

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Town Hall
26 January 2012 (7.30 - 9.00 pm)**

Present: Councillors Sandra Binion (Chairman), Gillian Ford (Vice-Chair), Dennis Bull, Nic Dodin, Robby Misir, Pat Murray, Frederick Thompson, Linda Trew and Wendy Brice-Thompson (In place of Billy Taylor)

Co-opted Members: Phillip Grundy, Jack How, Julie Lamb and Anne Ling

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 , co-opted member Margaret Cameron, Keith Passingham and Garry Dennis and Bev Whitehead

8 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Julie Lamb declared an interest in Item 5 as her son was in receipt of the SEN Transport provision.

9 MINUTES

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

10 SEN TRANSPORT UPDATE

The Committee received an update from the Assistant Director, Commissioning regarding the changes to SEN Transport provision and progress to date.

A briefing note was circulated to Committee members with details of progress at particular schools.

In response to a question around DADB assessments and children with siblings, the Committee was informed that the process for assessments with DABD was underway, siblings with younger children would have pick up

points but this would not be reflected in assessment results as siblings did not guarantee an automatic qualification and it was one factor amongst many.

The average range of journey times went from 7.30am through 8.45 or 8.50am, with the evening journey times typically being quicker. Whilst some children did face journey times, in rare cases of up to 1 hour and fifteen minutes and 1 hour thirty minutes. A balance was needed and the Council operated within national guidance and tried not to exceed a journey time of seventy-five minutes. Most journeys were well below that threshold.

At the previous meeting an alternative chart of journey times had been distributed to members, these times did not tally with LA figures as they were indicative. In response to further questioning, officers informed members that the average lost hours of learning per school was 17 hours and these averages tallied with the average achieved by the service before the changes.

The Committee moved on to discuss pick-up points and highlighted concerns of some parents that the location of meeting points was unrealistic and dangerous. Members were told that many meeting points had been moved after concerns had been raised, but there was a need to reach a compromise between the number of stops and the number of pick up points. Officers explained that chaperones had not been deployed at pick-up points as the points had been moved (following requests) nearer to pupils' homes, ultimately meaning more points and rendering the deployment of chaperones unviable.

The Committee was informed that the projected saving of the changes was on track, with the depot for the buses having been moved to allow for new start times, culminating in 10 less buses which translated to a saving of £40,000 per bus.

The borough was committed to achieve the highest possible standard of service, the taxis/black cab service operated through contracts with only a small number of fully accredited companies that had been vetted to quality standards. The geographical spread of schools in Havering meant that it was hard to compare its performance against neighbouring boroughs though there was a strong drive to achieve high standards. Cllr Rochford had travelled the longest route to ensure direct connection with service users and strategic decision-makers.

The Committee noted the update.

11 **SCHOOL STANDARDS 2011**

The Committee considered a report from the Principle Inspector of the Havering School Inspection Service regarding the performance of Havering primary and secondary schools, as well as academies in assessments, tests and examinations.

Members were told that Havering had made a key achievement in that Havering was one of only 2 Local Authorities in the country (out of 150) to have no schools performing below the new government 'floor standard' in 2011.

At Foundation Stage, it was stated that there had been a significant narrowing of the gap between the average FSP scores and those of the lowest 20% of pupils in the Authority, and we are pleased to report that this gap has narrowed still further in 2011.

In Key Stage One, Overall performance at the Levels 2+, 2B+ and 3+ benchmarks at Key Stage 1 improved. This improvement maintained Havering's place above the national average and was in keeping with the improving trend in the national picture.

As was the case for the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 assessments were all teacher-assessed rather than tested, as they were at the subsequent key stages; and again, like at the Foundation Stage, schools had been supported in recent years to improve the accuracy of the teacher assessments. As a result of this robust process of cross moderation these judgements were now as accurate as they could be.

The Committee was informed that at Key State Two industrial action (in 2010) taken by some headteachers in Havering and across the country had led to the English and Maths SATs not being administered in approximately half of all Havering schools. Comparing the 2011 results with those of 2010 was therefore probably of less value than comparing progress in the trends over recent years.

The key achievements in Key Stage Two were described as follows:

- Level 4+ attainment in both English and maths combined rose to 77.1% - above 2009 and higher than this year's national average figure of 74%, which has remained relatively static for a number of years. Level 5+ performance rose to 22.1% - well above previous years. This places us, once again, above the national average, which dropped back again this year following a significant rise last year. Raising the achievement of our most able learners remains a focus in all of our schools.
- In English, Level 4+ attainment rose to a best ever 85.7%, well above the static national average figure of 81%. Level 5+ performance increased to 33%: well above both our 2009 result and the national average.
- In mathematics, Level 4+ attainment rose to 82.3% - just 0.1% below our highest ever results of 2009 and above the national average. Level 5+ rose to 35.8%, to remain above the national average.

At Key Stage Four, the Committee was asked to note the following performance:

- Following the significant rise in Key Stage 4 results in 2010, results improved in 2011 – the 5th year of sustained improvement, with the key

measure of 5+A*-C including English and maths rising by a full 10 percentage points over that time.

