



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:

Draft Annual Report 2012/2013

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

To summarise the work of the
Council's Children & Learning
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

SUMMARY

This report is the annual report of the Committee, summarising the Committee's activities during the past Council year.

It is planned for this report to stand as a public record of achievement for the year and enable members and others to compare performance year to year.

There are no direct equalities or environmental implications attached to this covering report. Any financial implications from reviews and work undertaken will be advised as part of the specific reviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council note the 2012/2013 Children & Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report and the 2012/2013 Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report.

REPORT DETAILS

During the year under review, the Committee met on 8 occasions and dealt with the following issues:

1. REQUISITIONS

- 1.1 The Committee held several special meetings during 2012/2013 to consider a number of requisitions relating to decisions made by Cabinet.

A special meeting was held on 9 August 2012 to consider two requisitions, the first relating to the Future Shape of Education Service on a decision made by Cabinet so as to ensure that the Council is able to meet its statutory obligations to support children, families and schools, but within a reduced funding envelope, thereby ensuring the provision of high quality schooling to local residents and protecting the most vulnerable children and families.

1.2 Future Shape of Education Services

The requisition was sought in order to clarify the following issues:

- a. There is no option identified to work with the existing model. Our services have a high buy in rate so what consideration has been given to expanding and growing these services even further into other boroughs?
- b. In recommendation 2 (b), who will be making the final decision?
- c. All of the options need to be discussed by the Children & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee voted not to uphold the requisition by 7 votes to 1 with 1 abstention.

1.3 Commissioning School Places Strategy

The second requisition related to Commissioning School Places Strategy for 2012/13-2015/16. The decision of the Cabinet was:

- a. To approve the draft Commissioning School Places Strategy 2012/13-2016/17 (CSPS).
- b. To approve the circulation of the draft CSPS for consultation to all stake holders in school place planning.

- c. To delegate the determination of the final CSPA, to the Cabinet Member for Children Service's and the Group Director for Children's Services.
- d. To note that a further report will be going to Cabinet in September 2012, which will set out the details of each expansion scheme, the consultation process and indicative costs and funding for each scheme.

1.4 The decision had been called in on grounds which included:

- a. To examine the availability of spare accommodation which would meet some of the increased demand.
- b. To examine the implications of the proposed strategy for home to school travel particularly relating to primary schools.
- c. To consider the financial difficulties those schools will face as a consequence of the increase in pupil numbers in the current funding arrangements.
- d. A perceived lack of consideration of options for the development of Academies or Free Schools.

The Committee voted not to uphold the requisition by 7 votes to 1 with 1 abstention.

1.5 **Primary School Expansion**

1.6 The Committee held a further special meeting on 11 October 2012 to consider a requisition relating to Primary School Expansion for 2012-2013.

1.7 The decision of Cabinet concerned a report on the proposals for primary school expansions in the borough for 2012-13, owing to a projected shortage of primary school places for September 2013. Based on the report (which was circulated to members of the Committee) made the following decisions:

- a. There are 15 schools listed for proposed permanent expansion from September 2013 to meet the projected deficit of primary places;
- b. The statutory processes are initiated to permanently expand the capacity of eight of those 15 schools by September 2013: Harold Court Primary; Harold Wood Primary; Pyrgo Priory Primary; St Patrick's Primary; Rise Park Infant and Junior schools; and Towers Infant and Junior schools;
- c. The proposal to expand Branfil Primary School from 1 September 2013 is commenced, following the Representation Period which ended on 31 August 2012;
- d. That officers take all necessary steps in order to deliver the expansion programme, including the submission of planning applications;
- e. That the commencement of a tendering process for construction/ refurbishment works at issue of tenders for Harold Court Primary, Harold Wood Primary, Mead Primary, Parsonage Farm Primary, Rise Park Infant and Junior schools, Towers Infant and Junior schools, together with all associated investigations e.g. soil survey, and;
- f. That the final allocation of available Capital funding as detailed within the Cabinet report was to be delegated to the Lead Members for Children and

Learning and Value, and the Group Directors of Children's Services and Finance and Commerce.

1.8 The reasons for the requisition were noted on the formal notification and were detailed as follows:

- a. To review the selection of 15 schools and Branfil School set out in the Report to Cabinet for permanent expansion;
- b. to consider the capital and revenue financial risks predicted for the cost of expansion of the schools;
- c. to review the timetable to deliver the proposed expansions.

