



London Borough of Hackney
Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission
Municipal Year 2018/19
Date of Meeting Tuesday, 29th October, 2019

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

Chair	Councillor Sophie Conway
Councillors in Attendance	Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair), Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Ajay Chauhan, Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr Katie Hanson, Cllr Clare Joseph, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr James Peters, Cllr Clare Potter and Cllr Caroline Woodley
Co-optees	Jo Macleod, Shuja Shaikh, Aleigha Reeves and Raivene Walters
In Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cllr Anntionette Bramble, Cabinet Member Education, Young People and Children’s Social Care,- Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Families and Play- Anne Canning, Group Director, Children, Adults and Community Health, LBH- Sarah Wright, Director of Children & Families, LBH- Robert Koglek, Head of Service for Corporate Parenting, LBH- Frank O’Donoghue, Head of Finance, Hackney Learning Trust- Justine McDonald, Headteacher, Our Lady’s High School for Girls
Members of the Public	2 members of the public were present.
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Councillor Sophie Conway in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from:
- Graham Hunter (Co-opted member);
 - Michael Lobenstein (Co-opted member);
 - Ernell Watson (Co-opted member).

2 Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 The following declarations were received by members of the Commission:

- Cllr Chauhan was a teacher at secondary school in another London borough and a member of the NEU;
- Cllr Peters was a Governor at a local special school in Hackney;
- Jo Macleod was a Governor at local primary school in Hackney;
- Cllr Bramble was a governor at schools in Hackney.

3 Urgent Items / Order of Business

3.1 There were no urgent items and the agenda was as published.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (19.05)

4.1 The last meeting of the Commission was dedicated to the assessment of off-rolling in schools. Further to that meeting additional information was requested from HLT which had been provided and noted by the Commission. A number of recommendations will be drawn up on the basis of that evidence and submitted to the Cabinet Member for a response.

4.2 The minutes of the 9th September were agreed.

5 Cabinet Member Questions - Cllr Antionette Bramble (19.10)

5.1 The Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care attended to respond to questions in this portfolio.

School Funding

5.2 The Cabinet member noted the following:

- In September 2019 the Government announced an additional £7.1 billion 3 year settlement for schools with additional money for teacher recruitment, youth centres and children who were at risk of sexual exploitation.
- It was still too early to identify exactly what this financial package would mean for local schools, but as the Government would be using a levelling up approach to funding under the national formula it was unlikely this would result in any significant increase given current funding per-pupil funding in Hackney.
- Hackney schools would however see some additional funding in relation to inflationary costs, which would roughly equate to a 2% rise in funding between 2020 and 2021 - which would (approximately) mean a £150 funding increase per pupil per year.
- Teacher starting salaries would increase to £30k in the future which would assist with retention and recruitment, and which will be funded by a separate grant, though it was unclear how this would be funded in the long term.
- Whilst the Cabinet member welcomed the additional resource it was noted that schools and a number of key education services had not been fully funded for a number of years which had the effect of taking money out of the system. The Cabinet member would continue to listen to Head Teachers on the funding pressures in local schools and how additional funding would address these.
- There would also be a £200k reduction in the central services for schools budget that supports the LA and would further limit the local authority's role in supporting school improvement.
- A range of support was available to schools experiencing financial challenge, any school deemed to be at risk of a deficit is able to have a full risk assessment and be supported in delivering a deficit / performance recovery programme.

Questions from the Commission:

5.3 As schools were under increasing financial challenge, parents were often being asked for additional financial contributions for pupil costs (e.g. trips, uniform and some course materials). What guidance was available for schools to make sure that they remain financially inclusive?

- The Cabinet member was not aware of any major shift toward increased parental funding, though it was suspected that subsidisation by the school for out of class activities (e.g. school trips) may be decreasing. The Cabinet member was not aware of any instances where parents had been asked to contribute toward educational materials, but would continue to engage Head teachers to identify financial pressures in schools. It was acknowledged however, that parents do experience financial difficulties in supporting the schooling needs of their child (e. uniforms, sports kit, lunches and trips).
- It was noted that schools cannot make charges where parents are on different incomes in order to cross-subsidise service provision. Schools can ask for an additional contributions to support vulnerable children, but this should be voluntary and the purpose should be explicitly stated.
- Schools also received a pupil premium grant for vulnerable children which should primarily be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning but can also be used for broader educational support and interventions.

