# Hackney

London Borough of Hackney
Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission
Municipal Year 2018/19
Date of Meeting Wednesday, 11th March, 2020

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

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| **Chair** | **Councillor Sophie Conway** |
| **Councillors in Attendance** | **Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair), Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Ajay Chauhan, Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr Clare Joseph, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr James Peters and Cllr Clare Potter** |
| **Apologies:** | **Cllr Hansen** |
| **Co-optees** | **Shabnum Hassan and Jo Macleod** |

**In attendance**

- Cllr Anntionette Bramble, Cabinet Member for
- Cllr Caroline Woodley, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Families and Play
- Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care
- Anne Canning, Group Director, Children, Adults and Community Health
- Sarah Wright, Director, Children and Families Service
- Annie Gammon, Head of Hackney Learning Trust and Director of Education
- Paul Senior, Interim Head of High Needs and School Places, Hackney Learning Trust
- Andrew Lee, Assistant Director of Education, Hackney Learning Trust
- Francesca Cannarella, Head of SEND, Hackney Learning Trust
- Joseph Sieber, Interim Headteacher, Ickburgh Special School
- Bel Waters, Assistant Headteacher, Stormont House Special School –
- Pat Quigley, The Garden Special School
- Alison Arnaud, Principal Hackney and Tower Hamlets Campuses, New City College –
- Narzny Khan, Deputy Principal, Redbridge Campus and lead for SEND, New City College
- Ian Ellis, Foundation Learning & Inclusive Support Manager, BSix Sixth Form College
- Andrew Munk, Head of Employment & Skills, Hackney Council, Hackney Supported Internships
- Alison Miller, Programme Manager, Employment Pathways, Employment and Skills, Hackney Supported Internships
- Steve Jahoda, Service Manager, Disabled Children Service, Hackney Council
- Anne McGale, Head of Service, Hackney Integrated Learning Disability Service. Hackney Council
- Sarah Darcy, Children & Young People Strategic Lead,

**Members of the Public    2**

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### Councillor Sophie Conway in the Chair

### 1    Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the
Commission:
- Graham Hunter
- Ernell Watson
- Justine McDonald
- Michael Lobenstein
- Luisa Dorenelas
- Shuja Shaikh

1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from Annie Gammon.

### 2    Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 There were no late items and the agenda was as published.

### 3    Declarations of Interest

3.1 The following declarations were received by members of the Commission:
- Cllr Peters was a governor at a local special school;
- Cllr Chauhan was a member of NEU and a teacher at a school outside the borough;
- Shabnum Hassan was a Parent Governor at a local primary school;
- Jo McLeod was a Governor at a local school in Hackney and a parent of a child with special educational needs.

### 4    Post 16 Education & Training Pathways  for Children and Young People with SEND (19.05)

4.1 Support for children with SEND post 16 years of age was identified as a key area for further scrutiny as part of the work programme consultation with local stakeholders for 2019/20.   After scoping this item with officers, the Commission agreed it would focus its attention on assessing the Education and Training Pathways for children with SEND aged 16 years+.

4.2 The current 'Post 16 SEND strategy expires in 2020, so the Commission will aim to develop a number of high-level strategic recommendations which will guide and inform the refresh of this strategy.   The Commission had a number of objectives for this session:

1.      To assess current Post 16 education and training pathways for children with SEND post 16 and identify what is working well and identify areas of under provision.

2.      Ascertain how well local services are working together to assess, commission and support post 16 education and training needs of young people with SEND; and

3.   To identify key local priorities to inform the new Post 16 SEND strategy.

4.3 In addition to the local SEND team, a wide range of local stakeholders were invited to participate at the meeting including representatives from local special schools, colleges and training providers and, health and social care services.  Contributors were asked to complete a pro-forma ahead of the meeting to help the Commission establish the following for post 16 provisions for CYP with SEND:
- What was currently working well?
- If there were any service gaps?
- How local SEND partnerships were working?
- Local priorities for the new post 16 SEND Strategy.

HLT – SEND Team
4.4 The SEND team welcomed the opportunity for local stakeholders to contribute to the process to refresh the Post 16 SEND Strategy.  A presentation was made to the Commission and those attending outlining the key aims and objectives of the new Post 16 SEND strategy.  A key aim of the strategy was to move more young people away from home into employment or other more purposeful activities.

