

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Town Hall
29 March 2012 (7.30 - 9.30 pm)**

Present: Councillors Sandra Binion (Chairman), Gillian Ford (Vice-Chair), Dennis Bull, Nic Dodin, Robby Misir and Linda Trew

Co-opted Members: Phillip Grundy, Julie Lamb, Anne Ling and Garry Dennis

Non-voting Member:

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 Pat Murray, Councillor Billy Taylor and Councillor Frederick Thompson, co-opted member Margaret Cameron, Jack How and Keith Passingham and Bev Whitehead

13 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Julie Lamb declared an interest in Item 5 as her son was attending Corbets Tey School.

14 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 POST 16 LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR DISABILITIES

The Committee received a report from the 14-19 Manager on the areas of service and support being provided for post-16 education learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) and the two pilot programmes delivered in 2011/12.

The Committee noted that the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (ASCL) placed new duties on Local Authorities, namely

the duty to secure enough suitable education and training to meet the reasonable needs of 16-19 years olds as well as for those aged 19-25 who were subject to a learning difficulty assessment.

Since the Act was passed in November 2009, Havering Local Authority commissioned a review of Post 16 SEN Education in early 2010. The review highlighted the need to develop additional provision due to the changing demand for specialist provision. There were more children with profound and complex disabilities as a result of improved medical support and care.

Currently there were three special schools providing provision up to the age of sixteen. Ravensbourne was the only special school with Post 16 provision and provides provision for severe and profound learning difficulties (SLD/PLD). The current accommodation was not entirely fit for purpose, and it was hoped that by developing a proposal further both the educational needs and accommodation needs to support these learners could be achieved.

In the absence of significant capital or revenue funding, any local development would have to tap into external funding sourced through the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). Currently there were three main routes for funding learners aged 16 to 25 with LDD:

- The SEN block grant, which Local Authorities receive to discharge their statutory duties towards those with SEN in special schools (Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded).
- Additional Learning Support (ALS) funding allocated to colleges and independent providers for learners aged 16 to 25 in local provision.
- Provision funded for individual learners with LDD aged 16 to 25 as part of the specialist placement budget, which included provision at independent specialist providers where their needs could not be met locally. This budget was managed by the YPLA.

Whilst these funding streams would pass to Local Authority control in 2013-14, this did not help with the immediate pressure of securing Post-16 provision.

The Young People and Adult Learning Strategy Manager had worked with the Havering College of Further and Higher Education and Havering Sixth Form College to establish pilot schemes from September 2011 in which students were on the roll of the colleges and so able to access participation funding and Additional Learner Support funding through the YPLA, but receive their education through provision at Corbets Tey and Hall Mead respectively. The provision at Corbets Tey is for those students from Corbets Tey, Dycorts and similar schools who might otherwise have gone to or remained at out of borough day special schools' sixth forms and that at Hall Mead is for higher functioning students, who may have some problems engaging in an unsupported fashion at the Sixth Form College without a supported transition.

The Committee considered progress with the first programme, a partnership between Corbets Tey School and Havering College of Further & Higher Education, which consisted of:

- In the first year of the programme and six learners had been recruited onto the FE provision at Corbets Tey.
- Five days at the school was being offered.
- Shared expertise was being used to develop the curriculum and to deliver an Intensive Communication programme.
- Learners were following the Personal Progress Award.
- Corbets Tey graded 4 for overall effectiveness by Ofsted. Upon re-inspection some improvements were noted.
- Havering College had been able to claim £64,000 for the delivery of 720 guided learning hour programme.
- Corbets Tey delivery costs amounted to £119,829.
- LBH had provided £55,829 to deliver the funding of day five owing to a funding shortfall.

The Committee considered progress with the pilot developed in partnership between Hall Mead School and Havering Sixth Form College for a cohort of four learners, progress included:

- A five day timetable for learners at both sites.
- A summer programme to aid transition.
- LBH had provided £31,435 to Hall Mead to meet their costs.

To further develop the provision and strengthen learner transition Corbets Tey and the College would continue to work in partnership, and it was envisaged that a more integrated model of delivery will emerge. There were clear benefits of embedding more sessions within the college environment. This programme would continue with some modifications, however, it was not envisaged that the Hall Mead and Havering Sixth Form College pilot programme would continue into 2012/13 as this was a particular demand and need for this year group.

Members discussed issues arising from the report, particularly querying work done with Dycorts School; officers replied that the College was keen to work with partners, although Dycorts already had good transitional arrangements with the College. In response to questions, it was explained the funding for contracts was done on a year by year basis and that capital funding would be needed to allow the programme to be rolled-out for a three-year cohort. Further, officers explained that the admissions criteria for the programme had been modified to differentiate the provision between Corbets Tey and the College.

Members questioned whether the actions arising out of the full review of post-16 provision for learners with LLDD had been enacted. It was suggested that suggestions for an over-arching strategy group for post-16 had not been complied with as Positive Parents were struggling to get the Council to cooperate. Officers responded by saying that straight after the

review was completed much changed, with the publication of a new Green Paper and a shift in the overall strategic direction. Therefore arrangements considered before the change were not possible.

