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## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE Council Chamber - Town Hall 26 January 2017 (7.00 - 8.55 pm)**

### **Present:**

Councillors: Gillian Ford (Chairman), Meg Davis (Vice-Chair),  
Nic Dodin, John Glanville, Viddy Persaud,  
Keith Roberts and John Wood.

Co-opted Members: Julie Lamb and Suzanne Summers.

Church Representatives: 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 Councillors Robby Misir and Carol Smith, and Jack How, Church Representative.

### **10 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

#### **5. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) TRANSPORT UPDATE.**

Julie Lamb declared a Personal Interest in that her son is a user of SEND transport.

She took part in the discussion but did not vote on the item.

### **11 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 8 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **12 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) TRANSPORT UPDATE**

As requested by the Sub-Committee officers had provided an update on the key issues regarding journey times for the provision of transport for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities. The report

addressed issues raised with the time young people were spending on board transport and provided details on the current levels of spend, increasing pressures and actions underway to vary the offer and meet demand.

In 2016/17 389 young people were provided with travel assistance, of which 319 were on buses and 70 in taxis. The Passenger Transport Service operated 34 buses on a daily basis which was the same number as the previous year. In 2015/16 402 young people had been provided travel assistance in the form of a bus. Although there had been a slight reduction in the numbers travelling by bus the budget remained under pressure.

The total budget for 2016/17 was £2,248,610 for Home to School Transport, this included Post 16. Officers were forecasting an overspend against allocated budgets of £264,995. The overspend was in post 16 transport.

Travel to Corbets Tey School exceeded the Department of Education guidelines with young people spending more than 75 minutes on their journey to school. Additionally there had been numerous occasions when young people had arrived late at the school meaning that they missed part of the school day. Added to the long journey time this caused unnecessary stress for young people who were already experiencing difficulties.

Officers advised that having reviewed all the data they had agreed that an additional bus be added to transport young people to Corbets Tey School after half-term, this should help reduce the length of journey and tackle this issue of young people arriving at school late. This would be an additional strain on the budget adding £23k this year and £46k in a full year.

Officers would be undertaking a full budget review to see where savings could be made to address the overspend.

The Sub-Committee questioned why so many parents need to rely on the provision of transport. Officers advised that when a parent applied for assistance their applications were assessed. Many of the young people have severe needs which can best be met by using SEND transport.

A member of the Sub-Committee advised that more parents than ever were taking their children to school at Corbets Tey because of the problems. Given the location of the school this was creating its own problems with parking. The situation would get worse as the number of children with Special Needs were increasing.

Officers advised that if demand grew they would need to review and respond. They were talking to neighbouring boroughs to see how they deal with the problem.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the report.

### 13 **QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Sub-Committee were advised that 16 Corporate Performance Indicators fell under the remit of the Children & Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee. Eleven related to the SAFE goal and five to the PROUD goal. Nine of the RAG indicators had a status of green and six a RAG status of Red or Amber.

In the future consideration was being given to removing the tolerances which would mean no more RAG rating. The challenge for officers would be to set robust targets.

A steady improvement from quarter 2 had been seen. The percentage of children who left care at 18 but remained with their foster parents had risen although we were still behind the national average.

The number of recruited and retained in-house foster carers was still below target. Officers were looking to upskill current carers and recruit specialist carers to tackle the greatest need.

Following the OFSTED inspection we had seen a decrease in the number of contacts referred to Early Help and a corresponding increase in the number of contacts becoming referrals to Children's Social Care. Officers advised that this represented a challenge for the teams to re-calibrate the way they work in MASH and Assessment to see if we have the right targets. The key question was what help we were providing after assessment.

The Sub-Committee asked if there was some way to differentiate between children with SEND and those who have no special needs. Officers were also asked for information on the numbers of children placed out-of-borough. Officers agreed to provide this information when the Performance Indicators for quarter 4 were presented.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the report.

### 14 **RECENT REPORT ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE DATA**

This report had been prepared by the Interim Head of Education Services but she was unable to attend and she had sent her apologies.

HMCI had published his Annual Report of education, early years and skills for 2015/16 on 1 December 2016. The report highlighted the outcomes of a range of Ofsted performance measures in primary and secondary schools across the country. Each Regional Director had published a report covering

performance in their geographical patch. The report concentrated on the regional data.

The Ofsted report referred, inter alia, to three specific measures in the secondary sector:

- i. Progress 8 (a new measure);
- ii. Attainment 8 (a new measure); and
- iii. Percentage of pupils in good or outstanding schools.

The extracts below from the London regional information pack set out Havering's position on these measures.

- In both the new Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures, London was the strongest region nationally in 2016. London's overall Progress 8 score was 0.16 (national -0.03) and the Attainment 8 score was 51.7 (national 49.9). Only three local authorities in London achieved Progress 8 scores below the national average: Bexley, Havering and Lewisham.
- Progress 8 scores in Havering and Lewisham were the lowest of all London boroughs and well below the national figure, both at -0.14. The proportion of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, had also fallen in these two boroughs, compared with the provisional 2015 figures. On 31 August 2016, only 54% of secondary pupils in Lewisham were in a school graded good or outstanding; in Havering, only 57% of secondary pupils attended schools judged good or better.