The Committee voted not to uphold the requisition by 8 votes to 4 with one abstention.

1.9 **Merger of Children's Centre Activities**

1.9 1 A further special meeting was called by the Committee on 6 March 2013 to consider a decision made by Cabinet regarding proposals for the merger of Children Centre activities around 6 hub sites. Alternative operators (such as Schools and Libraries) would run and maintain the other smaller and less-used sites, which would be decommissioned as Children Centres, but continue to provide early years services such as pre-school provision.

1.9 2 The reasons for the requisition were detailed on the formal notification and were detailed as follows:

- a. The decision appears to be counter to Central Government and the Councils policies on early intervention
- b. The decision does not appear to have taken due consideration to the rise in the birth rate
- c. To allow Overview & Scrutiny Committees to consider the impact of the Council taking responsibility for Public Health Policy before the closure of Children's Centres.

1.9 3 The Committee voted not to uphold the requisition by 9 votes to 3 with one abstention.

2 **DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY**

2.1 The Committee was informed about progress made to date from a report from the Young People at Risk Commissioner in reducing teenage pregnancy and substance misuse among young people in Havering. The rate of teenage pregnancy in Havering was above the England and London average with over 60% of conceptions terminated. In 2010, The Children's Trust Board approved the development and launch of a local Teenage Pregnancy (TP) Board with an overall strategic aim to reduce the under 18 years teenage conception rate in the borough by 15%.

2.2 Evidence gathered in the consultation survey in 2010 amongst young people aged 13 years to 19 years by the Havering Teenage Pregnancy Board was used to formulate the Action Plan for 2012-13 whose key priorities were:

- Commission the Integrated Youth Service to deliver the Phoenix teenage Pregnancy Counselling Service and coordinate the delivery of the free Condom Card Scheme
- Commission Young add action, the young people's substance misuse service provider to deliver the targeted Sexual Health Support Service
- Provide a SRE Grant Scheme targeting and inviting 6 schools in Havering that are located in TP hotspots (Harold Hill, Rainham & North Romford) to apply for a grant to support and enrich their Sex and Relationships Education.
- Commission Living Well to provide the "TXTM8" service, the free 24hr sexual health information and advice text service for young people.
- Commission a new Z Card information mini booklet ensuring that is available and accessible to young people through a range of young people services borough-wide.
- Commission a sexual health training programme for staff who works across a range of children and young people services addressing subjects including skills to speak with young people about sex, supporting young people within the law, contraception and sexually transmitted infection courses.
- Conduct the annual Condom Card Scheme's User Satisfaction Survey with registered users to evaluate the service and measure its impact and outcomes on scheme users.

Review and update the "Only Way is Safer Sex" Facebook campaign and Teenage Pregnancy & Contraception pages on the LBH website.

2.3 The Committee are pleased to report that Havering continues to experience a reduction in the number of teenage conceptions that contributed to and strengthened a consistent downward trend in numbers and pregnancy rates in Havering (a trend that began in early 2009).

2.4 The Committee also considered progress and actions taken to tackle substance misuse of drugs and alcohol amongst young people.

2.5 Havering's strategic priorities in this area were commissioning, improving services, partnerships and digital worlds. The latter of these was about responding to and exploring new digital opportunities and maximising current technology to provide information, advice and support to young people, parents and professionals whilst recognising the need for reliable on-line sources of accurate information which young people could trust.

2.6 A local schools survey asked pupils their views about their health, education, leisure and personal safety. The survey was carried out in the autumn 2011 and a total of 4 local secondary schools in Havering participated in the survey. Overall, 411 pupils completed the survey. Some of the key findings included:

- In the past 12 months, 24% of pupils reported that people drinking or being drunk had made them feel unsafe "all of the time" or "most of the time". Also, 24% of pupils reported that they "sometimes" felt unsafe as a result of others drinking or being drunk. 29% reported that they had never felt unsafe.

- In the past 12 months, 34% of pupils reported that people dealing or using drugs had made them feel unsafe “all of the time” or “most of the time”. 31% of pupils reported that they had never felt unsafe.
- 76% of pupils reported that they were satisfied with the information about drugs and alcohol at school.
- 48% of pupils reported drinking alcohol within the last 12 months while 52% reported that they had never drunk alcohol.
- 14% of pupils reported to have been drunk at least once or more in the last 4 weeks; this equates to circa 2,100 secondary school aged pupils.
- 7% of pupils reported drinking alcohol “1 or 2 times a week”; this equates to circa 1,050 pupils. 3% reporting drinking “most days” which equates to 450 pupils.
- 10% of pupils reported using drugs within the last 12 months which equates to 1,500 pupils.
- 4% of pupils reported using drugs “every day” which equates to 600 pupils.

