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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Committee Room 3A - Town Hall 13 June 2013 (7.30 - 8.30 pm)

- Present:** Councillors Sandra Binion (Chairman), Wendy Brice-Thompson, Nic Dodin, Pat Murray, Frederick Thompson and Melvin Wallace
- Co Opted Members:** How, Julie Lamb and Garry Dennis
- Officer Attendance:** Kathy Bundred (LBH), Simon Jolley (LBH) and Mary Pattinson (LBH)
- Observer:** Joan Smith, Co-ordinator Health Watch
- Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Philip Grundy (Church of England), Anne Ling, Primary Schools, Margaret Cameron (NAHT), Keith Passingham (NASUWT) and Bev Whitehead (NUT)
- +Councillor June Alexander was substituted for Councillor Gillian Ford, +Councillor Georgina Galpin was substituted for Councillor Robby Misir

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

34 MINUTES

The Committee considered and agreed the minutes of the meeting held on May 9 2013 which were duly signed by the Chairman.

35 INSPECTION FRAMEWORK

The Committee received a detailed report on the OFSTED inspection framework which came into effect as of 1 June 2013. The framework constituted the basis for the inspections of Local Authority arrangements for supporting school improvements and the education of children and young people. The aim was to assist local authorities in their duty to promote high standards in schools and academies and included training and other education providers (including colleges) so that all children and young people received a good education. It was a legal requirement of all local authorities to promote high standards of education and their Statutory Duties were as follows:-

- (i) Promoting high standards
- (ii) Ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training
- (iii) Promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person under the age of 20 years and over the age of 20 years but under 25 years who were subject to learning difficulty assessment.

It was noted that inspections would not be universal as OFSTED would only inspect where there were concerns about performance, or at the request of the Secretary of State with a provision of five days' notice. During the five day inspection process, a number of key judgements would be applied and the inspection team were likely to conduct meetings with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee among others.

The Committee noted that despite the fact that local authorities have no specific powers of intervention in relation to academy schools, they retained a legal responsibility for performance within these establishments. The Department of Education expected local authorities to act as strategic commissioners for all schools. Where the local authority had concerns about the performance of an academy, there was an expectation that it must take reasonable steps to discuss these with the school and that it had a relationship with the school that would facilitate this.

The Local Authority Data Dashboard shown in the report diagrammatically depicted key relationships and related elements for effective partnership in the school improvement vision.

The Committee noted the report and agreed to select six items from the Local Authority Data Dashboard to consider in more detail as future agenda items.

The Chairman advised that a request would be made to obtain the minutes of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board prior to the next Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny meeting for consideration of any issues.

36 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

The Committee received a detailed update on the Children's and Young People Plan 2011-2014. The paper was presented as an overview of the final year of the current plan and a new plan would be formulated for a further three years from 2014.

Partner agencies, including those from the Police, Health, Education and voluntary sectors had collaborated well to deliver against the shared priorities.

It was noted that progress had been made in the six key priority areas which were:

- (i) Ensuring children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect

A number of processes were in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people which included strengthening multi-agency working practices, improved participation of families and professionals utilising the right tools and procedures for the specific needs of the child.

- (ii) Increase breastfeeding

Havering's initiation and continuation rates remained below London and national averages although they were now in line with statistical neighbours. At the last 6-8 week check, continuation rates had increased from 39% to 43%. It was hoped that the initiatives introduced would result in an increase to 47% which was the national average.

- (iii) Reduce child poverty

Nearly one in five Havering children under 16 years of age lived in poverty which was lower than many London Boroughs but higher than the Council's statistical neighbours. Child poverty has fallen in the last year however this was due to the decrease in median wage. A range of activity was underway in collaboration with partners to address the causes of poverty which included:

- a) developing a network of integrated services for families focusing on Foundation Years
- b) reducing barriers to employment
- c) improving financial wellbeing
- d) addressing health inequalities

- (iv) Reduce teenage conceptions and termination rates

Before the introduction of the current prevention strategy in 2010, Havering's local conception figures were worryingly high with 190 conceptions in 2009. In 2011, this had fallen to 131 conceptions which were below the national and regional rates. This was due to the effectiveness of the co-ordinated partnership working to achieve this result. Initiatives that remained in place were access to contraceptive and sexual health services including the Condom Card, targeted work with vulnerable groups and workforce development.

(v) Support complex families

Havering would be addressing this complex area by identifying high risk families of which there were 166 in Havering and by the redesign of existing services. These measures combined with the improved cooperation and collaboration with partners such as Action for Children, CAMHS and Job Centre Plus would ensure that the needs of the family were met as a whole rather than as individual members. It was noted that the Department for Communities and Local Government had visited Havering in January 2013 and were delighted with the progress made.

(vi) Improve access to high quality therapies

Access to effective therapies had been a concern for all and the activity for this priority was to re-design services, improve commissioning and collaboration with partners as well as ensuring early intervention to enable maximum independence.

The Committee was advised on the recent work to redesign the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) based on a clear understanding of local needs and customer requirements so that the service was brought closer to children. CAMHS were planning to be part of an Early Help scheme as well as introducing a triage system to process clients more speedily and to prevent inappropriate referrals.

The Committee noted the report and chose to select a number of issues arising as future agenda items at the November meeting. These items included access to therapies including speech and learning, closure of children's centres and early intervention and support for complex families.

37 ANNUAL REPORT 2012/2013 - CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

The Committee queried paragraph 2.1 of the report on the OFSTED inspection of private fostering where Havering was judged to be performing inadequately.

The Head of Children's Services confirmed that this was correct owing to the low number of fostering cases registered. This was, in part, due to the fact that a lot of private fostering was teenage and not easily recognised as in many cases children moved in with friends and relatives. There was also only one social worker allocated to private fostering which may have caused delays in picking up and working with cases. This had now been remedied as private fostering was covered by social workers on a rota system. It was noted that the OFSTED inspection in Havering on Safeguarding in private fostering was found to be satisfactory.

The Committee agreed the final draft of the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report for 2012/2013 and that it should be included within the annual report of the main Committee.

38 ANNUAL REPORT 2012/2013 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHILDREN AND LEARNING

The Committee agreed the final draft of the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2012/2013 and that it should be referred to full Council.

39 FUTURE AGENDAS

The Chairman requested that members forward their suggestions for agenda items to the Chairman and the Committee Clerk.

40 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

41 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as 19 September 2013.

Chairman

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