

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
Committee Room 3B - Town Hall
23 January 2020 (7.00 - 9.20 pm)**

Present: Councillors Judith Holt (Chairman), Christine Vickery (Vice-Chair), Carol Smith, Dilip Patel and Tele Lawal

Co-opted Members:
Julie Lamb and Kathy Freeman

Church Representatives:
Jack How

Non-voting Member: Ian Rusha

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gillian Ford, Councillor Tony Durdin, Councillor Sally Miller, Councillor Reg Whitney and Lynne Bennett.

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

25 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

No interest was disclosed at the meeting.

26 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27 COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION - CHILDREN CENTRES REDESIGN

The report before Members detailed the Councillor Call for Action request of Councillor Tele Lawal. The Member had requested the Sub-Committee scrutinise 'the Children Centre Re-design recommendations following a Public Consultation' that was undertaken between June and September 2019.

The grounds for the Councillor Call for Action were as follows:

- That the Council ran a consultation on proposed changes to the way that Children's Centres and Libraries operated in the London Borough of Havering.
- That the Council planned to close the following Children's Centres; Chippenham Road, Hildene, Ingrebourne and Rainham Village. The proposal stated that activities would be moved to community venues and the three other children's centres in the borough.
- It was stated that residents and ward Member were concerned by the proposals which will close Children's Centres in deprived areas where they are urgently needed. A review by the Council found that 60% of children who live in the most deprived areas were not seen at Children's Centres in 2017/18.
- That the data suggested that the Council's outreach and publicity needed to be improved. I believe dispersing activities across the borough will mean that many lower and working-class families will be unable/struggle to access services, due to low pay, insecure work, changes to their benefit, health issues, time and travel constraints.
- That research suggested that what happens in a child's early years had a defining impact on their life chances, educational attainment, economic security and health. Havering Council should be investing in Children's Centres. It was the belief that early intervention and prevention were always cheaper than a cure.
- The request was for the review of the proposal in order to ensure children living in Harold Hill and Rainham were not adversely affected by the changes, which was the fear.
- In addition, as the decision was being brought forward due to reduced funding from Central Government, the Call for Action was to also encourage the Cabinet Member to write to the Secretary of State about the impact of cuts to early years provision.

Chairman