

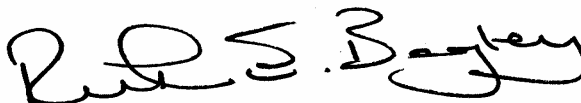
# Public Document Pack

Date of issue: 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2008

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> (Councillors Grewal (Chair), Basharat, Coad, Davis, Dodds, Matloob and Walsh (2 BILLD Vacancies))
<b>DATE AND TIME:</b>	THURSDAY, 5TH JUNE, 2008 AT 6.30 PM
<b>VENUE:</b>	COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, BATH ROAD, SLOUGH
<b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER:</b> (for all enquiries)	KEVIN BARRETT (01753) 875014

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



**RUTH BAGLEY**  
Chief Executive

**NOTE TO MEMBERS**  
This meeting is an approved duty for the payment of travel expenses.

AGENDA

PART 1

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
	Apologies for absence.		



**AGENDA**  
**ITEM**

**REPORT TITLE**

**PAGE**

**WARD**

**CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

1. Declarations of Interest.  
  
(Members are reminded of their duty to declare personal and personal prejudicial interests in matters coming before this meeting as set out in the Local Code of Conduct).
2. Election of Vice-Chair.
3. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 10th April, 2008. 1 - 6
4. Minutes of Scrutiny Panels - 7 - 32
  - (a) Education & Children's Services of 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2008.
  - (b) Green & Built Environment of 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2008.
  - (c) Community & Cultural Services of 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2008.
  - (d) Health of 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2008.
5. Appointment of Scrutiny Panels, Allocation of Seats and Appointment of Members. 33 - 36

**SCRUTINY ISSUES**

6. Broom and Poplar Houses Refurbishment. 37 - 42
7. Presentation - Statement of Accounts 2007/08.
8. Financial, Performance and Human Resources Monitoring 2008/09. 43 - 48
9. Report on Achievements from Resources Directorate - Capital Programme 2007/08 and Targets for 2008/09. 49 - 56
10. Forward Agenda Plan. 57 - 58
11. Date of Next Meeting - Thursday, 3rd July, 2008.

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Special facilities may be made available for disabled or non-English speaking persons. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

Minicom Number for the hard of hearing – (01753) 875030

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**Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 10th April, 2008.**

**Present:-** Councillors Swindlehurst (Chair), Dhillon and Small.

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillors Anderson, Arnold, P Choudhry, Coad and Shine.

**PART I**

**87. Declarations of Interest.**

None were declared.

**88. Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 28th February, 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**89. Minutes of Scrutiny Panels.**

The Minutes of the following Scrutiny Panels were noted and received:-

Education and Children's Services of 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2008.

Green and Built Environment of 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2008.

Community and Cultural Services of 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2008.

Health of 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2008.

**90. Recruitment & Retention of Senior Staff - Update.**

The Committee at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 had considered a report on the recruitment and retention of senior staff following a number of Chief Officers having left the Council's employ in the first half of 2007/08. The Committee had requested a further update in 6 months' time to include the following issues:-

- Comparison of senior staff turnover as compared to similar local authorities.
- Details as to whether retention across all categories of staff was an issue in Slough as compared to similar authorities.
- Strategy for tackling retention issues.

The Strategic Director of Human Resources presented her report covering the issues of interest to the Committee. She commented that, as with most authorities, the Council had pockets of recruitment and retention difficulties that were addressed through a variety of approaches. The Council's turnover rates were comparable with other authorities and some turnover was desirable to refresh the organisation. It was anticipated that, having secured appointments to complete the Corporate Management Team, there should now be a measure of stability as the Council embraced the challenges in

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delivering quality services to residents. The report also set out in detail the recruitment, retention and replacement strategy setting out a range of approaches adopted by the Council in this area.

Members welcomed the information in the report and raised the following issues:-

- A Member expressed disappointment at the small number of applications received for the recent post of Strategic Director of Improvement and Development. The Director responded that it was considered that the pay package and the advertisement had been attractive but it was possibly the case that there was only a limited number of suitable individuals in the market who would be interested. However, a good appointment had now been made.
- Reference was made to the Pertemps contract and whether this had made a difference to the Council's success in recruiting staff. The Director responded that, whilst the contract had only been in place for some six months, there was now a dip in the amount being spent on agency and consultancy staff although it was not yet clear whether this was due to an increase in the number of permanent staff. A Member asked whether there were clear and measurable targets as regards the success of the contract and this was confirmed. Following further debate, it was agreed that an update on the Pertemps contract be submitted to the Committee at its July, 2008 meeting.
- A Member asked whether research was undertaken as to the reasons why people left the authority. The Director confirmed that an exit interview process was in place but that the findings generally were that people moved to other posts for reasons of career advancement rather than any dissatisfaction with Slough.
- In response to a question, the Director updated the meeting on the current progress with the job evaluation and harmonisation review which now had agreement from the local and regional trade union representatives. The proposals would now be subject to ratification by the trade unions at national level prior to a ballot of their members. Acceptance at the ballot would enable implementation of the agreement.

**Resolved** - That the report be noted and welcomed and that an update on the success of the Pertemps contract be submitted to the Committee at its July, 2008 meeting.

### 91. **Interim Accommodation Arrangements for the New Slough Islamic School.**

This item had been deferred at the last meeting of the Committee and was now submitted for information as the Cabinet had subsequently resolved the recommendations as set out in the report. These were that the Slough Islamic School should use the current Lea Infant and Junior school buildings until 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2009 or until a new school was completed and, secondly, that officers be authorised to approve the terms of the lease, etc.

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Members asked a number of questions of detail about the Islamic School project and Officers noted that SISP were still confident that they would complete the building by the required date. The interim accommodation arrangements were noted and it was -

**Resolved** - That the report and the current position be noted.

### 92. Funding Options for Lea Nursery and Children's Centre.

The Committee was reminded that the Slough Islamic School Project (SISP) had appointed a preferred bidder to build their new school on the Lea campus. At the same time as tenders were invited for this contract, they were invited for the provision of a Nursery and Children's Centre for the Borough Council. Capital funding had been set aside of £2.2m but the tenders received gave construction costs of between £3m and £3.9m, representing a potential funding gap of between £0.8m and £1.7m. The report set out the action that had subsequently been taken to reduce the funding gap and "value engineering" was being undertaken with the preferred bidder to remove non-essential costs. However, it was anticipated that there would continue to be a funding gap of some £1m and the Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2008 was being requested to resolve whether the Centre should go ahead as previously agreed; whether it should be postponed and re-tendered; or whether the proposed Children's Centre should not proceed.

