

Overview & Scrutiny

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission

DRAFT Minutes of 14th March 2022

Official Attendees for the record

Cllr Sophie Conway (Chair)

Cllr Sarah Young

Cllr Caroline Selman

Cllr Katie Hanson

Cllr Humaira Garasia

Connected Virtually

Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice Chair)

Cllr Anya Sizer

Cllr James Peters

Cllr Lynne Troughton

Shabnum Hassan

Jo Macleod (Co-opted member)

Salmah Kansara (Co-opted member)

Ernell Watson (Co-opted member)

In attendance virtually

- Cllr Anntionette Bramble, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care
- Cllr Caroline Woodley, Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years, Parks & Play
- Annie Gammon, Head of Hackney Learning Trust and Director of Education
- Stephen Hall, Assistant Director, School Standards and Improvement
- Debra Robinson, Systems Leader, Hackney Education

Cllr Sophie Conway in the Chair

The Chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting and those members of the public who were viewing the livestream. The Chair reminded those attending that this was a hybrid meeting, with members of the Commission and officers attending both in person and connecting virtually and that the meeting was being broadcast live via the internet.

The Chair thanked Cllr Hanson and Cllr Peters for their service to the Commission, this being their last meeting as a Councillor.

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the Commission:

- Cllr Anna Lynch
- Jacque Burke, Group Director for Children & Education

2. Declarations of interest

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

- Jo McLeod was a Governor at a primary school in Hackney and a parent of a child with SEND;
- Cllr James Peters was a governor at a special school in Hackney;
- Cllr Anya Sizer was a parent of a child with SEND.

3. Urgent Items / Order of Business

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

4. Parental Engagement and Involvement

Chair introduction

- 4.1 Parental engagement and involvement has been a common theme in much of the recent work of the Commission, be this in relation to school exclusion, supporting children with special educational needs in schools and closing the attainment gap. An additional £300k was allocated to Hackney Education in 2021/22 to support local efforts to reduce school exclusions. Part of that additional funding has been used to set up a Parental Engagement and Involvement programme to build schools' capacity to work more effectively with parents.

Director of Education and Systems leader

- 4.2 Hackney Education underlined the importance of parental engagement with schools as this was central to children's development, progression and attainment. A Systems Leader had been appointed to lead and deliver on this work, to support and empower schools to work more effectively with parents and to share learning across the sector.
- 4.3 The Systems Leader (SL) commenced work in September 2021. The SL had collated local data on parental engagement, visited local schools and spoken to numerous parent groups to help ground this work. It has been agreed that the project would focus on enabling schools to reach parents on the periphery who experienced difficulties in engagement (e.g. through their own school experience, language barrier). It was important to remember that many parents of children attending schools in Hackney now had experienced negative and excluding experiences within their own schooling in Hackney, which has resulted in strong feelings of suspicion and mistrust. The SL would work with schools to help them overcome these barriers.
- 4.4 The SL summarised some of the work carried out to date which included:
- Collation of background research to identify best practice and innovative approaches to parental engagement;
 - Develop a self-evaluation tool kit which will be trialled with schools to help them benchmark their parental engagement strategy;
 - Assessing whether there are named persons in schools to lead on parental engagement and if there is a dedicated strategy;
 - Assisting schools to set up local school forums and developing guidance to assist schools;
 - Meeting with local parent groups (e.g. HiP);
 - Deliver training to headteachers and deputies on engaging and working with parents.

Questions from the Commission

- 4.5 It was positive that the community organisations were being consulted and involved in this work as these can help to advocate for parents and families. Will there be any additional support directed toward these local groups to help them develop the capacity to engage, and advocate on behalf of parents?

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- Advocacy was on the agenda within this project and some initial work had commenced. The project would seek to build and extend upon the work of (Hackney Youth Parliament and Pembury Community) in developing Parental Champions to advocate for families in need (e.g. exclusion meetings). A small number of schools had been engaged on this issue, and it was clear that whilst some schools would embrace advocacy, others may be more reluctant to admit others into their meetings with parents. In this context, it was important that there was a reciprocal understanding of the importance and value of advocacy.
- The CVS could play an important role in the improved connectivity between parents and schools and additional meetings were planned to improve this relationship.

