

# **Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission**

## **Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

### **Draft Minutes**

#### Attendees:

Sophie Conway (Councillor) (Chair)  
Margaret Gordon (Councillor) (Vice Chair)  
Ajay Chauhan (Councillor)  
Sade Etti (Councillor)  
Katie Hanson (Councillor)  
Clare Potter (Councillor)  
Caroline Woodley (Councillor)  
Cllr James Peters (Councillor)  
Graham Hunter (Co-opted member)  
Justine McDonald (Co-opted member)  
Ernell Watson (Co-opted member)  
Jo McLeod (Co-opted member)  
Luisa Dornela (Co-opted member)  
Shabnum Hassan (Co-opted member)  
Aleigha Reeves (Hackney Youth Parliament)  
Maariyah Patel (Hackney Youth Parliament)  
Clive Kandza (Hackney Youth Parliament)

#### In attendance:

Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Families and Play  
Cllr Anntionette Bramble, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care  
Anne Canning, Group Director, Children Families and Community Health  
Sarah Wright, Director of Children and Families Service  
Annie Gammon, Head of Hackney Learning Trust and Director of Education  
Polly Cziok, Director of Communications, Culture and Engagement  
Pauline Adams, Head of Service Young Hackney  
Dan Beagle, Consultation Officer  
Rohney Saggarr-Malikand, Young Futures Commission  
Jermain Jackman, Young Futures Commission  
Katie Glasgow, Planning Policy  
Gabireille Abdi, Planning Policy  
Lizzie Bird, Planning Policy  
Dinah Bornat, Diector ZCD Architects  
Luke Billingham, Hackney Quest, Hackney Wick Through Young Eyes  
Huan Rimmington, Build Up  
Modi Abdoul, Young Hackney  
Larisa Ahmed(Entity Youth Group)  
Thyreece Williams (Entity Youth Group)

There was 3 members of the public present.

## 1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Clare Joseph, Michael Lobenstein (Co-opted member) and Shuja Shaik (Co-opted member).

1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Katie Hansen and Cllr Clare Potter.

## 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 special school in Hackney;
- Graham Hunter was a governor at Primary Advantage Federation;
- Justine McDonald, was a Headteacher at local secondary school;
- Jo McLeod was a governor at a local school in Hackney.

## 3. Urgent Items / Order of Business

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

## 4. Making Hackney a Child Friendly Borough

4.1 A key theme to emerge from the Commission's work programme consultation for 2019/20 was how children and young people are actively engaged in the design, planning and delivery of services for them. The Commission therefore agreed to assess this issue within the context of the council's commitment to 'Make Hackney a Child Friendly Borough'.

4.2 The agreed aims of the session were:

- Explore the council's policy ambitions for a child friendly borough;
- Assess how children and young people were currently involved in planning services and how this could be improved;
- Consider how the council can create a child friendly physical environment which is embedded within local planning and development policy and guidance.

4.3 To assist in these aims, the Commission heard from a range of local stakeholders and other informed contributors. From the evidence presented, it was hoped that the Commission would develop a number of strategic recommendations to guide and inform the development of the council's approach to 'Making Hackney a Child Friendly Borough'.

4.4 The session was held in 3 parts which are as set out below:

Part 1 - Policy ambitions for a child friendly borough

Part 2 - Exploring how we engage, involve and advocate for young people

Part 3 - Assessing how to develop child friendly neighbourhoods and physical spaces

Part 1 – Policy Ambitions for a child friendly borough.

## Cabinet Members

4.5 The policy for Child Friendly Borough policy is covered by both the Cabinet member for Early Years, Families and Play and the Cabinet member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care and both attended to provide an overview for the ambitions for this policy.

4.6 The Cabinet member for Early Years, Families and Play noted that Hackney had already made considerable investments to ensure that the borough was child friendly which was exemplified through the presence of high performing schools, 21 children's centres, 7 adventure playgrounds and other local child friendly projects such as School Streets and Play Streets. It was noted that the Child Friendly Borough policy would extend this commitment further to ensure that the needs of children and young people were embedded in planning and development processes across the borough.

4.7 The approach to this emerging policy was informed by a number of local neighbourhood design and consultation projects at both Haggerston Youth Centre and the De Beauvoir Estate. These projects analysed what young people's views of a number of public spaces, and sought to assess their accessibility and use through 'a young person's eyes'. It was apparent that there were specific reasons why children and young people may choose to use a public space or not, and details of this work were contained within a report produced by ZCD Architects: Neighbourhood Design: Working with children toward a child friendly city.

4.8 A Child Friendly Borough policy in Hackney would seek to build on this work through the development of a Special Planning Document which would set out how the council would expect spaces to be designed so that these were positively viewed and used by children and young people across the borough.