There were numerous groups working in tangent and considering the same general issues, the new strategic direction presented an opportunity to merge the existing groups together and to avoid duplication. Yet, until the national picture was finalised it was necessary for local strategy to remain fluid. The new arrangements presented a challenge to all and new funding guidance dramatically changes the way special educational need funding and delivery is conducted.

It was asked what happened to an SEN pupil now whilst there was a transition to new ways of working and new funding programmes. It was explained that current programmes were continuing for the time being. However, Members expressed concern that not all SEN learners were suitable for education at the College and these pupils had no choice but to seek provision out of borough, which was not fair. Officers stated that there was to be an intensive analysis of out of borough placements, though Havering had the lowest number of students out of the borough than its neighbours. There needed to be an assessment for future provision as it was difficult to model services for SEN around a broad range of needs.

Members asked what pupils on such course studied and were informed that there was a huge range of subjects taken and these were tailored to the learner's needs. Most obtained a Personal Progress Qualification, which was well-established and centred on teaching independent living skills. There was concern however, that the specialism offered by Corbets Tey had been narrowed too much with each institution receiving a core funding block for its specialism. There was inequality in the previous funding stream. It was explained that the pathways needed by a learner would be known long before they reached age 16 and the borough was seeking a variety of models with a range of partners.

The Committee noted the report.

16 **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2011-14 - UPDATE**

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Lead, Performance and Policy from Social Care and Learning, regarding the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 (CYPP). Specifically, the report was updating the Committee on the progress made against the six priorities as determined by the Children's Trust.

The Committee noted that the six priorities of the CYPP and the work being undertaken under each priority, detailed as follows:

1. Ensuring children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect

This first area worked to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people was embedded in multi-agency working. This would mean intervening early and at the right time as well as involving families in service design and delivery. Key activity included:

- Strengthened multi-agency working practices: the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was due to go live in 2012 with partners located in the same office to allow for better information sharing. A 'triage' service was in operation in the Duty and Assessment Team and a new referral form had been introduced in order to reduce unnecessary referrals and speed up the process.
- Improved Participation of Families.
- Professionals using the right tools and procedures for the specific needs of the child: the high standards imposed by the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) were being implemented across the sector, with working being led by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).

2. Increase breastfeeding rates

The Committee was informed that evidence suggested that breastfeeding had many health benefits for children, including reducing child obesity. Havering had one of the highest rates of obesity and one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in London. To address the gap, significant work had been done to improve the reliability of breastfeeding data. Work underway included:

- Increasing awareness of breastfeeding to all cultures and age groups: this work included breastfeeding awareness sessions in schools and an extensive marketing campaign.
- Supporting mothers to feel confident to breastfeed in public.
- Improving access to breastfeeding support services.

3. Reduce child poverty

Members noted that nearly one in five children in Havering lived in poverty (this was defined as belonging to a family receiving 60% less than the median income). This number was lower than other London boroughs; the rate was higher than Havering's statistical neighbours. Current activity included:

- Developing a network of integrated services for families, focusing on the Foundation Years.

- Reducing barriers to employment
- Improving financial wellbeing
- Addressing health inequalities

4. Reducing teenage conceptions and termination rates

Teenage conception rates had been increasing, contrary to a national and London-wide downward trend. Latest data showed that the local rate was now falling and at a faster rate than for London and England, demonstrating the impact of local efforts, which included:

- Access to Contraceptive and Sexual Health (CASH) services: including a Condom Card scheme (C-Card) and a sexual health information booklet.
- Targeted work with vulnerable groups.
- Workforce development.

5. Support complex families

The Committee was informed that there had been a lot of recent media attention on the Government's Troubled Families programme. Unlike many other boroughs, Havering had already begun to plan how it would address the complex and inter-related risk factors affecting a section of the population, to help them to break their negative and often inter-generational cycles of behaviour and deprivation. This work had been progressed through the Top 100 Families project currently underway. The aim was not to create a new service; rather, to re-design existing services and improve cooperation with partners to maximise the impact of interventions. Work consisted of:

- Troubled families/top 100 families: partners had suggested more than 800 individuals who they felt would benefit from involvement in this work; over 500 families had been suggested. There was a significant proportion for whom domestic violence, substance/ alcohol abuse and mental health issues were commonly identified. Analysis continued to refine this list, to determine which families would ultimately be part of the programme.
- Community Budgets

6. Improve access to high-quality therapies

Access to effective therapies had been a concern for parents and professionals alike. The broad themes of activity for this priority were to

redesign services, to improve commissioning and collaboration with partners, and to ensure early interventions. Work in this area included:

- Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)
- Redesign Services
- Improve commissioning and collaboration
- Early targeted interventions to increase independence

The Committee discussed various aspects of the report; in particular Members sought more information regarding the Triage Team. Officers explained that the team received some 1200 calls per month and 65% of referrals did not meet the criteria for further investigation. This was a dedicated team of social workers assessing each referral. The Committee requested that more information regarding the work of Triage Team and the criteria used for assessing where to redirect referrals be brought to the Committee.

The Committee noted the report and requested further information on the work of the Triage Team, the MEND programme and more information on services for children in terms of drugs, alcohol and sexual health.

Chairman