5.4 The Commission requested more detail about the teachers' pay settlement that was to be funded through special grant funding. Further clarification was sought to ascertain if this included teaching assistants and other school staff and took into account their pension contributions?

- It was noted that teachers' pay increase did include additional grant funding for both the pay increase and for the increased pension contributions (though this was only for teachers).

5.5 The Commission sought to clarify is the £150 increase per pupil would be the same for both primary and secondary?

- The £150 figure related to primary school pupils and further clarification would be sought on the approximate increase that the new funding arrangement would mean for secondary pupils. In total, Hackney funding for schools would increase by £2.8 million. The Cabinet member would continue to talk to Headteachers to assess the impact of this additional funding and assess ongoing funding pressures going forward.

Agreed: the Cabinet member agreed to obtain data on the approximate increase that would result for secondary school pupils.

School Failure

5.6 LA's have a duty to promote positive and high standards in education and have powers to intervene in schools in which they have concerns. LA's have the power to issue a warning notice for a school for which they have concern, and can do so for a number of reasons including ongoing poor performance, inadequate leadership or governance or where the safety of children or staff is at risk. It was noted that a warning notice would only be used as a last resort, and if the school had resisted support interventions offered by the council and other regulatory agencies (e.g. training and developmental support packages).

5.7 The LA has a number of different powers of intervention which can be used where there are serious concerns for schools maintained by the LA:

- Restrictions placed on funding and the withdrawal of delegation;
- An Interim Executive Board (IEB) can be put in place to replace an existing governing body;
- Additional members can be added to the governing body;
- A requirement that the school governing body goes into a formal arrangement with another governing body.

5.8 Accountability arrangements for different types of schools (maintained by the LA, Free School, Academies and Independent Schools) are however fragmented. Thus whilst the LA may directly intervene in LA maintained schools, it has limited powers to do so in other schools. The LA may however seek to engage and involve other regulatory bodies (e.g. Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), Department of Education) to use their regulatory powers to bring about improvement in Free Schools and Academies. It was noted that such agencies often lack local data and intelligence to inform regulatory action which was an impediment to local action. The LA has no powers to intervene at an independent school except for where there were safeguarding concerns.

5.9 The Cabinet member reiterated that irrespective of school setting, the LA would act to support the positive development and attainment of all children and young people in the borough. Whilst the LA may not have the powers to intervene, it would actively monitor school performance and offer help as necessary. In this context, the LA has worked with a local Free School for which there have been a number of concerns. Both members and officers have visited the school to offer support and provide critical challenge to bring about the improvement required.

5.10 It was noted that in the unlikely event of the closure of a maintained school, the LA would be responsible for finding other school places for displaced children. Where closures occurred in other school settings, the LA would also be required to provide school places where the child wanted to return to a maintained school.

Questions from the Commission:

5.11 There have been a number of concerns around Hackney New School (a local Free School) particularly in relation to the lack of outside space and the appropriateness of some buildings used for teaching. Can the Cabinet member update the Commission on the current situation, in particular the outcome of a recent visit to the DfE by Cabinet member and the local MP?

- It was important to note the context for Free Schools, in that these were able to set up without reference to the Local School Place Plan (based on the educational needs for provision of places) and do not have to work in alignment with the local authority in planning school provision.
- It was noted that the school has experienced a wide range of challenges including changing leadership, temporary school closures and inappropriate facilities. A new head had been appointed and was committed to improving education provision at the school.
- Given the broad geographical area covered, the RSC may not always be in the best position to act, as they may not have access to local data and intelligence which may guide and inform regulatory oversight and action with local free

schools. Given the complexity of issues at this particular school, the RSC had been invited to visit.

- Whilst additional funding has been requested and received from the DfE to support changes needed for improved teaching and capital developments at the school, it was suggested that this had been insufficient. The School and LA continued to be in ongoing discussions with the DfE.

