

**Report of the Cabinet Member  
Children's Services and Schools**

I have been asked to Report as follows for Full Council on 7 December 2023:

**1. By Councillor Hannaford as follows:**

Can the Cabinet Member please update council on the RACC Concrete situation in our Devon Schools, to include number of buildings effected, remedial works, and educational capacity and campus displacement issues.

**2. By Councillor Bailey as follows:**

It has emerged this week that there was a significant delay by DCC in the convening of a statutory safeguarding meeting in 2015/16 in relation to former district councillor John Humphreys. Humphreys was convicted in August 2021 of child abuse. Devon and Cornwall police have this week stated that they made a referral to DCC as the statutory safeguarding authority on 7th December 2015 as part of their criminal investigation into former Councillor Humphreys. Yet despite the clear urgency DCC waited three months to convene a statutory multi agency meeting. The meeting was not convened until more than 3 months later on 9th March 2023.

Please provide a cabinet report which:

- a) Explains why DCC did not convene a safeguarding meeting for three months despite a referral by Devon and Cornwall police. Particularly given the fact that the referral came from the police why did DCC not act with more urgency?
- b) Advises what discussions took place in those three months internally within DCC and between DCC any third parties.
- c) Explains why DCC's 'independent' report makes no reference of this delay.
- d) Sets out when then portfolio holder for Children's Services, the current portfolio for Children's Services, and the Leader of the Council first became aware of the allegations about John Humphreys And what actions did they take. (This is very straightforward question yet it has never been answered).
- e) Whether DCC be reviewing other cases where a referral has been made to it as the statutory safeguarding authority to identify issues including delays.

**Responses**

1. The latest with the RAAC investigations is as follows:

Of 164 DCC Maintained Schools at the beginning of the investigation process, we are down to a small number of schools which are due further invasive surveys in the coming weeks.

The final list to be inspected are the following 11 sites:

BISHOPSTEIGNTON SCHOOL  
CAEN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL-MAIN SCHOOL SITE

HAYTOR VIEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL-MAIN SCHOOL  
SITE (QUEENSWAY)  
HONITON PRIMARY SCHOOL  
ILFRACOMBE CHURCH OF ENGLAND JUNIOR SCHOOL  
IPPLEPEN PRIMARY SCHOOL-MAIN SCHOOL SITE  
PILTON INFANTS SCHOOL  
SEATON PRIMARY SCHOOL  
STOKE HILL INFANTS & NURSERY SCHOOL  
STOKE HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL  
WEST CROFT SCHOOL

These inspections involve completing asbestos surveys in some cases and using specialist equipment at height so need to be conducted out of school hours.

The expectation is that no RAAC will be found based on initial surveys, but we are pushing for resolution with 100% certainty before the Christmas break.

This accounts for the DCC maintained estate only.

2.

- a) The LADO records indicate that the LADO was informed that there were historical complaints regarding Mr Humphries but that his employment role was not working with children, he was not a person in a position of trust (as defined by WT 2013), the victims were not in contact with Mr H, he did not have any children of his own and the police were conducting an investigation to gather further information. As such there was insufficient information to support a LADO meeting at that time. Discussions continued with the Police and the LADO in December and January 2015/16 while the police continued to investigate the matter. A meetings was arranged on 25 February 2016 for 3 March 2016, this was cancelled and re convened on 9 March 2016.
- b) As outlined above discussions were taking place between the LADO and Police.
- c) The minutes of the LADO meeting make no reference to when the matter was first referred by police to the LADO. It is not uncommon with LADO referrals for there to be a delay before the first meeting is held if there is no immediate risk to a child – the allegations were historical, and the alleged perpetrator is not in a position of trust in relation to working with children. Indeed, with historical abuse allegations, it is often beneficial for there to be a delay whilst information is collated.
- d) The LADO records do not provide an answer to this question – however, Mr Humphries was a district councillor rather than a county councillor. The LADO deals with sensitive confidential information and would not usually notify third parties not connected to the matter. East Devon District Council were contacted as the responsible body.
- e) Referrals relating to children who are thought to be likely to experience significant harm are monitored on a daily basis. The LADO process is regularly reviewed.

**Andrew Leadbetter**  
Cabinet Member  
Children's Services and Schools