4.9 The Cabinet member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care highlighted a number of important issues for this work. Preliminary consultation work noted that whilst the views of children and young people about the accessibility of public spaces differed from those of their parents, parental perceptions about the safety of such spaces greatly influenced young people's actual usage of such spaces. It was therefore important to acknowledge the role of parents in developing local planning guidance.

4.10 Hackney Youth Parliament (HYP) and the Young Futures Commission (YFC) were two current examples of council's commitment to engaging and involving children and young people in planning and delivery of local services. HYP elected representatives from across schools in Hackney and were actively involved in a number of local planning consultations. The YFC had also been consulting widely with local children and young people on what services were working and what could be improved across the borough. It was hoped that the outcomes from this latter consultation would further inform the policy commitment to a Child Friendly Borough.

## Questions to Cabinet Members

4.11 The Commission sought to ascertain the timescales for the development of the Child Friendly SPD and how success would be measured?

- It was expected that a report would be taken to Cabinet on the development of the SPD by the summer of 2020.
- Monitoring the impact of this new policy would necessarily be long term to reflect the nature of spatial development processes, and would be given further consideration by Planning Policy team within the council as the policy development process progressed.

4.12 In terms of comparative planning policies, could Hackney learn anything from the approaches of other boroughs to making child friendly neighbourhoods?

- It was noted that the Southwark Young Advisors project had proved very informative. This project was made up young people (aged 15 to 24) who could help community leaders to engage other young people within the community to improve local decision-making and help improve services. This approach had been reflected in the development of the Young Futures Commission here in Hackney.
- There had also been a number of successful local projects which had involved young people in planning and neighbourhood design such as Build Up and Hackney Wick Through the Eyes of Young People, and the borough would seek to learn from these projects in developing the SPD.

## Part 2 - Engaging and Involving Young People Hackney Youth Parliament

4.13 Representatives from Hackney Youth Parliament provided an outline of the principles of this consultative body, how it worked and examples of projects in which it had been consulted. Representatives also offered some reflections on how youth engagement and consultation might be improved locally.

4.14 A Hackney Youth Charter had been developed to provide a good practice guide for local organisations for the engagement and involvement of young people. This Charter set out eight principles which should underpin young people's involvement:

1. Young people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them;
2. Young people are all different and all equal in participation matters;
3. Organisations should respect, encourage and facilitate young people's involvement;
4. Training and support should be provided to help young people to participate;
5. Adults need to develop trusting relationships in which young people are treated with maturity and respect and in which the aims and expectations of involvement are clearly communicated;
6. Young people should be involved in all aspects of decision making from planning and design of services, to assessing how effective they have been;
7. Services should report annually on those projects where they have actively engaged and involved young people;
8. Services should try to engage and involve those young people who may not be actively engaged to ensure their views are also represented.

4.15 Hackney Youth Parliament elections take place every two years, the next election being due in October 2020. There are currently 22 Youth Parliament members aged between 12 and 22. Each candidate is elected on a personal

manifesto, the issues in which they are interested in and will pursue whilst an elected representative.

4.16 From the personal manifestos of elected representatives, the Youth Parliament developed four key promises to young people across Hackney:

- To make Hackney Greener (starting with Youth Hubs);
- Increase awareness of local opportunities for young people;
- To project and represent the voice of young people in all work;
- To guide and support the incoming youth parliament.

4.17 The Youth Parliament meets weekly at Hackney Town Hall and is currently working on a project to improve the environmental sustainability of youth provision in the borough. Working on projects like this can help Youth Parliament representatives to develop critical thinking skills, learn about politics and the importance of social action.

4.18 Youth Parliament representatives represent young people through a wide range of forums and meetings, including the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission, British Youth Council and London Youth Assembly.

Representatives are also asked to take part in local consultations across a wide range of services. It was noted that there are a number of barriers to supporting local consultations which included:

- It may not be on an area on which elected representatives have an interest;
- Insufficient notice provided of consultation requirements, or details of what would be involved;
- Involvement in consultation was at too late a stage to make a difference on the outcomes;
- The consultation was area specific rather than borough wide; and
- Consultation involvement would involve a longstanding time commitment.

4.19 The Youth Parliament had also set up a body called the Friends of Hackney Youth Parliament, so that a wider cohort of young people could be actively engaged involved in local consultation projects. As well as improving the capacity for young people's involvement, it will also help to match interests of young people with nature of the consultation.

4.20 A key objective of the HYP was to represent the views of young people and it aims to further support this further through two processes:

- Entity – a group which can provide illustrative insight of the lived experiences of young people in Hackney which can be useful for local consultation exercises on a wider range of issues;
- Hackney Youth Forums – these fortnightly forums are open to young people aged 12-19 who live in Hackney to debate issues, share ideas and contribute to shaping services for young people. These forums support young people to develop communication and other interpersonal skills (e.g. debating, teamworking, presentations).

