

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
Committee Room 3A - Town Hall
6 July 2017 (7.00 - 9.35 pm)**

Present: Councillors Gillian Ford (Chairman), Meg Davis (Vice-Chair), John Glanville, Viddy Persaud, Carol Smith and Jody Ganly

Co-opted Members: Julie Lamb

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 Keith Roberts, Ray Morgon, Philippa Crowder and co-opted member Jack How.

29 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2017 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman subject to noting that Councillor Carol Smith was present at the meeting.

30 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE UPDATE - QUARTER FOUR

The Sub-Committee were advised that 15 Corporate Performance Indicators fell under the remit of the Children & Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Nine related to the SAFE goal and six to the PROUD goal. Nine of the RAG indicators had a status of green and six a RAG status of Red or Amber.

Members noted that the position was consistent with the end of Quarter 3 update.

Members noted that the following areas that required improvements within the SAFE goal:

- The percentage of care proceedings completed within 26 weeks dropped for the second consecutive quarter during Quarter 4. To improve performance, there were a number of actions taking place including reviewing the legal tracking procedure; working with the Legal department to identify and respond to training needs; reviewing the supervision policy and developing accountability of social workers so that when targets were missed there was a framework in place to act swiftly to rectify this.
- The percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years had continued to rise as the year had progressed and was higher than at the same point last year. The Face to Face programme was providing practitioners with training to work with families in a systemic way and provide families with the tools to sustain their own progress.
- The percentage of looked after children (LAC) placements lasting at least two years was below target and both in the last quarter and last year. As part of the Department for Education Innovation Programme, the service was working to recruit specialist foster carers who would care for 11-17 year olds with complex and disrupting behaviour patterns. These foster carers would receive heightened support and training to respond to the increasingly complex needs of our looked after children.

The report detailed the following highlights within the PROUD goal:

- The percentage of young people leaving care who were in education, employment or training at ages 18 to 21 was above target and better than the annual outturn the previous year.
- At 3.3%, the proportion of 16 to 19 year olds who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and not known fell compared to the outturn for 2015/16 as participation amongst young people in Havering continued to increase.
- The percentage of Early Years providers judged to be Good or Outstanding by Ofsted exceeded target and was better than the previous year.
- Apprenticeship numbers at ages 16 -18; had increased compared with the previous year, as a result of the close working between the local apprenticeship provider forum and the local school and colleges to promote the apprenticeship offer.

Members were informed that Cabinet had approved the new Corporate Plan for 2017/18 which included a list of new Corporate Performance Indicators. As many of these new Corporate PIs do not neatly fall into the remit of one of the Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committees it had been agreed that, from Quarter 2 of 2017/18, performance against the Corporate Performance Indicators would only be reported to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis, with the reports being made available simultaneously to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Sub-Committees.

The Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committees would be able to request reports on performance against particular indicators as required and would also be able to commission more detailed analysis of areas within the remits of the sub-committee that may warrant further consideration.

Members noted that the new arrangements would be in place from Quarter 2 2017/18 onwards to account for the fact that the new Corporate Plan was not approved by Cabinet until May, and the Council's Service Plans for 2017/18 also do not go live until Quarter 2.

The Sub-Committee had been requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Board to identify three indicators that they would like reported on a quarterly basis relevant to the remit of the sub-committee.

The Sub-Committee concluded that that the sub-committee was a unique group looking at the front line service where all indicators were important and statutory.

The Sub-Committee agreed to have all indicators reported to the Board for them to decide what three indicators they would like reported.

31 REPORT ON FOSTERING

The Sub-Committee received a report that provided an update on fostering arrangements in relation to developments, on-going performance and challenges in Havering pre and post the Ofsted inspection.

The report detailed the developments, on-going performance and challenges within the Fostering Service. Members noted that there had been significant work in maintaining foster carer recruitment, which had now expanded to include recruitment of specialist foster carers.

The report informed the Sub-Committee that the number of Looked After Children was increasing and the in-house foster carers were not able to accommodate the volume of children requiring placements. It had resulted in the use of Independent Fostering Agencies, with some children being placed outside of the Local Authority. The current arrangement was to match children in long term foster care arrangements in order to promote stability and consistency for children who were looked after. This has required commitment from the foster carers.

