

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
Town Hall  
19 September 2013 (7.30 pm – 10.00 pm)**

- Present:** Councillors Sandra Binion (Chairman), Gillian Ford (Vice-Chair), Wendy Brice-Thompson, Pat Murray, Frederick Thompson, Melvin Wallace and Keith Wells
- Co-opted Members:** Phillip Grundy, Jack How, Julie Lamb, Anne Ling, Garry Dennis and Keith Passingham
- Non-voting Member:** Keith Passingham
- Officer attendance:** Kathy Bundred (LBH) and Mary Pattinson (LBH) and Lorraine Hunter-Brown (LBH)
- Apologies:** Councillor Nic Dodin and co-opted member Margaret Cameron
- Observer:** Councillor Paul McGeary

The Chairman advised those present of action to be taken in the event of an emergency evacuation of the building becoming necessary

**42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were noted and the Chairman welcomed Councillor Georgina Galpin as substitute member for Councillor Robbi Misir. The Chairman informed members of the resignation of Bev Whitehead (NUT) member. A replacement was being sought and details would be announced at a later date.

**43 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None declared.

**44 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman asked the Committee to note the change in membership and welcomed Councillor Keith Wells to the meeting.

45 **MINUTES**

The Committee considered and agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2013 and were duly signed by the Chairman.

46 **ANNUAL CABINET PERFORMANCE REPORT 2012/2013/APPENDIX 1  
ANNUAL CABINET PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee considered the relevant sections to Children and Learning in the Annual Cabinet Performance Report 2012-2013.

Early Years

The Early Years Provision was 76.4% which was 3% above target and an improvement on last year.

The Committee were advised that there were private companies/individuals providing early year care and although they were subject to robust quality assurance, they were not local authority maintained and therefore the Authority had no control. A Quality Assurance team had been retained by the Local Authority to check on their provision. It was noted that there would be an increase of 500 places for this year. Officers confirmed that 15 nurseries situated within schools formed part of the maintained sector.

Apprenticeships

The 14-19 Partnership had set a target of 500 apprentices to be recruited as part of a three year programme and that 242 had already been recruited in the first quarter. Officers confirmed that next year's academic outturn would be included in next year's target. A member queried the number of NEETs that would be included in this year's figures and officers agreed to obtain this information confirming that a NEET report was due soon. Another member wanted to know if the 242 included children who are resident but who do not necessarily attend Havering Schools. Officers explained that all data was recorded nationally and was linked to the Academic year not the financial year. There would be further comments relating to this in the next report.

Fostering

In fostering placements of two years or more, the authority did not achieve its performance target of 75% although the figure of 63% was an improvement on the previous year. Officers advised that in having reached 63% with an outturn of 49.1% had been very challenging and therefore the service had made significant progress. The Chairman suggested that this may be a matter for a Topic Group to address.

Learning.

It was noted that performance at Key Stage 4, pupils achieving 5 or more A\* - C grades had improved significantly with current Annual Performance at 65.2%. A report would be made available which would provide comparisons with other local authorities.

### NEET

Officers advised that the government had changed the processes in calculating NEET. Every young person who counts as unknown is marked as being NEET. It was noted that performance was better than target although slightly worse than last year. A target of 4.9% had been set for 2013/14 which was allowing for 3000 additional 17 year olds to be factored in. Havering was actually below target but hoped to retain performance.

Members questioned how the authority obtained accurate numbers and information about NEETs. Officers advised that local authorities commence the count in July so as to ensure an accurate measure as possible by early September. The intention of government policy was that all children/young people are in either school, training, college, an apprenticeship or employment. It was known that a small percentage of NEETs were in actual fact teenage mothers but that was only one group in a small NEET cohort and was typical nationally. Members enquired about putting young people through apprenticeships and asked what jobs would be available upon completion of their training. Officers advised that they would ask Trevor Cook to provide further details on any schemes in relation to work done with Job Centre Plus and report back to the Committee. It was also agreed that a representative from Job Centre Plus address a later meeting around policies and outcomes for NEETS.

### Child Protection Plans

It was noted that there had been an increase in Child Protection Plans however the duration of these had remained relatively short. In the current financial year, there had only been one child who became subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time within two years. The wording of the indicator had been modified to include within 2 years as per the Munro Report. The Authority's performance was better than target for 2012/2013 however the target had been reduced by 4% for 2013/2014 owing to the additional measures now in place to support children and families. Members requested that further information on Protections Plans be provided.

### Teenage Pregnancies

The Committee felt that 40,000 teenage pregnancies in the borough was far too high and were assured that Public Health was addressing the issue. The Chair stated that the subject formed part of the JSNA and further discussion on the issue would take place under the forthcoming joint scrutiny topic group on children's Health Services. It had also been previously discussed

at the last Children's OSC at it had featured in the Children and Young Peoples Plan. Officers were asked to provide the number of LAC children pregnant at the next CPP meeting. Members enquired whether movement from other areas or out of Havering had affected the figures. Officers affirmed that these would be health figures and would therefore not be available to Social Care. Officers asked the Committee to note that there had been a lot of positive work done with the Condom Card Scheme, however, the Committee felt that further work on sexual health needed to be done. The Committee requested a breakdown on pregnancy figures and agreed to review the subject again.

