

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
Town Hall
10 May 2016 (7.00 - 9.30 pm)**

Present: Councillors Gillian Ford (Chairman), Carol Smith (Vice-Chair), Nic Dodin, John Glanville, Joshua Chapman, Keith Roberts and Dilip Patel (In place of Jason Frost)

Co-opted Members: Jack How, Julie Lamb and Lynne Bennett

Non-voting Member: Ian Rusha

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Philippa Crowder and Councillor John Wood and co-opted member Linda Beck

Two members of the public were also present

57 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Julie Lamb declared a personal interest as her son received SEND transport.

58 MINUTES

No minutes were available for approval, these were deferred until the next meeting.

59 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (QUARTER 3)

The Sub-Committee received the Corporate Performance Indicators for Quarter 3 (2015/16) relevant to the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

It was noted that the report identified where the Council was performing well (Green) and not so well (Amber and Red). The RAG ratings for 2015/16 were explained. There were 13 Corporate Performance indicators that fell under the remit of the Sub-Committee and related to Children's Services and the Learning and Achievement service.

It was noted that under the “People will be safe, in their homes and in the community”, there were eight indicators, relevant to Children and Learning. Three (37.5%) had a green RAG rating and five (62.5%) indicators had a red or amber RAG rating. The areas with a red or amber RAG rating were:

- Percentage of children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family;
- Percentage of young people leaving care who are in education, employment or training at the age 19 and at age 21;
- Percentage of looked after children (LAC) placed in LBH foster care;
- Percentage of referrals to Children’s Social Care progressing to assessment, and
- Percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years.

It was noted that under the “Our residents will be proud to live in Havering”, there were five indicators all of which were RAG rated green. The highlights included that the apprenticeships remained on the increase as an attractive post-156 option amongst young people who want to secure employment rather than continuing on with A Levels or go to university. It was noted that the target was 514 and the actual performance was 570. This was attributed to the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) strategy.

The Sub-Committee agreed that growth needed to be looked into. The suggestion of the number of active placements for foster carers was discussed included ensuring that the right carers were in place for the children.

The Sub-Committee agreed that there needed to be adjustments in how indicators were recorded and reported.

60 IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) REFORMS UNDER THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014

The Sub-Committee received a report setting out the progress to date in implementing the reforms brought about by the Children and Families Act 2014 in respect of children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It noted that the Act came into force in September 2014 and this was the biggest reform of support across Education, Health and Social Care for children with SEND.

It was noted that some aspects of the legislation sought to bring about a cultural shift towards person centred approaches, greater inclusion of children and their families and some specific tasks and functions that must be acted upon. Officers stated that the implementation was half way through with an end date for implementation and completion of March 2018.

All Local Authorities are required to publish in one place a clear and easy-to-understand “local offer” of education, health and social care services to support children and young people with SEND and their families. Havering had a local offer, however had received feedback from users and their families, and was looking to review and refine the information available. A Local Offer Panel and Steering Group had been established and continued to meet to oversee the future updating and development of the local offer.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans had replaced the Statements of SEN and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDA). The process of assessment and EHC planning had commenced for all new arrangements and work was underway to convert all existing statements to new EHC plans. The plans were now more outcome focused and better for the child. Officers stated that approximately a third of conversations had taken place in half the time period. It was noted that not all plans were in the correct format and positive feedback had been received from partners on improvements.

Personal Budgets were an allocation of resources to meet the needs of the child. These could be used in different ways with some necessary for a social care requirement. A personal budget could be requested when the local authority had agreed to a statutory EHC assessment and confirmed that an EHC plan will be prepared. It was noted that currently EHC plans were being sent to parents/ carers with a tick against No for Personal Budgets. Officers would investigate this issue.

Joint Commissioning was a strategic approach to planning and delivering services in a holistic way. It was a way for different partners commissioning education, health and care provision to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND. A Joint Commissioning working group had met regularly since November 2013 and had been instrumental in forging strong links with the Havering Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This had aided the appointment of the Joint Children’s Commissioner in May 2015, working both for the Local Authority and the CCG.

Officers agreed that there was further work to be done in this area and had identified a number of projects and opportunities for re-commissioning including Speech and Language Therapy, Special School Nursing and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

The Sub-Committee noted that the engagement and participation of children, young people and parent carers was central to the reforms and was the driver behind the other work streams. A marked shift from consultation to full co-production had been seen. Local parent forums had been established and had been involved since the start, in planning and implementation of reforms under the Children and Families Act. It was anticipated that regular termly meetings would be held to discuss the priorities and progress in an open productive way.

