

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Wednesday, 23rd October, 2019.

Present:- Councillors Kelly (Vice-Chair), Ajaib, Basra, Begum, Qaseem, Sadiq, A Sandhu and Sarfraz

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor N Holledge and Paul Kassapian

PART 1

10. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

11. Election of chair

Resolved: That Councillor Basra be elected as Chair of the Panel for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.

(Councillor Basra in the Chair)

12. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th July 2019

Members noted that a revised set of minutes, which had been amended in terms of numbering only, had been tabled.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2019 be approved as a correct record.

13. Member Questions

No questions were raised at the meeting.

14. Measuring Young People's Happiness - to follow

The Panel received a report which sought the Panel's views on how the approach to the measurement of children and young people's happiness in Slough might best be developed.

James O'Neill, Strategic Insight Manager, outlined the content of the report, which related to the priorities of the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy of protecting vulnerable children and improving mental health and wellbeing. The report also related to the first priority of the Five Year Plan that Slough children would grow up to be happy, healthy and successful.

In considering the report, a Member suggested that a balanced scorecard would be useful in scrutinising the work/progress, particularly if it could be made available quickly. The officer undertook to provide this.

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A Member expressed the view that a number of children who were entitled to free school meals did not take them and could therefore fall 'under the radar' and he questioned whether this could be captured. The officer confirmed that this could be factored in and that interpretation of data was significant. He added that some of the wellbeing questions would highlight such issues. Questions would need to be asked in child friendly language as the aim was build up a picture of the child.

Resolved – That the report be noted and a balanced scorecard be used to report information to the Panel in the future.

15. Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report

The Panel received the Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report which provided an account of the Board's activities in the financial year April 2018-March 2019. Members noted that some of the electronic links in the report did not work but that the documents could be made available on request.

Nick Georgiou, Independent Chair of Slough Safeguarding Boards, introduced the report and advised that the main message was that there had been significant changes required by the Department for Education (DfE) in terms of child safeguarding. The DfE had indicated that the establishment of the Slough Safeguarding Leaders Group was to be welcomed.

In response to a Member's question in relation to awareness training, the Independent Chair stated that this was a good illustration of how different agencies were working together. Betty Lynch, Safeguarding Partnership Manager, added that the different boards had worked together in order to encourage attendance at safeguarding training with approximately 40 professionals attending each session.

The Chair of the Panel sought reassurance that support for schools and teachers was included as part of the training agenda and was advised that the Director of Children's Services chaired the Safeguarding Partnership and that a coordinator assisted schools with training. In addition, emerging topics were discussed with schools.

A Member questioned the increase in the number of allegations referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Chair of the Board explained that this was a positive in that allegations were being referred and was an indication that the process was working, particularly when the outcomes were considered. The Safeguarding Partnership Manager added that the LADO was employed by the Children's Trust and had provided intensive training on safeguarding which had, in turn, increased awareness.

In response to a Member's question in relation to the number of children fostered privately, the Chair of the Board stated that he would question the accuracy of the figures. Awareness of the issues around private fostering needed to be increased, particularly in schools. An officer advised that private

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fostering was the term used when a child went to live with an individual who was not a member of their immediate or extended family for 28 days or more. These children were potentially quite vulnerable.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

16. Joint Parenting Panel Quarterly Update

The Panel received the report which provided an update on the work of the Joint Parenting Panel since the last meeting.

Members noted that the responsible officer had been unable to attend the Panel meeting and the request that any questions/comments be submitted separately.

Resolved – that

(1) the report be noted; and

(2) Members submit any questions or comments on the update report to the scrutiny officer.

17. Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2019/20

The Panel reviewed the current work programme.

Members indicated that it had been useful to visit children's centres and agreed that it would also be beneficial to visit youth groups.

Resolved – That the work programme be noted.

18. Attendance Record

Resolved – that the attendance record be noted.

19. Date of Next Meeting - 5th December 2019

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.04 pm)