with safeguarding partnership. This would bring many new organisations and settings into safeguarding systems.
- Local authorities were the most significant financial contributor to local safeguarding partnerships, in Hackney the local authority contribution made up 68% of the CHSCB budget of approximately £340k. The Police contributed £5k and the CCG contributed a further £12k, with additional financial support given by providers (e.g. ELFT and Homerton).

**Agreed:** Proposed new arrangements for local safeguarding partnerships to be included within the 2019/20 CYP Scrutiny Commission work programme.

5.6 The Commission raised the serious case review concerning a local child which had died from starvation after being left alone at home after his mother had died from an epileptic fit. The Commission sought to understand what was learnt from the case review to prevent this happening again.

- CHSCB reported that the case review was published in 2017/18 and had contributed to nationwide improvements in the way pupil absence was monitored within schools. Schools were now minded to obtain two numbers from parents to help verify child absence.

5.7 The Commission noted that two recent case reviews had been published in the past year both of which concerned the suicide of young people in Hackney. The Commission also sought to understand the learning from these case reviews and if there were any implications for local services?

- CHSCB noted that these were two of three serious case reviews in the past year. It was noted that a further serious case review would soon be published and that a further serious case review would be commissioned, and that both involve cases where a young person had taken their own life. In terms of the general themes, self-harm and suicide was a major issue in Hackney and in other boroughs, and indeed nationally. Similarly, it was known that locally and nationally there was high demand for CAMHS. There was also greater expectations on schools to help to identify and manage mental health issues in young people.
- None of the published serious case reviews had highlighted that these were predictive or preventable events. It was suggested that it might be of

more benefit to look at the findings of the serious case reviews when there was more time and the issues could be explored in greater detail.

5.8 What work had been undertaken in respect of school exclusions and safeguarding, particularly in the context of rising fixed and permanent exclusions?

- This was an area in which the CHSCB was taking a strong interest. It was noted that there was a vulnerable adolescent steering group which had considered school exclusions given the clear safeguarding concerns for children not in school or alternative settings.
- The CHSCB would like to develop earlier safeguarding interventions that identify those features and characteristics of children at risk of exclusion and would help to minimise the incidence of school exclusions later on in the child's life. CHSCB wanted to develop processes that identified risk factors at the beginning of a child's pathway to possible exclusion, rather than at the actual point of exclusion. CHSCB would report more on this issue in the next annual reporting year.
- HLT reported that the majority of exclusions were fixed term and in most cases children were excluded only once. Whilst schools were required to put support in place for the first day of exclusion, parents were ultimately responsible for children after exclusion.
- LBH officers noted that school governors were being encouraged to recognise the protective influence of school in keeping children safe when validating and confirming school exclusions.

5.9 Given the growing and evolving risks to children associated with social media, the Commission wanted to know what assurance CHSCB had that local services had appropriate systems and controls in place to keep children safe? Was there sufficient training and development opportunities on social media for staff?

- Social media continued to play a significant role in safeguarding and the CHSCB was alert to the risks posed to young people. CHSCB had developed a handbook for professionals and there was guidance that had been cascaded out to help professionals identify and mitigate the risks from social media.
- An APP had been developed by CHSCB for use across schools which would provide advice about the risks of certain social media sites and other APPs.
- A digital footprint survey was also planned to establish the online habits of children and young people. This would inform the work of schools as well as CHSCB's training offer.
- It was acknowledged that this was a fast moving medium which would require ongoing monitoring and assessment to identify new and evolving risks.

5.10 The Commission sought to understand how CHSCB would work together with the Children and Families Service (CFS) to respond to priority actions identified in the focused visit undertaken by Ofsted?

- CHSCB had reassessed the datasets for children on child protection plans and for children and need to assess whether these were giving an accurate picture of the interventions and support required. A key line of work would be to identify how the broader safeguarding partnership

could escalate concerns and provide challenge. CHSCB had a very positive and open relationship with CFS and had the the right to roam and had an 'open book' relationship with CFS.

- There were 4 key components to effective safeguarding; context, early help and prevention, health and well-being of staff and leadership. CHSCB was confident that there was strong leadership in place to provide effective challenge and to respond to priority actions identified.

5.11 The Commission enquired what safeguarding work CHSCB had undertaken in relation to childhood obesity?

- CHSCB responded that it worked very closely with the Health and Well Being Board, which had childhood obesity as a target area. It was noted Health partners were very active in this area.
- LBH officers noted that childhood obesity was a priority for the council and that a partnership board chaired by the Chief Executive was overseeing this work.

5.12 The Chair thanked the independent Chair and officer from CHSCB for their attendance and their responses to questions from the Commission.

## **6 Outcome of School Exclusions**

6.1 Since the last meeting on 25h March 2019, a focus group has been held with children who have been excluded. This was conducted by Young Hackney for children in attendance at New Regents College.

6.2 The Commission will continue to collect evidence to support the review throughout May. Three more site visits of Alternative Providers were planned these included:

- Complete Works (Tower Hamlets);
- Footsteps (Haringey);
- BSix (Hackney).