4.6 There are procedures and processes in place, which unintentionally or otherwise, keep parents at arms length in schools, particularly in the secondary sector (e.g. restricting the modes/times of parental communication). Will the project assess the potential barriers to parental involvement and how these can be overcome? Are there any differences between the approaches of maintained schools and academies?

- Over 20 schools had been visited thus far, and whilst there were examples of good parental communication strategies, it was clear that not all schools were reaching the right parents. What was most apparent was that there was insufficient tracking and monitoring or parental engagement and agreed processes of how parents could be followed up.
- It was also important to differentiate between engagement and involvement. Parents helping to fundraise and support school activities was not the same as engaging with the school to support their child's development and progress. Parents also needed to streamline and focus communication with parents and to prioritise those parents who may face difficulties to engage.

4.7 What themes have been emerging from the consultation and engagement with parents to date, about what needs to be improved? What were the outcomes of the parental conference?

- Communication with parents was important, but there was a concern that this was overly focused through the school's website. This presented a number of accessibility issues for parents.
- Other key themes continue to emerge from this consultation with parents including:
 - School transition: There was some innovative work taking place in the community where local voluntary sector groups were assisting with transition. This might provide scope for further advice and guidance to schools via Hackney Education;
 - Exclusions: parents spoke frequently about not knowing who to go to to seek help, both pre and post exclusion. It is clear that parents need further guidance and information to support them.
 - SEND: improved communication with SENCO and school and parents was cited and it was possible Hackney Education may co-produce these parent groups.

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- 4.8 How will Hackney Education evaluate the impact of this work with local parents? What outcomes do you hope to achieve?
- Ultimately, what Hackney Education wanted to achieve as a result of this work was improved outcomes for children. It was noted that in two schools, two groups of underperforming pupils (boys) had been identified and the schools had agreed to improve engagement with parents as part of a strategy to raise attainment and improve educational outcomes. Parents would be consulted to help develop a shared approach to this improved outcomes.
- 4.9 How will best practice be shared not only amongst schools but also with parents themselves? Has Hackney education consulted with other local authorities in helping to identify good practice for parental engagement?
- The SL was starting a local network to support parental engagement in schools. This would encourage dedicated ;leads to come forward and share best practice across local schools.
- 4.10 Do schools need to be more outward facing and community focused as part of an improved approach to parental engagement?
- Schools should be the hub of the community, so if schools were not aware of the needs of the communities in which they are based then it was unlikely that they would be able to respond effectively to the needs of children and their families. In this contact it was important that community groups should feel a part of the school and the school should actively engage such groups to this purpose.

Chair summary

- 4.11 This item resonated with many of the findings of the Commission in its work throughout this year and members support local efforts to improve parental engagement. The Chair noted that it would be helpful to receive an update on this work in the future to assess how this work is progressing.

5. School Improvement Partners

Chair introduction

- 5.1 The School Improvement Partner (SIP) Programme assists schools to develop higher standards of leadership and management expertise. Dedicated advisers work with schools to assess and improve, how well students are performing, the quality of teaching and learning and management and leadership. Given the importance of School Improvement Partners in improving attainment and closing the attainment gap, the Commission has requested an update from Hackney Education, which sets out the role and function of the School Improvement Partners and how they support local schools to improve.

Director of Education (DoE) & AD for School Standards and Improvement (ADSSI)

- 5.2 The DoE and ADSSI presented to the Commission highlighting the following information:
- There were 14 School Improvement Partners supporting 81 local schools, these were either directly employed by Hackney Education (n=7) or contracted sessionally;

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- SIP also supported 30 other schools outside the borough through a traded services arrangement;
- SIP offers core support to all maintained schools with 3 visits per year. Free schools and academies receive 2 visits unless they buy into additional provision. Whilst schools will focus on one aspect to improve each year, there were common threads for all schools which included the performance of key groups of pupils (SEND, children with social workers), any identified risks and agreed school priorities (e.g. pupil numbers).
- Exclusion was also a key point of challenge within the visits to ensure that there was local rigour in exclusion processes and these were fair.
- SIP also helped to identify risks within local schools and where it was appropriate to provide additional support.
- Schools were essentially autonomous, setting their own budget with their own governing body, therefore the role of Hackney Education was to seek improvement through influence and support.
- 96% of local schools were rated as good or better, which was above regional and national rates.
- A two sided report is compiled at the end of each visit which is sent to the school governing body together with suggested actions.