Committee Members expressed considerable concerns at this funding gap. Whilst the Committee in general supported option (a) as set out in the report, namely to go ahead with the construction of the scheme as proposed and explore options for bridging the funding gap, it was agreed that the following issues needed to be brought to the attention of the Cabinet:-

- The Committee noted that whilst there was a provision added for inflation within the project, and building construction costs had risen considerably above the rate of other inflation during the planning and design phase, the cost of the scheme was still substantially above that budgeted for. The Committee had considerable misgivings as to how such a situation could have been arrived at.
- It was noted that a sum of £2.2m had been set aside within the capital programme for the provision of the Lea Nursery and Children's Centre. The Committee was advised that a total capital provision had been made available to the authority to provide for children's centres and this sum had been split four ways. However, because of the particular design of the Lea project, it should have been clear at a much earlier stage that the budgeted sum was inadequate. Members expressed concern that, at the design stage, inadequate regard appeared to have been given to the capital funding available for the scheme, thereby giving rise to the funding gap situation in which the Council now found itself. The Committee therefore requested that detailed consideration needed to be given to the process by which this scheme had been designed so as to learn any lessons for the future.

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- It was agreed that a full review of the whole process from design stage to the present time be undertaken so that lessons could be learnt in respect of future schemes to prevent the Council finding itself in a similar situation in the future. It was agreed that the Cabinet ask Officers to undertake a review of the project to date to pull out such learning points.
- Members also asked a number of questions about the funding arrangements for the Muslim School and whether they had been able to raise their 10% proportion of the costs. Officers advised that as this project was being delivered by SISP and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the funding arrangements would not have any impact on the Borough Council's budget.

**Resolved** - That recommendation (a) as set out in the Cabinet report be proceeded with but that the considerable concerns of the Committee as set out above be taken on board, including the recommendation that a full review of the whole process from design stage to the present time be undertaken so that lessons can be learnt in respect of future schemes.

### 93. **Scrutiny Call-in - Local Area Business Growth Incentive Scheme (LABGI) - Allocation of Funding.**

Councillor Anderson had submitted a post-decision call-in on the issue of LABGI funding in the following terms:-

“This is a major decision for the Council which has not yet been through the scrutiny process. I do not take issue with community projects benefiting from the LABGI additional money; however, I would like to call in the decision to ensure that this is a legitimate use of the money as it is usually supposed to be used to promote further business growth. I would like the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to verify that this is a legitimate use – if it is found to be a legitimate use of the money then I have no problem with it proceeding with the decision. Also, I am unsure that this is the most effective use of the money – community projects in residential side streets are unlikely to have any real effect in attracting new businesses to Slough. I would like Scrutiny to use its role to ensure that the Council will not be challenged if the Council uses the money for these purposes.”

Members were advised that the call-in had been submitted to a special meeting of the Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> April which had decided to proceed with its earlier decision to allocate the sum of £25,000 per ward and that the remainder of the funding be held pending the financial outturn. The Committee noted that Councillor Anderson's concern centred around whether the use of the monies for community projects was a legitimate use of LABGI monies. Additionally, he had concerns about the way in which the local ward councillors would decide how the provision would be allocated within their own ward.

The Committee was advised that, at the present time, there was no requirement for authorities to utilise LABGI monies for a particular purpose as



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the awarding of the funding was seen as a “reward” for encouraging economic development in an area. Whilst the rules may change in the future, there was no difficulty with regard to the Cabinet’s proposals for the utilisation of the funding for projects in individual wards.

The Committee did however have some concerns both at the use to which the monies were being put and the process for agreeing the projects in question with local councillors. Members expressed the view that, given the very real needs in the town and the lack of available funding to undertake some of the Council’s priorities, the utilisation of these windfall monies in this way did not appear to be the most appropriate use of the funding.

Additionally, individual Councillors expressed concern that there did not appear to be a clear process in place for the ward councillors to agree schemes within their wards, with some Members announcing schemes without having spoken to their colleague councillors. The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the appropriate mechanism would be for the ward councillors in each ward jointly to submit in writing a proposal to the appropriate Director setting out their proposals for this expenditure which could then be signed off. It was however agreed that the Cabinet should be asked to ensure that such process was made absolutely clear to all Members.

**Resolved** - That Cabinet be requested to note the Committee’s concern at the decision to allocate the LABGI monies for ward projects, given the other very real priorities in the town; and that Officers be instructed to draw up and circulate to all Members clear guidelines for the agreement and allocation of these monies within the wards.

### 94. Review of Fees and Charges for 2008/09.

The Strategic Director of Resources submitted a report setting out in detail the review of fees and charges for the 2008/09 financial year. The Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> April was being requested to note the charges and to approve any that were not able to be set at Director level under the existing scheme of delegation.

In noting the report, the Committee commented on the extremely detailed information submitted and suggested that a complete review was required of the way in which the fees and charges were reported to Members so that only the key areas were reported in future with the vast bulk of minor charges being dealt with at Officer level. The Chief Executive agreed that, for future years, a review was required of the format of reporting this information.

It was also suggested that it would be extremely useful, where there was a large increase in a particular charge, that a justification be provided for this so that Members were clear about the reasons for it.

Concern was also expressed of the fact that in some cases where there was a very minor increase in charges (e.g. 50p for allotments), Council Officers were sending individual letters, the cost of preparing and posting of which must

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exceed the increase itself. The result of this practice also needed to be reviewed.

**Resolved** - That the report on the review of fees and charges for 2008/09 be noted but that the issues raised by the Committee be taken into account in respect of the reporting of fees in future years.

### **95. Performance Monitoring 2007/08.**

The Committee considered an information report highlighting the Council's overall performance from financial management to service and HR activity. The report gave the third quarter statistics from the Human Resources department, the latest position on the HRA as well as the likely outturn for both revenue and capital expenditure. The report also gave the latest position regarding Council Tax capping and sought approval to the writing off of Council Tax debts.

Members noted that bond monies in respect of Broom and Poplar Houses had now been received by the Council in the sum of £360,000 and this was to be transferred to an earmarked reserve in order to offset any further planning appeals the Council was required to meet. Officers were continuing to look at options to seek additional compensation for the authority. In response to Members' questions, it was noted that a further update report on the scheme was due to be submitted to the June meeting of the Committee.