It was noted that the Act sets out substantial new rights and protection for young people that do not exist in the previous system. Officer explained that this was transitional and new protocols had recently been signed off. This needed to be timely and flexible to the needs of the individual, and was essential that it started early in children with complex needs. Extensive work had taken place around additional Post-16 SEND provisions. The multi-agency approach which had been adopted would support developing personalised pathways. Independence skills, employment opportunities and individualised programmes would be at the heart of these pathways.

The Chairman asked that details of the different forums mentioned within the report were circulated setting out partners on each group, their remit and whom they engage with.

The Chair of Positive Parents was present at the meeting and made a number of observations about the report and its content. These included an assurance that parents would be involved in the working group for the local offer, to ensure that it was meaningful. It was noted that the local offer did not currently signpost to out of borough provisions and it was not clear for special schools.

Officers stated that a broader approach may be necessary to ensure that these issues were included. The local offer only included information that was readily available. However officers were keen to establish a steering group. The Chairman asked that this be established as soon as possible.

It was noted that schools were not consistent with their approach to EHC plans, and there was no engagement with providers (e.g. physiotherapists). It was further noted that the plans often have information missing. Officers stated that monitoring would be put in place to ensure that plans are written with the child at the centre. The Chair of Positive Parents added that the plans could only be used once agreed by the parents and all parties, this was not the case for a number of plans where only education were involved and there was no input from health or social care. It was suggested that the voice of the child was not considered as often they were not asked for their views. It was important that efforts were made to engage the child in the assessment, even for only 10 minutes.

The Chairman suggested that the children involved be invited to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee to discuss their experiences.

Other areas of concern included ensuring that there were trained and independent supports to assist parents together with the issues of personal budgets which, up until now, had not been allocated to anyone given the forms have the “no” box already ticked. This had been raised on a number of occasions but no action had been taken. Officers stated that Personal Budget Protocol had been drafted and this would be built upon.

The Sub-Committee thanked officers for the informative report.

61 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES TRANSPORT UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received a report setting out the progress to date in addressing issues in the Havering Special Educational Need and Disability Transport Offer. It was noted that there were a number of children and young people who were transported in the borough, and the cost of this was rising.

Assessments for travel training were being carried out with young people together with more work with families as to how the cost of the transport could be reduced as well as the demand.

Officers stated that there were only 12 that were collected from a meeting point other than their home, and some could possibly, with training, also use the meeting points. This would be more efficient and the journey times would reduce. Independent travel was also an option for some individuals.

It was noted that a meeting with parents and engagement with the Heads of Special Schools and the college would be taking place to get a greater investment in independence. It was appreciated that this would be stressful and could cause anxiety to some children and young people and so would not be suitable for all. Meeting points would be used in a robust way and it was agreed that this was not a “one size fits all”.

It was made clear that funding of transport to out of borough schools would still be carried out and the policy was very clear that this should be continued.

The Chairman stated that concerns had been raised in the past about the suitability of the meeting points. Officers stated that they would ensure that the meeting points were in a safe and warm environment out of any inclement weather. Members of the Sub-Committee explained that an assessment had been done in the past which looked at how the meeting points could be utilised. This caused unnecessary stress and anxiety to the family dynamics and yielded very little. It was felt that the more high functioning children could benefit from the travel training as almost 54% of all students with learning disabilities were attending mainstream schools.

The Sub-Committee noted that stakeholder engagement had taken place with the Heads of Special Schools and the Deputy Principal of the College regarding the implementation of the transport policy. They were supportive of the aims and would actively identify students that they believed could both travel independently and would benefit from this approach. A detailed conversation had also been had with Positive Parents. A question and answer sheet had been sent to all parents about the consultation as all parents needed to be informed of the discussions being had. Positive Parents reported that they communicate with their members, and also

SENCO's, special schools and colleges. There had always been an issue in information being passed on from SENCOs in mainstream schools.

Officers stated that the tender process was commencing for the travel training provider in due course. Positive Parents were welcomed to join the panel in agreeing on the way forward.

The Sub-Committee thanked officers for an informative report.

62 PUPIL PREMIUM

The Sub-Committee received a briefing paper on the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG). The coalition government introduced Pupil Premium funding in 2011. The purpose of this targeted investment was to close the performance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. These gaps had proved to be persistent and slow to narrow. In return for these significant levels of investment, schools and governors are held accountable for the impact of the expenditure and for reporting to parents.

The eligibility criteria for the PPG was as follows:

- Any child who had been entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) at any point in the last six years ("Ever 6");
- Children looked after for more than six months continuously at any point the child's history;
- Children who had been adopted from local authority care;
- Any child whose parents were serving in the armed forces.

It was noted that Havering's figures overall were lower than the national average with 22% in primaries and 26% in secondary, compared with the national figures of 26% in primary schools and 29.7% in secondary schools. The variation across schools in Havering was varied with the lowest PPG eligibility in 2015-16 was 3.3% and the highest was 53%.