4.5 There were a number of high-level issues which needed to be addressed when considering the Post 16 SEND Strategy.  These included:
- Parental anxiety – many parents were worried what opportunities there would be for their child after the age 16;
- Young people's uncertainty – like other young people at this age, they were worried about the world of work and future opportunities for them;
- Expectations from 2014 Act – the legislation clearly stated that where needs were identified then these need to be met;
- Funding pressures – whilst the number of children with EHCPs had increased significantly, funding levels have been maintained at 2011 levels;
- Definition of full-time – pre and post 16 definitions are different (former 5 days per week and the latter 3 days per week);
- Measuring progress – a young person with an EHCP is able to access education up to age of 25 if they are demonstrating progress, but there is a lack of consensus about what progress means for young people;
- Increasing numbers – there has been a significant growth in young people with an EHCP;
- Provision supply and costs – given the unparalleled growth in demand, supply of education and training opportunities is limited and costs can be high;
- Transition from child to adult provision – need to ensure that thresholds are the same to assist a smooth transition and to avoid a cliff-edge;
- Travel assistance – some children may need transport and travel assistance to enable them to access provision which can be both costly and complex to provide;
- Clarity of pathways – are pathways clearly defined for children and young people and understood by their parents and are these inclusive?
- Integrated multi-agency support – it was suggested that whilst improvements have been made, a more joined up approach to supporting the needs of young people would be beneficial.

4.6 It was noted that the number of young people with an EHCPs (or statement) across London has grown significantly over the past decade, and that there were now almost 60,000 such plans across the capital.  This increase has been mirrored in Hackney, with

in excess of 2,500 young people with an EHCP locally. The number of post 16 plans has increased from 138 in 2015 to 439 in 2020 and now comprise almost 20% of all plans locally.  These trends are confirmed both nationally and regionally.

4.7 Currently young people from national curriculum year (NCY) 12 make up 26% of EHCPs maintained by the authority, whereas in total, years NCY 19, 18, 17 and 16 make up just 18%.  As the number of young people with an EHCP increases, it was expected that there would be a more even distribution across NCY's in the future.

4.8 It was noted that very few children with an EHCP have a singular need and often have combined and complex needs. The most common primary need of young people aged 16 and over with an EHCP was an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which featured in 28% of all plans.  In line with regional projections, it was expected that there would be further significant growth in demand of approximately 25% for provision for young people with ASD to 2022.

4.9 The local spend on post-16 provision had increased from £3.7m in 2016/17 to £6.4m in 2019/20, which equated to a 75% increase.  This increase was in part attributable to a lack of supply for services to support young people post 16.  The total cost of transport provision for young people with SEND had also risen from £3.6m in 2014/15 to £4.4m in 2019/20. The distance that young people may have to travel to access education, training or other support that they may need is a significant influence on costs .  It was noted that post 16 transport costs would increase in line with the increase in the number of young people post 16 with an EHCP.

4.10 For young people with an EHCP across London as a whole, approximately 35% of 16-18 capacity was met through further education (FE) colleges, 19% by mainstream schools and 43% by special schools and colleges.  This pattern of usage does differ by the primary needs of young people.  For example, learners with profound learning difficulties were far more likely to attend a special school, whilst those with a speech or language difficulty were more likely to attend mainstream settings.

4.11 In respect of the post 16 education and training pathways of young people with SEND a number of key issues were raised:
- The number of young people who were not in education or training (NEET) increased with age and as a consequence, there was a need to develop both the scope and capacity of further education and training opportunities for young people post 16.
- Local analysis of the post 16 education and training pathways for young people with SEND in Hackney had identified a number of patterns:
  - The majority of young people were in mainstream school and college settings;
  - There had been a significant growth in the number of supported internships available locally;
  - There were few places at mainstream 6th forms for young people with an EHCP.

4.12 It was the duty of the local authority to provide for the assessed needs identified within an EHCP.  Given the individuality of the needs of young people with SEND, many different settings and providers were commissioned to provide bespoke provision to meet these needs.  In total over 120 individual education and training providers were commissioned by Hackney.  New City College, BSix, Stormont House and Ickburgh were (numerically) the most commissioned education and training providers.  It was noted that there had been a significant growth in commissioning services that provided supported internships.

4.13 Although 75% of education and training providers were out of borough, most of these were in neighbouring boroughs such as Newham, Tower Hamlets, Haringey and Islington and could still be considered local.  In terms of pupil numbers, 52% attended in-borough provision and 48% out of borough provision.  The annual cost of placements ranged from £1,148 - £149,005, with an average cost of £14,955 per placement.  It was

noted that these costs were subject to wide fluctuations given the evolving and diverse needs of this group of young people. Given the fluctuation of local needs, it was also difficult to develop commissioning arrangements with providers as this may lock the authority into unnecessary contracts.

4.14 The proportion of young people aged 16+ with SEND who were NEET was approximately 10% which was middle ranking among central London authorities (range 7-16%). The Really NEET Project was a locally established programme to work with this cohort of young people to enable them to access education. training or employment.

4.15 Given the projected increase in demand for services, there was a need to develop sub regional partnerships in which local authorities work together to develop more local options for children and young people with an EHCP post 16. It was also noted that, with the exception of some increase in-year funding for 2019/20, funding for SEND had been broadly static for 10 years. There was also a need to improve data on local providers and the outcomes of young people to improve commissioning arrangements.