With regard to the costs of planning enquiries, some concern was expressed at the considerable financial implications for the Council where the Planning Committee was taking particular decisions against the strong recommendations of Officers.

**Resolved** - That the report be noted.

### **96. Forward Agenda Plan.**

The Committee noted its forward agenda plan for future meetings. It was noted that the reports on the Haymill/Thames Valley Community Centres and on property disposals (estate shops/Windsor Road) were due to be submitted to the June meeting, as was the update on the Broom and Poplar audit recommendations.

**Resolved** - That the reports be noted.

### **97. Vote of Thanks**

The Committee passed a vote of thanks to the Chair for his service during the municipal year now ending. The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their support during his year of office.

Chair

(Note: The meeting opened at 6.30 p.m. and closed at 9.00 p.m.)

**Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Monday, 17th March, 2008.**

**Present:-** Councillors Maclsaac (Vice-Chair in the Chair), Dhillon, Mann, O'Connor and Pabbi.

**Education Non-Voting Co-opted Members**

Sandy Hopkinson, Primary School Representative  
Margaret Lenton, Head Teacher Representative

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillors P Choudhry, Finn and Jenkins.

**PART I**

**45. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**46. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 were agreed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of Councillor Jenkins in the list of attendees.

**47. Schools' OfSTED Inspections**

An update on the outcome of schools' OfSTED inspections from between October, 2007 and February, was provided for Members' information. The report primarily contained good news concerning the schools that had received OfSTED inspections. The summary of results showed that all grades were 'good' or 'outstanding'. Officers informed the panel that the inspections that had taken place in the previous few weeks had also shown good results. The Director of Education and Children's Services noted that parents were beginning to recognise the success of Slough schools and the applications to Slough secondary schools had increased significantly this year.

Members placed on record that their congratulations be conveyed to the schools concerned and that Officers be commended for producing a clear and concise report.

**Resolved -** That the report be noted.

**48. Slough 2007 Key Stages Summary Results**

This report contained good news and showed that the majority of students in schools were achieving very well. The foundation results were good considering the base that children started school with. Key Stage 1 results further improved on the foundation results. Although Slough's Key Stage 2

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results were often seen as a weakness they had improved from previous years. The reason for the dip in results at this stage was due to the high level of mobility in Slough schools. Those pupils beginning and ending the stage in Slough schools achieved very well. New measures of progress were to be introduced and Officers felt that these would improve the results further. Results from Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 were also exceptionally good.

A Member thanked the Officer for the explanation for the slight anomaly in the results at Key Stage 2 and suggested that it would be useful in future to receive a breakdown of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 results between selective and non-selective schools. It was noted in the past two or three years comprehensives have improved massively and the grammar schools have retained their excellent standards. A co-opted Member noted that at Slough grammar schools the results were taken for Key Stage 3 at the end of Year 8, a year early, as they were taking part in a national pilot programme. The Scrutiny Panel passed on their commendations to the schools.

**Resolved** - That the report be noted.

### **49. Slough's Disabled Children's Residential Respite Unit Breakaway - Statement of Purpose**

Robin Crofts outlined this report and introduced Jackie Wright and Sue Betts who worked more closely with the Breakaway children's home and would provide further information to the Members. Sue Betts, the Manager of the children's home, gave a detailed explanation to Members of some of the information included in the report. Thirty children had access to respite care at the unit; some of these just for teatime visits, some had one or two overnight stays a month and some were on a part care programme in order to prevent family breakdown or out of area care. A recent OfSTED report received by the unit ranked the provision overall as good with no recommendations for improvement.

The Chair noted that many of the children attending the unit had a number of difficulties and the competency of the staff managed this well. It was good that there was a unit such as this within the Borough. It was agreed that a visit for a Councillor would be arranged. The Director of Education and Children's Services informed the panel that Breakaway offered continuity of care for children as well as continuity for their education and health care needs as many attended the paediatric unit at Wexham Park Hospital. Mr Crofts confirmed that after Easter Arbour Vale residential unit would be opening which would provide 12 beds. Arbour Vale would cater for children on the autistic spectrum and would be able to support a large number in due course. Although with a slightly different remit it would work together with the Breakaway unit and therefore an amended statement of purpose may need to be reviewed for next year and brought back to the Scrutiny Panel.

**Resolved** - That the contents of the report be noted and that the Statement of Purpose be approved.

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### 50. Youth Offending Team Progress Report

Shelly LaRose, Youth Offending Team (YOT) Manager, presented the report to the Panel. Members were reminded that the Slough YOT was a partnership arrangement funded by Slough's Education and Children's Services, Thames Valley Probation Service, Health Service – Berkshire East Primary Care Trust and Thames Valley Police. The plan was produced yearly and the work of the YOT was divided into statutory provision and preventive work. It was noted that much more preventative work was being done at present, in line with the direction received from Central Government. Much of the work aimed to achieve a balance when dealing with addressing offending behaviour in order to make Slough safer.

It was noted that motoring and violence against the person offences had gone down which reflected the excellent work of the YOT. However, there was a small cohort committing theft offences which had gone up over the past year along with drug related offences. However this group is now believed to have moved on from Slough although others may already be taking their place. One of the key objectives of the YOT was to communicate with young people to bring down offending. To this purpose a youth café had been set up in Cippenham in order to engage with young people. It was noted that one of the big challenges for the YOT was to get young people into education training or employment. Cumulatively Slough had achieved 71% of young people in education, training or employment. Although this was short of the 90% target set by the Government, it had increased dramatically from 40%. There was a 6% target of young people to be on remand. Slough was currently at 9%, this was due to just one or two people in a small cohort. It was noted that small changes could dramatically affect percentages. The YOT was meeting offending behaviour reduction targets and working with MALTS. It was reported that this would be an important function in the future.

Reoffending was due to be looked into over the 2008/09 year as the criteria for this had changed. At previous meeting of the Panel Members requested a breakdown by types of offence. More females than males were offending at present; this may be due to a link with drugs. It was mainly 16 and 17 year olds who were the most prolific offenders. The ethnic breakdown of young offenders broadly matched the ethnicity of the population as a whole.

The YOT were in the process recruiting more appropriate adults and Members of the Management Board. It was noted that a capacity and capability assessment would be carried out in line with the Local Area Agreement and priorities would be agreed between the YOT and the Youth Justice Board. The current aim for the Slough YOT was to maintain the existing Level 4 and to consolidate this position. Slough was in the top ten of its selected statistical neighbours and the manager of the YOT gave her thanks to the Management Board for their hard work.