Questions from Commission

- 5.3 What informs the standards which SIP is endeavouring to set across local schools? Are these solely set on the Ofsted framework or are we using any local ambitions or targets? For example, inclusion is very much a Hackney standard which might not figure as prominently in the Ofsted framework?
- The work of SIP is informed by the Ofsted framework and other national benchmarks. In terms of target setting, there is an expectation that schools should be aiming to achieve within the top 20% of schools nationally and most schools achieve this.
 - Local Hackney themes also informed the work of SIP, such as through the inclusive school and curriculum. There were also local priorities which the SIP sought to raise with schools, such as effective SEND support and a reduction in school exclusions. In many ways SIP's acted as a mediator or broker between schools and the wider support of Hackney Education services.
- 5.4 In relation to the question above (5.3) whilst the role of the SIP in developing school attainment is clear and has shown positive impact among local schools, but what has been done to challenge the persistently high levels of permanent school exclusions within local schools? What successes has the SIP learnt of from local schools in addressing this entrenched challenge within the local education system?
- School exclusions are an across service concern and the SIP can play an important role in mediating between the school and other educational support services. The SIP has been key to initiating reviews of behaviour policies and how pastoral support has been provided to children. The SIP will assess the school's data on exclusions and challenge schools where this is higher than national averages and check with schools on those strategies to address the underlying causes. It should be emphasised that the role of the SIP was not to hold the school to account, but to provide leadership and management support.

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- It was also noted that SIP were also governors within local schools and they could provide challenge through this process alongside other governors. The SIP focus was on the role of the Headteacher, to encourage and support them in developing and improving the school. It was noted that there has been some success in reducing the number of fixed term exclusions in local schools.

5.5 How many academies engage with the SIP more than the basic two visits per year? This is particularly pertinent given that most of the secondary schools are academies locally.

- 3 secondary academies had bought additional support through the SIP, which together with the 6 maintained secondaries meant that most local secondaries were receiving the full package of support. There are no academies that have refused support from the SIP.

5.6 Can School Improvement Partners be utilised to support local Alternative Provision or indeed, in SEND independent provision which young people attend?

- Alternative Provision was a cross borough concern and was utilised by children and young people across a number of London boroughs. There is a cross borough quality and improvement mechanism in place to support provision. This was a live topic of discussion within Hackney Education.
- It was noted that Hackney Education was stepping up its involvement with Alternative Provision in light of recommendations from the Commission. Hackney Education was also working more closely with independent schools in the Orthodox Jewish community in the north of the borough to improve numeracy and literacy.

5.7 Does the SIP engage with other stakeholders such as parents or the wider school staff team in its work?

- Pupil voice is very much part of the SIP, and partners talk to schoolchildren at each visit about their experience of the curriculum and wider school system. Although partners would not meet with parents directly, it was common practice to inquire as to school strategies to engage and involve parents.
- Although the SIP would not generally attend a Parent Teacher Association meeting, it was likely that they would attend the governing body meetings to 'temperature check' the situation in a school.

5.8 What is the relationship between SIP and Ofsted? What happens when there is a disagreement of opinion?

- SIP works within the Ofsted framework and aims to ensure that schools also understand this and the associated inspection process. There is considerable focus to ensure that schools are Ofsted inspection ready. There is generally little divergence in the opinion and views of Ofsted and the local authority, however, there are routes to escalate concerns if it feels that local schools have been treated unfairly. Generally the local authority would meet inspectors as part of the Ofsted assessment and if there were any concerns, these would be raised then.
- Whilst SIP provides strategic advisory support, there is a different layer of support below which provides more teaching and classroom based support to

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schools. This included pedagogical support as well as other pupil support (e.g. mental health).

- 5.9 Do the statutory powers of intervention of the local authority apply equally to maintained schools and academies?
- The intervention powers of the local authority only apply to schools in the maintained sector.
 - It was noted that if there were concerns about an academy, then this could be raised with the Regional Schools Commissioner (if concerns had not been heeded by the Headteacher or Executive Head). The Regional Schools Commissioner could only issue warning notices to academies.
- 5.10 Are visits by SIPs planned in advance with the school? What assurance can be provided that the assessments and judgements made by the SIP (and subsequent support) are based on the authentic position of the school as opposed to those issues presented by the school?
- It was reiterated that the SIP was not an inspection process, but it was about providing new and different perspectives to leadership and decision making within the school. Visits are arranged with the school, but once in the school a wide programme of activities will be undertaken by the SIp including looking at attainment records, attendance books and of course talking to other key staff and children in attendance.