Questions
4.16 Do NEET figures include those young people who commence but do not complete an education or training programme?
- Yes.

4.17 Is it not a concern to the authority that so many young people with SEND are attending placements out of borough, particularly in respect to partnership working with other local services (such as social care, SLT and other health services)?
- The preferred option of the authority is for in-borough provision as it helped to provide a more joined up support for young people. Given the specificity of young people's needs however, it was not always possible to cater for all of these in-borough. It was noted however, that although young people may be in out of borough placements, they would still be entitled to full range of local support.

4.18 It was noted that improved data in respect of better outcome data from providers and improved tracking of young people was needed to develop post 16 provision. What needs to be done locally to improve data monitoring? Is there any tracking of those noted as requiring school support as well as on an EHCP?
- Data monitoring was improving over time as new software was constantly being developed or updated which assisted pupil tracking. The real challenge however, was to improve the quality and the timeliness of the data received by the authority to support better monitoring. It was clear that more specialist roles were needed in the SEND team to support systems analysis and contract management, and that with this aim in mind, the service was actively recruiting to extend the skill set of the SEND team.
- Whilst there is a statutory requirement to monitor EHCPs, there is no similar requirement to monitor those requiring school support. There was also an issue about how 'school support' was defined, as this varied across different schools and institutions.

4.19 With an increased number of children aged 16+ with SEND, what cost pressures will this generate in future years and how does the service plan to respond?
- The issue of SEND funding should be seen as a coherent whole rather than for post 16 provision specifically (as there are equally pressing cases for pre-school provision also). SEND funding in its entirety needs to be addressed as this had been centrally underfunded for many years.

4.20 Given that transport spending for young people with SEND has continued to increase, does the service expect further increases, if so, how will these be mitigated without compromising on the quality of the service provided?
- Although the Council remained a significant provider of transport services for children and young people with SEND, other more effective ways to provide transport were

increasingly being used by parents such as personal budgets. Independent travel training was also available for those children for whom this would be appropriate.
- The service regularly reviewed transport costs including for taxis, buses and other transport methods. There were many logistical problems in providing a transport service not only in terms of the accessibility of vehicles to different young people, but also in relation to traffic and duration of journey times which young people with SEND may be able to tolerate. Some children with higher needs need multiple escorts to support them on journeys, whilst others may be able to travel more independently. Young people were also attending settings at different times which inhibited the use of collective transport (buses) and required more bespoke travel arrangements such as taxis.

<u>Focus Groups with CYP with SEND and their Parents</u>
4.21 Together with Hackney Independent Parent and Carers Forum, the Commission held two focus groups with parents and young people on 20th and 27th February 2020. In total, over 30 children and their parents attended these focus groups. The 5 key issues to arise from these focus groups with parents are summarised below

**1)** That current education and training provision for post 16 was insufficient, where there was not enough capacity nor sufficient range of options to meet local needs of young people with SEND, particularly in relation to those with complex needs.

**2)** That the EHCP process was not working effectively in Hackney where there appeared to be a number of issues with plans not being updated regularly, mainstream settings not following the plans with limited oversight or accountability.

**3)** That there was not enough support provided to parents to help them navigate the education and training pathways available to their children and that there was variable support from local SENCO's. It was also noted that local EHCP coordinators and specialist providers were overwhelmed with demand.

**4)** That transition at 16, 18 and 25 was causing much anxiety for young people and parents as preparing for adulthood sessions not consistently happening, parents were insufficiently involved in placement planning, and where full-time provision post 16 in most constituted of 3 days provision.

**5)** There is a great deal of parental uncertainty about the future education and training pathways for children with SEND post 16 as parents concerns were long-standing and had not been addressed.

4.22 Representatives of Hackney Independent Parent Forum for children with SEND also made the following points.
- There were problems at year 11 transfer of young people with SEND, with the final destination not being agreed in a timely way which often left young people and their parents in a very anxious state. More forward planning and preparation was required from year 9 onwards.
- Given the increase in the number of young people with an EHCP, there was an explicit need to plan ahead to develop further options for young people as they reached 16.
- Parents were concerned that the review process for EHCPs was not being fully supported and that often parents were left to represent their child themselves without appropriate support or without proper notification of changes. It was felt that greater partnership with parents at this juncture could lead to reduced incidence of where decisions were challenged.

<u>The Garden School</u>
4.23 The Garden School did not currently have any post 16 provision, and most students had to go out of the borough for specialised provision. Whilst feedback from parents was that such out of borough provision was good, wider support services based in Hackney had reduced sight of their child. For parents of children with high needs

which require multi-agency support this was problematic. Post 16 provision had now been agreed with the Garden School, a site secured and new service was being planned for those with autism locally. The School was currently developing a curriculum with other local stakeholders. One of the main barriers in developing post 16 education and training was identifying providers which can offer structured, meaningful and supported placements in the community.