Members questioned whether a significant proportion of theft offences were related to drugs misuse and questioned what had been undertaken in Slough to intervene in this. It was brought to Members attention that the Police

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statistics showed that offending rates had decreased. However some young people needed rehabilitation treatment rather than just community care that was currently available. The YOT's aim was to engage more staff at a lower level in order to tackle this from the beginning. 49 drug offences were recorded during 2007/08, although the number was probably far higher as drug offences were not always recorded. Officers estimated that this could be as high as double the recorded amount and within this there could be as many as 15 to 20 who were heavy users.

Members questioned how many in the YOT had struggled academically at school or suffered from learning disabilities. It was explained that problems at school could be a factor for many of the young people which was why the YOT was focusing heavily on achieving the target for people in education employment and training. Inadequate parenting was a contributor to some of the offenders but some came from very supportive families who often tried to help and intervene. Dyslexia screening was regularly carried out but due to resources this was no longer the case. However if a problem was revealed with a young person they would be screened.

The Director of Education and Children's Services informed Members that the YOT's hours were not 9 to 5 but spread across days, evenings and weekends to ensure that central services were in place for young people. The Chair suggested that the YOT, if possible, work with other support services in providing information with particular reference to identifying those with dyslexia.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted

### **51. Information On Youth Services In the East of Slough**

The Scrutiny Panel received information regarding youth service provision in the east of Slough. A map that showed the locations of youth service provision was tabled. Horsemoor Green in Langley was the only main centre in the east of Slough. There were two centres to the central east of Slough one of which, the main Slough youth centre, was a specialist art and creative industry unit. This was popular with residents throughout Slough and was open to 10.00 p.m. on a drop-in basis to provide excellent provision for young people. The Upton Lea centre was a general use community centre and at present held a youth club one night a week. This centre was heavily used and there were plans to increase the provision to two nights.

It was noted that the Youth Service was collecting information on activities that were available in order to set up a comprehensive website for young people to access the services available to them. Horsemoor Green would be open for further hours but Officers were also looking for alternative provision in the east of the Borough particularly in the Colnbrook and Poyle area. Street work was carried out with young people on the streets of Slough by a dedicated street work team. This was obviously more accessible in the summer than in the winter and it was felt that further provision was needed. Significant funding had been secured for a mobile unit and hopefully further

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funding would be available. Officers were looking to bring this on line over the next year.

A Member noted that their Ward on the western side of Slough also had poor provision for youth services and it was felt that the service needed to be better spread geographically overall. Officers noted that a wider mapping exercise was carried out in order to compile the report and the provision was mainly located in the north-west and central-west of Slough. The Director of Education and Children's Services noted that Officers had met with young people through the Young People's Cabinet and it was noted that they often did not have information to access youth services which was why the website was being set up. The Chair noted that there were clearly large gaps in provision and that people were very territorial. It would therefore be difficult to try to engage people to attend youth clubs in other areas. It was suggested that the Youth Service Team could work with local parishes in order to locate venues for youth service provision.

**Resolved** - That the report be noted.

### **52. Minutes of the Admissions forum held on 17th January 2008**

Members discussed a number of issues surrounding the recent news regarding school admissions and suggested that a report on this should be brought to the next meeting.

**Resolved** -

- a) That the minutes be noted.
- b) That a report be presented to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Panel detailing the numbers of first choice places offered in Slough at primary and secondary schools and School places planning.

### **53. Minutes of the Slough Schools Forum held on 23rd January 2008**

**Resolved** - That the minutes be noted.

### **54. Forward Work Programme**

A Co-opted Member informed the panel that it would be useful if the panel could look into the skills training provided at the skills centre set up by Windsor Boys Schools. The centre was also used by Slough Schools and it was felt by member of the education business partnership that some of the training, such as hairdressing, was inappropriate.

**Resolved:**

- a) That a report on provision at the Skills Centre be provided at the next meeting to address the appropriateness of training.
- b) Agenda plan to be amended as agreed in the appropriate items.

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### 55. Any Other Business

**Forced Marriages** - A number of Members were concerned about the recent reports on forced marriages and wanted to know the extent of the problem in the Slough area. Officers noted that it was very difficult to get accurate quantitative information but agreed that it was a serious issue and that further action should take place to address the problem.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Luton report be distributed to E&CS scrutiny members.
- b) That Officers decide on appropriate action concerning further steps in addressing the problem of forced marriages, including reporting to Members.

**Music Provision for Mallards** - A Member raised concerns about the lack of access for children to learn a musical instrument and suggested that provision to learn a musical instrument is found for children at Mallards.

**Resolved:** That officers would investigate whether provision could be found in the current budget or whether a bid could be made for the youth opportunity fund.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 p.m. and closed at 8.20 p.m.)



**Green and Built Environment Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Wednesday, 26th March, 2008.**

**Present:-** Councillors Hewitt (Chair), Dhillon (until 7.10 p.m.), Parmar, Plimmer, Small and Swindlehurst (from 6.40 to 7.40 p.m.).

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillors Coad and Maclsaac.

**PART I**

**53. Declarations of Interest.**

None.

**54. Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Panel held on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 were approved as a correct record.

The following issues were raised as matters arising:-

Cippenham Development – Completion of Sports Pitches

Following the discussion at the last meeting, the Assistant Director, Transport and Planning reminded the Panel that the condition under the Section 106 Agreement limiting the number of homes that could be occupied before the four sports pitches were completed had still not been complied with as the areas in question had not been seeded and it was now getting perilously close to becoming a breach of condition. The developers were talking to officers regularly and the last discussion had taken place some three weeks previously and they continued to monitor the position closely. There was still time to comply with the condition through, for example, turfing the areas in question although this would be more expensive. If the condition was not complied with, consideration would be given as to what enforcement action the Council should take and Members would be kept updated on the position.

Report on Distribution of Burglar Alarms

It was noted that the report requested at the last meeting on People 1<sup>st</sup>'s policy in respect of the distribution of burglar alarm had not been received and officers agreed to endeavour to ensure that it was submitted to the next meeting.

Northern Road/Cumberland Avenue – Traffic Management Scheme

In response to a Member's question, the Assistant Director Transport and Planning advised that the safety audit being undertaken into the revised scheme had not yet been finalised but it was proposed to submit a comprehensive report to the June meeting of the Panel. Members requested

that this report, as well as including the safety audit and police accident statistics, should also include full details of any comments received from the local Residents' Association/Neighbourhood Action Group as well as representations by individual residents and this was agreed.

