

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
Committee Room 3A - Town Hall
26 April 2017 (7.00 - 9.10 pm)**

Present: Councillors Gillian Ford (Chairman), Meg Davis (Vice-Chair), John Glanville, Robby Misir and Viddy Persaud

Co-opted Members: Julie Lamb, Special Schools

Church Representatives:

Lynne Bennett and Jack How

Non-voting Member: Ian Rusha (NUT)

Officer present:

Tim Aldridge, Director Children's Services

Trevor Cook, School Provisioning and Commissioning Manager

Caroline Penfold, Head of Children and Adults with Disabilities Service

Brian Boxall, Chair, Local Safeguarding Children's Board

Emma Allen, Head, Corbets Tey School

Anthony Clements, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Three young people from the Avelon @ Corbets Tey Centre and their families were also present.

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillors Keith Roberts and John Wood.

21 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

The following interest was disclosed:

5. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY UPDATE - AVELON & CORBETS TEY.

Julie Lamb, Personal, Chair of Governors at Corbets Tey School.

22 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman gave details of the arrangements in case of fire or other event that may require the evacuation of the meeting room or building.

The Chairman added that a topic group meeting re SEND transport was under consideration and that this could be held at Corbets Tey School.

23 **MINUTES**

On minute 10 – Julie Lamb asked for clarification over why, having disclosed an interest, she would not have been able to partake in any vote on the SEND transport item. The clerk to the Sub-Committee would clarify this and provide a response outside of the meeting.

The Sub-Committee noted that, as Marshalls Park was now an Academy, Suzanne Summers was no longer eligible to be a co-opted member. Officers would begin the process of finding a new co-opted member representing secondary parent governors. The Sub-Committee recorded its thanks to Suzanne Summers for her work as a co-opted member.

24 **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY UPDATE - AVELON @ CORBETS TEY**

Officers explained that the unit had started in September 2016 with nine students and supported young people aged 16-19 who had learning disabilities or special needs. Learners worked on programmes to develop skills and learn as they progressed towards adulthood. It was planned that there would be 27 students enrolled from September 2017, showing the demand for this type of service.

The Committee was also joined by several young people who attended the unit. They reported that they liked the facility, particularly enjoying areas such as maths, music, cooking and learning to shop independently. Students' families added that, since attending the centre, the young people had acquired skills such as cooking breakfast and swimming. The families felt that, since attending the centre, that had noticed a difference in their children who were now able to interact much better with groups of people.

The Chairman thanked the young people and their families for their attendance and input to the meeting and this was marked by warm applause from all members of the Sub-Committee. The head of the unit thanked the Council for their support and also recorded her thanks to the parents and carers of the original students who had trusted in the planned provision before the facility had opened.

It was noted that an e-mail from the Chair of Governors at Corbets Tey School relating to this agenda item had been sent in a personal capacity and had not been on behalf of the Governing Body as a whole.

Officers believed that the Avelon @ Corbets Tey provision had been a success. It provided an alternative and was cost effective as it reduced the

need for students to be placed outside of Havering. This also reduced travelling time for children.

Officers explained that the phase 2 expansion of Avelon @ Corbets Tey was to have been covered by section 106 funding but this had not proved sufficient. Future budget plans would therefore be taken to the next available Cabinet meeting and a new procurement process would also have to take place. It was hoped, subject to Cabinet approval, to bring funding for the expansion project into this year's capital programme. The Council's asset management section was confident that the construction of phase 2 could still be achieved by September 2017 but it was accepted that a full timeline needed to be established.

A co-opted member stated she had been advised that phase 2 would not be completed by September and felt therefore that a contingency plan should be confirmed. Officers would discuss this with asset management and keep the school and the families of prospective students advised of the position. Members agreed that there needed to be good communication about the project. Planning for the new buildings had already been secured and officers would check on the decision making process that would be required.

All young people at the unit would be from Havering and aged 16-19 although it was planned to extend this to 25 years of age. There was a rising demand for the Avelon provision and some young people could move on to the Avelon adult centre.

Future plans included the use of roof space in the building to potentially increase capacity further although there would be a phased approach to any further expansion. Other boroughs had requested to purchase places at the facility but this would be kept for Havering young people. Not all pupils would be taught on the site at the same time in any case.

Staff at Avelon aspired for the young people to be more independent and employment was also a focus of the unit's work. The need for increased staffing would need to be addressed as part of any contingency planning.

The Sub-Committee noted the position and it was agreed that the Chairman should write to the young people who attended the meeting, thanking them for their input.

25 SCHOOL EXPANSION PROGRAMME

Officers advised that the higher birth rate in Havering was leading to increased demand for Early Years places. Provision for Early Years was therefore in the process of being increased in several wards such as Mawney, Harold Wood and Rainham & Wennington. Opportunities to meet this need were also being explored with the voluntary sector.

Expansion works were also in progress at a number of primary schools including Pyrgo, Mead and Hylands. A number of primary school expansions were also planned in the Rainham and South Hornchurch areas although it was possible these could be deferred due to a delay in the Rainham Village development. A site for a 3 form entry school had been identified for this area. The school would be run by a Multi-Agency Trust and was currently expected to open in 2020.

Additional secondary school capacity had already been introduced and several schools' admission numbers had been rounded up which had allowed more first preferences to be offered. Nearly all secondary schools in the central area had been expanded and a new secondary school was also forecast to be needed by 2022. Site specifications for this would be included in the Local Plan.

