

Children, Young People, Families & Learning Overview and Scrutiny Commission**1:30 p.m. – 4:52 p.m. Monday 17th November 2025****Room 77, The Guildhall, Alfred Gelder Street, Hull, HU12AA and MS Teams (Officers Only)****Present:**

Councillors: Payne (Chair); M. Collinson; Grozav; Kennett and A. Thompson.

In attendance:

Councillor Tock, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Hull City Council
A. Campbell, Strategic Lead Improvement, Performance and Quality Service, Hull City Council
J. Edhouse, Local Authority Designated Officer, Hull City Council
S. Crabb, Independent Reviewing Service Manager, Hull City Council
K. Ryan, Head of Transport and Traffic Management, Hull City Council
C. McKenzie, Operational Transport Manager, Hull City Council
S. Scargill, Group Manager, Localities and Safeguarding, Hull City Council
F. Bell, Service Support Manager, Localities and Safeguarding, Hull City Council
K. Fisher, Head of Service – Safeguarding Area 6, Hull City Council
P. Turner, Executive Director Children/Family Services/Deputy Chief Executive, Hull City Council
P. Todd, Scrutiny Officer, Hull City Council
A. Holgate, Head of Governance, Hull City Council

Apologies:

Councillors Henry, Kassim and Kemp.

Minute Number		
35	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (2)	
Councillor M. Collinson declared a personal interest, in minute number 39, insofar as he has a child that qualifies for home to school transport.		
Recommendations:		Reasons for Recommendations:
a) N/A.		a) N/A.

36	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20TH OCTOBER 2025 (3)	
P. Todd (Scrutiny Officer) submitted the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15 th September 2025 for approval.		
Recommendations:		Reasons for Recommendations:
a) That the minutes of the meeting of this Commission held on Monday 20 th October 2025 be taken as read and correctly recorded.		a) N/A.

37

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report
2024-25 (4)**

J. Edhouse (Local Authority Designated Officer) and A. Campbell (Strategic Lead Improvement, Performance and Quality Service) attended the meeting to present the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report 2024-25. The report provided an account of the activity of the LADO service between the 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025 and evaluated practice, plans and the allegation management process and the effectiveness of the LADO service in ensuring that Hull Local Authority was discharging its statutory responsibilities.

The officer provided an overview of the report and highlighted that due to a consistent increase in referrals to the LADO, over a 6-year period, there had been an increase in full time equivalent staff from 1 to 2 LADO's and that 25% of cases had been substantiated to prove the allegation that had been made.

The Commission discussed:

- i. The importance of the child's voice and how it is used within LADO referrals. The officer advised that where a child was involved in an accusation, their voice was always a part of the allegation management meetings.
- ii. Trustees and Governors were underrepresented in training, despite the importance of their understanding of the role of the LADO, and the proposed approach to improve this. The Commission was informed that the new Education and Safeguarding Manager, due to start in December, would work closely with Heads of Schools, CEOs, Safeguarding leads and Governors to provide an understanding of the role of the LADO, effective communication and guidance to ensure lower-level concerns and complaints would still be referred.
- iii. The reasons surrounding the increase in LADO referrals over the six-year period that the LADO had been in post. There had been an increase in awareness of the role of the LADO which had constituted an increase in referrals made, alongside additional circumstances that were brought into the LADO allegation management process, since 2020, such as conduct outside of work or home that may deem a person unsuitable to work with children.
- iv. The licensing differences between Hull taxis and Wolverhampton, Leeds and Bradford taxis, due to their prevalence in the city, and how they were handled by their local LADO. The Commission was advised that there were no significant differences in the way the taxis out of the area were licensed or dealt with by their local area LADO. Any referrals made to a LADO in a different authority, for an allegation that took place within Hull, would be referred to the Hull City Council LADO.
- v. The preference that resources be focused on protecting children and ensuring a focus is placed on resolving cases, rather than focusing on processes.