4.24 The Garden School reported that individually, there have been some very positive experiences where children had attended out of borough settings (such as the Phoenix) and who had progressed to obtain a place at a local college. The real concern was among those young people with really high or complex needs where it was difficult to get appropriate placements. The school had visited many forms of provision and there were good examples of meaningful and supported training including events management, bike maintenance and craftwork. The Garden School required the local authority and other partners to work more closely with it to support the needs of young people post 16 to develop a wider range of opportunities for this cohort of young people.

Ickburgh Special School
4.25 The school noted that it had partnered with the Council to provide work experience for three school leavers in the London Fields Park Service. It was felt that this was a very positive experience as this broadened the horizons of young people, reassured parents that paid employment (and independence) could be possible and demonstrated to the broader public that young people with SEND can contribute to the community. The downside was that there was no follow-up to the internship with no pathways for young people to develop further.

4.26 It was also noted that entry or acceptance criteria for some work experience placements which required a certain level of numeracy or literacy potentially excluded those children who had good practical skills. It would therefore be useful to have some flexibility in entry requirements that can be adapted to young people's skills and aptitudes.

4.27 It was suggested that there was a cohort of young people who had very high-level needs or profound multiple learning difficulties for whom supported internships or paid work experience would not be possible. It was felt that there was scope for more collaborative commissioning among education, health and social care agencies which could help to develop a broader range of meaningful opportunities for this cohort of young people.

Stormont House
4.28 The majority of young people attending Stormont House special school aim to go on to paid employment and the school has been successful in this and helped a good majority of students to obtain full-time or part-time employment. This was a lengthy process however, which required the support of local stakeholders and partners in the community.

4.29 Whilst the increase in the number of supported internships was to be welcomed, it was felt that with further collaboration across the sector, the breadth and depth of internships could be developed. Again, it was noted whilst such internships were open to young people with an EHCP, the access criteria restricted take up. As such, whilst supported internships were a very positive and welcome development, these were currently only available to a very small number of young people with SEND. It was suggested that a local working group made up of local schools, employers and the local authority could be established to help support the extension of supported internships.

4.30 A further barrier to supported internships as identified by young people themselves, was that those individuals and organisations which were signposting young people often lacked sufficient information themselves about the available internships. It was

suggested that investment in improved training at key points of referral could help to improve access to internships by young people with SEND.

4.31 Three priorities were identified for post 16 education and training for young people with SEND which were:
- The need to develop the depth and breadth of supported internships or other routes to supported employment;
- The need to provide training to local employers to build their confidence and skills in being able to support a young person with SEND in an internship;
- To reassess local curricula to ensure that these developed appropriate skills and understanding to prepare them for adulthood.

New City College
4.32 The College welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the new post 16 strategy for young people with SEND.  The College also highlighted the following key issues:
- Post 16 education and training pathways need to be reframed in to focus on the skills and values which children with SEND bring to workplaces and society in general;
- Greater recognition needed to be given to the voice of young people with SEND in planning and developing post 16 pathways, particularly in relation to their aspirations for work, employment and training;
- The National Apprentice Conference had acknowledged that there were barriers for greater uptake of supported internships, particularly those expectations around English and maths;
-  The College was disappointed that there were local transport issues in respect of timetabling and access, but would work with the SEND team to identify solutions.

4.33 The College noted that there had been good collaborative partnerships with local special schools to develop and improve the post 16 pathways for children with SEND. There were a number of development priorities for the locality in this respect:
- The need to develop the range of supported internships available for young people with SEND and to ensure that these were more inclusive;
-  Whilst work to support transition was ongoing, it was felt that more could be done to help students and colleges prepare for new placements, in particular earlier notification.
- More widespread debate was needed across the sector to agree more effective and appropriate measures through which to assess attainment and progress of young people with SEND.

BSix
4.34 There were 37 learners with an EHCP at BSix in the current year who access a wide range of study programmes. Effective and supported transition is key to the success of young people with SEND post 16, this was exemplified through effective partnering with Stormont House which resulted in 4 young people from that school obtaining a place at university.  There was however, a need to improve is transitions from mainstream schools.

4.35 There were concerns around the limited number of young people with an EHCP who can access supported internships.  It was suggested that there was a need to provide pre-supported internships to young people with SEND who may not have work ready behaviour because of their needs.

Hackney Council Supported Internships
4.36 The service was commissioned by HLT to provide supported internships in the council.  This is the second supported internship programme in the public sector in Hackney, the other being at the Homerton Hospital which commenced a year earlier. It was important that the Council lead by example to other local potential employers, and to illustrate the range of positions in which young people with SEND were being supported (e.g. Human Resources, Libraries, Regeneration).