Questions to Hackney Youth Parliament

4.21 Can you provide any examples of where HYP has been involved in local consultations which have worked well, and those which have not worked so well?  
- It was difficult to differentiate between those consultation projects in which HYP had been involved which were successful and those which were not, because most had some elements of both success and failure. There were however a number of traits of successful consultations which were viewed positively by HYP representatives involved:

- Where sufficient information was provided throughout the consultation, clearly setting out the aims of the project and what was expected of them;
- Those projects that sought to empower participants through developing their understanding of local issues, or helped them to develop knowledge and skills which could be used productively in other settings with young people.

4.22 What were HYP representatives' views of their role on the CYP Scrutiny Commission and if there was anything that could be done to support further contribution to its work?

- After CYP Scrutiny Commission meetings, HYP representatives reported back to the all members of the HYP. It was noted that there was a lot of interest in those issues which affected young people in their daily life, in particular the Commission's work on school exclusions resonated with many members of HYP as this issue had formed part of their personal manifesto.  
- It was suggested that other HYP members (other than the existing representatives) have a wide range of interests and would certainly be interested in attending the meetings of the Commission. Therefore, extending HYP representation to the Commission to other HYP members might encourage more young people to be involved in agenda items in which they were interested.

4.23 What obstacles does the HYP face in its work?

- The main problem was local awareness of HYP, how it works and how it can work with local services. It was noted that the Cabinet member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care met regularly with HYP members and helped to promote its work and to develop links with local services which had been very helpful.

4.24 How has being a HYP member helped to improve the range of skills that you have and assist you in your future ambitions?

- Representatives noted that being a member of HYP had helped in their ambition to attend university. Membership of the HYP had also helped them to develop an understanding of politics, how decisions were made and how to get actively involved in local projects. Through their role as a HYP representative they had developed critical thinking skills, and by speaking at public events this had helped to improve self-confidence. In addition, HYP representatives had learnt to work collaboratively, supporting each other in their work.

4.25 The Commission were interested in the HYP proposal that council services should 'pitch' projects to them so that these could be matched to the interests of representatives. How might this work?

- Representatives indicated that it would be useful if services presented projects for which they would like young people's involvement at the beginning of their term of office. This would enable young people to sign-up to projects of interest and plan their involvement alongside other responsibilities.

4.26 How might you think Friends of HYP might work to extend the reach to a broader group of young people?

- There were a number of ways in which the membership of HYP could be extended to create a wider range of young people which included:

- Extending membership to alumni (those who had left to go to university);
- Opportunistic recruitment through visits to local youth hubs;
- Through social media such as Twitter.

4.27 How does the HYP represent and involve children and young people from a wide range of backgrounds, for example those from varying ethnic groups or children with SEND?

- The membership of HYP was diverse in itself, but sought to capture the views of young people across Hackney through visits to young people's settings such as local youth hubs.

4.28 The Commission were interested in how HYP could get further involved in projects it was interested in, such as the Commission's school exclusions review. In particular, being involved in the drafting and validating of project recommendations.

- It was agreed that this would be an area of interest, and would welcome the Commission's invite to for a wider group of young people to look at the conclusions of this work.

#### Young Futures Commission

4.29 The Co-chair of the Young Futures Commission (YFC) outlined to the Commission the purpose and function of this youth led body and the consultative work undertaken to date. The YFC aimed to gather evidence from the lived experience of young people aged 10-25 to understand their views of Hackney, what they feel about local services and what challenges they face. The aim of the YFC was to make recommendations from thus consultation that would help improve the lives and life chances of young people, and to enable members, officers and other council partners to learn more about young people's experience of growing up in Hackney.

4.30 The independence of the YFC was emphasised to the Commission. The governance arrangements had already been redrafted to reflect its independence, where all adults had been removed from the board to help create a safe space for young people, led by young people. Although funded by and accountable to the council, the YFC had its own website and email account and had its own branded merchandise separate from that of the council.

4.31 The YFC is also peer led with young people being trained to engage and consult other young people across the borough. This approach not only helped to develop the consultation skills and confidence of young people, but also creates a trusted pool of facilitators with whom other young people are happy to confide and share information with. This approach is valued by young people and helps to yield good quality data from those who engage with the YFC.

4.32 The YFC has also been flexible and creative in the way that it has involved young people, seeking to engage young people in the settings where they feel

comfortable and happy to speak to local facilitators. There have been numerous street interviews with young people as part of this borough wide engagement which have taken place at Hackney Carnival, local festivals and other local events.

4.33 The YFC has had the benefit of an engagement officer who has helped reach out to a number of communities and organisations, to gain their trust and to facilitate access to young people in those communities (e.g. Orthodox Jewish Community). Other techniques have included:

- Mapping exercise – where young people encouraged to identify areas of the borough that they like or don't like via red and green pins and to explain why. The views of young people from this exercise will be collated in final reporting;
- Inequalities – encouraging young people to explore difference and equality through participation in group activities;
- Not accepting that there are hard to reach young people but to develop creative ways in which to reach diverse communities of young people that live in Hackney.