5.12 Has the LA issued any formal warning notices to local schools? If so, what was the outcome?

- The issuing of a warning notice was a last resort of the LA and only undertaken after every other avenue of support had been exhausted.
- In the past the LA has issued a warning notice and would not hesitate to issue again in the future if the school was not offering a safe and reasonable education to its children.
- The LA had supported the DfE in issuing warning notices to schools where the LA does not have direct regulatory oversight (e.g. Independent schools).

5.13 What are the financial consequences of school failure, and the impact that this may have on the LA?

- Schools that are experiencing difficulties can receive the support of a dedicated support programme by the LA. This is a wide-ranging package of support to help bring schools back on track.
- When a school gets in to difficulty this can also be a particularly challenging time financially as recovery plans may involve significant costs. Although there are significant costs associated with school failure, both the LA and DfE have limited resources in which to respond, therefore school failure remains a significant challenge and risk.

Hackney Schools Group

5.14 The Hackney Schools Group has now been formalised as the Hackney Schools Group Board (HSGB) and had recently been approved by Cabinet. The Board will bring together representatives from local schools together with a range of other local stakeholders and experts to provide a long term steer to educational provision and school improvement in Hackney. An independent chair had been appointed to Board, which would act as an advisory capacity to the Director of Education.

5.15 The make-up of the board will include Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, independent experts, Lead Member for Education, another Councillor (appointed by the Mayor of Hackney), Director of Education (Hackney Learning Trust) and Group Director Children, Adults and Community Health (Hackney Council). The Board will meet four times a year and sub-working panels will meet 3 times per year (standards, pedagogy, innovation, CPD, vulnerable children and staff wellbeing). A number of other board members and panel members had also been appointed.

5.16 In terms of outcomes, reports of the Board would be presented at both scrutiny and Cabinet.

Questions from the Commission:

5.17 How much support, financial and otherwise, will the LA provide to the Board?

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- In respect of cost implications, the independent chair will receive a stipend for that role. All other costs (including staffing) will be met within existing resources of HLT.
- The Board would be independently evaluated and the LA was in discussions with a University to undertake this.

5.18 Will meetings of the Board be open to the public and will there be a public record of the meetings?

- There will be information for the public on the work of the Board, though it is not clear what format this would be in at this stage.

5.19 Was the selection process for Board members open and transparent and if interviews were undertaken, who conducted them?

- All positions were publicly advertised. In addition, a specialist recruitment agency was used. The interview for the Independent Chair was undertaken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care, the Director of Children, Adults and Community Health and the Director of Education. Other appointments to the panels were led by the Director of Children, Adults and Community Health and the Director of Education.
- It was hoped that the Board and panel members would be representative of a wide range of specialist expertise and interests, but also reflect the socio-demographic diversity of Hackney.

5.20 How will the Board improve school inclusion, particularly in relation to SEND?

- One of the sub-panels will focus on vulnerable children which will cover inclusivity at school. It is hoped that this would contribute to local work on supporting children with SEND, reducing school exclusions, the teaching of SRE and improving support for LGBT students at school. The panel will also look at disproportionality in the education system and help to provide challenge on local inequalities.

6 Recruitment & Retention of Foster Carers - Review Update (19.55)

6.1 In 2017/18 the Commission undertook an in-depth review into the recruitment and retention of foster carers. An executive response was provided to the 10 recommendations of the Commission at Cabinet in July 2018.

6.2 The Head of Service for Corporate Parenting attended to update the Commission on progress against the agreed recommendations. The key successes and ongoing challenges of this work were reported as below:

- A pilot of the Mocking bird Model of foster carer support had been successfully developed (with the Fostering Network) and appeared to be working well. This model created a hub and satellite system to foster carers that provided additional expertise and wrap around support to foster carers and looked after children in the community. Two more hubs were planned for the next 12 months.
- The Corporate Parenting service had also recruited two specialist social workers to help match looked after children with foster carers. This will help to make sure the placement is right both for the child and foster carer and help promote placement satisfaction and continuity of care.
- In the past year, there had been a significant reduction in the use of independent foster carers to care for looked after children.