Chair Summary

- 5.11 The Chair thanked officers for attending the meeting and responding to members' questions. The Chair noted that this item had been very helpful in setting out the role and function of the SIP and the relationship that they have with schools. It was felt that it would be really helpful for the Commission to have a case study to understand how the SIP process works and how they grapple with issues of concern.
- 5.12 The Chair noted that whilst the key aim of the SIP was to provide strategic leadership and management support, there were concerns over the ability of SIP to provide effective challenge to local schools, especially as the SIP did not systematically include the voice of parents and other stakeholders in assessment and challenge to local schools. It was felt that this might give rise to some discordance as to what the school leadership and the wider school community might feel are priority issues to address.

Action: To liaise with HE to provide further case study data as to how the role of the SIP works in practice. (Or facilitate a meeting with a number of SIPs).

6. Cabinet Member Question Time

- 6.1 Cabinet members attend the Commission annually to respond to questions within their portfolio of services for which they are responsible. The Commission may select three lines of questioning which are submitted 6 weeks in advance of the meeting. The Cabinet member is then required to provide a verbal response at the meeting.

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6.2 Cllr Anntionette Bramble, the Cabinet member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care was requested to respond to 3 questions on children's mental health services, and the role of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The Commission is aware that children's mental health is a shared responsibility across Local Government, health and voluntary sector partners and is supported by integrated commissioning arrangements, and has thus agreed to focus questions with the Cabinet member on local mental health services and support to children and young people to understand:

- The number and nature of referrals to local services;
- Waiting times and access to mental services
- Improving accessibility of local services, and
- Ensuring vulnerable groups have access to mental health services.

Question 1 - Demand for CAMHS services and waiting times in Hackney

1. Demand for CAMHS and waiting times in Hackney

- a) Can the Cabinet member provide an update on the volume and nature of referrals to local CAMHS services pre and post-pandemic?
- b) There are a number of national standards for waiting times for CAMHS services:
 - 95% of young people with an eating disorder to be seen within 4 weeks (1 week if urgent)
 - At least 50% young people with a 1st episode of psychosis to get help within 2 weeks of referral
 - 75% of young people referred to talking therapies (mental health, depression, anxiety) to start treatment in 6 weeks and 95% in 18 weeks.

Can the Cabinet member update the Commission on how waiting times for CYP in Hackney relate to the above standards? And in general:

- How do waiting times for CAMHS for children and young people in Hackney compare to other similar boroughs?
- How has covid impacted on waiting times?
- What support do young people receive whilst they are on a waiting list?
- Are young people provided with information and/or signposting whilst they are on a waiting list?
- What investments or adaptations have been developed to reduce waiting times for children and young people in Hackney?

Cabinet member response

- East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) supports those children in Hackney with mental health issues. During and after the pandemic, the number of referrals to ELFT doubled from 400 to 800 and the proportion diagnosed with a mental health condition increased from 8% to 18%.
- Local investment in children's mental health was strong and at levels above other local authorities and health services. Local services still faced

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significant challenges however not only in relation to demand, but also in recruiting and maintaining key staff and other professionals.

- In respect of the eating disorder target, it was noted that Hackney was not always meeting the national standard expected. A summit of partners had been convened to ascertain what actions could be taken to improve this response and provide interim support to children and their families (e.g. through HCVS or WAMHS).
- Both the psychosis and talking therapies targets were being met and it was noted that Hackney had the shortest waiting times in the country on these measures. In other broader CAMHS assessments, Hackney was nationally rated the 6th best performer.
- Whilst these indicators were positive, it was accepted that some young people were still waiting a long time for the mental health support that they may need and that more still needed to be done to address these.