Recommendations:	Reasons for Recommendations:
<p>a. That the Scrutiny Officer circulates the Local Authority Designated Officer Annual Report 2024-25 to members of Licensing Committee for information.</p>	<p>a. To ensure members of Licensing Committee have oversight and knowledge of the work of the LADO due to its close link with taxi services.</p>

38	Independent Reviewing Service for Children Subject of Child Protection Plans Annual Report 2024-25 (5)	
<p>S. Crabb (Independent Reviewing Service Manager) and A. Campbell (Strategic Lead Improvement, Performance and Quality Service) presented the Independent Reviewing Service for Children Subject of Child Protection Plans Annual Report 2024-25 and provided an overview of the report.</p> <p>The Commission discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The importance of educating families to understand what constitutes neglect and how to avoid it. Future priorities included increasing face-to-face Child Protection Conference Reviews to 80% by the end of 2025, which had almost been achieved with the current number at 75%. Other actions were to embed the neglect toolkit in practice and bring in partners to help drive this further. ii. The concerns of virtual conferences reducing the quality of the review. The Commission was advised that all parties were required to have cameras on, some families attended the virtual conference from the child’s school and that there was a trend in father’s attending conferences when conferences were held virtually. A flexible approach would be taken to accommodate if it would mean full attendance. iii. The reasons behind the increase in Child Protection Plans and other approaches that could be used to address the concerns. The Commission were advised that once the threshold, set by law, is met then a Child Protection Plan is issued. It was noted that at times families are working with all the necessary agencies to change behaviours and ensure the safety of the child however a Child Protection 		

<p>Plan has been issues due to meeting the criteria. The Council was investigating ways to provide support and intervention before a Child Protection Plan is issued via best practice work and approaches taken in other authorities.</p> <p>iv. The approach and focus on early intervention being taken by the Council to prevent families reaching a crisis risk point. The Officers advised that work took place amongst the assessment team and sub-groups with a focus on prevention work using the neglect toolkit and DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-Based Violence) assessments to provide families with the tools they need to resolve the issues themselves.</p> <p>v. The Family First Partnership programme placed a focus on early intervention work and the upcoming training and events would provide networking opportunities for partners to come together and collaborate on family group decision making.</p> <p>vi. Actions that had been taken by the Council to improve the level of health information available. The Commission was advised that work had taken place with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and GP services to improve their accountability. Health information analysis would now be provided by GP's which will feed into the early prevention work.</p>	
<p>Recommendations:</p>	<p>Reasons for Recommendations:</p>
<p>a. That an update on the Independent Reviewing Service for Children Subject of Child Protection Plans be added to the work programme, in 6 months' time, to enable the Commission to review progress throughout the year and receive an update on the early intervention work and how it has impacted on Child Protection Plans.</p>	<p>a. To provide the Commission with a progress update on early intervention work and how that has impacted the number of children subject to child protection plans and assess if further actions are required.</p>

39	Home to School Transport (6)	
<p>K. Ryan (Head of Transport and Traffic Management) and C. McKenzie (Operational Transport Manager) attended the meeting to provide an update on the Home to School Transport service provided by Hull City Council and provided an overview of the presentation and highlighted that the service transported over 1000 children per day; there had already been 341 applications made since the start of the academic year which</p>		

compared to 355 for the full year prior; continued changes were being implemented to create efficiencies; the home to school server user survey gathered critical feedback and would continue on an annual basis moving forward. Information had been recently shared with the Corporate Strategy Team about the increase in Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs) and provided an update on Delivering Better Value (DBV) activity. The Executive Director suggested the paper be circulated to the Commission to provide further detail.