Members expressed some concern that local people were not being kept informed of progress and it was agreed that a briefing note be prepared for the Residents' Association and the Neighbourhood Action Group so that they were aware that a further report on the matter would be considered in June.

### 55. Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Update

The Head of Drugs and Community Safety made a presentation to the Panel updating it on the work of the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) drawing attention to a number of issues including the following:-

- Restructuring of the DAAT
- Work to reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs.
- Work to reduce the harm caused by alcohol.
- The DAAT's performance over the past six months and its delivery plan for the coming financial year.

He concluded that performance had improved over the recent period and the restructuring and tendering of the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) contract should further improve delivery in the coming year. Planning for 2008/09 was on track and included new options in relation to action against the problems caused by alcohol. He would report further to the Panel on progress in six months' time. Of particular note was the fact that there had been an increase of some 16% in the number of drugs users who were participating in treatment programmes as well as a small increase in the number who stayed in treatment for 12 weeks or more. Whilst much work still needed to be done, this trend was encouraging. It was also noted that, as compared to other authorities in the Thames Valley area, Slough was getting a higher percentage of drugs users into treatment and had a relatively high success rate in people under arrest being tested for drugs use.

Members raised the following issues in the subsequent debate:-

- Whilst the increase in the number of people in treatment was welcomed, Members asked whether any information was available on the number of rough sleepers in Slough at the present time as this could be an indication of the level of drug and alcohol misuse. Whilst the officer did not have that information available at the meeting, he undertook to provide it to the Member concerned.
- It was confirmed in response to a question that, whilst the DAAT had changed certain of the partner agencies it used to deliver some aspects of its work, its relationship with SHOC and Look Ahead was unchanged.
- A Member asked for additional information about the length of time individuals were in treatment and the relapse rate of those individuals

who had gone through a treatment programme. The officer undertook to ensure that the requested information was provided.

- A Member noted that there were incidents of “chaotic” residents or tenants who, as well as being a danger to themselves, often caused considerable problems for those around them and sought clarification of what action the Council was taking to address this difficult issue. The Strategic Director of the Green and Built Environment confirmed that this issue had been identified as one requiring urgent attention and a cross-Directorate workshop including all relevant service areas had been set up to undertake a full review of the current procedures for dealing with such individuals with a view to completing the piece of work by July. Members requested that the outcomes of this important piece of work be reported back to the Panel and this was agreed.
- A Member asked whether, where an individual was arrested for drug possession, consideration was given where possible to them receiving treatment rather than being prosecuted. The officer responded that, wherever possible, the DIP endeavoured to get individuals into treatment as an alternative to prison but, at the end of the day, it was a decision for the legal system.

On completion of the presentation and questions, it was –

**Resolved** – That the current position be noted and welcomed and that a further report be submitted to the Panel in six months’ time.

### **56. A Single Use Plastic Carrier Bag Policy For Slough Borough Council**

The Head of Environmental Services and Quality submitted a report as requested by the Panel on the possible introduction of a single use plastic carrier bag policy within the town. In introducing his report, he referred to the fact that whilst certain trials had already been carried out in places, the national picture had changed recently in that the Chancellor in his budget statement announced that supermarkets would be forced to charge their customers for carrier bags but would be given one year to voluntarily end reliance on single use carrier bags. Proceeds from the tax would be passed to environmental charities and it was proposed to introduce this legislation for enactment in 2009. It was suggested that this could result in a 90% reduction in the number of carrier bags in circulation.

Given the more helpful national picture, the Council could more confidently endeavour to introduce a local policy, whilst bearing in mind that it would not be possible to force local retailers to comply with it. He outlined the five key elements of such a local approach, namely –

- A publicity campaign using the “Cleaner, Safer, Greener” theme and integration with the existing work plan.
- A redesign of the “Keep Slough Clean” jute bag with a number available for free distribution at events or as prizes and it may be possible to secure sponsorship for this.

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- Production of a guide showing retail outlets that had undertaken to charge for plastic bags, perhaps integrated in some way with the Fairtrade directory.
- Retail outlets that were responsive to the policy could receive some form of door sticker or certificate to inform customers of their “green credentials”.
- Overview of the Council’s own internal practices e.g. at Wexham Nursery, libraries and events to ensure that single use plastic carrier bags were not being given away.

Members welcomed the proposals whilst noting that significant improvement would only be achieved through national legislation as local authorities had no enforcement powers in this area at the present time. However, it was felt that the Council should be endeavouring to take the lead locally wherever possible.

**Resolved** – That the report and the proposed local approach be welcomed and endorsed.

### 57. **Emergency Plan for Notifiable Animal Disease Outbreak**

The Emergency Planning Officer introduced her report outlining the new Borough Council Emergency Plan for notifiable animal health outbreaks and advised that a copy of the full document was available for Members to view in the Members’ Room. She outlined the legislative background and the key elements as set out in the Plan, advising that the role played by the lead officers in this authority would be key to the effective control and eradication of a disease situation and ensuring that the needs of the local community were provided for. Whilst it would have been hard to imagine a year ago that Slough would have been involved in diseases such as foot and mouth, the recent outbreak had shown the importance of being prepared for such eventualities and this plan set out the roles of the authority and of its officers to control and eradicate the disease.

Members welcomed the report and it was –

**Resolved** – That the report be noted and welcomed.

### 58. **Highway Engineering Programme Of Works**

The Assistant Director, Transport and Planning introduced a report setting out the proposed programme of works to be carried out by the Council’s highway engineering team in the 2008/09 financial year. The report included details of the carriageway surfacing programme, the footway priority list and the programme of street lighting schemes as well as information about the provision for drainage works.

A Member asked when work to improve the roadway in Concorde Way and Griffin Close would be undertaken and he was advised that these roads would be reviewed for the 2009/10 programme.