4.37The supported internship programme was based on the Project Search Model which combined work-based placements with learning. The council team was partnering with BSix to provide the education component to this programme. It was important within the programme to identify and match the key skill sets of young people to job roles across the council. There is combined input from a placement mentor, job coach, tutor and employment adviser to support young people on the programme.

4.38 In terms of future provision, it was noted that there was a strong demand to increase capacity and breadth of supported internships and other education and training options post 16. It was suggested that there needed to be a more strategic approach to commissioning among all partner agencies to plan and prepare for future needs and extend options within the post 16 education and training pathways for children with SEND. There was also a need to harmonise the different supported internships available within the borough for greater consistency.

4.39 More broadly across, it was suggested that there needed to be improved planning for education and training services to prepare for the needs of children and young people with SEND were 'in the pipeline' and would soon be following post 16 pathways. It was recommended that conversations were needed with young people with SEND and their parents were needed much earlier to assess their needs, aspirations and the level of support that would be needed going forward.

4.40 It was suggested that more work needs to be done locally to help young people prepare for supported internships. The aspirations of young people and their parents also needed to coincide with the goal of the internship, which was to obtain paid employment after completion of the 9-month programme.

Social Care (Children and Adults)
4.41 The Disabled Children's Service (DCS) was moved from HLT to Children and Families Service in 2019 to improve social work support and oversight for disabled children using this service. The Preparing for Adulthood Team (PFA) is part of the Integrated Learning Disability Service which supports people with a learning disability 18+. ILDS is a multidisciplinary integrated health and social care team (LBH and ELFT). The PFA team works with young people preparing for adulthood and transitioning from children's social care to adult social care.

4.42 The PFA team are aware of young people at age 9, and attend year 9 reviews if appropriate. The DCS and PFA have links with local special schools and colleges and attend parents' evenings, open days and other transition events. The PFA is in the process of becoming more outward facing and is actively speaking to young people in local settings to further understand their anxieties about transition and their future aspiration.

4.43 It was acknowledged that supporting young people with a LD into paid employment was underdeveloped, and an issue which many authorities grappled with. In Hackney, an officer from the Supported Employment Service within adult social care is present on a weekly basis to help facilitate conversations between social workers and young people about opportunities into work. In line with other submissions, it was felt that there could be more creative commissioning with education and health colleagues which created a complementary programme of education or training with other supported activities and created a more joined up offer for young people.

Health (CCG)
4.44 Health Services provide a range of service-based transition support including SLT, Physiotherapy and Occupational Health, GP based annual reviews and the Transition Health Outreach Team (THOT). The THOT supports young people in confidence building, advocacy, attending annual reviews (in effect, a key worker service).

4.45 From a health perspective, there were a number of gaps in provision for education and training pathways of young people with SEND aged 16+. These included:
- Insufficient choice of courses available, with limited progression for those young people who cannot progress past level 1 in maths or English;
- Insufficient capacity at THOT to meet demand, and no equivalent service for those young people with higher needs;
- Annual reviews are not fully optimised where health services not consistently involved;
- Post 16 placements are sometimes agreed very late, which means that health and other services may not have time to put in support plans at the outset for young people.

4.46 In terms of priorities for the new post 16 strategy, three suggestions were put forward:
- An agreed standard for transition and EHCP which includes all partners;
- A system of accountability to ensure high quality provision that involves all stakeholders
-  A strengthened and consistent offer for young people with complex needs and their families into transition to adulthood.

Questions
4.47 How many young people were on the supported internship programme and how many are waiting to go on the programme.
- There were 17 young people on the hackney council supported internship programme at the moment who were recruited from about 30 applications. In total, there were about 58 young people on supported internships across Hackney.

4.48 The importance of planning ahead within EHCP reviews was underlined in the contribution of local stakeholders. What learning or advice can special schools give to mainstream schools on this issue?
- One of the special schools suggested that the EHCP review process was currently not an effective tool to support children with SEND.  It was suggested that recommendations from the early pathfinder local authorities in respect of EHCP have not been implemented and the current storytelling approach was ineffective.  EHCP were often long and cumbersome (frequently up to 20 pages) where it can be difficult to decipher young people's needs.  Young people's contribution to EHCP was also underdeveloped. Because of deadlines and pressures on time and other resources, agencies did not always have the capacity to complete EHCPs as fully as they should.  It also seemed incongruous that the local authority is the author of the plan yet it is local schools who lead with other agencies in facilitating assessments and the actual delivery of the plan. It was felt that the reviews of EHCP's did not give sufficient weight or consideration to those people who know the young person best; their parents, the schools who have daily contact and of course, young people themselves. A simpler format would be welcome with more opportunity for young people to contribute. In some instances, the voice of young people felt like an 'add-on' within the EHCP.  The most important information in the EHCP was the aspirations of young people, but this tended to get lost in the volume of other information in the plans.

