

Children and Young People Select Committee Chair's Update July 2026

Scrutiny Review – Additionally Resourced SEND Provision

The purpose of the scrutiny was to receive an update on the implementation of the transfer from September 2025 and engage with the secondary schools to encourage additional applications from the secondary sector. The Select Committee wanted to fully understand the barriers to schools becoming ARPs and identify ways that these could be overcome to secure the provision required for children and young people in the Borough.

However, early in the scrutiny review, the Government announced that it would be publishing a White Paper outlining the intended approach to SEND reform. The announcement came amid increasing calls for action regarding the rising number of registered SEND pupils and the associated challenges faced by councils. Following the announcement, the Select Committee decided to pause the review to await the detail of the White Paper.

In May 2026 the Select Committee received a presentation on the White Paper and considered the implications for their work. The Select Committee agreed to summarise the evidence collected and key findings and advise Cabinet that they would be concluding their work given that the Government was now making plans to direct all schools to have Inclusion Hubs.

An Executive Summary setting out findings and conclusions appears elsewhere on this agenda. Cabinet is being asked to note the report.

Scrutiny Review – Children Not in School

The Executive Summary of the Select Committee's final report was considered at the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting. The recommendations focused on strengthening consistency and partnership working to reduce time out of education and improve outcomes for vulnerable children. Collectively, the recommendations aimed to ensure that all children and young people are supported to access suitable education safely and in a way that meets their individual needs.

The final report was considered by Cabinet in June and all recommendations were approved. An Action Plan is scheduled to be considered by the Select Committee in September.

Scrutiny Review – Alternative Provision

A tri-partite meeting was held on 25 June and the July meeting of the Select Committee will be receiving an introductory presentation and considering the scope and project plan for the review.

This scrutiny review will examine the Council's approach to Alternative Provision (AP), assessing whether current arrangements meet need and improve outcomes.

The following key lines of enquiry have been identified:

- What are the reasons that children are placed in alternative provision?
- How has demand changed over time? What does the data tell us?

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- Are particular groups more likely to access alternative provision?
- What proportion of children return to mainstream education? How is this managed?
- What is the AP Framework? How is quality measured?
- What are the outcomes for children accessing alternative provision? How is progress monitored? How is attendance tracked?
- How is alternative provision commissioned and monitored? What is the average cost per placement? Is there sufficient local provision? How is provision regulated?
- How do we ensure robust safeguarding in all AP settings?
- What do children and young people say about their experience of AP? How are their voices heard? How are mental health and emotional wellbeing supported?
- How do we engage with parents/ carers?
- What preventative strategies are in place in mainstream schools?
- How well do partners work together? Is there a shared AP strategy?
- What are the rules around OFSTED registration?

Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance

Key Issues / Problems or concerns	None – the next overview meeting is September 2026
Problems or concerns	None
Requests for more information	None

Monitoring

Key Issues / Problems or concerns	Outstanding monitoring: • Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships - A further progress update to be scheduled in due course • Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment - Ongoing
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Remaining 2026-2027 Meetings (all 5.00pm unless stated)

15 July 2026
 16 September 2026
 14 October 2026
 11 November 2026
 16 December 2026
 13 January 2027
 10 February 2027
 17 March 2027