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- The service has recruited over 12 foster carer ambassadors (who are experienced foster carers) to assist in the recruitment of new foster carers. Evidence would suggest that the opportunity to speak to existing foster carers can be influential in the decision to apply to be a foster carer.
- In terms of recruitment, the service had recruited 12 new foster carers which was below the annual target of 23. It was noted however that there were no resignations within the in-house foster carer service, so there had been a net gain of 12 foster carers. Comparatively, this figure was higher than neighbouring boroughs, where the average net recruitment was 9 foster carers.
- The number of enquiries to be a foster carer had also increased significantly, partly as a result of increased use of social media (Facebook).
- Having a spare bedroom is a key requirement for fostering, but given the scale of the local housing situation this remains a significant barrier to foster carer recruitment.

Questions from the Commission:

6.3 The Commission sought to clarify what a residential setting for a looked after child would look like?

- For clarity, residential care refers to children's homes.

6.4 Is the foster carer recruitment process successful in recruiting carers who can meet the needs of children in care in Hackney; that is adolescents who have complex needs?

- There has been some targeted recruitment alongside other NE London boroughs to increase the number of foster carers with the specialist skills to care for adolescents with complex needs but this was an ongoing challenge for the service and also nationally.
- The service aims to train and develop the existing pool of in-house foster carers who may have more experience to meet the needs of adolescent looked after children. It was acknowledged however that it was often difficult to match the needs of this group of young people with foster families, and that placements in residential settings or semi-independent accommodation was becoming more common.

6.5 If Hackney can increase the availability of larger properties will this help to increase the number of in-house foster placements and reduce costs for looked after children?

- A scheme is in operation in Hackney to offer larger properties to foster carers, though it has been very difficult to match foster carers who can take up this offer. One family had moved into larger accommodation through this process. Although most looked after children are cared for by a foster carer, for a number of adolescents entering care, living with another family may not be their preferred choice and they would prefer alternative semi-independent care if available to them. The latter is significantly (up to 10X) more expensive than being cared for by a foster carer.

6.6 What training and support is offered to foster carers to ensure that they manage the complex needs of looked after children?

- Clinical support is offered to all foster carers.
- The fostering service also continually reviews its internal training offer. The local training offer was informed by a cumulative assessment of the annual individual review process, which identified the training needs of individual foster

carers. The service produces a training brochure to ensure that foster carers are aware of the training courses available.

- The implementation of the Mockingbird model with improved access to other foster carers ensures that foster carers have more day-to-day support. Additional clinical support is also available through this model to help parents manage more complex needs. The service has purchased the license for Mockingbird, therefore the Fostering Network will continue to work with and support local foster carers operating in this model.

6.7 How has the use of Facebook contributed to enquiries about becoming a foster carer in Hackney?

- The use of Facebook had resulted in a significant increase in enquiries, which have then referred potential applicants onto an on-line self-assessment process. From here, applicants are contacted by the recruitment team who visit and support potential recruits through the application process.
- Whilst the service constantly assessed and trialled new methods of recruitment, 'word of mouth' was consistently the most effective way to engage and deliver new applicants.

Agreed: CFS would provide additional data on the number of foster carer enquiries received each year and routes from which enquiries were generated.

6.8 The Commission noted the engagement with Independent Foster Care Agencies (IFA) this year and sought to understand what the outcomes had been?

- CFS held an engagement event for IFA's earlier in 2019 which was very successful in engaging differing agencies and to bring them together to discuss foster care issues. The event had been positive as this had helped to further develop relationships with IFA's and to strengthen liaison processes with the council. It was also an opportunity to showcase how the Fostering Service works to support children and foster carers in Hackney. Given its success, this IFA engagement would be an annual event.

6.9 Maintaining a good council-wide support package was essential to retaining in-house foster carers. The Commission was disappointed to note that there had been no progress on the proposed Council Tax reduction scheme for foster carers and requested an update.