6.3 The Commission would also look at the evidence from the 'deep dive' the HLT had undertaken and would use this to inform its conclusions and recommendation into school exclusions.

6.4 Once the above has been completed, the Commission will then review the evidence it has collected, assess if further work is needed, and to formulate conclusions and recommendations. These conclusions and recommendations will be tested out with senior officers and relevant cabinet member(s) to ensure that these were practical, achievable and affordable

6.5 The Chair will produce a draft report which will be circulated to the Commission for comment. This will then be finalised at a future meeting of the Commission.

## **7 Work Programme (Current and Future)**

7.1 Given that this was the final meeting of the municipal year the Commission was invited to reflect on the current work programme (what worked, what didn't work) and what items it may want to include in the future work programme.

7.2 The 2018/19 work programme saw a wide breadth of issues covered. There were 4 types of items which were considered by the Commission:

- **Standing Items**; items which require annual oversight and surveillance such as the school places, childcare sufficiency, and children's social care.
- **Holding Executive to Account**; Cabinet Members were both invited to be questioned on their portfolio covered by the CYP Scrutiny Commission;
- **Review** – items were taken to support the current review (school exclusions) as well as to follow up the recommendations from previous reviews (free childcare, foster care, unregistered schools);
- **One-off items** – items of interest that required an update or lighter touch scrutiny (Support to LGBT young people, mental health in schools, SEND update).

7.3 It was important to remember the role of Overview & Scrutiny in developing the work programme for the Commission as these would shape the types of items that are selected for scrutiny. The key functions of scrutiny were highlighted to the Commissions:

- **Overview** – Holds decision makers (e.g. Cabinet Members and Senior Officers) to account;
- **Policy development and review** – help to improve or develop new services and policies;
- **Performance management** – e.g. reviews performance, budget monitoring, value for money, quality;
- **Scrutinise external agencies** e.g. Police, Health Services, Fire Service, Housing Associations;
- **Public engagement and involvement** - represents views of the public and helps maintain public confidence in decision making.

7.4 The Commission also discussed how valued is added to those items which are scrutinised by the Council.

- Provides assurance to decision making;
- Provides open challenge in public which promote democratic accountability;
- Bring stakeholders together to look at difficult or complex issues – bringing statutory agencies, voluntary sector and community to develop collaborative approach and solutions;
- Public engagement and involvement - seek to involve service users, residents and the local community and meetings are held in public;
- Enhances democratic accountability and involvement - open, public and transparent assessment gives confidence to community

7.5 The Commission also discussed those skills and approaches to scrutiny that contribute to effective scrutiny practice. These included:

<b>Approaches</b>	<b>Skills</b>
Cross party approach – non-party political, consensus approach	Prioritising – picking the right topics/issues

Evidence based – research	Questioning – obtaining the right information
Practical and constructive	Consensus building - working across party
Inclusive – working with partners and the local community	Partnership working - building relationships
Relevant and timely	Influencing – “selling” scrutiny
Flexible format – opportunity to innovate	
New information	

7.6 Given that there were 8 meeting per year of the CYP Scrutiny Commission there was limited capacity and it could not scrutinise all the issues that might be suggested through the consultation. In this context, it would be important to prioritise items for inclusion within the work programme against a number of assessment criteria:

- Is this issue aligned to corporate priorities of the Council and/ or its partners?
- Does this issue resonate with the Commission, other non-executive Councillors and the wider local community?
- How does scrutiny add value to this item?
- Is this issue being looked at elsewhere - will scrutiny compliment/ duplicate this work?
- Is it timely - is this right to do now (could new legislation be coming into force)?

7.7 Key stages of the consultation process to develop the new work programme were highlighted to the Commission. These included:

- Writing to key stakeholders for suggestions;
- Holding a stakeholder meeting to discuss suggestions;
- Meeting with Cabinet Members and senior officers to discuss the work programme;
- Commission discusses and agrees work programme;
- Work programme is confirmed by Scrutiny Panel.

7.8 The Commission discussed the work programme for 2018/19 and the types of items that it would like to receive at future meetings. The following summarises the key points from this discussion:

- There was a preference for discursive items, where different stakeholders to brought together to discuss issues under consideration – the LGBT item worked well in 2018/19;
- Members were keen to hear the voice of local communities and local people who may be directly affected by the policy area under consideration (people’s first hand experiences);
- Site visits should be full day, encompassing a range of stakeholder views and site visits;
- Site visits were important to help bring context and front line issues to the attention of the Commission;
- It would be useful to survey the availability of members.

7.9 Members also made a number of suggestions for possible items to include within the work programme for 2019/20:

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- Mental health of young people - particularly at exam time and the support available for them;

Children's social care.

## **8 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

8.1 Two actions were confirmed.

8.2 These were agreed.

## **9 Any Other Business**

9.1 There was no other business.

9.2 The date of the next meeting was the Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Duration of the meeting: Times Not Specified