Questions from the Commission

- 6.3 The pandemic has created a number of hidden mental health conditions which may not be readily identifiable to parents or practitioners such as, for example, eating disorders or the impact of family stress on children (alcohol, illness). How prepared are local services for an expected rise in referrals and how are local services encouraging young people to come forward?
- It was important to recognise that the pandemic had created a delayed trauma, where children and families had to manage mental health concerns prior to obtaining treatment or therapy. There was an emergency referral service in operation together with a home treatment service which was responding to urgent needs as they arose.
- 6.4 In relation to the significant increase in demand, is there any further data on the nature of this increased demand or the demographics of children requiring mental health support? Are there any indicators that other mental health needs are not being met?
- There has not been a change in the demographic of referrals in relation to ethnicity, but there has been an increase in the number of younger children being referred for mental health support. While this was concerning on one level, it was hoped that for some this was an earlier diagnosis helping children to address mental health issues before these become more entrenched.
 - It was noted that additional capacity of around 10-15% was needed within the system to help address some of the underlying 'unknown' concerns.
- 6.5 Do local services expect any increase in demand as result of the war in Ukraine and the increase in refugees which may result? How are local services preparing?
- Hackney has a strong record of welcoming and supporting refugees. It was noted that many local services offered a trauma informed approach to working

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with children and would be well equipped to support child refugees from the Ukraine and other countries.

2. Improving Access to CAMHS in Hackney

With multiple services and entry points, it is acknowledged that access to local CAMHS services can be complex and difficult to understand not only for young people and their families but also for referring professionals. A local key objective is to have a fully integrated pathway or 'no wrong door' approach for local services set up by/in 2022.

- How far have local CAMHS services progressed with this objective and what have been the key achievements to date?
- What improvement will this bring to the referral process and accessibility of CAMHS?

There is evidence to suggest that '*open access mental health hubs*' might be more acceptable to young people than CAMHS or school based counselling / therapy services which could help more young people to access the support they need. A consortium of children's mental health charities are campaigning for these to be established nationwide.

- What do we know about local young people's preferences for mental health service provision?
- Are there any similar initiatives in existence or planned for Hackney?

Cabinet member response

- Local services acknowledged that entry to mental health services can be complex and were working to simplify access. This has been going well and there has been progress.
- Local mental health services acknowledge the potential role that mental health hubs might play in improving access, but at present this development was not being considered locally. The focus locally had been on developing the capacity of local services to improve access.
- The Cool Down Cafe had been developed as a peer support mechanism for young people with mental health concerns. Hackney CVS operates this service in partnership with Young Hackney and Peabody to support young people aged 16-24. The Cafe helps to bring professional support into community settings and to address some of the stigma around mental health. It operates a number of youth-led workshops to help address mental health issues.

Questions from the Commission

6.6 It was noted that there were problems in recruiting and maintaining mental health professionals. How was Hackney managing this problem?

- There is a strategy and supporting communication plan to support recruitment and retention. Services were actively talking and engaging with staff to

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support retention. This was a nationwide problem however, which required more proactive government intervention to resolve.

- 6.7 Whilst Hackney may have high levels of funding, the general narrative was that CAMHS services were under acute financial pressures. What is the situation locally? How has additional funding decreased waiting lists and improved access?
- Historically the council and other mental health partners have invested more in mental health services, but there has been a more recent reduction in funding for CAMHS services.
- 6.8 In terms of take up among some local groups, what happens when a parent does not wish their child to be referred for mental health service provision (via another practitioner or school for example)? Is parental consent required?
- All mental health interventions with young people are predicated on parental consent. In some instances, this does require some prolonged engagement with parents to help them understand how children will benefit from treatment and support. There are now trained CAMHS workers across all schools providing expert professional advice to children and families at a much earlier point. Talking to professionals in non-clinical settings such as schools can also encourage children and families to seek help earlier.
 - Statutory thresholds were key to determining whether parental consent was required, if it was below, parents would need to provide consent, if above, the practitioner would determine the need for treatment and support.
- 6.9 If the local services are not pursuing mental health hubs, what was the evidence base to suggest that young people wanted something different?
- Young people wanted a variety of services to support their mental health needs such as through on-line services, face to face, in school or in similar services to hubs. This is reflected in the approach to mental health services which provides a broad range of mediums through which young people can access mental health support. If the evidence points to hubs in the future, then this is where local services will head.
 - The outcomes of the Young Futures Commission have helped guide and inform the council's approach to supporting children and young people on a variety of policy issues, including mental health and emotional wellbeing. This has helped to ensure that the authentic voice of children and young people is heard in the decisions that are taken about them

3. Mental health support to vulnerable groups

National reports indicate that the mental wellbeing of some groups of children and young people were particularly impacted by the pandemic: children from black and other minority ethnic communities, children with existing conditions, children from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds and children from LGBT communities.