### Adoption

It was noted via the adoption indicators that the authority had not performed very well last year but performance overall was improving. It was hoped through better placements and quicker court proceedings, the situation would continue to improve. A member cautioned that adoption was about people's lives and that there should be time for reflection in the process.

### Summary

The Committee noted the Annual Cabinet Report and expressed concerns over the method of target setting where there was a lower level of provision and a greater cohort in a number of areas. Members also questioned whether the targets were subject to a robust challenge process. The officers present confirmed that the targets were externally benchmarked, the challenge process was robust and that the figures were signed off by the Chief Executive.

Members discussed the format of the Annual Corporate Performance Report which did not show how Havering was performing nationally and requested that the officers provide this information.

## 47 **COMMISSIONING SCHOOL PLACES STRATEGY 2012-2016**

It was noted that the Cabinet Report from the Council's Continuous Improvement Model relating to this item would be reviewed at a later meeting.

A further discussion was held with regards to the current school places situation in Havering. Concerns were raised by members regarding the number of schools that had been approached to take "bulge classes" Officers advised that there was a policy document that explained the strategy behind bulging and expanding classes and that a further document was due to go to Cabinet providing an update in class numbers. The Committee were asked to note that there had been a significant rise in the number of families requiring school places in Havering, and that officers were currently finalising strategies to manage the situation. A detailed report would be provided at the next OSC meeting.

The Committee enquired what steps were being taken to ensure applications for Havering Schools were from legitimate Havering residents. Officers advised that the Local Authority payed for a system that carried out checks on residency. The Committee were asked to note however that a pan London system operated within the secondary sector.

Members of the Committee questioned forecasting procedures if a number of schools in the borough had been asked to provide "bulge classes". Officers advised that this was not an exact science and had to use birth data and social housing data (not private) which in itself was not always accurate – i.e. a two bedroom flat could contain six children. Officers stated that they had been aware of the additional numbers for September 2013 as they had known about families arriving in the borough and therefore had to act in order to provide extra capacity.

In response to a particular enquiry, it was agreed that officers would provide a report on the borough's failing schools at the next meeting.

#### **48 LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD 2012/2013 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee noted the LSCB Annual Report and that it had been agreed that members would receive minutes of future LSCB meetings. Officers confirmed that a new independent Chair had been appointed to the LSCB and had been selected through an open recruitment process. It was agreed that both the LSCB Chair and Vice Chair should be invited to address the Children and Learning OSC.

In relation to the Annual Report, it was noted that there had been no serious case reviews or child deaths. Owing to the complexity of the document, it was agreed that the Annual Report be discussed at a separate meeting and any questions be forwarded beforehand to the Committee Clerk.

Members of the Committee expressed their concerns that the OFSTED inspection had rated the Authority as adequate and that not all the recommendations had yet been met. Officers agreed to provide details of an improvement plan which had been implemented following the inspection.

Members asked for clarification of their statutory role and their responsibility for children and young people in the borough. It was noted that this was a shared responsibility with the OSC in conjunction with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board and the Chief Executive.

Concerns were raised about the levels of young people involved in serious crime and requested further information from officers about the challenges in this area.

It was agreed that the Committee hold a further meeting to discuss the OFSTED findings and the LCSB Annual Report.

**49 NEW OFSTED INSPECTION OF EDUCATION FUNCTIONS**

The Committee agreed to defer item 8 on the agenda (New OFSTED Inspection of Education Functions) to a later meeting owing to time constraints.

**50 OFSTED ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN**

The item was discussed in conjunction with Item 7.

**51 JOINT TOPIC GROUP - CHILDREN & LEARNING OSC WITH HEALTH OSC**

Following discussions with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it had been agreed to establish a joint Children's Health Topic Group. It was noted that the Chairman and several Committee members from Children & Learning Overview and Scrutiny would attend future meetings.

**52 FUTURE AGENDAS**

The Chair confirmed that two additional meetings would be arranged for October 2013. One meeting would be held to discuss the omitted item (New OFSTED Inspection of Education Functions). A further meeting would discuss outstanding issues around the Annual Corporate Performance Report, the Local Children Safeguarding Board Annual Report and the associated OFSTED Inspection results.

**53 URGENT BUSINESS**

The Vice Chairman informed the Committee of a communication recently received highlighting transportation problems to and from Dycourts School. Transport would often arrive late at the school following journey times that ranged from 75 minutes to 2 hours. This was having a significant effect on pupil behaviour as well as reducing the time spent in lessons. A Committee member advised of similar problems at Corbets Tey School. It was agreed to forward the correspondence onto officers who would investigate and report back to the Committee.

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**Chairman**