4.34 Through its work, it has also become apparent to the YFC that some of the practices and cultures of the council are not conducive to young people's involvement. These barriers need to be recognised and challenged, for example when and where it holds its meetings.

4.35 It was also important to recognise, value and recompense those young people who have given their time to support the project. Approximately 30 young people were paid above minimum wage level for their work to support the YFC. It is important to remind young people their time is equally valued as adults, and that their time should not be expected to be given for free.

4.36 Whilst the YFC utilised social media to engage young people, other face-to-face methods were preferred by the team. This approach was more effective at reaching people and obtaining quality information back from participating young people. This approach was also central to developing meaningful engagement and providing an authentic narrative of the lives of young people in Hackney.

4.37 Having undertaken extensive local consultations, and tested out and confirmed the emerging themes with young people, the YFC is now in its final phase. Members, council officers and other adults were now involved and had been conveyed key messages from the consultation and had been invited to co-produce solutions to identified problems. A number of themed partnership groups had been established between YFC and other key stakeholders to help co-produce tangible outcomes for this project.

4.38 There had also to be a lasting legacy of the project, how to empower young people to actively engage and involve with the council and other local agencies, and to ensure that their voice was effectively heard and reflected in the planning and development of local services.

Questions to Hackney Young Future Commission



4.39 The report was very impactful highlighting the lived experiences of young people, particularly those affected by knife crime and those who live in temporary accommodation. How can the council ensure that such experiences are not neglected in planning and shaping services in the future?

- Whilst the approach of the consultation was balanced, it was difficult to escape how the lived experience of some young people had been adversely impacted on their life and the people around them. An important issue to come from this was how safe people felt in the borough, and how their perceived safety impacted on what services they used, and critically where these services were accessed. If there was a legacy to the YFC it must be that there is greater recognition that the voices of young people must be heard from across the spectrum of local lived experiences to ensure that the voice of young people was truly authentic voice in shaping local provision. Consultation approaches should be diverse to ensure that the views of young people from across the local community were adequately represented. Consultation tools need to be constantly assessed and adapted to ensure that these captured the authentic voice of local young people.

- Whilst the consultation has been taking place, it was noted that young people have had the opportunity to get further involved if they so wished through becoming a peer educator or researcher. It has always been recognised that children may want to be involved at the moment of the consultation or for a longer period, and that choice was open to them. It was noted that whilst the YFC had visited children in local schools and alternative provision, in many instances, the most beneficial insight had been gained when young people had followed up this initial contact with more qualitative contributions to project workers.

- Confidentiality was also an important consideration throughout the consultation and engagement process as young people were reluctant to give their personal details in consultation interactions. Young people also had to feel confident that the information that they were providing would be confidential to enable them to speak openly and freely.

- There were over 4,500 direct quotations from young people who participated in the consultation, which would be a significant resource for local services, and the YFC was beginning to think about how this could be shared.

- The consultation also gave young people the opportunity to provide 'any other' information, many of which chose to provide solutions to problems or issues identified. This would appear to underline the importance of continuing to include children and young people to help solve local challenges that affect them.

4.40 Are there plans to look at the views of younger children through similar processes?

- The YFC has been looking at the views of children of the age of 10 and upward, but it is fair to say that many of the older children were able to reflect back and assess issues that affected them when they were younger. It was important to remember however, that the lived experience of children of just a few years apart can be very different.

4.41 Mental health emerged as a significant concern among young people from the consultation outcomes, how is the YFC progressing this issue?

- A health working group has been developed from this work, in which young people the YFC work alongside officers to further explore the health issues which are affecting young people, and how best local services should respond. Mental health

has figured prominently in this work, noting the particular mental health pressures that young people feel around for example. youth violence and exam pressures.

4.42 How did the YFC ensure representation of the diverse community groups across the borough?

- It was important to note that whilst the consultation did reach young people from diverse communities in school and youth club settings, the data gained was a reflection of that setting rather than that of any ethnic or community perspective. Therefore, YFC was mindful to enter in to the different communities to speak to young people in their cultural context. It was noted that the final report will provide some analysis of the different cultural perspectives of young people.

Part 2 – Director of Communications Culture and Engagement

4.43 Director of Communications Culture and Engagement has overall responsibility for communications and engagement across the council, and is the lead officer with oversight of the YFC. It was reiterated that the YFC has been successful in reaching young people with in excess of 4,000 contacts and 2,500 items of recorded feedback.

4.44 The brief for the YFC was to ensure that it reached a broad range of young people which went beyond those who were engaged to some form of local services, be it HYP, Youth Forums or even YOT. An aim of the project was to reach those not in touch with services and might not traditionally engage with youth consultations.