4.49 Is there anything that Hackney an authority or as a partnership can do to improve EHCPs?
- EHCPs are a statutory requirement and the concerns raised about these in Hackney are also experienced elsewhere.  It was suggested that there is some value in developing sub-regional hubs to develop and share good practice, which perhaps could identify how EHCPs could be improved.  This should be a priority.

4.50 Do any of the special schools have any out of borough attendees which may give some insight as to how post 16 education and training is organised elsewhere?
- Once of the colleges present indicated that they worked with children from a range of boroughs. One of these boroughs had approached the college to plan for the needs of children and young people with SEND, having assessed needs in year 10.  This gave to

college 2 years to plan and prepare for their needs.  It is helpful if boroughs can approach the college in advance to assess what is provided and what might need to be adapted or developed to support young people with SEND.

4.51 Is the authority starting early enough in supporting young people with SEND into paid employment?  Are we doing enough to make jobs in the council more accessible to young people with SEND?
- The focus must be on developing the best quality of life for all young people. There has been a tendency to over-focus on those young people who have skills which may enable them to work, over and above higher needs young people for whom paid employment may not be a future option.  Local partnerships must seek to avoid the placement of young people with higher needs into any setting which may institutionalise that young person.  Needs and aspirations of young people vary widely, thus whilst cooking and horticulture may be seen as a limiting option for some young people with SEND, it may also be seen as a positive opportunity for others.
- The Chair noted that there would appear to be a number of barriers to young people accessing opportunities which included insufficient information sharing, attainment requirements and ineffective EHCP.

4.52 How can the council increase provision in local 6$^{th}$ Form, especially if there is a growing cohort of young people with SEND moving through the system?  For example, those children who are diagnosed with ASD cover a wide range of abilities some of which may be best supported through local 6$^{th}$ Forms?
- How young people with an EHCP were being supported within local 6$^{th}$ Forms was being assessed locally and the SEND team were working with local schools to ensure that they focus on the needs of the community.  It was noted however, that schools were autonomous in these matters.  The issue was more complex than schools having high standards of entry for 6$^{th}$ forms, as there were different legal requirements for provision for children with SEND pre and post 16.
- It was noted that the objective of all provision was that a child with SEND had the ability to succeed whatever the setting or placement.  There were local schools who supported children with an EHCP in their 6$^{th}$ forms, but this was only possible at scale.  It was not possible to operate a bespoke course for 1 or 2 young people in a school with an EHCP.  Whilst the majority of schools have 6$^{th}$ forms focus on 'A' level study, more vocational courses on offer in these settings.  Whilst it was acknowledged that the depth and breadth of this offer was small at present, this was an encouraging step to making 6$^{th}$ forms more inclusive.

4.53 A key issue to arise from the focus groups with young people and their parents was the difficulty that many experienced in obtaining information about the different pathways and options open to them. Could there be any additional support from the council, perhaps an information fair with all contributors here today for young people and their families? A one-stop shop for all pathway options for young people with SEND?
- This is something that the SEND service was actively considering by extending the local offer information to young people.  Having all education and training providers in the same room together where parents and young people can assess the options available to them would be a positive step forward.

4.54 What is the post 16 offer for young people with SEND but who may not have an EHCP?
- Most of the support for this group of young people would come via the school setting as their needs are not covered by statutory requirements. The schools will of course be monitoring the destination outcomes of young people after leaving school to reduce the incidence of those NEET.

4.55 The Commission sought to outlined 4 themes from the evidence submitted which should be reflected the emerging priorities?

1. The need to map out current service provision and how this meets current demand and identify service gaps;
2. The need to improve coordination across the sector with more collaborative working for provision (e.g. supported internships);
3. Improved support for post 16 transition with improved and earlier communication with young people and their families to help them prepare for changes ahead;
4. The need to ensure that young people were given sufficient opportunities to move away from institutional or home support into more meaningful and gainful activities which promotes their independence.

View of Young Person
4.56 The Chair invited a young person present to give their views of SEND post 16 education and training pathways.  A summary of the issues raised is given below:
-The young person set out orally her experience of post 16 SEND provision which included both positive and negative experiences, however, the student wished to highlight the expectations, encouragement and support of professionals had been critical to their success.

4.57 Parents were concerned that their child's EHCP was not being updated regularly and that the annual review process was unsatisfactory.  What is being done to improve this locally?
- EHCP's were only updated when they needed to be updated and this depended on the changing needs of the child. The annual review process is where professionals are invited to submit reports on the child and to meet and discuss their needs and support. If it is needed, the EHCP can be altered on the basis of agreement at these meetings. The critical points are around transition points for these reviews.  The SEND service has added capacity to the team to enable it to attend these key review meetings and to help improve the quality of these plans.