Specific reference was made to a lighting scheme recently undertaken in Common Road, Langley and the barriers and other equipment which appeared to have left in an untidy manner in the roadway. The officer undertook to ensure that this situation was checked and rectified. Members asked a number of questions of detail on the proposed programme and it was

**Resolved** - That the report be noted.

**59. Road Safety Profile of Slough 2007- A report from the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership**

The Head of Transport introduced a report arising from the collaboration taking place between local authorities and the Thames Valley region and the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership. The work undertaken included a road safety profile for Slough which highlighted some of the key information and trends in Slough, allowing comparisons to be made with other areas in the Thames Valley. Such information could be used as a tool to highlight and help guide road safety activities in the Borough. He commented that whilst the final report was due to be published in about June, the report had highlighted a number of key areas where Slough's accident and other statistics were high compared with other towns, particularly in regard to speeding and violation of red traffic signals, amongst others. The report also highlighted a higher than average incidents of collisions involving certain categories of resident in Slough and this was extremely significant as it could help the Borough to target education and training on these particular groups. He confirmed that, when the final report had been published, it would be made available to all interested parties.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

**60. Transport Scheme Priority List**

The Head of Transport reminded the Panel that the principle of scheme prioritisation was discussed at previous meetings and Members had endorsed the approach being taken by officers to assess the relative priority of all transport-related schemes. Because Slough did not have sufficient resources to carry out all of the essential traffic and safety schemes, it was essential that schemes were assessed and prioritised upon agreed selection criteria including casualty rates, Local Transport Plan objectives and targets together with achievement of corporate priorities. Based upon the agreed methodology, he circulated a schedule setting out the priority list for Members' consideration. He noted that the top priority scheme was for the A4 Bath Road from Dover Road to the town centre and, for comparison purposes, also circulated the assessment of the proposed Northborough Road scheme advising how the two priority rankings had been arrived at, given the issues raised by the Panel at an earlier meeting.

Members raised the following issues in the subsequent discussion –

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- Clarification was sought as to why it was proposed to close the subways at the Co-op roundabout and elsewhere. Officers responded that there had been well documented community safety issues with a number of subways including these over a number of years and it was now proposed to proceed to close those particular ones as there were adequate surface level crossings available. Similarly, it was proposed to close the Tuns Lane subway at a future date although this was more problematical as there was no suitable surface level crossing available at the present time.
- A Ward Member asked why the scheme for Langley High Street - Rat Running had such a low priority. The criteria for drawing up the priority were explained, particularly the fact that there were other areas in the Borough with a worse accident record than this one. The Member expressed her concern that, given that this was a "safe route to school", it should have a higher priority.
- Further clarification was sought as to the work to be undertaken at Northborough Road. Officers commented that a full appraisal would take place during 2008/09 which would take into account all relevant issues including street lighting, etc. The issue of large vehicles using the area would also be investigated as part of this work.

**Resolved** - That the Transport Scheme Priority List be noted.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 p.m. and closed at 8.43 p.m.)

**Community and Cultural Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 27th March, 2008.**

**Present:-** Councillors Small (Chair), Dhaliwal, Dhillon, Latif Khan and Shine.

**Co-opted Members Present:-** Barbara Goldstein and Glynys Higgins

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillors Aziz, Grewal & Jenkins and Heather Mason.

**PART I**

**34. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Small declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – ALMO Update - as she was a Board Member of People 1<sup>st</sup> (Slough). Councillor Dhaliwal declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as she was a tenant of People 1<sup>st</sup> (Slough). They would however remain and speak during consideration of these items.

**35. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 were approved as a correct record subject to the inclusion of Barbara Goldstein and Glynys Higgins in the list of attendees.

**36. Matters Arising**

The Member who raised the issue concerning ground maintenance on the Britwell Estate had not yet received any feedback on this issue. It was agreed that this would be passed to the appropriate Officer to respond to the Members' queries.

The Panel were reminded that a letter had been distributed to all Members of the Panel informing them that the impression given at the last meeting concerning the changes to housing benefit was misleading and the letter gave the Members the correct information regarding this.

**37. Customer Service Centre Update**

The Head of the Customer Service Centre (CSC) introduced a report updating the Panel on the current service level statistics in respect of the Customer Service Centre. Members were reminded that the statistics contained in the report were the same format as previously but included recent information. The report updated Members on the current service level statistics on the CSC. The report contained customer analysis data including ethnicity, gender, age range and disability. The report also contained statistical information on the call centre telephone enquiries, including time taken to answer calls and deal with telephone queries as well as front of house enquiries at Landmark Place.

Members raised the following issues in the subsequent discussion of the item:-

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- A Member questioned how information regarding ethnicity was collated. Members were informed that this information was collected by CSC staff when answering enquiries by asking a number of questions. Members present at the meeting confirmed that they had never been asked this information.
- A Co-opted Member requested further information on the purpose of gathering this information. An Officer explained that the CSC was continually monitoring the service it provided and how this could be improved. Through the collection and analysis of the information presented in the report the CSC could address the management of different issues. It was confirmed that although none of the Members on the Panel had been asked the appropriate questions, in the last quarter 38,268 callers had been asked, enough to compile the appropriate statistics. An Officer noted that the questions being asked depended upon the call volume and the type of query. If the caller had asked to be put through to a different Department or person then the questions would not have been asked. In many instances the CSC would already have the information about the caller. A Member asked whether callers were asked these questions before the query was dealt with. The staff at the CSC would gauge when and whether it was appropriate to ask the questions and in many circumstances most of the information had already been gathered.
- A Member informed the meeting that they were concerned about the apparent lack of publicity for the recent Britwell Talk Shop open day and asked if it was known how many people attended this event and how many knew about it. An Officer informed the meeting that as the open day was part of the Lifelong Learning Team's remit they organised the publicity for the event. However a number of posters and leaflets had been put up and distributed in Landmark Place. It was also believed that a lot of work had been completed concerning this event in the Britwell area. It was agreed that the Officer would look into this and find out what work had been carried out and a report concerning this would be brought to the next meeting.
- A number of Members were concerned that when they phoned to speak to an Officer at People 1<sup>st</sup> or other Council departments they were directed to the CSC, either through voice mail or directly redirecting the call. When the CSC was called and People 1<sup>st</sup> was selected they were then directed back to a voice mail message redirecting them back to the CSC. In this way Members were going round in circles and were redirected repeatedly to different departments. Officers informed the Panel that advice had been issued about redirecting phones to the CSC. It was believed that this had ceased to be a major problem. Members clarified that they had been caught in a phone 'loop' in the past three months. The Head of the CSC requested that when this happened Members should contact her directly. It was noted that some people may not want to do this after they had been waiting on the phone. However Members were informed that they could e-mail the Head of the CSC including the time, date and nature of the call to notify the problem.
- A Member made a request to spend a day at the CSC. This had been offered to Members in the past and they could spend a day observing the front of house and phone calls any time they wished. Members needed to contact the Head of the CSC to arrange this.