- Not all in-house foster carers were local residents and paid council tax in Hackney, so this required particular care and thought to ensure that the service was not treating foster carers who lived elsewhere differently. The service would continue to work on this.

Agreed: Although no further updates were required, that a short briefing on the recruitment and retention of foster carers would be provided as part of the Children's Social Care Annual Report (October yearly).

6.10 The Chair thanked officers for attending and updating the Commission on this item.

7 Children's Social Care Annual Report 2018/19 (20.20)

7.1 This Children Social Care Annual Report is a standing item that presented annually (with a mid-year update) within the Commission's work programme. The

report sets out how the Children and Families Service in Hackney performed for key aspects of children's social care provision (e.g. referrals, assessments and children entering care) together with identified priorities for the year ahead.

7.2 The Chair welcomed Sarah Wright (Director of Children and Families) and Anne Canning (Group Director, Children, Adults and Community Health Services) to the meeting who presented the report. In presenting the report the following issues were highlighted to the Commission:

- CFS continued to review provision in relation to the outcomes of the Ofsted focused visit in February 2019 and continued to respond to priorities in the agreed action plan. CFS felt that there had been good progress on many of the issues identified by Ofsted. CFS was preparing for a full 2-week onsite visit from Ofsted which was expected imminently.
- Overall the picture was of rising demand for children's social care services with the number of looked after children in Hackney continuing to rise: it was 405 as of the end of April 2019 but was currently at 426. The majority of young people entering care were 16 and 17 year olds. There had also been an increase in the number of young unaccompanied minors seeking asylum entering care.
- Whilst the data in the report suggests that the number of children on child protection plans had decreased in the year to April 2019, it was noted that this figure had risen considerably since that time. The service is seeking to analyse and monitor the reasons behind this increase.
- The Contextual Safeguarding project continues to be a significant piece of work for the service and is being rolled out further. As Hackney was a leading player in the development of this new approach to safeguarding, CFS had recently hosted a conference at which a large number of LA's attended from across the country.
- All staff were being trained in the 'Safe and Together' model which aims to better support those families which have experienced domestic abuse. The focus of this model was to support the victim and hold the perpetrator to account for their behaviour and their continued role in parenting.
- There was now a dedicated unit to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children which was helping to address the traumas that some of these young people had experienced. Work was also being undertaken to develop supported lodgings for this group of young people.
- It was noted that the Young Carers service was coming back in-house in November 2019, and would be delivered by Young Hackney.
- The social work element of the Disabled Children Service was also back within CFS and a number of permanent staff had been recruited to replace agency staff.
- In terms of the workforce, social worker retention was reported to be very good within the service.
- The service was updating its corporate parenting strategy which will reflect on the role of the council as corporate parent, and how best CFS and the wider family of council services can support children in its care.
- In 2018/19, the number of first time entrants into the youth offending systems (81) dropped considerably from 2017/18 (111). It was suggested that this figure is perhaps contrary to widely held perceptions of increasing levels of youth crime.

Questions from the Commission

7.3 The Commission sought to understand the reasons behind the significant rise in children who were subject to a second or subsequent child protection plan, and what CFS were doing in response.

- CFS had undertaken great deal of analysis of these figures and concluded that there were not any discernible patterns or associations within this data. Although work has been undertaken with families to help them understand the sustainability of change that may be needed, in some cases families had not been able to sustain the ways in which they provided support to their children.
- There may be other circumstances which may precipitate a further action plan, for example, when a parent enters into a new relationship which might be abusive and would create a new risk for the child.

7.4 As 60% of looked after children are now young adolescents aged 13 or above, how is CFS responding and adapting to respond to the needs of this cohort?

- This was a London wide problem, where a large number of boroughs were experiencing similar trends within their profile of looked after children. It was noted that local authorities were meeting across London to help develop policy and practice responses to this aspect of children's social care.
- It was suggested that once fully integrated into local practice, the Contextual Safeguarding approach will play a significant role in safeguarding adolescents.
- It was noted that CFS operated a specialist service from Oxford to develop family interventions that can help rebuild family relationships and help adolescent children to return home. However, CFS was assessing whether more intensive support was needed earlier on.
- It was noted that whilst there was always a significant flow of children moving both into and out of care each year, monitoring had shown that the rate of children being returned home had reduced. This had contributed to increased numbers of looked after children, particularly among adolescents where it may take additional time to respond to their complex needs and reintegrate back into the family home. It was also often difficult for social workers to engage and involve parents of adolescents in care which made transition back to the home a more difficult and lengthy process.