2.7 The data above had informed the Substance Misuse Action Plan 2012-13 which had an over-riding purpose of ensuring that both the commissioned and youth offending services would be accountable to and working towards developing consistently high quality standards and arrangements for professionals, young people and their families. The Committee noted the key priorities for the 2012-13 action plan were:

- Commission a service to identify and build resilience with schools pupils with substance misusing parents.
- Commission a workforce training programme in 2012-13 for professionals working with children and young people in Havering, ensuring that all sectors are invited to attend the training programme.
- Establish a volunteering scheme to ensure that young people engaged with the commissioned substance misuse service have their wider health and social needs identified and supported to access local services.
- To strengthen the annual needs assessment, design and launch a young people’s drugs and alcohol survey encouraging schools and youth support services to support young people complete the survey.
- Design, consult on and implement on-line user satisfaction surveys that invited professionals, young people and parents to comment on their experience of using the commissioned substance misuse service.
- Consult on and design a Quality Assurance Charter outlining a set of standards that professionals can expect from the commissioned service, promoting this Charter through the on-line and paper referral pathways.
- Consult on the development of the local authority website pages for substance misuse related to young people, promoting new pages to the community through the website, professional groups and social media pathways.
- Consult on the development, design and implementation of social media products, in particular developing Facebook and Application software (known as “Apps”) in order to maximise new technology to signpost young people and parents to the local commissioned services.

3. MULTI –AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH)

- 3.1 The London Safeguarding Children Board, the Metropolitan Police, London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) and the Greater London Authority agreed in 2011 to take forward a London wide project bringing together partner agencies to work more closely together on information sharing. Poor information sharing has been a feature of many inquiries into child death tragedies including Peter Connelly in Haringey.
- 3.2 In Havering, agencies had been working closely together to establish a MASH in Mercury House. Progress had been very good. Although, Havering was not in the original first wave of MASH programmes, the police were now in Mercury House and health partners were recruiting to their post in the multi-agency team.
- 3.3 The Committee was informed that the priority areas that MASH sought to address were as follows:
- placement moves;
 - transfers to social care and the Youth Offending Service;
 - service planning not being informed by young people;
 - poor use of performance data, and;
 - the pace of change being too slow.
- 3.4 With a view to achieving the overarching themes, the triage/MASH 'pod' had been located in a refitted 4th floor of the North Wing of Mercury House. A police server had been installed along with a new IT system specially designed for MASH. Within MASH, there were three 'assessment pods', comprising:
- four social workers (including three senior practitioners);
 - two advanced practitioners;
 - a practice manager, and;
 - two administrative staff.
- 3.5 There was a single assessment framework that was being used to assist staff in dealing with cases that had increased complexity and to analyse cases in line with the Suffolk judgement.
- 3.6 There had been some improvements of referrals overall as a result of the MASH, although timescales remained a challenge. The next step was to re-launch and extend the hospital social care role in Queens and St Georges and to improve structures by utilising new technologies.
- 3.7 The Committee asked for more information around the specific time delays in the referral process and queried who coordinated the work between MASH and the Police.

4. TROUBLED FAMILIES

- 4.1 The Committee considered a report from the coordinator of Havering's Troubled Families programme.

- 4.2 In October 2011, the Department of Communities and Local Government announced the national Troubled Families Programme, whereby Government funding would be available to local authorities based on the likely prevalence of families with specific characteristics.
- 4.3 The Committee was informed that Havering's Troubled Families Programme was a merger of national and local initiatives. The programme had begun by plotting the areas of deprivation to identify the top 100 families.
- 4.4 The Committee was taken through the process by which the troubled families would be identified. The Government had established national thresholds that included education, crime and anti-social behaviour and work. To these three criteria Havering had added its own local, discretionary criteria.
- 4.5 So far, Havering had identified 170 families, with a further 415 target families. One family had 37 teams of agencies visit them, which demonstrated the importance of streamlining services and the ways in which the Troubled Families programme would tie-in with the MASH.