4.45 A key principle of this engagement process, which was a conclusion of the 'Hackney a Place for Everyone' project, was that interactions and data collection would take place where young people naturally congregated, where they felt safe and comfortable to share their views. This went hand-in-hand with the use of peer researchers, which meant that consultation was young people talking to other young people in their natural setting.

4.45 The approach also recognised that young people have busy lives and could therefore 'dip-in and dip-out' of the consultation process as they wanted. Binding young people to an ongoing commitment to be involved and is not realistic of the way that young people live their life. It was noted that this flexible approach is being adopted by HYP on the creation of 'Friends of HYP'.

4.46 The YFC had also illustrated that whilst many young people were connected to social media, they did not necessarily want to use this medium to communicate their views and perceptions about their life in Hackney. Indeed, many young people preferred to do this face-to-face with peer researchers. This would appear to dispel the myth that many young people just want to communicate solely through social media.

4.47 The dataset from the YFC was already being utilised by officers across the council, for example, this had already assisted in a review of Hackney Carnival. It was hoped that the dataset would continue to be used to inform other service plans. The final report will be invaluable for providing a very detailed snapshot of the views of young people in Hackney in 2019. This shelf-life of this report would not be long however, as it should be recognised that the views of young people evolve very

quickly. So it would be important that there is a legacy for YFC, to ensure that the inclusion of young people is enshrined at the heart of the councils policy making process.

4.48 Finally, to reiterate a point that had been made earlier by other contributors, is that the parents of particularly young people need to be involved in those consultations. Parental views of local amenities and service also shape and influence those of their children and ultimately can determine whether young people use such facilities (even where these views differ). This should be reflected in the approach to the Child Friendly Borough which should ensure that parents are engaged and involved about local facilities and have the confidence to use them.

Questions for Director of Communications, Culture and Engagement

4.49 How do you envisage that the work of the YFC will be embedded across the council?

- There are no clear answers at the moment, but it is clear that there must be a legacy in terms of the consultation and engagement infrastructure for children and young people. There is a review of HYP taking place which I hope that this work can contribute to. Whilst the real work on the legacy of YFC is yet to take place with the young members of that Commission, it was clear that what was not required were any more formal structures. It was clear however, that there needs to be some adaptations to local consultation processes.
- It was hoped that at the very least senior managers from across the council would be appraised of the data which would enrich their decision making around children and young people services in their respective directorates.

4.50 What new understanding has come out from the YFC on the way that young people use local youth clubs and the barriers that young people feel that exist preventing them from using them?

- One clear message was that young people wanted Youth Clubs to be open later than they were already.
- It was also acknowledged that there were probably a number of smaller youth clubs outside the council provision which serve a particular cohort of young people or specific locality within the community. It would be really helpful to work with Young Hackney to build up local intelligence to help improve access to such groups of young people.
- Whilst consultation feedback suggested that young people understood that there were numerous youth clubs for young people which they could access, they also wanted a range of other activities, for example a local football club or dance club which was accessible to them. Young people may not want to commit to formal classes but simply turn up and do something on the day.
- In making young people aware of the services available to them, it was noted that the views and recommendations of other young people was highly influential in determining patterns of usage. Again, this underlines the importance that young people attach to face-to-face peer contact.

Part 3 – Developing child friendly neighbourhoods and physical spaces

4.51 The Councils Planning Policy Team has been working on Supplementary Planning Document to support a Child Friendly Borough. In trying to ensure child friendly planning and development design in Hackney, this was a new and innovative

project and would be the first such SPD nationally. As the SPD was at an early stage the Planning Policy team welcomed the input of the Commission and other stakeholders at this time.

4.52 It was noted that there were three levels in the planning policy framework these being the National Planning Policy Framework, London Plan and the Local Plan, and the proposed Child Friendly Borough SPD would sit under the latter being Hackney specific guidance. The Local Plan, contains a number of key policies to guide planning, development and infrastructure development across the borough (e.g. Social & Community Infrastructure, Liveable Neighbourhoods and Public Realm). An SPD provides more detailed guidance to prospective developers in the borough.

4.53 Initial scoping had taken place with Cabinet members and senior officers to establish the strategic framework and the components which would make up the Child Friendly SPD. The SPD would include:

- Objectives and guidance in determining what child friendly means in Hackney;
- A review of policies, case studies and best practice design examples which can inform child friendly proposals;
- Guidance on the delivery of child friendly borough principles at different scales (e.g. Doorstep, Local and Neighbourhood);
- The establishment of a cross council departmental working group for the project that can continue beyond the SPD.
- To engage and upskill the ability of young people to engage with SPD guidance and future built environment issues in their area.