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- Given that some of these communities may already experience difficulty in accessing statutory services, how have local CAMHS ensured that mental health support remains accessible?
- What outreach activities take place with local communities to support access to CAMHS?

Cabinet response

CAMHS commissioned a number of services to help address accessibility of mental health services:

- Kooth, an on-line mental health support service for children and young people.
- St Joseph's Bereavement Service supports young people who have been affected by bereavement.
- Growing Minds and mental health hub for children of Black Caribbean ethnic origin, who can access a wide range of support from one location;
- Cultural competency training is also provided across the service to help address disproportionalities;
- Tree of Life - Non European centric approach to wellbeing;
- Project Indigo helps to support LGBT young people across the borough;
- Hackney has a strong clinical service of around 45 staff who are co-located across different settings across the borough.
- It was underlined that a good universal offer was central to reaching the wide ranging emotional and mental health needs of local children and young people.

Questions from the Commission

6.10 Do you think SENCOs should have more training on issues such as CAMHS?

- SENCO are now required to have professional training which is to be welcomed. There is also a SENCO forum locally which helps practitioners to engage, share ideas and best practice and develop discrete training.
- It was really important that there are now more qualified practitioners in a much wider range of local settings which can help bring decision making and support much closer to young people that may need mental health support.
- Each school has a mental health lead separate from the WAMHS worker and all staff will have had training to help them identify mental health needs.

Chair Summary

6.11 The Chair thanked Cllr Bramble for attending and responding to members' questions so fully. There were a number of follow up points:

- 1) Suitability of mental health offer for neurodiverse children - and the evidence base for this;
- 2) Further data on the nature of increase in demand for services in relation to nature of services required and demographic profile;
- 3) What is known about children for whom it is suspected are not accessing services that they may need?

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- 4) Assurance around the effective provision of mental health support provided to children attending in alternative provision settings, especially those in locations outside of Hackney;
- 5) More detailed information on the nature of the financial challenge faced by CAMHS, and a breakdown of budget across the sector;
- 6) Further information about pressures on staffing and how shortages are being managed within the service - could there be a more localised solution to staffing challenges?

7. Post 16 SEND Strategy - Cabinet response

- 7.1 The Commission made a number of recommendations to the Cabinet member for Families, Early Years, Parks and Play in April 2021 to support the development of a new Post 16 Strategy. The Cabinet members' responses to the Commissions' recommendations were as set out in the report pack.
- 7.2 The Chair had a number of questions in relation to the response which were as follows:
- 7.3 To clarify, will there be a dedicated strategy for Post 16 provision still as envisaged as this is not clear from this response?
 - The Cabinet member for Early Years, Families, Parks and Play responded: the Post 16 strategy will be integrated into a broader SEND strategy which will be included within the Preparing for Adulthood strand. It was one of four priority strands being brought forward within the overarching strategy. If the Commission feel that there is further work that is needed, then this can be picked up when the strategy is published. Expected to go to Cabinet in June 2022.
- 7.4 A key recommendation from the session was about increasing the number, scope and accessibility of supported internships, but the response does not make any reference to this - except that the internships programme has been recommissioned? Will the supported internship programme be increased?
 - The Cabinet member for Early Years, Families, Parks and Play responded: the strategy will encompass this, particularly in the way that it partners with other agencies to develop and extend the offer. There is a commitment to this locally, but there are pressures on resources to be able to match this. The Cabinet member would come back to the Commission with further details.
- 7.5 The Commission noted the cabinet member's response.

8. Children Centre Consultation

- 8.1 The Commission was consulted as part of the Early Years Strategy and the reconfiguration of Children's Centres in October of last year, and the Commission formally responded to the Consultation in November. A report of the public consultation was produced and enclosed for members to note.

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8.2 As part of the Commission's work on this topic, parents of children attending Children's Centres which were proposed for closure were invited to set out their views and concerns. Hackney Education produced a response to the concerns of parents for members to note.