The Sub-Committee noted that nationally the government was spending £2.5 billion a year on this initiative, which equated to approximately 6% of the schools budget. The rates for each category and allocation for Havering for the financial year 2016-17 were explained. It was noted that for primary pupils (4,068 pupils) the rate was £1320, for secondary (702 pupils) the rate was £935. For children adopted from care (100 pupils) and looked after children (203 pupils) the rate was £1900. It was explained that the schools were responsible to decide how the pupil premium allocated to their school was spent. Schools were held accountable for their use of the additional funding to support pupils from low-income families and the impact this had on educational attainment. Schools had to publish online details of their pupil premium allocation, their plans to spend it in the current year and the impact of their actions.

The Sub-Committee looked at a number of graphs which provided details of performance gaps comparing Havering to National, Inner London, Outer London and other statistical neighbours. It was noted that in Early Year Foundation Stage the gap had narrowed in Havering more quickly than it had nationally, however the gap was still wider than was generally seen across London and other statistical neighbours. In Key Stage 1 reading, writing and mathematics Havering pupil consistently perform significantly above the national average. This was higher than the rest of London but was in line with statistical neighbours. Attainment at Key Stage 2 was the biggest success with both FSM and Non-FSM pupils improving. It was noted that due to focused work, the FSM pupils' attainment had improved at a faster rate from -20% in 2013 to -13% in 2015. This was in line with the national average and our statistical neighbours.

At Key Stage 4, the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students was narrower than both the national average and our statistical neighbours, though the gap remained wider than was usually found in London. Although the Havering gap was 25% in 2015 there was great local variation, with the smallest gap of 0% (where disadvantaged pupils did as well as their peers); and the largest gap was 35% (where the non-disadvantaged pupils out-performed the disadvantaged).

The Sub-Committee was informed of areas where the local authority could provide support, albeit, often as a voluntary traded arrangement. These included quality assurance teams visiting the schools to explore the use of PPGs, actions, outcomes and impacts. Training events on effective use of PPG for school leaders, governors, teachers, including the sharing of effective practice were also set up. Councillor Challenge Sessions (themes included Pupil Premium practices as well as other focussed areas. All of the above were well received.

Pupil Premium "Health Checks" or full Pupil Premium Reviews in schools, on a traded basis were very successful and reviewed a number of areas including: Raiseonline, Schools website, Schools policy, Governor Accountability, Budgets and data systems. OFSTED also used the PPGs as a feature of schools with high aspirations and attainment levels.

It was noted that PPG was now being benefitted at an earlier stage, as the KS4 results showed that with earlier that PPG was introduced the better this was for the educational attainment of the child and the school. It was important that children were identified earlier, and it was essential that the link with Children's Centres was put in place for the under 5's.

The Sub-Committee NOTED the brief and thanked officers for the informative presentation.

63 TRADED SERVICES

The Sub-Committee received a presentation on Education Traded Services. It was noted that this was a brand for both statutory and non-statutory service provided by the local authority to education providers. The expertise ranged across a number of specialist areas including:

- Leadership and Governance
- School Improvement and Curriculum
- Facilities, Technical and Asset management
- Administration and Finance
- Pupil and Staff Wellbeing.

This portfolio of traded support services comprised 30 individual service providers spread across four service directorates. i.e. Children, Adults and Housing, Culture and Community, Communities and Resources and OneSource. Eleven of these traded services operated in the Learning and Achievement service.

The Sub-Committee noted that in 2013 the e-business had commenced, this was now a portal which was an efficient and cost effective professional service gateway enabling schools and settings to purchase services and training programmes. This was embedded with schools and early year settings; the service was looking to engage with child minders to use the services and training too.

It was noted that the customer base included 100% buy in from Havering primary schools, with the majority of Havering secondary schools continuing to purchase support services from the Council even though most of them had converted to academy status. There were also 63 non-Havering Schools and settings based in 10 Local Authorities purchases one or more services and booked training course with the Havering service providers in 2015/16.

Officers explained the challenges faced by the service. These included:

- Reductions in revenue resulting from academisation, particularly when schools join medium or large chains of Multi Academy Trusts.
- Ensuring the high standard across all services
- Ensuring that traded support services are focused and driven by outcomes through systematic review of impact of provision on school outcomes
- Securing current levels of service delivery and expanding customer base in the face of budget constraints and cost pressures.
- Competition from external Local Authorities and private sector providers.
- Competition arising from school to school trading support models.

The Sub-Committee thanked officers for an informative presentation and asked that the directory of traded services be circulated to all members.

64 **FUTURE AGENDAS**

As this was the last meeting of the municipal year, the Chairman asked that any suggestions for the future agenda be sent direct to the Committee Officer.

Chairman

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