

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

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WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

MEASURING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S HAPPINESS

1. **Purpose of Report**

For the Panel to discuss how an approach might best be developed to measure children and young people's happiness in Slough.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

That the panel:

- a) Review the information included in the report;
- b) Give their views on how young people's happiness might best be measured in Slough;
- c) Consider how they wish for this information to be reported back to them in future.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

This report relates to the following priorities of the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy:

- Protecting vulnerable children
- Improving mental health and wellbeing.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

This report relates to the first priority outcome of the Five Year Plan:

- Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

(b) Risk Management

Without a clear approach for defining and measuring happiness for children and young people, Slough Borough Council (SBC) would run the risk of being unable to assess in full how effectively it is delivering this aspect of outcome one of the Five Year Plan, nor to provide a benchmark from which to assess progress.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act or other legal implications to the recommendations from this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The recommended actions do not require an Equalities Impact Assessment to be conducted. However, any approach taken to measuring happiness for children and young people will need to factor in inequalities.

(e) Workforce

The development of an approach to defining and measuring happiness for children and young people will require officer time from the Strategic Insight Team (SIT) and other key services, as well as the support of Senior Leaders.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 Background

At the Scrutiny training session held on 11th July 2019, members of the Education and Children's Services (ECS) Scrutiny Panel requested that the 2019/20 work programme include three themed sessions, dividing up their scrutiny of outcome one of the Five Year Plan:

- i. Slough children will grow up to be happy
- ii. Slough children will grow up to be healthy
- iii. Slough children will grow up to be successful.

The Panel was due to receive a report on the East Berks CCG Local Transformation Plan for children's mental health and wellbeing that is currently being developed. However, this is not yet in a position to be brought before the Panel and has therefore been deferred to the next meeting of the Panel on 5th December 2019.

In discussions after the last meeting of the ECS Scrutiny Panel, officers reflected that it might be necessary to develop a more formalised approach to defining and measuring young people's happiness in Slough, in order to support the work of the Panel in scrutinising this element of Outcome One, and SBC's performance.

Additionally the SIT are currently developing a new index for Slough to support officers and members in identifying key challenges and improving services. It will be important to ensure that any such index includes appropriate indicators to account for this element of the Five Year Plan.

Developing an approach will also be important for assessing the impact of Slough's partnership boards.

5.2 What might be measured?

There is currently no standard set of performance metrics used by local authorities to measure happiness amongst children and young people. However, the Government have this month published a research report entitled *State of the Nation 2019: Children and Young People's Wellbeing* - the first such report.

This presents SBC with an opportunity to look at the methods and metrics that are being used nationally and seek to adopt those that are suitable for application by SBC and our partners. The report provided national data on the following:

- Children's average wellbeing (based on 'happiness with life' - collected through surveys), overall and by characteristics
- Children's average wellbeing over time, and proportion of children reporting being relatively happy: overall and by age and gender
- Proportion of children reporting being relatively unhappy over time, by age and gender
- Wellbeing in Free School Meal pupils
- Wellbeing in Special Educational Needs pupils
- Young people's life satisfaction, feeling that life is worthwhile, happiness and anxiety, overall and by age, gender and ethnicity
- Average life satisfaction in young people aged 16-24 in England, overall and by characteristics
- Wider indicators around children's perceptions of their lives, looking at:
 - Relationships with family and friends
 - Health
 - Appearance
 - School
 - Bullying
 - Attainment
 - Attendance
- Psychological health in adolescents, aged 14-15 to 17-18
- Factors associated with psychological health in teenage girls, looking at:
 - Relationships
 - Life experiences and behaviours
 - Schools experiences
 - Attitudes
 - Protected characteristics
- Protective and risk factors for girls' psychological health at age 14-15 and 17-18, looking at:
 - Feeling safe in their neighbourhoods
 - Seeing friends
 - Sleeping 8-10 hours
 - Positive attitude to school
 - High locus of control
 - Physical exercise
 - Social media use
 - Risky behaviours
 - Time on homework
 - Bullying, not online
 - Bullying, including online

5.3 How SBC plan to incorporate this into reporting

The SIT will investigate how much of this information is available at local authority level, as well as developing a strategy for filling any gaps that exist.

We will also work closely with the council's schools, early years, young people and public health teams to develop surveys to help ascertain a greater understanding of the views of Slough's young people.

Once the SIT have a clearer sense of what information is available, and more importantly, what this information tells us about where SBC and partners should focus collective efforts, we will look to bring a further report back to the Panel for consideration.

It may become possible to produce a balanced scorecard for the Panel to review - similar to those adopted by the Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel.

6. Comments of Other Committees

This report has yet to be seen by any other committees.

7. Conclusion

Developing an approach to defining and measuring children and young people's happiness will help the council and partners in service improvement, and support the work of the ECS Scrutiny Panel in providing effective scrutiny of this element of outcome one of the Five Year Plan.

Officers would welcome the Panel's engagement on what form this approach should take and how they wish to scrutinise this subject in the coming years.

8. Appendices Attached

None

9. Background Papers

'A' [State of the nation 2019: children and young people's wellbeing, Department for Education, 10th October 2019.](#)