5. ACCESS TO FREE SCHOOL PROVIDERS

- 5.1 During 2012/13, the Committee also received a document outlining the criteria by which potential Free School Providers seeking to establish a Free School in the borough would be assessed.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES – COMPLAINTS & COMPLEMENTS

- 6.1 The Committee received the report on Complaints and Compliments for Children and Young Peoples Services where the Committee noted that this was reported separately owing to specific regulations.
- 6.2 It was noted that there were around 133 complaints during 2011/12 with 36 matters raised by MPs and Councillors. For 2011.12, 34 compliments were received in relation to the good work Children and Young People's Services had carried out. The Committee also noted that most complaints were initiated by parents and that the majority related to quality of services, alleged staff behaviour and disputed decisions.

7. CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE

- 7.1 The Committee noted that the education Act 2011 had inserted a new duty requiring schools to secure access to independent careers guidance for pupils in years 9-11 as well as including options available in respect of 16-18 year olds with regards to education, training and apprenticeships. Schools would be able to work individually or in partnership to secure impartial careers guidance services. The Committee were also informed of the responsibilities of local authorities which were to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people in education or training and to assist the most vulnerable or those at risk of disengaging with education or work.

7.2 The Committee established a topic group to investigate the new careers education, information, advice and guidance service that was to replace the old Connexions Careers Service.

8. SCHOOL TRANSPORT

8.1 At the February 2013 meeting, the Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Group Director (Commissioning) from Social Care and Learning regarding progress made with changes to the SEN Transport provision and also went on to discuss the School Travel Plans. Further to a request by the Committee in 2012, members considered a presentation from Havering's Smarter Travel Officer regarding school travel plans in the borough.

8.2 The Committee noted that a School Travel Plan (STP) was a document written by a school in consultation with its pupils, parents, staff, and local residents, which sought to address travel and transport issues in and around the school

8.3 The STP looked at how pupils and staff currently travelled to school, how they would prefer to travel and how the school could encourage more sustainable travel habits. An effective STP would be kept up to date, reviewed annually, and re-written every three years. School Travel Plans were usually voluntary and relied on the schools willingness to participate.

An STP was said to help schools by:

- Reducing traffic congestion and air pollution in and around the school site
- Improving personal and road safety skills
- Improving the health and fitness of pupils and staff - linked to improved academic results
- Establishing safer walking and cycling routes to school
- Enhancing relations with the local community

9. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

9.1 The Committee considered a report from the Manager, Additional Educational Needs regarding attendance data for schools/academies for the school years 2009-10 to 2011-12 and the work being undertaken by the Local Authority to support attendance in maintained schools and academies in the London Borough of Havering.

9.2 The Committee noted that the Government was placing high importance currently to improving school attendance and reducing the number of children with high levels of absences from schools/academies. The Committee also had regard to information concerning the overall rates of attendance and the rates of "persistent absence" for schools/ academies in the borough for the three school years from 2009-10 to 2011-12, providing comparisons with figures both national and for outer London boroughs.

- 9.3 The Committee noted that School staff, both teaching and non-teaching, were in the front line of the drive to improve attendance. While Local Authority staff could make a valuable contribution, teachers and others who worked in schools were in daily contact with pupils and could forge effective links with parents at a local level. It was essential that the promotion of good attendance was recognised at every school.

10. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

- 10.1 The Committee considered a report from the Principle Inspector, Havering School Improvement Services (HSIS) regarding the performance of all schools in the borough over the previous academic year.
- 10.2 The report summarised the 2012 performance of Havering primary and secondary schools/academies in key stage assessments, tests and examinations.
- 10.3 The Committee noted that 2012 was another successful year for Havering schools. Although early years results were mixed, Havering enjoyed its best ever results at Key Stages 1 and 2. There was a fall for the first time at GCSE, due to the outcomes of the English results, which were a national phenomenon. For the second year running, Havering had no schools or academies below the government floor standard (60% L4 joint En/Ma at Key Stage 2, and 40% A*-C (inc En/Ma) at GCSE).

11. MODULAR SCHOOL BUILDINGS/SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT/CHILD CARE

In the final meeting of the Municipal year, the Committee received a presentation regarding the use of Modular School buildings in local schools as well as updates on the Havering School Improvement Strategy and the Child Care Sufficiency Assessment.

12. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee approved the Annual Report for the Corporate Parenting Panel 2012/2013.