The Sub-Committee noted that the proposal was to sustain and build upon Foster carer recruitment and retention with the aim to support children with complex needs with specialist foster carers and build a system that can support challenging placements and provide value for money.

The report detailed the profile/inspection outcome of the service, it was noted that as at 27 June 2017, there were 257 children being looked after by the authority. 79 children being placed in-house compared to 85 placed with Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements; 33 within semi-independent and 26 within residential placements.

The Sub-committee was informed that between April 2016 and March 2017 the Fostering Service received 181 enquiries from members of the public interested in foster caring. From April 2017 to date 28 enquires were received.

The Service had recruited 15 carers for 2016/2017, three carers below the set target of 18. It was mentioned that this was impacted by delays with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. It took five to six months to fully recruit a foster carer and present to Panel for approval. Since March to 27 June 2017 there have been a further 11 fostering households approved, 7 approved for 0-18 and 4 for 0-12 years; 9 of these are available for sibling groups of at least 2.

The Service also monitored the reasons foster carers leave Havering as this also provided an indication of potential areas for attention/improvement. There have been a number of de-registrations in regard to quality standards. Over the year April 2016-17 seventeen foster carers have resigned with the following reasons:

- 2 shared carers (Short Breaks carer's children with disabilities living at home) for whom Direct Payments were now used.
- 3 Carers who have moved out of the area and transferred to their new local authority.
- 6 Carers who were not prepared to work to the Local Authority's standards and child centred approach.
- 5 retired/family circumstances
- 1 following an unsubstantiated allegation made by children previously placed.

The Sub-Committee noted that the innovation programme was being used to target specialist foster carers in recognition of the range of multiple and complex needs of some the children coming to care. This is explained as follows:

Face to Face Pathways; a programme of innovation lasting two years, to implement a new and different approach to respond to the issues facing young people in care aged 11-17 and those leaving care aged 14-24. The programme would require the Local Authority to develop, test and redesign provision to support care leavers and looked after children. The ambition was to be a regional centre of excellence for successful transitions to adulthood.

To support the enhanced Fostering offer; an additional remuneration category would need to be added for those Carers who were willing to offer placements to children with multiple complex emotional/behavioural difficulties.

The Sub-Committee noted the following action plan for the service:

- The Care Resources Service to continue to ensure fostering responded effectively to current challenges for children and the recruitment drive be further developed. The work would address Ofsted's recommendations and findings from practice week/auditing.
- To continue with the recruitment campaign to expand the number of in-house carers (with a particular focus upon over 11's) and ensure foster carers were committed to working to keep sibling groups together wherever possible. The campaign would be evaluated in autumn 2017.
- To strengthen in-house offer and build a proposal in relation to an enhanced fostering model based upon the existing/projected profile of service demand, by first quarter 2017/18.
- To explore a range of joint commissioning options which included fostering capacity within the East London sub-regional. Further information to be provided in quarter one of 2017/18.

The Sub-Committee noted the update report.

32 **SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND TRANSFORMATION**

The Sub-Committee noted a report that detailed the service approach to continuous service improvement. The report updated Members on progress to improve the delivery of social care.

Members noted that the service had several key objectives for the year, across the range of front-line services. These include;

- a. Improving the quality and effectiveness of social work interventions and improve the experience for families.
- b. Provide effective interventions at all levels of need ensuring effective primary and secondary prevention.

- c. Increase the stability and skills of the workforce to improve the quality of relationships with children and their families.
- d. Improve the response to demand to ensure that families are provided a timely and proportionate intervention and increase the reach of early help services.
- e. Consolidate learning to ensure we continue to provide effective and co-ordinated services for children at risk of child sexual exploitation.
- f. Ensure that feedback from children and their families is sought to improve the quality of interventions.
- g. In house and commissioned services demonstrate good value when outcomes and costs are benchmarked against other authorities.
- h. Continue to build on improvements to the quality of placements for children in care, improving timeliness of permanency and enhancing the outcomes for care leavers.
- i. Reduce the budget deficit by installing strict financial controls. Monitor and report on progress, whilst looking for further opportunities.
- j. Implement and track the first year of the Innovation Programme.
- k. Monitor against the thirteen recommendations made by Ofsted and report on progress to them, to the Department for Education and internal stakeholders.
- l. Ensure the workforce development and retention activity is in place to increase the number of permanent social workers.
- m. Develop and implement the Social Care Academy, providing a strong and competitive offer for social workers, with the aim of encouraging highly skilled and experienced practitioners to work for Havering.

The Sub-Committee was advised that the following range of activities were underway to deliver against the outlined objectives;

- A review of all placements had been carried out outlining the forward plan for these and determining the potential costs and savings that could be achieved by March 2019.
- A workforce development working group had been formed with clear terms of reference, to ensure we have a robust approach to recruitment and retention. The group had led to the development of the Social Care Academy.
- A financial recovery plan had been developed, which demonstrated what activity could lead to reducing the budget deficit and making efficiencies which included strict controls on expenditure.

- Social care workforce were undergoing Systemic Practice training in order to enhance practice and allowing for more meaningful and purposeful interventions to be delivered to children and young people.
- A work plan was being developed with the Joint Commissioning Unit, to enable better value for money on placements and other commissioning ventures.
- An approach to demand management was being considered, including greater detail on the projected increase in population and what impact that would have on resources.
- A more effective and regular supervision was now taking place to improve quality and timeliness of interventions.

The report outlined the following next steps by the service:

- To continue monitoring progress of the service plans, ensuring all risks and issues are managed. To evidence improvement and where relevant, report/escalate to the Transformation and Improvement Board.
- The service was looking to develop an approach to ensure that all future reporting needs go through a single point of contact and were managed through a joint panel with the corporate performance service.
- To develop a reporting calendar, so all services were clear when to expect Performance Indicators and other information.
- To review all Service plans in September in order to ensure they were all still current and meet the developing needs of the service.

The Sub-Committee noted the continuous service improvement report.

33 **OFSTED IMPROVEMENT**

The Sub-Committee received an update report that outlined the service was meeting its statutory responsibilities and continuing to evidence improvement against Ofsted recommendations.

The Sub-Committee noted that the long-term ambition of the service was to achieve at least a 'Good' grading against all of the key areas Ofsted measure against the framework. It should be noted that the framework is expected to change in 18-24 months.

The report informed the Sub-Committee that further to the submission of the formal response to the Ofsted's recommendations the service was

committed to making changes in the short and long term, to raise social work standards.

The report detailed that Social Care Service was successful in receiving Innovation funding from the Department for Education. The investment would be distributed across the social care system but predominately across Fostering and Leaving Care. The investment would enable the service to innovate in these areas and enhance the offer available, which would be tracked and monitored as part of the Ofsted improvement programme.

The Sub-Committee noted that the service was working through the 13 Ofsted recommendations. Each recommendation had a defined set of management actions which were owned by specific senior officers within the Directorate. The management actions each have a timescale, a set of specific measures, key performance indicators and outcomes which benefit children, young people and families.

The report indicated that the Leaving Care strand had developed a dedicated action plan which was directly linked to the overall plan. This was as a result of the grading received in the area, and the need for the service to fully understand the issues, mitigate risk and plan for significant service improvement. It would also help identify and plan for the dependencies with the Innovation programme.

The Sub-Committee received the following update on the monitoring progress:

1. Children's Services had a Transformation and Improvement Board, which was responsible for overseeing change initiatives and service improvement. It would also be the governance mechanism where all progress, monitoring and decisions take place for all Ofsted improvement actions. The Director of Children's Services (DCS) was the Senior Responsible Officer, supported by the Assistant Director for Social Care and other key senior managers within Children's Services.
2. Progress against the Ofsted Action Plan would be monitored every month, with a report available describing trends, ongoing activity within the service and the impact the activity was having.
3. As of June 2017, a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had been agreed by the Board. Baselines and targets have been agreed, where applicable. A first draft report had been presented to senior officers and feedback had been gathered to ensure the report meets the ongoing needs of the service.
4. Early measures show considerable improvement in a number of areas, including;
 - A reduction in the number of Child in Need plans.
 - A reduction in the number of Child Protection Plans.

- An increase in the number of social workers taking up permanent positions.
- An ongoing improvement in the timeliness of interventions in Early Help.
- Improved performance in the MASH
- More direct contact with Care Leavers
- Improved rate of Return Home Interviews completed within 72 hours
- Increase in allocation of independent visitors

It was also stated that as the Service reviews its delivery and strengthens the delivery of social care, the expectation was to achieve improvement across a number of measures. The Service had also taken measures to reshape the structures of delivery services in order to ensure there was capacity and the appropriate roles to deliver sustained improvements.

The Sub-Committee noted the following next steps by the Service:

1. The delivery of a new business intelligence solution, Power BI from Microsoft, would enable the service to receive data in differing formats and enhance how the Ofsted indicators would be monitored. It would also allow for easier retrieval of reports, resulting in being able to manage areas of risk more closely. The service was proposed to start from August 2017.
2. The Service would continue to monitor the performance of all Ofsted key indicators, against the Ofsted Acton Plan, managing risk and issue and ensuring all milestones and deliverables were agreed and managed.
3. To continue to work with the Safeguarding Board and responding to their challenge and ensuring alignment in activity that was shared or had an overlap.
5. To prepare for the next Ofsted quarterly meeting, expected in autumn 2017.
6. To begin to plan for the new inspection framework being developed by Ofsted.

In response to an enquiry on the current progress, the Assistant Director of Children's Services stated that the service was in a better place and position but there was still a significant journey ahead.

The Sub-Committee noted the improvement the Ofsted improvement and monitor progress update report.

The Sub-Committee received a report that detailed the service vision to ensure a good start for every child to reach their full potential and our ambition to establish a self-improving education system.

The report updated members of the sub-committee on the progress to improve standards of teaching, learning and leadership across Havering's schools.

The report indicated that following the published performance measures, it was agreed that a school-led improvement strategy was required to address the shortcomings highlighted by Ofsted data and the Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) annual report.

Further to the previous update to the Sub-Committee, the following steps have been taken:

- An independently-chaired Improvement Board was established to oversee an agreed improvement strategy and had met regularly. The Board had met termly to monitor the progress and impact of the improvement strategy, holding schools' leaders to account for improvement.
- The key indicator of the success of the improvement strategy would be that all schools be judged to be good or better by Ofsted by July 2018, subject to each school's place in Ofsted's calendar of inspections.
- As a measure of the joint commitment to the rapid school improvement required, in April 2017 a budget of £100,000 was allocated to support the work of the improvement strategy: £50,000 from Havering Local Authority and £50,000 from contributions from secondary schools through the Havering Learning Partnership (HLP - the association of secondary schools).
- The Regional Schools Commissioner had increased the number of monitoring visits to Havering's secondary schools, remarking on the positive approach the local head teachers group, governors and the local authority have taken in rising to the challenge to improve pupil outcomes.
- Additional funding of £1.2m had been sought from the Department for Education (DfE) Strategic School Improvement fund. The fund was to help schools use their resources most effectively in order to deliver more good school places.

The Sub-Committee noted the following next steps by the service:

- That the service continues to monitor the performance of all schools on a regular basis with a refreshed approach to bringing about necessary improvements. This includes forensic evaluation of progress through monthly performance review meetings in those schools identified as being under-performing and a greater use of the powers available to the authority where schools are a cause for concern. To date, there had been no change in the secondary sector to the baseline percentage of schools Good or better. The only two inspections that have taken place since January 2017 resulted in the same Ofsted grading.
- The independently-chaired Improvement Board continues to meet the school-led governance body which monitors the agreed improvement strategy.
- A decision was been awaited on the five bids submitted to DfE, the outcome was expected in August to deploy funds from September.
- It was stated that individual secondary schools would learn of the pupils' outcomes in late-August 2017. How local schools compare, such as against the Progress 8 measure, would not be known until later in 2017. This is because the measure is a relatively new one and Havering's outcomes (and the success of the improvement strategy) will be dependent on outcomes of all pupils across London and England. We anticipate the HMI annual report, with data comparing local areas, to be published in December 2017.

The Sub-Committee noted the improvement update report on the schools-led strategy.

35 **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Sub-Committee agreed its annual report 2016-17 and further agreed that the report be referred to full Council.

Chairman