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- A Member noted that on their last visit to the CSC there was some confusion regarding the waiting system for customers and numbers called. These were being called out repeatedly without any customers answering. It was felt that this increased delay for other customers. The Member also suggested that it was difficult to see which numbers would be served next. However, Officers confirmed that TV screens in MyCouncil showed this information.
- Members raised two issues concerning the behaviour of members of staff at the CSC. The Panel were informed that they had seen a member of staff jumping over a desk and felt this raised health and safety concerns. Another Member had witnessed an elderly customer being 'shrugged off' by a staff member when seeking help, in order for the staff member to speak to a security guard. Members felt that these Officers displayed inappropriate behaviour for the public face of Slough Borough Council. The Head of the CSC requested that both Members provide the details of these incidents in order that they may be looked into.
- The Chair noted that many people were experiencing problems when using MyCouncil and that other Officers were becoming overburdened with calls that should be directed through the CSC. An action plan was in place to look at the key priorities of the CSC which would be taken forward. Changes to the operating procedure had been implemented over the past month and improvements in some areas already showed. Council Tax bills had gone out daily rather than weekly which had dramatically improved customer service in this area, as there was no 'avalanche' of phone calls. The benefits department had also improved wording on their letters in an effort to reduce the number of people querying the content of letters received.
- A Member explained that they could not find the opening times of MyCouncil on the internet site. Officers explained that the times were on the website.
- Members advised that they had observed long queues from MyCouncil down Slough High Street. This often occurred on a Thursday morning when the CSC opened late. However, Officers felt that the public were well aware of the situation and noted that it was needed for staff training. Opening times were arrived at on the basis of customer feedback and part time staff were employed to cover the busiest times and extra part time staff had been taken on in the latest recruitment drive. 8 to 8 opening had been looked into, however this would require more extra staff than would be cost effective or if staff were stretched out across the day this could worsen the situation.
- The number of people visiting Landmark Place had remained fairly static since its opening. However calls had increased due to several elements including additional responsibilities and extended opening times. A proposal had been put forward to deal with the high demand of phone calls. Officers were looking into operating an e-service system on the internet in order for people to access information 24 hours a day.
- A Member asked about the provision of a complaints service for Slough. This was in operation and was known as Respond. Eventually as this was rolled out

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across the Council, there would be a champion in each section to deal with complaints. The public could access this through the website or the CSC staff would inform people of the appropriate action to take in order to make a complaint. A report on the complaints service was issued every month for all services except social care.

- The CSC opened in October, 2005 as the One Stop Shop and switchboard set up. The dynamics of MyCouncil had changed considerably since then. However Members felt that it was still experiencing the same problems. It was agreed that Panel Members should ensure that a copy of all case work concerning MyCouncil was sent to the Head of the CSC, who assured Members that they wanted to provide better services and the staff at My Council were working hard to achieve this. A member requested that an item on the uniform of the 'meeters and greeters' should be added to the agenda plan.

**Resolved - (a)** That the agenda plan be updated as detailed above

**(b)** That the performance statistics in relation to the Customer Service Centre and the Action Plan to improve services to residents be noted

### 38. ALMO Update

The Chief Executive of the ALMO, People 1<sup>st</sup> (Slough) updated the meeting on progress made by the ALMO so far. People 1<sup>st</sup> were looking to build upon their two star status and make sure that the recommendations in the report were implemented. The recommendations were:-

1. Strengthen the focus on access and Customer care – by ensuring level three of the equality standard was reached.
2. Improve the organisation's approach to performance management and value for money – by exploring new approaches through the Interserve contract.
3. Improve customer service and resident involvement – by developing new arrangements to involve tenants.

Officers informed the Panel that they would ensure that People 1<sup>st</sup> met its targets. People 1<sup>st</sup> was looking to incorporate targets from the existing service plan and it was reported that when the Panel next meets the progress over the coming year could be reviewed. This included not just the PIs but overall service targets. Members requested that in future the performance indicators be given as a separate report including additional information.

Members raised a number of issues in the subsequent discussion:-

- A Member pointed out that re-let times had increased again for February and questioned the cause of these time lags. It was noted that this was probably due to the delays in people going into properties to repair them and this may be due again to logistical difficulties that had been experienced in the past.

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- The service charge collection rate had decreased since the previous year and Members felt that this trend would continue as people were unwilling to pay controversial charges that, they believed, were for services that they had not received. The Leaseholders Forum, an independent organisation, was discussing this at its next meeting and would look into how best to deal with the charges. 1 in 8 leaseholders had received dramatically increased bills and did not know what action to take. People 1<sup>st</sup> had worked with Forums around different initiatives, including spreading payments across a longer period and was aiming to introduce e-mail services for tenants and leaseholders. Information and dates of leaseholder meetings was included in the People 1<sup>st</sup> newsletter. Members requested that an article on leaseholder services be included in the next People 1<sup>st</sup> newsletter to remind people of available services.
- A Member asked about issues concerning recharges for repairs to properties. There was awareness amongst Officers of the controversy surrounding this issue but assured Members that this no longer happened and previous concerns had been addressed. When Interserve received a request for repair they informed the caller if there was a chance that it would be a rechargeable repair. However people were no longer being charged before a call out takes place. Members requested that tenants needed to be made aware of what constitutes 'wilful damage'. It was agreed that the policy on wilful damage and a list of the charges that had recently been instigated would be passed to all Members of the Panel. Members asked whether tenants were asked their age before being informed of the recharge. There was a system in place to flag up this information but some data was currently unavailable, although this would be continually improved.
- Members asked if rent agreements still contained the clause that people should keep their properties clean and tidy. Officers responded that it was and that it was mainly enforced on resident's front gardens. Members questioned why Housing Officers were not dealing with this. It was noted that this was difficult to enforce in many cases but Housing Officers were doing their best to respond to problems.
- Members felt that for years people had paid for services that they had not received but until the bills were itemised people did not realise this.
- Officers notified the panel that a briefing note to Members would be received in their packs over the next few weeks.

**Resolved:** That a separate report be submitted to the next meeting detailing the performance indicators.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 5.00 p.m. and closed at 7.25 p.m.)

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## **Health Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 3rd April, 2008.**

**Present:-** Councillors Plimmer (Chair), Dhillon, Dodds, O'Connor, Shine and Small.

**Also present:-** Nasreen Bhatti (Berkshire East PCT), Dr Sadhana Bose (Berkshire East PCT), Andrew Burgess (Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust), Suzie Loader (Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Trust), Dr Angela Snowling (Berkshire East PCT), Viki Wadd (Berkshire East PCT) and Rob Whitehouse (Slough Community Leisure).