- The key measure of 5+A*-C including English and maths rose to 64.2%; still well above the rising national average figure of 58.3%.
- The measure of 5+A*-C also rose again, representing a sustained year-on-year improvement. The national average figure matched the Havering figure for the first time this year. However, the national improvement was the result of many schools around the country adopting a variety of courses which carry multiple GCSE “equivalencies” but which the current government do not favour and they were looking to either phase out or reduce their equivalency. Havering schools continued to offer a broad and balanced curriculum that was still GCSE-based for the majority of learners, with an appropriate offer of other courses for some students.
- Not only was attainment in Havering continuing to improve, but students’ progress in English and in mathematics continues to rise and outstripped national performance.
- The second year that the English Baccalaureate measure was being reported. It rewarded those students who achieved an A*-C in English, maths, 2 sciences, a modern foreign language and either history or geography. This measure was introduced retrospectively last year and still did not reflect any changes in curriculum take up.

The main aspects of Key Stage Five were detailed as follows:

- Outcomes for 6th form students in Havering improved in both key measures in 2011.
- 5APS per student and per examination were two headline measures used to assess the performance of sixth forms. Whilst it was important to compare individual year results with national scores (the latest national scores were for 2010) it was equally important to note the trend over time to ensure these scores were improving.
- The average point score per student provides a measure of the average number of A level equivalents studied and the grades achieved. The more qualifications undertaken by a student and the higher the grades achieved, the higher the average point score per student. For Havering schools, APS per student remained significantly higher than the national average though trends over time varied for each school/academy.
- The average point score per examination gave an indication of the average A level grade achieved by students at an institution. The higher the grade, the higher the points score per examination entry. For Havering schools APS per examination remains higher than the national average though trends over time vary for each school/academy.

The Committee was also given information regarding schools receiving direct support from Havering School Inspection Service.

The Committee raised questions around the phasing out of the Connexions Service and it was confirmed that the service would be replaced by the National Careers Service. This new careers service would be monitored against a matrix service with a quality award awarded where appropriate. This service would also be a part of Ofsted inspections and via a 'Destination Measure' that would track destination of students a year after leaving school.

The Committee noted the report.

12 **CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2011-14**

The Committee considered a report from the Acting Service Manager, Foundation Years and Independent Advice Service regarding the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011-14.

The Committee was informed that under Section 6 (1) of the Childcare Act 2006, local authorities had a duty to ensure there was sufficient childcare in their area, so far as is reasonably practicable. The findings from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) published on 1 April 2011 enabled the Local Authority to draw up an Action Plan aiming to narrow the gaps in childcare provision as highlighted.

The report detailed the progress towards meeting those actions as published. It also provided an opportunity to inform Councillors of the recently published consultation document which called for significant changes in the way the Local Authority must ensure sufficiency in the childcare market and the Local Authority's statutory role on the delivery of free Early Education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment published in 2011 made the following recommendations:

- The Local Authority continues to support provisions in offering more flexible places.
- The Local Authority continues to pro-actively support the development of holiday provision and promote its availability to parents in the borough.
- The Local Authority continues to promote Early Education Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds, the pilot scheme providing funded places for 2 year olds and other help available to support childcare costs to eligible families. Eligibility was classified by the DfE as the term after which the children attains the required age e.g. 2, 3 or 4.
- The Local Authority continues supporting childcare providers to access training, including training on caring for children with disabilities and special educational needs, in line with the Local Authority's budget.

- The Local Authority continues to support new and existing childcare providers with achieving and maintaining the delivery of quality childcare.

Further to this, on the 11 November 2011 the Department for Education (DfE) published a consultation document setting out its proposals on the new entitlement for two year olds from September 2013, including which children will be eligible. It also included proposals on the quality and flexibility of the entitlement for two, three and four year olds. The consultation was due to close on 3 February 2012 and comments would be collected from the Early Years Provider Reference Group, a statutory body of representatives from across the sector.

Members were asked to note the following changes being brought in by regulations as they stood:

- 1) The Local Authority would be required to provide 500 places for eligible 2 year olds from September 2013. The funding route for delivery was still being considered but would potentially be through the Early Intervention Grant.
- 2) A requirement to increase the number of free hours for 2 year olds from 10 per week to 15 per week by September 2013.
- 3) Duty to introduce eligibility criteria that considers the potential to qualify for Free School Meals as an indicator of economic disadvantage.
- 4) Looked After Children and children with Special Educational Needs would be given the legal entitlement to Free Early Education at age 2 regardless of economic disadvantage.
- 5) Local authorities would be given power to fund providers to deliver free hours between 7am and 7pm (but retain the suggested limit of 10 hours per day)
- 6) Remove the limit that the full 15 free hours should be taken over no fewer than three days.
- 7) Replace the current quality assurance system with a “basket” of eligibility criteria approach, under which local authorities would require providers of free early education to meet.
- 8) No free provision to be based in Ofsted “inadequate” settings.
- 9) Streamline the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and propose that local authorities report annually on their Section 6 sufficiency duty to elected council members and parents.
- 10) Repeal the Section 11 duty to undertake a nationally prescribed assessment every 3 years.

The Committee noted the report.

Chairman