4.54 Through the course of the planning policy development process, it was clear that there were a number of emerging design principles which could underpin the design guidance contained within the Child Friendly SPD. These were as summarised below:

- Well-connected and safe routes – ensuring that routes to and from places where young people meet were safe, well connected and welcoming;
- Doorstep space – recognising that spaces in front of the home were important areas in which children develop key skills and confidences;
- People before Cars – streets are more than just for vehicular access, but are important thoroughfares for pedestrians and cyclists, which should prioritise the latter groups;
- Playful encounters – maximising those spaces in the public realm (outside parks and dedicated play-spaces) as areas for opportunistic play;
- Contact with nature – given the documented health and welfare benefits, access to greenspace, green infrastructure and local ecosystems should be maximised;
- Agency and decision making – ensuring that there is genuine engagement and meaningful involvement of children and young people in decisions which may impact with them;
- Open and Accessible Hackney – removing barriers which may limit the free integrated movement between spaces that people may use, especially young people (e.g. gates, railings, fences);
- Eyes on the street – spaces that are characterised for mixed usage and local amenity;

- Places for all ages – creation of public spaces which are safe, convenient and attractive to intergenerational usage;
- Variety of parks and open spaces – ensuring that there is a sufficient range of spaces which offer flexibility to meet varying needs of children and young people.

4.55 The Planning Policy Team were also updating the local Statement of Community Involvement. All planning authorities are required to have this document which sets out how the council will involve local stakeholders, including members of the community, in plan-making and related decision-making processes.

4.56 The SPD will also highlight some of the existing schemes, projects and developments which illustrate some of the principles of the Child Friendly policy objectives. Existing case study examples include:

- Hackney Play Streets
- Hackney School Streets
- Community Parklets
- Hackney Play-bus
- Estate regeneration – Kings Crescent, Woodberry Down, Marion Court & Evelyn Court.

4.57 The Planning Policy Team have consulted a wide range of specialists and local stakeholders as part of the SPD development process, including ZCD Architects, Erect Architecture, Hackney Quest, Young Futures as well as individual departments across the council (Regeneration, Street Scene Parks, Public Health, Education and Urban Design). In addition, the team have also worked with Hackney Youth Parliament and other groups of young people to inform the development of design principles, and had provided training to enable them to look at future planning and environment issues. Young people will now be approached to reflect on the emerging guidance for the SPD and to confirm that their views are reflected in the components of this policy.

4.58 As the development of the SPD is a statutory process, it is supported by an engagement strategy with local stakeholders. A key part of this process will be to consult young people on the proposals and there are plans to engage local school children (primary and secondary) as well as other established youth forums (HYP, YFC) and youth groups. The Planning Policy Team were also exploring the role of Hackney Apprentices to see if they may have a role in developing the draft SPD. It was hoped to have Cabinet approval for the SPD by Spring/Summer of 2020, with final adoption of the SPD being in Summer/Autumn 2020.

#### ZCD Architects

4.59 Hackney has been at the forefront of child friendly design being one of the first areas to establish Playstreets. The London Plan was also due to be published shortly which would be accompanied by supplementary guidance which would feature many case studies from the Hackney. Children have rights to access play areas and other public spaces in which they feel safe and comfortable to use, and gradually the industry is beginning to respond by designing spaces for children.

4.60 Consultation and engagement of young people is of course important, but clear principles and guidance for child friendly design is equally so, as young people can't always be at hand when planners and architects are designing physical spaces for them. Such design principles can also help children to assess and test out child friendly urban design and planning.

4.61 Much had been learnt from workshops with young people in preparation for the Child Friendly SPD in Hackney. One particular aspect of this work which was successful not only engaging young people but also in helping the project team to decipher key aspects of design which worked for young people, was the locality assessment where young people were invited to view and talk about the area in which they live (via the Google Street view technology). Also going outside and looking at areas with young people was also very informative, as it helped to adults to see spaces through the eyes of young people.

4.62 Another important lesson from early work was the need to value and reward the participation of young people in urban design projects. Given the scale and investment of urban development, which may run to many tens or even hundreds of millions of pounds, paying young people for their involvement in planning and design recognised the value of their input into such schemes. Payment of young people also encouraged greater commitment and professionalism to their participation which in turn supported additional training opportunities to bring additional skills and insight from their participation. Payment also recognised and valued the expertise of young people.

4.63 Young people have a unique insight in their local neighbourhoods and how those spaces worked for them. Whilst engagement and involvement had improved, it was acknowledged further developments were necessary to ensure that the views of children and young people were factored into better neighbourhood design and planning.

4.64 ZCD architects were working on developing a national toolkit for engaging an involving young people with the Town and Country Planning Association, much of which will be tested in Hackney.

4.65 Understanding the time lag between planning proposals being brought forward to actual build on site, it is clear that engagement of younger people may, at some stages, need a longer-term commitment (of between 6-10 sessions). This will allow young people to be trained up in this role to ensure that have the understanding and skills to provide meaningful insight. It was suggested that a core group could be extended to a range of satellite groups to help reach a wider range of young people.