4.58 The Chair asked contributors to highlight key information which they wished to take forward for inclusion within the strategy.
- Ickburgh School - noted that the four priorities highlighted earlier in the session but wished to emphasise the need for strategic commissioning in planning for future needs of young people with SEND post 16;
- The Garden School - highlighted that there was a wide range of needs within the SEND cohort and this should be remembered in commissioning and planning service. Keeping this in mind, will help the locality to provide a more holistic range of services to support young people with SEND.
- Stormont House – it was hoped that there was a consensus for the sector to work more collaboratively and that there is a need to take an aspirational approach to supporting young people across the authority.
- New City College – emphasised that there was a greater need to include the voice of young people in the planning and delivery of education and training services for them. EHCPs are pivotal in supporting the needs of young people and these need to be more focused and responsive to young people's needs.
BSix – the earlier that placements are agreed the better placed agencies are to support transition and put in place appropriate support for a young person with an EHCP.  It was also important to ensure that young people had a voice throughout their education and training pathways.
Supported Internships LBH – there was a range of good practice across the sector which needed to be developed further through more collaborative working.  A more strategic approach to commissioning would help coordinate and direct provision and help services prepare for future increases in demand.

4.59 The Cabinet Member concluded by highlighting a number of key issues from the discussion:

- Whilst it was clear that a number of schools were aiming to make their schools and classrooms more inclusive, this was still 'work in progress' and more can be done to improve this;
- Like for many other young people, transition points were a major source of anxiety for children with SEND and it was clear that more could be done to provide early help to this group of young people to support them through this process.
- Local data has shown the association between young people with SEND and their likelihood to be excluded.  Given that it also known that the critical points for exclusion were pre and post transition, it was suggested that early help to young people with SEND before and after transition may help to reduce incidence of exclusion.

4.60 The Chair thanked all partner agencies for attending and contributing to the discussion of post 16 education and training pathways.  The Commission would review the evidence presented, and make a number of recommendations to inform the refresh of the Post 16 SEND Strategy.

## 5       Cabinet Member Questions - Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years and Play (21.05)

 5.1 The Cabinet Member for Early Years and Play attended to respond to questions covered within this portfolio. As per scrutiny protocol, the Commission had identified 3 policy areas on which they would like to direct questioning.
1. How is the council working to alleviate childhood poverty, and in particular childhood food poverty?
2. To update the Commission on the Troubled Families Programme; funding arrangements and plans to embed support locally.
3. To provide a brief update on children's centres, what services they provide and who uses them?  How are vulnerable families supported by Children's Centres? How will the Children's Centre Engagement exercise guide and inform service provision - especially Stay and Play provision?

Childhood Poverty
5.2 The Cabinet member noted that there was a manifesto commitment to develop a poverty reduction strategy.  This was particularly important as latest estimates suggest that as many as 48% of children and young people were living in poverty in Hackney (once housing costs are included).  This is the highest level of childhood poverty recorded for Hackney.

5.3 It was noted that there are three main drivers for increased childhood poverty in Hackney these being:
- Local housing pressures
- Welfare reforms which have led to reduced level of financial assistance, and have caused financial hardship (e.g. Universal Credit)
- Changing nature of employment with greater prevalence of low paid unsecure jobs.

5.4 The council has taken a number of actions in response to growing levels of poverty:
- Inclusive Economy Strategy – this would aim to ensure that all sections of the community can benefit from economic growth in the borough;
- Housing & Homeless Strategy – there were provisions to limit evictions;
- Early Help Review – this was assessing how preventative interventions could help to reduce family poverty;
- Debt Advice - local services were commissioned to provide debt advice and support to families which are struggling financially (e.g. CAB, Law Centre);
- Council workforce – cheaper loans and salary advance to help staff to reduce debts.

5.5 In the recent budget agreed by the Council, £500k had been allocated to poverty reduction strategies which included funding for food poverty work, housing case work (£200k), early help pilots (£70k) and poverty proofing council polices.  In relation to food poverty, a number of initiatives were taking place:
- Increasing access to health start vouchers – to help parents obtain fresh fruit and vegetable as well as vitamins and baby milk;
- Increase take up of Alexander Rose vouchers which also offer help to buy healthy foods, but are also available to those families who have no recourse to public funds;
- Increase take up of free school meals, with the council exploring the possibility of extending this to all primary schools if a cost-effective option can be found;
- Improving the 'holiday hunger' response across the borough.