The Commission discussed:

- i. The service user survey did not include the drivers and operators of the home to school transport which could provide further key information to shape the offer. Drivers that did not want to undertake home to school transport jobs could provide information as to how to improve the service further, as could service users that ceased to use the home to school transport service due to dissatisfaction. The comments were noted, and the Commission was advised that although drivers were not included in the survey, the Transport service met with them on a regular basis and were provided with feedback.
- ii. The changes over the years in the awareness of Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the impact on the service delivery of home to transport due to increasing applications. The Commission were advised that awareness and understanding had increased over the years and that the service was seeing increasingly complex needs amongst children. All transport requests were assessed on their own merits based on the needs of the child and what their plan required and then balanced versus the cost of the service to create efficiencies where shared vehicles could be used.
- iii. The protocols that were in place for when children requested a different drop off location to that of the planned route. The Commission was advised that the routes are set and plans in place to safeguard the children and ensure officers were always aware of the location of vehicles in case of an incident. Drivers, including contractors, are instructed to contact the Council’s transport office if they are unsure or have been given alternative instructions. The office could then contact social services, where necessary, to verify if the information was accurate as safeguarding remain the paramount concern. Furthermore, it was advised that drivers must always ensure a child is greeted by an adult at the drop off location, and whereby there was no one present, other safeguarding measures were in place to follow on.

Recommendations:	Reasons for Recommendations:
<p>a. That the Increase in Education, Health & Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs) paper, that was presented to the</p>	<p>a. To provide further information surrounding the increase in requests for Education, Health and Care Plans and how the Council can deliver the best value whilst maintaining the service.</p>

<p>Corporate Strategy Team (CST), be circulated to the Commission off agenda.</p> <p>b. That a future update be added to the work programme to show the progress made and the outcomes of next year's survey results.</p>	<p>b. To monitor progress made against the findings of the survey, how changes have been implemented and further efficiencies created to deliver the best value.</p>
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<p>40</p>	<p>Private Fostering Annual Report 2024-25 (7)</p>	
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S. Scargill (Group Manager, Localities and Safeguarding) attended the meeting to present the Private Fostering Annual Report 2024-25 which gave an overview of activities in relation to privately fostered children in Hull from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2025. The officer provided an overview of the report and highlighted that:

- i. Private Fostering week was due to take place on the week commencing 1st December 2025 where there would be a push to raise the awareness of privately fostering children.
- ii. There had been no complaints over the reporting period in terms of private fostering arrangements
- iii. Since the report had been written, there had been ongoing audit work, sessions had been held with the social work academy and a regular steering group had continued.
- iv. Work had been conducted with schools to provide information within their receptions to further increase awareness of private fostering.

The Commission discussed:

- i. The suitability of locations that information boards could be found, with information on private fostering. The Executive Director explained that information needed to be placed strategically to ensure further assistance could be provided such as within GP surgeries, libraries, or schools.

Recommendations:	Reasons for Recommendations:
a. That the report be noted.	a. N/A

41	Section 17 Audit Action Plan (8)	
<p>F. Bell (Service Support Manager, Localities and Safeguarding) provided an update and reassurance on the progress of the findings of the Section 17 audit completed November 2024, by South West Audit Partnership (SWAP), who supply internal audit services for Hull City Council. An overview of the report was provided that highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. SWAP’s audit identified 13 findings under different categorisations of priority. Continuous work was underway to address the concerns and regular communication had been taking place between Hull City Council and SWAP. ii. Government guidance was updated in 2016 however Section 17 payments had not been reviewed in a number of years. iii. Improvements to the transparency of payment recordings, accessibility to online forms and promotion of guidance surrounding Section 17 payments were some of the actions taking place. iv. A further review of policy would take place once the Council had implemented Workday (as a replacement to Oracle e-Business Suite) to ensure further issues would not re-occur. <p>The Commission discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That Section 17 payments were a last resort, and families were not fully aware of the benefits they should be in receipt of. The Commission were informed that at times it was down to a lack of education of help available, however the Welfare Rights team would undertake a full benefit assessment and advise where the correct credits were not being claimed. Work also took place via the Family Hubs to prevent families getting to a financial crisis point or a reoccurrence taking place in the future. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. The options available to provide families with access to gas or electric and the link to the processes taking place to issue vouchers or money. The Commission were advised that Children’s Service work with Finance to provide a QR code that can be taken into a shop to pay for services and that cash was rarely given out. It was noted that processes that required tightening with regards to receipts. iii. The action plan noted actions would be completed by the end of November pending the upgrade to Liquid Logic. The Officer advised the Commission that further work was required to link in with Workday following implementation.
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Recommendations:	Reasons for Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. That an off-agenda update be provided in March 2026 that provides an update on progress made against the actions identified on the audit plan. b. That a future update be brought in June 2026, following the implementation of Workday, to demonstrate the new measures implemented to prevent future issues that had been identified by the auditors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To provide assurance that measures have been progressed within a reasonable timeframe. b. To present the new procedures in place, how they operate, and provide assurance that the audit concerns have been fully addressed to prevent future problems.