4.66 It was acknowledged that in general, child friendly proposals were not as good as they could be at the moment, and there was much that the industry and local planners could learn to develop and improve engagement and involvement of young people in urban design and planning,

#### Hackney Through the Eyes of Young People (Hackney Quest)

4.67 It was important to understand the broader narrative of children's lived experience in Hackney, to acknowledge those areas where there has been some

consistency and other areas where there has been limited progress. Maintaining provision of children's centres and youth clubs recognised the importance of child focused infrastructure to support young people's needs and maintain their engagement and connections with the borough.

4.68 It was equally important to challenge that narrative of positive transformation for children and young people given the current lived experience of young people in Hackney. Many young people were anxious about unemployment, housing and poverty which in a visibly unequal local economy can undermine a sense of inclusion within the borough. In addition, 48% of young people grew up living in poverty in Hackney and this is a very important prism through which to view development in the Borough. Additionally, whilst improved local schools have enhanced the life chances for many young people, others have been clearly left behind or excluded in this advance.

4.69 Deep engagement with young people had underlined the importance of cages and multi-use areas to young people. These facilities are highly valued resource for young people and an important part of their local social infrastructure. These facilities can be improved however, as these physical spaces need to be accompanied by a programme of structured activities which encourages multiple uses and improved access to a wider range of young people. It would also be beneficial if such spaces were run by young people, who were trained and paid to run these sites for the benefit of all local young people. Such social infrastructure could provide a practical platform through which to engage children and young people on a whole range of local issues including community safety, childhood obesity, community cohesion.

4.70 In terms of making Hackney Child Friendly, it should also be acknowledged that not all land and facilities were public, with many spaces owned and managed by private companies. Young people were not always positively welcomed in such spaces, and in some cases private security treated them with suspicion and mistrust. Whilst the council may be limited influence in such areas, it was highlighted to the Commission that the creation of privately owned 'public spaces' was a growing trend which needed further scrutiny in relation to community access and utilisation.

#### Build-Up

4.71 The Project was set up as a result of the outcomes of Hackney Wick Through Young Eyes, in which young people said they did not have a say in how local areas were changing. Build-Up worked with a group of young people to develop a previously unused and unloved space in Hackney. 26 young people were involved in the project aged 11-17 who were supported by two paid young people and over 100 volunteers. Build up project would help young people to design and build the area themselves.

4.72 The project was supported through a local crowdfunding appeal which helped to generate funds and local interest. The Council, members and officers were also involved in the project. It was noted that whilst some officers were open and positive to this local challenge, other departments were more confined by traditional structures. Once completed, there were high levels of satisfaction among young people who had actively contributed to this development project.

4.73 From this work, 6 key principles about how to engage and involve young people emerged:

1. Young people need to be part of those decisions which affect and impact upon them and that existing structures may need to change to accommodate their involvement;
2. The decisions that young people are involved in are real, where the impact and consequences of those decisions are visible to young people. Young people need to feel that they are part of and benefit from their involvement in the project.
3. There needs to be a clear distinction between consultation and engagement which is paid and what is voluntary and be clear about the expectations of young people in these different circumstances;
4. Involvement of young people needs to be inclusive and open to all young people in the community, where it should be recognised that young people may need additional help and support to enable them to participate;
5. Where possible, consultation and engagement should build on work of existing organisations, which maximises local contacts, knowledge and learning;
6. Creating spaces for young people benefits everyone, and the locality needs spaces for everyone – making facilities child friendly was in part making these human friendly.

#### Questions

4.74 The Commission suggested that in developing the SPD, officers should avoid terminology which suggested that facilities, such as roads, were closed when designating these for child friendly activities.

- Officers agreed, as exemplified by differing responses of drivers to street signs indicating streets were closed or that of the use of street bunting to indicate that some other event was taking place. These may seem small things, but were important in developing community understanding and acceptance of child friendly events.

4.75 What can be done to break down the physical barriers between estates and other adjacent public realm spaces?

- Officers noted that individual physical spaces meant different things to different parts of the community. To make a place child friendly was to understand how that space was currently valued and used by the community as a whole. The barrier between estates and rest of the public realm is reflected in the child friendly design principles particularly in relation to scale which will provide guidance on doorstep design and neighbourhood design.

4.76 How can improvement in public realm intersect with childhood poverty and how can such development remove local inequalities and improve conditions for local young people.

- It was important that the developmental work to support the SPD works with young people of differing life experiences (e.g. SEND) so that their needs are reflected in the emerging principles and guidance. This was a planning document, so there were limitations in what the SPD could deliver in this respect. It is hoped that this work will of course stimulate wider discussions across the council and empower and involve young people in decisions that impact upon them. The SPD will also be a great



resource for estate regeneration and for wider place shaping work taking place across the borough.