As regards Special Needs, schools had been identified for three Primary Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs). In the longer term, a new 60 place Special School would also be needed and £5-6 million capital investment from central Government would be required for this. Targeted funding for existing Special Schools had also been announced with a focus on Special Educational Needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Options for sponsors and a site for the new school had not been finalised as yet.

It was accepted that the Dycourts Special School building was currently in a poor condition. This school was now an Academy, operating under the Hornbeam Academy Trust. The Council could liaise with the School Commissioner over the condition of the building. The Sub-Committee agreed that it was unhappy with the quality and standard of provision at Dycourts School and the Director of Children's Services would report back on this after a planned visit to the school in June.

It was suggested that the National Autistic Society could be approached to be the sponsor of the new Special School which was likely to be a new build facility. The risk of any change in Government policy on funding of schools varied as some proposals were further forward than others. Capital funding for the next two years was however secured.

The Sub-Committee noted the report.

26 HAVERING SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Board Chairman explained that there had been a lot of changes in 2016 including the face to face programme initiated by the Director of Children's Services.

A restructure of the Metropolitan Police had sought to address inspection findings that the Force was failing in its safeguarding responsibilities, particularly of children. Police management was now different and the local

Havering Police now worked closely with local social care agencies. Children's Police teams had been previously run from the centre but these were now overseen by the local Commander. Safeguarding teams were also now part of a local command process. Twelve extra officers were now available across the three local boroughs to deal with missing children and child sexual exploitation cases which it was felt allowed more flexibility.

The transition from children's to adult services had been highlighted as a problem in a recent serious case review and officers were currently looking at this. There was however an excellent relationship in Havering between children's and adult services.

Havering had received £2.4 million from the Department for Education innovations fund and officers would bring the programme of work related to this funding to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee. The Board Chairman felt that it was necessary to change approach from dealing with specific incidents to dealing with families and their complexities which would for example reduce the numbers of children going into custody etc.

The Local Safeguarding Children's Board had been inspected as part the recent OFSTED inspection and recommendations made covered areas including the correct operation of thresholds, ensuring accurate data went to the Board and strengthening oversight of private fostering arrangements, which was already under way in Havering.

The Board Chairman reported that the BHRUT Hospitals' Trust had improved its safeguarding work and now had a much bigger team for this area. It was however still difficult at times to access all GPs via the Clinical Commissioning Group. The Probation Service had good representation on the Safeguarding Board.

OFSTED had found there was good multi-agency working in Havering and this needed to continue. There were however risks posed by the impact of austerity measures and of the rising birth rate. The Board Chairman thanked the Council and in particular Councillors Benham and Davis for their support of the Board.

The Council's Children's Services team had produced guidance on the use of thresholds but other agencies had to understand their responsibilities re safeguarding and that thresholds started from the early intervention stage. The Face to Face programme would allow use of an escalation policy. Escalation documents could also be used to reinforce threshold levels with new staff. The Director of Children's Services added that a professional judgement was made re the needs of a family. In his view, other agencies did have an understanding and awareness of thresholds. Previous problems with this had been due to a high turnover of staff.

MASH provision had been strengthened and an away day for all MASH partners had recently been held and better partnership working was now being seen at the MASH. It was necessary to understand the threshold of

what each agency could do and look at a child's family as a complete unit, not just one incident. The Local Children's Safeguarding Board could start making agencies talk to each other and think about services.

Children's Services were looking to work in a more integrated way with regards to the transition to adulthood for children in care and early intervention for families with emotional and wellbeing issues. The latter service was being piloted in the north of the borough. Updates on this work would be brought to future meetings of the Sub-Committee.

The step down from child protection status was improving although the Board Chairman felt there was a need to ensure early intervention at children in need status as this would ensure only the most serious cases reached child protection level. The right support needed to be available at each stage of the process and assessment of the family was important. The Director of Children's Services added that most families eventually came out of child protection plans and the Council was moving towards undertaking its own interventions.

The Board Chairman felt that control of the process was achieved via identifying the right provision at a case conference and ensuring that this was delivered. It could however be very difficult to get families to engage at times. Members felt that, whilst it was expected that the Council, Police and health organisations would work together, schools were not so involved. The Director of Children's Services felt that there were strengths in Havering's partnership arrangements. There was also a new service leadership team in Children's Services. Whilst the service was moving in the right direction, the work involved would take at least two years to complete.

Members agreed that the quality of the case conference was key and it was important that the right people were at the conferences. Agencies involved were however also under pressure.

Safeguarding work had been very good in the previous year and the Board had held two safeguarding conferences for practitioners. It was noted that the rising population locally meant that an increasing number of more complex children's cases were being seen in Havering. The Board Chairman agreed that serious case reviews were now very complex and there was often an issue of a family having lived in a number of different boroughs.

The Sub-Committee noted the annual report of the Havering Safeguarding Children Board.

The Chairman would compile an outline work plan for the next meeting. Possible subjects for future topic groups included out of borough placements, more detailed scrutiny of SEND provision and progress against the OFSTED report recommendations. It was suggested that out of borough placements could be looked at in the context of the relevant commissioning strategy. The Chairman would discuss future topic groups with officers in more detail.

It was agreed that progress against the OFSTED report should be a standing item on future agendas and the Director of Children's Services would circulate the OFSTED action plan to the Sub-Committee. This had been shared with OFSTED on 31 January and a final version had been submitted in March. OFSTED had indicated that the action plan was comprehensive, ambitious, realistic and sufficiently resourced. Meetings would also be held quarterly with OFSTED in order to give updates on the action plan.

28 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business raised.

Chairman