7.5 The Commission sought further information on why the number of children entering the Disabled Children Service had increased significantly over the past year? What were the reasons behind this and how was the service responding.

- The Disabled Children Service had just been taken over by CFS so it was difficult to comment on these figures at this stage. It was suggested that more young people were being diagnosed with SEND which may have contributed to this figure. Additional resources had been placed within the service and there would be further analysis of activity and service data.

7.6 The Commission highlighted three significant increases from the report (1) child protection plans (2) the number of looked after children (3) unaccompanied asylum seekers. Were these increases mirrored London wide and nationally and was there an expectation that such rises would continue?

- As a result of the Ofsted focus visit, the service was assessing and processing cases much quicker which would hopefully mean that support for children and families would be timelier. This may result in children being stepped up from Child Protection to becoming looked after much quicker than before.

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- It was suggested that practice may have become more risk alert which could have impacted on the numbers of children on a Child Protection Plan or being made subject to care proceeds.
- In relation to unaccompanied asylum seekers, the government had introduced a dispersal system which sought to devolve responsibility of care to a wider range of local authorities across the country. Although there was a regional cap, London had traditionally accepted far more unaccompanied asylum seekers than other regions. This represented a significant financial and political challenge to London local authorities. As of end of October 2019 there were 47 unaccompanied asylum seekers being looked after by the council. This figure was not expected to rise. Many of these young people stay in the care system for longer as they do not have families who could provide alternative care.

7.7 The Commission noted a significant increase (14%) in referrals to the Domestic Abuse Intervention Service (DAIS). How will the new Safe and Together approach help to increase support to families experiencing domestic abuse? What does working with perpetrators look like, particularly as perpetrators sometimes do not recognise the abusive nature of their behaviour?

- Demand has risen considerably for this service, which whilst disturbing, also indicated that families were seeking help and getting support. The Safe and Together model helps social workers recognise the measures that mothers put in place to protect their children and hold perpetrators to account for their actions and for their continued parenting responsibility.
- This approach also sought to avoid the penalisation of mothers (by removing their children) and sought to develop a partnership approach with the mother by helping support and maintain their care of their children.
- This approach also empowers social workers to have difficult conversations with perpetrators to get them to recognise how their behaviour impacts on their children and the family as a whole and how this must change to protect their family. 30 social workers had recently completed the 4 day core training module to improve practice.
- Social workers also received support from a specialist worker with experience of dealing with domestic abuse perpetrators.

7.8 How will the integration of the Disabled Children Service work with other services within CFS?

- Although the Disabled Children Service was still located within the HLT, it was expected that the integration of social work function within CFS would result in improved focus on safeguarding for this particular group of children. It was noted that there had been some positive feedback from the initial integration of this service.

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

8 Support for LGBT+ children at school - Cabinet Response (21.10)

8. Support for LGBT+ children at school – Cabinet Response

8.1 At its meeting in February 2019, the Commission assessed the support available to LGBT+ students in school in Hackney. Recommendations from this assessment were submitted to the Deputy Mayor and Cabinet member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care in June 2019. The Deputy Mayor's response was approved by Cabinet in September 2019.

8.2 The Commission noted and agreed the response. It was noted that the Director of Education would lead on the implementation of this work and the Commission would consider an update in the formulation of its next work programme for 2020/21.

Agreed: That a progress report be taken by the Commission in the next work programme (20/210).

9 Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission - 2018/19 Work Programme (21.15)

9.1 The Commission noted the changes in the work programme for 2019/20 which included:

- 25th November – Making Hackney a child friendly borough;
- 10th December – Post 16 provision for children and young people with SEND;
- 24th February – Update from Black Men’s Project;
- 24th February – Sex and Relationship Education Guidelines - preparedness of Schools for new.