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Rank	LA	% of pupils in good or outstanding schools 2016	Change from 2015 (% points)	Change from 2012 (% points)	% of pupils in academies 2016
139	Havering	57	1	-9	84

Officers advised that the key issues were in Maths, Sciences and Modern Languages. Data showed that the brightest children from the most deprived areas do badly.

With regard to the primary sector in London, there was no direct reference to Havering. In the regional information pack the percentage of pupils in good or outstanding schools showed Havering at 132 out of 152 authorities (the lowest performer in London).

Officers advised that the problems in Secondary Schools were more systemic with schools failing to maintain the progress pupils had demonstrated in primary schools.

Prior to the publication of the report officers had requested a discussion with the Regional Schools Commissioner for the area about the development of a joint improvement strategy for tackling under-performance in the secondary sector. As a result of this discussion an independently chaired Improvement Board had been established to oversee the agreed improvement strategy. Dame Joan McVittie had been appointed Chair and the first meeting held on 20th January. There had been good attendance from Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors across the secondary sector with all 18 secondary schools being represented.

A draft action had just been received and was yet to be considered by officers. The Council had a key role to play to use our influence and provide support. The Regional Commissioner had indicated that funds would be available to fund school improvement and when further details were available a bid would be submitted.

Officers were also working with the primary sector looking to develop a more robust approach towards leadership and governance. Officers had already issued a formal notice to improve on one school.

Ofsted expect to see progress from previous years therefore a good performing school can struggle if progress is not made. The Council need to work with Primary Schools encouraging them to join the right MAT to ensure progress.

The Sub-Committee requested that the Improvement Plan and Outcomes be submitted to the next meeting together with details of progress in meeting the targets. An invitation should be extended to the Regional Schools Commissioner to attend a future meeting of the Sub-Committee prior to which a pre meeting should be held to decide what questions to ask.

Officers advised that the Chief Executive, leader of the Council and Lead member would be meeting the Regional Schools Commissioner.

The Council would look to some MAT's applying for Improvement Funding on behalf of all schools.

The Sub-Committee were advised that the funding formula was changing and the Council would need to look for ways to lever in additional funding. Officers advised that Traded Services had made a small profit which had been reinvested in the service.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the report.

**15 HAVERING SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16**

Consideration of the above item was deferred until the Chairman of the Havering Safeguarding Children Board was available to attend.

**16 REPORT FROM OFSTED INSPECTION**

Officers had submitted a report detailing the recommendations contained in the Children's Social Care and LSCB – Ofsted SIF report and the Council's engagement on the action plan. Ofsted had awarded the Council an overall 'Requires Improvement to be good' grading to the Children's Social Care and LSCB services.

The 'Experiences and progress of care leavers' strand had received an 'inadequate' grading, as a result of which Ofsted would make a return visit towards the end of March 2017, to check progress on this area and scrutinise the action plan to improve this area of the service.

Ofsted had made 13 recommendations to the Council. These were:

1. Ensure that managers at all levels use management information effectively to oversee the work of their teams, and that performance reports include analysis, evaluation and commentary.
2. Ensure that partners understand thresholds, that they are applied consistently and that children referred to the MASH, or who require help out of hours, receive a timely and proportionate response.
3. Ensure that all assessments of children and care leavers consider all areas of need and risk, including equality and diversity issues and health needs.
4. Improve pathway plans, reviews of pathway plans and visits to care leavers to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Ensure that all plans for children are specific, measurable and child focused and that copies are provided to parents and carers in a timely way.
5. Ensure that all care leavers are fully aware of their entitlements.
6. Ensure that all children and young people who go missing from home or care are offered prompt return home interviews and that the information obtained is used to support their safety plans.
7. Improve the sufficiency and availability of placements for care leavers, children looked after and children with a plan of adoption so that they are well matched according to their needs.
8. Ensure robust tracking and decision making for children who are subject to pre-proceedings and permanence planning, to avoid drift and delay,

and that independent reviewing officers and child protection chairs provide sufficient challenge to these plans.

9. Take steps to ensure sufficient independent visitors for all children looked after who would benefit from this.
10. Ensure that the support needs of children subject to adoption and special guardianship are comprehensively assessed and result in a plan that addresses children's individual needs.
11. Improve the regularity and scrutiny of management oversight and the quality of staff supervision at all levels, ensuring that staff are properly held to account for their practice in providing appropriate help and support for children and reducing drift.
12. Increase the influence of the corporate parenting board, ensuring that the direct involvement of children is central to the board's work and that the membership and workplan target priorities effectively. Properly celebrate the achievements of children and young people.
13. Expedite the development or re-commissioning of the electronic system to ensure that it is fit for purpose, that it adequately supports the planning and recording requirements of the care leavers' service, the provision of management information and enables proper storage of adopters' records.

The Sub-Committee agreed that officers should report back to the next meeting with the agreed Action Plan.

## **17 FUTURE AGENDAS**

The Sub-Committee agreed that Brian Boxall be invited to the next meeting to present the Havering Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2015/16.

Any member who wishes to see an item on the agenda should contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for the Sub-Committee.

## **18 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**The Committee resolved to excluded the public from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that if members of the public were present it was likely that, given the nature of the business to be transacted, that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 2 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 which could reveal information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and it was not in the public interest to publish this information.**

19     **SUB COMMITTEE'S RECENT VISIT TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Sub-Committee noted the feedback from the recent visit to Children's Services.

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**Chairman**