42	Direct Payments Service Audit – Progress on Actions Identified (9)	
<p>K. Fisher (Head of Service – Safeguarding Area 6) provided an update on the progress of actions identified by the direct payments audit completed and finalised on the 14th July 2025 by South West Audit Partnership (SWAP), who supply internal audit services for Hull City Council. An overview of the report was provided that highlighted:</p>		

- i. Direct Payments would continue to increase nationally, and not just in Hull, which could be attributed to the increase in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- ii. SWAP’s audit identified 11 findings, of which the common concern was linked to inconsistent application of processes despite a process existing. An action plan had been developed, and work was taking place to address the challenges from the audit.
- iii. The Direct Payments had previously been managed by the Finance Department, but there was a previous audit concern as it was deemed a conflict of interest for finance to decide on issuing payments, therefore it was transferred to Children’s services. The service however lacked the financial expertise which created the process issues identified.
- iv. Moving forward Children’s Services planned to build resilience, improve communication with the Finance Department to ensure all payments were administered correctly and a consistent approach was taken across all processes.

The Commission discussed:

- i. Audit findings highlighted several issues with some recommendations completed, while others have not yet started. The discussion focused on whether any outstanding actions could present challenges or create future issues, and the Commission was informed that one of the key areas of focus was to create a business case for a panel administrator that would have the expertise to establish links with Finance colleagues and ensure processes were in place and build resilience in the system to ensure everything did not rely upon one staff member.
- ii. The impact on the families that were in receipt of direct payment due to the process issues that had been identified. The Commission was informed that there had been no complaints in relation to the administration of direct payments over the previous six months. The only issues raised were linked to a reduction in payments whereby there was a right of appeal process that took place to address the dissatisfaction.

Recommendations:	Reasons for Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. That an off-agenda update be provided in March 2026 that provides an update on progress made against the actions identified on the audit plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To provide assurance that measures have been progressed within a reasonable timeframe.

<p>b. That a future update be brought in June 2026, following the implementation of Workday, to demonstrate the new measures implemented to prevent future issues that had been identified by the auditors.</p>	<p>b. To present the new procedures in place, how they operate, and provide assurance that the audit concerns have been fully addressed to prevent future problems.</p>
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<p>43</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES UPDATE (10)</p>	
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P. Turner (Executive Director Children/Family Services/Deputy Chief Executive) attended the meeting to update the Commission on current/key issues and for members to identify matters to be considered and raise questions and issues that may lead to further work being undertaken. The Executive Director informed the Committee:

- i. The Leaving Care Service was hosting multiple November events celebrating care leavers' achievements. Senior leaders completed a peer review in Sheffield; reciprocal review happening in Hull this week.
- ii. There was a focus on increased Education Health Care plan requests amid national concerns about upcoming process changes.
- iii. Updated statutory guidance on school uniforms (effective Sept 2026) meant primary schools would have a maximum of 3 branded items and Secondary/middle schools to have a maximum of 4 branded items (including tie). The Government was pursuing legislation to enforce limits.
- iv. Senior managers attended training via The Staff College, including courses on Black and Asian Leadership, Leading in Uncertainty and SEND-focused leadership.
- v. Annual education achievement event for children looked after was held on 23 Oct with over 250 guests and nearly 100 awards presented.
- vi. Trials of "Magic Notes" and "Magic Reports" AI tools in Early Help and Safeguarding show time-saving benefits. Practice standards were being developed, and the Corporate Transformation Team were providing support.
- vii. Confirmed indicative 3-year funding (approximately £5.5m) for Best Start Family Hubs & Healthy Babies programme; delivery guidance expected in December.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> viii. Additional Executive Boards were held focused on Family First Partnership vision; 3 frontline workshops scheduled in November to engage staff. ix. Hull Fostering promoting recruitment through college/business visits and national short film campaign with more than 90 other Local Authorities. x. National Adoption Week featured webinars and info events to raise adoption awareness and permanence benefits.
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Recommendations:	Reasons for Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That a workshop be organised for the next municipal year, to discuss the use of Magic Notes and Magic Reports (AI). The workshop will provide information on the pilot scheme being used by Children's Services, demonstrating what has been done, the operational practice, the link to databases, data security assurances and the future plans to use AI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To allow for a detailed overview of the pilot scheme, being trialled by Children's services, and discuss the benefits of implementing AI programmes against the risks it may present. This could lead to efficiencies and changes in the working practices of officers within Children's Services.

44	YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY ENGAGEMENT GROUP FEEDBACK (11)	
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P. Todd (Scrutiny Officer) submitted the report to update the Commission on the most recent outcomes and feedback from the Young People Scrutiny Engagement Group.

The Commission welcomed the updated and supported the suggestion of a paid position for a Young Person Champion for Housing. It was also noted that the Housing Officers that attended the meeting were actively listening to the concerns.

Recommendations:	Reasons for Recommendations:
a. That the update be noted.	a. N/A

45	CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, FAMILIES & LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION – OUTSTANDING ACTIONS (12)	
<p>P. Todd, Scrutiny Officer submitted the outstanding action list.</p> <p>The Commission discussed the action list and agreed that the completed items be removed and the Scrutiny Officer follow up those actions that were still awaiting a response.</p>		
Recommendations:	Reasons for Recommendations:	
a. That the completed items be removed and the Scrutiny Officer follow up those actions that were still awaiting a response.	a. To ensure any outstanding actions are being addressed in a timely manner.	

46	REFERRALS RECEIVED (13)	

P. Todd, Scrutiny Officer submitted the referrals for consideration.

The Commission discussed:

- i. The concerns in relation to the ability to recruit and retain staff at senior levels and the impact of having to continue to use agency staff. The Executive Director advised the Commission that agency workers were used to fill vacant posts on a temporary basis and other staff within the Children’s Services were appointed to the senior positions that had become vacant. An agency worker that filled one of the posts had since been successful in gaining a permanent position. There was a small amount of agency workers remaining with the posts out to advert to secure permanent staff members.
- ii. The use of temporary children’s homes due to extra resource implications associated. The Executive Director advised that these were used to avoid sending the child in question out of area, and instead stayed within the boundaries of Hull to ensure continuity of place until a new permanent setting could be found. OFSTED were aware of the use and although they did not condone the use of them, there had not been any sanctions.

Recommendations:	Reasons for Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. That no further action be taken by this Commission. b. That the future authorised usage of Temporary Children’s Homes, by the Executive Director of Children, Young People and Family Services, be communicated to the Members of the Commission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Commission were satisfied with the response of the Executive Director and would continue to monitor the situation via the budget reports presented to the Commission periodically. b. To allow the Commission to monitor the usage of temporary home and make early recommendations should they have future concerns.

P. Todd, Scrutiny Officer submitted the draft work programme.	
Recommendations:	Reasons for Recommendations:
a. That the work programme be noted.	a. N/A

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