9.2 No decision has yet been taken on the in-depth review for 2019/20 except that this will be as a ‘scrutiny in a day’ exercise.

9.3 The Commission noted that a General Election had been called for 12th December 2019 which would place two future meetings within the ‘pre-election period’ (25th November and 10th December). Initial advice was that the business of the council should continue as usual and there were no plans at present to change the date of these meetings.

10 Outcome of School Exclusions - Update (21.20)

10.1 A brief update was provided to the Commission on the progress of this review. The Commission were reminded of the overarching aim of this review:

‘...scrutinise the outcomes of excluded pupils and to identify those policies and practices which best help to ensure excluded children and those at risk of permanent exclusions have the same opportunities as their peers in mainstream education.’

10.2 There project had a number of component objectives which were as set out below:

1. To assess support available to children and their parents at risk of permanent exclusion or those at the point of exclusion.
2. To examine Alternative Education provision in Hackney
 - a. Breadth and quality of provision
 - b. How services are commissioned – in relation to needs and outcomes
 - c. Attainment outcomes for young people
3. To improve understanding of the impact of being excluded on young people and their families
 - a. Disproportionality (e.g. children with SEND, black Caribbean boys)
 - b. Mental health and wellbeing
 - c. Associations with youth crime, criminal exploitation and wider safeguarding concerns
4. To identify and support best practice best practice to reduce exclusions and improve outcomes of those who are in AP
 - a. Behaviour strategies, reintegration, SEND support
 - b. Across sectors(AP, Special school and mainstream settings)

10.3 The Commission had undertaken a wide range of evidence gathering to support these objectives. This included:

1. Work of the Commission – young people and their parents
 - a. Focus group with 8 young people who had been excluded – permanently or fixed term
 - b. Focus group with 6 young people at New Regents College (PRU)
 - c. Opportunistically spoke to young people on site visits (New Regents College, Hackney Quest and Hackney City Farm)
 - d. Focus group with 13 parents whose children have a SEND
 - e. Focus group with 10 Turkish speaking parents whose children who have a SEND
 - f. Opportunistically spoke to parents on site visits (Hackney Quest)
 - g. Case studies via Islington Law Centre
2. Alternative Providers:
 - a. New Regents College (Pupil Referral Unit) – both attended CYPSC and site visit
 - b. Boxing Academy - both attended CYPSC and site visit
 - c. Inspire Directions - both attended CYPSC and site visit
 - d. BSix - both attended CYPSC and site visit
 - e. The Complete Works - site visit
 - f. Hackney City Farm - site visit
 - g. Footsteps - site visit
3. Evidence gathering within the Council:
 - a) Hackney Learning Trust – has established local priorities, a strategy and action plan to reduce exclusions. Also undertaken a deep dive into exclusions data. Set up Exclusions Board to monitor and oversee exclusions strategy.
 - b) Health and Wellbeing Service – including school Exclusions service.
 - c) Reintegration Service (Primary) – works with children at risk of exclusion, has supported 480 children 86% it has no further contact with.
 - d) Fair Access Panel – a route through which some excluded children can re-enter mainstream education.
 - e) Children and Families Service – Young Hackney – strong correlation between exclusion and those who used early help service and those with open social care case.
 - f) Deep Dive – a project worker employed for 6 months to undertake a detailed investigation of children who had been excluded from school.
4. Comparative assessments with other boroughs:
 - a) London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham - January
 - b) Waltham Forest - November
 - c) Tower Hamlets and Newham - November
5. Community evidence gathering:
 - a. The Difference - specialist exclusion charity
 - b. Hackney Quest – Hackney parents and young people charity
 - a. Special Schools - Garden School and Ickburgh School

10.4 The Commission was in the process of evaluating and collating the evidence received for the review. From this the Commission would develop a number of strategic recommendations which would be consulted upon with relevant services and contributors.

11 Any Other Business (21.30)

There was no other business.

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The meeting closed at 9.15pm.