4.77 In relation to Build up, what has worked well and what hasn't worked well in terms of project design?

- A key learning was openness, being accessible to young people on the terms in which they wanted to engage (e.g. time commitments). There must also be an appreciation of the diversity of young people to enable them to connect in different ways. There was also a recognition that officers need to reflect on the way that they work so that that this was accessible to young people.

4.78 How will the officers evaluate the effectiveness of the SPD and if it has been successful? Are there any plans for short term or longer-term evaluations?

- As the local environment was constantly changing, the Planning Policy Team tended to review planning policies on an annual basis to ensure that these were still relevant and effective in achieving their objectives. Monitoring and evaluation of this new SPD for a Child Friendly borough would be important to understand and further work would need to take place to identify those parts of the planning application process which need to be assessed for child friendly principles and how these are tracked.

4.79 The SPD on child friendly borough is design focused, will it also take account of construction processes (movement of heavy plant) and the impact on children and young people and access requirements?

- This area was generally assessed at part of the planning submission, though perhaps not specifically in relation you children and young people.  
- Contributors highlighted that children and young people may be differently impacted by new development, but with careful planning and consultation some of these may be mitigated.  
- Contributors also noted that neighbourhood development may have a more profound effect on children and young than adults because the development may impact on their usage of local facilities (or movement around the neighbourhood) for a considerable period of time.

4.80 Whilst it was important that new facilities should be assessed in terms of accessibility and acceptance to young people, additional work may be needed in respect of children with SEND. Some parents of children with SEND may feel reluctant to take their child to local parks and play spaces not because of the facilities, but because of the reaction of other children and parents to their presence.  
- Partly this was about building parental confidence to enable them to take their child to the park, but also around building community understanding of the wide variety of the needs of local young people.

4.81 How much weight or influence will the SPD have? Will developers be able to wriggle out or trade off these obligations against other requirements?

- Whilst it was acknowledged that an SPD is part of the local Planning Framework, it does not have the same weight as the Local Plan itself. The SPD is however still a material consideration with which planning applicants must have regard in development proposals.

4.82 The Chair invited contributors to highlight key evidence that they had noted from the session which should inform the development of the Child Friendly borough?

- YFC – getting meaningful engagement is really important, and that the council should consider how can amend existing structures to incorporate a wider range of consultation and engagement with young people. YFC will be looking at the legacy for the project and how it can influence such structures in the longer term.

- Planning Policy - there had been many positive contributions to inform the SPD both in terms of content and process. There was a lot to be learnt about how the Council engages and involves young people. It was also noted that needs of children and young people were evolving rapidly and that consultation and engagement needed to reflect that.

- Hackney Quest – a key theme across all the contributions was that there is a need to pay and train young people for their time and input into these consultations. This would help to develop a team of local young people with different specialisms who can provide insight in to local decision making. It's also about valuing the role and input of children and young people. In respect of the Child Friendly borough, there is a need balance those spaces provided to children where they have freedom to create and express themselves and not feel scrutinised and spaces which may need facilitated support.

- ZCD Architects – it will be important to describe what a child friendly borough looks like? There are some uncomfortable truths that agencies and officers have to face up to if they are better able to serve the needs of young people, recognising the lived experience of young people more and challenging the way that we work. There is a need for officers to come out of their offices and engage with young people in their settings, but also try to engage in them through different media as well (films etc).

- Build Up – a number of key points were evident which included (i) the need to organisations to reflect and challenge the way they did things in light of children and young people's needs (ii) the importance of face to face consultations in getting sound quality information and feedback from children and young people (iii) the necessity to create safe spaces where children felt comfortable to work with adults.

4.83 The Chair also invited Cabinet members present to reflect on the evidence presented.

- The Cabinet Member for Early Years and Play noted that a clearer idea of what a child friendly borough might consist of had emerged from the session. It was important to think about the legacy of YFC and other consultative projects for young people, so that local systems and processes are changed and children and young people are upskilled to better contribute in the future.

- Whilst Hackney is leading on this agenda, it was important not to lose sight of the experiences of young people and that whilst progress has been made, it is not equal for all our children. It was also important to remember that in order to successfully engage and involve young people, agencies and individuals may need to let go of some of their pre-existing concepts and be open to new ways of working and indeed, giving way to young people. It should be that as a council, we should only respond to a piece of work where this represents the authentic voice of young people.

## 5. Minutes of the last meeting

5.1 Actions from the last meeting: a further update to the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers has been added to the work programme for 2020/21.

5.2 The minutes of the 29<sup>th</sup> October meeting were approved.

## 6. Work Programme

6.1 A number of additions have been made to the work programme since the last meeting (October 2019) which include:

- 1) 27<sup>th</sup> January - Children and Families Service will be reporting to the Commission the outcomes of the Ofsted Inspection.
- 2) The April meeting will fall within the pre-election period (for London Mayor) and it is likely that this will need to be rescheduled (most likely early May).