8.3 Members noted both reports.

9. Work Programme 2021/22

9.1 As this was the final meeting of the Commission in this municipal year, it provided an opportunity for members to reflect on the work programme for the past year in particular:

- What items have worked particularly well and have had impact;
- In what ways the Commission has worked best for members:
 - Multiple / single item agendas?
 - Pre-decision scrutiny?
 - Site visits?
 - External guests?
 - Working jointly with other Commissions?
- Those issues which remain a priority and likely to be taken forward in the next work programme

9.2 A summary of members responses is provided below:

- Cllr Sizer emphasised the importance of listening to different voices within the Commission and was assured that the Commission sought to do so within all its work. The Exclusions review was a very powerful piece of work and exemplified the approach of the Commission.
- Cllr Hanson suggested that there should be a one page summary for all reports that are presented to the Commission and there should be a key for any acronyms used. It was important that the reports submitted to the Commission remain accessible.
- Cllr Troughton indicated that the Exclusions work of the Commission was important and powerful, but it needed a summary report which could help get the key findings out to a wider range of stakeholders beyond this Commission. Priority should continue to be given to SEND. Members did struggle with the paperwork and it would be useful if more information could be placed in appendices.
- Jo Macleod suggested work on exclusions and SEND had been very impactful and momentum should be maintained on this work. Further priority should be given to mental health services and what impact that this has on young people locally. Additionally, the Commission should ensure that the voice of other stakeholders is heard within the meetings and through its work (children, parents, teachers). It was important that the Commission is not reliant on the reports of officers and to provide new information for consideration (e.g. its own research, site visits, focus groups).
- Cllr Peters - SEND provision and school exclusions should remain a priority for the Commission, taking into account the mental health needs of children and how

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services support them. In agreement with Cllr Troughton, it was important to provide key summaries of the achievements of the Commission which could be disseminated further. It was also important that the work of the Commission is promoted through social media. It was also suggested that the Commission should develop a glossary for the Commission which could be published alongside the reports with each agenda. The Commission should also not lose sight of the Ofsted inspection outcomes and ensure that that oversight is maintained of the council's progress.

- Cllr Selman - there was lots of interest in the exclusions report and it was important that there is a summary for wider dissemination. It would be helpful if further work can be done to facilitate greater engagement and involvement of Hackney Youth Parliament into the work of the Commission. More site visits would be welcomed.
- Cllr Young - although there were no opposition members, the quality of scrutiny was strong with good engagement from members and officers. It was noted that agendas were often full with lots of items and numerous reports. If this could be reduced, it may enable more follow up questions on topics. Time was limited and it was acknowledged that it was difficult to prioritise topics for inclusion.
- Cllr Bramble - appreciated the work of the Commission in highlighting what was working well and what needed to be improved, but also in holding Cabinet members to account. It was important to have a strong internal challenge to make sure that the council was doing the best for local residents.
- Cllr Conway - joint work undertaken with Health in Hackney on disproportionality in perinatal mental health was a good partnership piece of work which helped to scope this area. The scrutiny of commissioning of independent SEND provision was also positive and felt that this secured some positive outcomes for the service. Budget monitoring role has helped to provide additional oversight of the functions of the council and how these are aligned to policy and service development. It was also noted that best scrutiny occurs when young people and others are actively involved in its work. The work on housing support for care leavers was also a good example of cross commission work with Living in Hackney. It was noted that Child Q Safeguarding Practice Review was published today (14/3/22) which related to a strip search of a 15 year old girl in school which raises issues around safeguarding in schools and adultification bias. The Chair formally thanked the CHSCP for its leadership in this case. Mental health was also a severe challenge nationally which needed to be kept in the view of this Commission. Given that most children with SEND have their needs met through mainstream schools, the Commission should begin to assess at how well schools serve these needs. It would be helpful to develop the health side of the Commission's work and improve scrutiny in this area. Getting more parent groups coming to the meeting.
- Cllr Margaret Gordon- a youth-led scrutiny session would be a positive development for the Commission.

9.3 The next meeting of the Commission was scheduled for June 13th 2022. Given the upcoming elections and that the new Commission would not be confirmed until May

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25th 2022, it was suggested that items for the first meeting should be standing items (which the Commission takes annually) so to give officers enough time to prepare and so that scrutiny takes place.

Agreed: School Places and Childcare Sufficiency reports to be taken at the June 13th 2022 meeting.

- 9.4 The Chair formally thanked all members of the Commission for their support for its work throughout the year.

10. Minutes

- 10.1 Previous minutes were not available in time for the meeting and would be taken at the first meeting of the new municipal year.

11. Any other business

- 11.1 There were no other items of business.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm