

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2010**

Councillors Councillors Bull (Chair), Browne (Vice-Chair), Alexander, Allison, Basu, Ejiolor and Newton

Apologies Helena Kania and Sarah Marsh (Parent Governor)

Also Present: **Co-optees:** Yvonne Denny (Church Representative)
Councillors: Reith, Rice and Winskill
Officers: Peter Lewis (Director Children & Young People's Service), Debbie Haith (Deputy Director, Children & Families), Hilary Corrick (Independent Member of Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee), Rob Mack (Scrutiny Officer), Duncan Stroud (Associate Director - Communications, Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships), Claire Wright (PCT – Head of Strategic Commissioning) and Natalie Cole (Clerk)

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
OSCO98.	<p>WEBCASTING</p> <p>The Committee noted that the meeting was recorded for live or future broadcasting on the Council's website.</p>
OSCO99.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Winskill and Sarah Marsh (Parent Governor Co-optee).</p> <p>Councillor Rachel Allison acted as a substitute for Councillor Winskill.</p>
OSCO100.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>RESOLVED that Health Visitors be considered as a new item of urgent business (minute OSCO107 below).</p>
OSCO101.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in relation to items on the agenda.</p>
OSCO102.	<p>DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS</p> <p>There were no such items.</p>
OSCO103.	<p>CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS: CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES</p> <p>The Committee received the portfolio briefing and the responses to advance questions posed to Councillor Lorna Reith, Cabinet Member for Children's Services. The Committee asked supplementary</p>

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2010**

questions, the answers of which are noted below.

Re. Q8 – Child Protection Legal Fees - The Director of Children’s Services informed the Committee that the number of legal proceedings in child protection cases was not within the Council’s control; more information on this would be circulated to the Committee in response to questions on what actions were being pursued to reduce legal fees and how the Council would meet the appropriate milestone (action 98.1).

The Committee noted that other local authorities had similar experiences with courts constantly requesting additional information before making decisions on child protection. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that the over-spend on legal fees was being highlighted at Government level.

Re. Q10 – Health White Paper – The Committee requested a short note providing more information on how the Council was establishing close relations with the GP Collaboratives in Haringey and how it would ensure that the health and protection needs of children were reflected in the Council’s response to the White Paper (action 98.2).

Re. Q12 – Committee members were informed that young people coming back into the system were not due to inappropriate case closures but rather to do with how contact about the individual was made and how relevant the data was. The Deputy Director – Children and Families explained that the service was keen to conduct further case studies investigating how information was dealt with when contact about an individual was made a number of times or when re-referrals took place. The Committee noted that “contact” included any information from any agency, even a simple update which needed adding to the system.

A Committee Member expressed concern at the number of black and ethnic minority (BME) children excluded from schools. Headteachers from certain schools with high and low levels of exclusions would be identified to be invited to a future Overview & Scrutiny Committee to talk about the different approaches when dealing with exclusions (action 98.3) including alternatives to exclusion. It was noted that the school was responsible for providing alternative placements for young people excluded for up to 5 days and the local authority provided an alternative for those excluded for more than 6 days.

Re. Q20 – It was reported that whilst the number of social workers in Haringey had increased there were still social worker vacancies. It was noted that Social Workers applying for jobs were not as concerned with financial incentives as they were about working for an employer who provided support, suitable office accommodation, training and a career path. The Committee would receive a briefing note detailing the caseloads of social workers (action 98.3.1).

Re. Q23 – The Committee requested details on the number of children

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2010**

	<p>who were eligible for but did not take up free school meals (action 98.4).</p> <p>The Committee asked further questions, the answers of which are noted below:</p> <p>The Committee congratulated Headteacher, Governors and pupils at Gladesmore School on achieving 91% 5+ A*-C GCSE results.</p> <p>In response to questions it was noted that whilst the local authority did not encourage Free Schools it maintained contact with them and worked towards a long term aim to include Free Schools within the Council's family of schools.</p> <p>Out of the £8.5 million Primary Capital Programme funding withdrawn from Haringey by the Government a settlement of £3 million would be returned to the Council.</p> <p>It was noted that the additional 40 children with Child Protection Plans moving into the Borough was due to cheaper rental prices in Haringey.</p> <p>As a result of the Southwark Judgement (which ruled that councils should ensure homeless 16-18 year olds have a full assessment and support for employment, health, education and finance as well as accommodation) there was an additional 20 looked after children in Haringey.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the briefing and answers to questions for the Cabinet Member for Children's Services be noted.</p>
<p>OSCO104.</p>	<p>SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN - UPDATE ON PROGRESS</p> <p>The Committee received the Safeguarding Plan for Haringey report, presented by the Director of Children & Young People's Service. A discussion followed and the following responses to questions were noted.</p> <p>The increase in child protection activity had affected the ability to roll-out the health visitor programme.</p> <p>Re. Action 6.03 – Safeguarding Champion scheme extended across the Children's Trust (not on track) – the Committee was informed that there had been commitment from the Chief Executive and the Borough Commander and a Haringey staff member to act as champions.</p> <p><i>Clerks note: The Chair left the meeting at this point (19:35) and Councillor Browne (Vice Chair) took over as Chair.</i></p> <p>Re. Action 7.03 it was noted that the Council would ensure that as much support and training will be available for the Third Sector as was possible.</p>

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2010**

	<p>Re. Action 4.09 – Ensuring that Young people are constantly involved and their views are heard in Safeguarding Services - it was noted that the Council was engaging with young people for example attending Youth Council meetings and similar activities.</p> <p><i>Clerks note: Councillor Bull returned to the meeting at this point (19:40 and resumed as Chair.)</i></p> <p>The Committee asked for the reasons that the recent South Tottenham Children’s Trust Board meetings had been cancelled (action 99).</p> <p>The Director of Children and Young Peoples Service congratulated Northumberland Park School on it’s good exam results.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted.</p>	
<p>OSCO105.</p>	<p>CHILDREN’S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PERFORMANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE</p> <p>The Committee received the report updating on the on the work of the Children’s Safeguarding Policy and Performance Advisory Committee, introduced by Hilary Corrick, Independent Member of the Advisory Committee and Councillor Reg Rice, Chair of the Advisory Committee. It was noted that the date of the report should read 6th October 2010.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the Advisory Committee currently reported to the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and there were on-going discussions about whether the Advisory Committee should come under the Scrutiny umbrella in future.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted.</p>	
<p>OSCO106.</p>	<p>CHILD PROTECTION PERFORMANCE AND KEY ISSUES REPORT</p> <p>The Committee received the update report on key performance issues in Child Protection, introduced by Debbie Haith, Deputy Director, Children and Families, who drew attention to the 17% increase in the number of looked after children (LAC) and the 23% increase in those subject to a children protection plan.</p> <p>The Committee noted that there had been a decrease in the numbers of assessments (NI59 and NI60) completed within the timescales (page 64) particularly over the summer period. The report contained data up to August 2010 therefore supplementary information on assessments would be circulated to Committee Members (action 100.1). It was noted that the 10 day target for initial assessments to be completed was more realistic (than the 7 day deadline) and allowed professionals more time to talk to each other about cases.</p> <p>The Committee asked for information on the 7 out of 21 care leavers</p>	

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2010**

	<p>who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) on their 19th birthday (Page 66, NI 148) (action 100.2).</p> <p>Committee members noted that the statistics provided in the performance reports were agreed by Council Members through a process conducted by the policy and performance team. Committee members were invited to email the Cabinet Member if they had suggestions on specific variations on data that they wished the Committee or the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee to consider (action 100.3).</p> <p>In response to concerns raised about the low statistics for reviews in August (page 69 of the agenda pack) and for social worker visits to children in care (CIC) (page 71) it was noted that numbers tended to dip during the summer holiday period and there were a number of reasons why visits might be cancelled and rearranged.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted.</p>
<p>OSCO107.</p>	<p>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p><u>Health Visitors</u></p> <p>Claire Wright, Assistant Director for Commissioning - NHS Haringey and Duncan Stroud, Associate Director – Communications, Engagement and Partnerships – NHS Haringey were invited to the meeting to update the Committee on the health visitor service.</p> <p>The Committee noted that Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) was currently delivering health visitor services on a priority basis due to large work loads; a high number of health visitor vacancies and an increase in the birth rate. It had not been possible to extend the universal programme for health visitor services due to the increase in child protection cases but discussions on how to best provide universal health visitor services were being held between GOSH and Haringey’s Children’s Services.</p> <p>Committee members expressed concerns that only 14% of mothers in Haringey received one-year visits from a health visitor and asked officers to investigate how other boroughs such as Tower Hamlets provided a much higher level health visitor service and noted that this could be due to the higher level of funding received by other authorities (action 101.1).</p> <p>Assistant Director for Commissioning - NHS Haringey – stated that the aspiration was to provide a multi-agency service for all in Haringey, which would be led by the health visitors service.</p> <p>The Director of Children’s Services - L. B. Haringey added that some Children’s Centres provided a full health visitor services. He also highlighted that future Sure Start grant funding would be ring-fenced and would be used to enhance health visitor services.</p>

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2010**

	<p>Officers would investigate a Committee Member's report that the baby-clinic in the Highgate Children's Centre only offered a baby weighing service and not universal health visitor services (action 101.2).</p> <p>The Committee agreed that GOSH had not fulfilled the criteria for providing health visitor services and that the department was failing new mothers in the Borough. Committee Members also expressed concerns that targeting health visitor services created a stigma which could result in fewer people taking up services.</p>	
OSCO108.	MINUTES RESOLVED that subject to the addition of Yvonne Denny, Co-opted Church Representative in the list of attendees, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
OSCO109.	FUTURE MEETINGS The next meeting would be held on Thursday 17 th March 2011.	

COUNCILLOR GIDEON BULL

Chair

The meeting ended at 20:40 hrs

SIGNED AT MEETING.....DAY

OF.....

CHAIR.....