Questions
5.6 Are there any plans for emergency feeding of children and young people should the coronavirus take hold and children are off school for a long period of time?
- The council was aware of this issue and there are resilience plans to help schools respond and to support children and families that might be affected.  Whilst there were no plans to close schools at this time, this remained an option should the virus take hold.  At present, the council was following Public Health England advice.

5.7 How much money has been spent on Collaborative Casework to reduce poverty?
- This has only just been approved for the 2020/21 budget and casework will start from April this year.

5.8 The Commission sought clarification on the Move on Team which was helping families move into the private rented sector where there were no social housing options available.
- This was covered by the Cabinet member for housing.

5.9 As well as increasing poverty there was also increasing inequalities, how do these intersect and what can the local authority do in response?
- The drivers for increasing poverty and inequality are very much the same.  The levers that the council has to bring about such widespread change are limited in that it cannot determine levels of welfare benefits or the number of units of social housing developed across the borough. The council was nonetheless working hard to reduce poverty through improved and better debt advice and making sure that limited emergency funds were used to best effect to support local families.

Troubled Families Programme
5.10 This is a government funded programme to support families with multiple and complex needs by joining up local services dealing with each family's problems as a whole rather than responding to each problem, or person, separately. A whole family approach is taken in the assessment of a family's needs and a wide range of health and social care services contribute to the development and delivery of that action plan.

5.11 The local authority is required to develop an outcomes framework against which progress and successes can be measured within the Troubled Families Programme. This evaluative data is connected to the payment by results (PBR) system which is used to fund this initiative centrally. To qualify for payments, improvement must be sustained for at least 6 months in the qualifying criteria (below).

5.12 To qualify for this programme, families much have qualifying criteria in two of the following criteria:
- Crime and ASB;
- Education and attainment
- Children in need
- Work and finances
- Physical and mental health

- Community safety.

5.13 As of 27th February 7,000 families had been identified as potentially qualifying for support within the Troubled Families Programme in Hackney. To date the programme has supported 3,510 families to make sustained improvements to qualify for PBR, a conversion rate of 50% (the London average being 41%). Demographic data from the programme demonstrated that:
- 43% of families helped were of black British ethnic origin, 31% white British and 9% Asian/ Asian British.
- Including all parents and children on the programme, 14,272 were female and 10,807 were male.

5.14 Local authority provision of Troubled Families Programmes is subject to external scrutiny via spot-checks from DCLG.  In 2019, a spot-check process was undertaken in Hackney using a 10% sample of local cases.  No problems were identified and the authority received a favourable report from DCLG.

5.15 Funding was due to cease in March 2020, but additional funding has been provided to all authorities until March 2021.  Whilst payment systems will continue, local authorities were expected to embed services via transformational plans.  It is expected that the early help review currently taking place in Hackney will consider how the programme can be embedded within the local service framework. The national spending review would determine if further funding will be provided to this scheme.

Questions
There were no questions from the Commission.

Children's Centres
5.16 There are currently 21 Children's Centres in Hackney over 6 cluster areas.  The Centre's offer a wide range of early education, health and childcare services including SLT, community midwifery, health visiting.  In February 2020, Millfield's Children Centre decided to cease running day-care within their children's centre to be effective from September 2020.  HLT will liaise with the Children's Centre to ease transition, and it has reiterated that it will continue to support the provision of freely available services such as Stay and Play services from the Millfields site.

5.17 The Children Centre offer will be central to the early help review taking place across the council.  It was also acknowledged that Children's Centres would help shape the manifesto commitment to develop Opportunity Hubs which may see an extension of the family support offer through these sites.

5.18 Some of the key issues to emerge from the recent consultation with parents at local Children's Centres was the importance of Stay and Play services, the desire for extended service provision to cover weekend openings.

Questions
5.19 The Commission sought reassurance that there were no plans to restructure or reduce provision at any other children centre?
- Whilst there were no plans to reconfigure provision, it was noted that two other children's centres who are commissioned by the HLT to provide services were currently facing financial challenges.  The early help review will assess the role of children's centres to ensure that there was no duplication with other services and that support was provided in the geographical areas where this was most needed.

The Chair thanked Cabinet members for attending and responding to questions from the Commission.

**6      Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission - 2019/20 Work Programme (21.30)**

6.1 A number of amendments have been made to the work programme for the final meeting of the CYP Commission for 2019/20 which included:

May 12th 2020 - the Commission will review a number of City & Hackney's emerging children's mental health strategies as part of pre-decision scrutiny:
   • Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy; and
   • Approach to Adverse Childhood Events.

**7      Minutes of the Previous Meeting (21.30)**

7.1 Minutes for 15th January, 27th January and 11th March were not available but would be presented at the next available meeting.

**8      Any Other Business**

8.1 There was no other business. The meeting closed at 9.55pm.


Duration of the meeting: Times Not Specified