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Qureshi.

### **PART I**

#### **52. Declarations of Interest.**

Councillor Maclsaac declared that two members of his family were employed by the Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

#### **53. Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 12th February, 2008 were approved as a correct record.

#### **54. Joint East Berkshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Minutes**

The minutes of the Joint East Berkshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10th January, 2008 were noted.

#### **55. Berkshire East Obesity Strategy.**

The Panel received a presentation from Dr. Angela Snowling, Consultant in Public Health, Locality Lead for Bracknell Forest. Dr Snowling explained that the local strategic vision was to improve the health and wellbeing of the East Berkshire population by 2012. The recommendations of the Foresight report (2007) had estimated that two thirds of children would be overweight or obese by 2050. The national strategy had indicated that the priority would be to restore obesity levels in children to those measured by the Health Survey for England in 2000. It was emphasised that collective action was needed and early intervention would encourage activity and nutrition in places such as children's centres. School based prevention would include education to reduce TV viewing.

The Berkshire East Obesity network had been established to develop action plans and implement the strategy that would run from 2008-2012. Monitoring would be carried out by the local network and GOSE. Members noted the required involvement of town planners and members of the leisure industry. Employers, local strategic partnerships, the voluntary sector and institutions would also be

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involved with the strategy, together with food producers, retailers and manufacturers.

Members noted the incidence of overweight children on a ward basis and this evidence had been discussed with local area agreement teams. The Network would work together to deliver a comprehensive range of services and interventions to prevent and manage obesity for the population of East Berkshire. Dr Snowling highlighted the at risk groups in the locality and the most prominent ages of risk. She discussed the timescale for the implementation of the strategy and the mapping of local contributors since June-December 2007.

In response to the presentation, Members made the following observations:-

- A Britwell Ward Councillor was concerned at the number of Fast Food Outlets in his ward which in his opinion encouraged families to eat too much convenience food. He was concerned that youth activity was limited and children were unable to play outside their homes due to the excessive number of “no ball game” signs. He argued that parks were not used because of concerns in relation to bullying. The Member commented that children were healthier in the days when they received school dinners and suggested that all children should be able to have a free school meal. He was also concerned that Slough residents should not lose the enjoyment of Farnham Park Pay and Play Golf course if it were sold. In response Dr Snowling agreed that his view on school lunches was echoed nationally but advised that the provision of lunches must be a school based decision. She also advised that a national play strategy would be published in the near future.
- In response to a question relating to the benefits of breast feeding, Dr Snowling advised that it was beneficial to children because less weight was gained and there were other beneficial nutritional values. Members were advised that the incident of breast feeding in Slough was at a very successful level.
- A Member argued that obesity would be difficult to tackle until the issue of poverty amongst children in the town was addressed. She was concerned that in some large families children could not afford to take part in sport and leisure activities. She felt that initiatives such as ‘walking buses’ to school would be helpful in the strategy. In response The Interim Director, Community and Cultural Services, advised that participation in sport and reducing obesity were currently critical indicators in the draft LAA. It was anticipated the final LAA would be signed off by Cabinet in June. Local authorities were required to set stretch targets for critical indicators and Government Offices would carefully monitor whether these targets were being delivered. To support the work of the LAA, the government had no longer ring fenced a number of existing grants and these had been pooled into ‘Area Based Grants’. Local Strategic Partnerships could use these grants to support the delivery of LAA targets. The Area Based Grant for Slough was around £4.5m for 2008/2009. However, it was important to emphasise these were existing grants being used to fund current services, therefore the scope to redirect these monies could be limited. The Officer

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also advised that consideration would be given to the safety of parks as part of the Community Safety Strategy.

- A Member was concerned that there was a shortage of midwives in Slough but was reassured by Ms Loader that the level of midwives in post was higher than ever and the recruitment process continued.
- A Member suggested that a children's champion should attend Planning Committee meetings to ensure that provision was made for play areas when applications were considered.

### Slough Community Leisure

Rob Whitehouse addressed the Panel on behalf of Slough Community Leisure. A briefing note had been submitted to the previous Panel meeting outlining the cost of the proposal to introduce free admissions to swimming pools for disadvantaged children. A Member had challenged the estimate given and requested that a representative attend the future meeting to discuss this. Mr Whitehouse advised that Slough Community Leisure had operated the council's leisure facilities since 2000. At that time 25% of funding was received from the Council. The current funding level provided was 13% and the remainder of income was received from door receipts. It was noted that Slough Community Leisure had worked closely with the PCT last year on health initiatives. Members were advised that 7000 children were members of the leisure centres and several new initiatives had been introduced particularly to encourage the use of the facilities by 8-16 year olds.

Members raised the following observations:-

- A Member advised that on a recent visit to Mallards Children Home she had learned that the resident children did not receive reduced admission prices to leisure facilities and she asked how well publicised the reductions were. Mr Whitehouse advised in response that until 2008 discounts were given to individuals only but discussions were currently being held to assess whether discounts could be provided for day centres and individuals in care. He advised that children who came to the centres with schools were charged a 50p entrance fee.
- The Interim Director agreed that this was an important issue and advised that he would discuss this matter with Director of Education to discuss whether Looked After Children should have automatic free membership.
- A Member stated that the cost of swimming lessons for a 3 year old was £69 per term and she was concerned that this was an excessive amount and poor families would not be able to afford this level of charges.
- The Interim Director advised that a report would be submitted to the next Panel meeting to consider what could be done to encourage sporting activities. He also suggested that the obesity strategy should be presented to the Youth Cabinet to ask their views on what they thought would be the most effective way to combat child obesity.

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The Panel thanked Dr Snowling for her comprehensive report and presentation.

### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the Report and Presentation be noted.
- (b) That the Obesity Strategy presentation be presented to the Youth Cabinet for their view and comment.
- (c) That the Interim Director discuss the possibility of automatic free membership to Looked After Children with the Director of Education.

## **56. Safeguarding Adults - Annual Report.**

The Panel received a presentation and a report from the Head of Learning Disability Services, to advise on the Local Authorities responsibilities and arrangements in relation to safeguarding adults. Members were advised that safeguarding adults related to all work that enabled an adult who was or may be eligible for community care services to retain independence, well being and choice and to live a life that was free from abuse and neglect. The six Berkshire Unitary Councils had agreed in 2000 to produce guidelines for protecting vulnerable people in Berkshire. The procedures were published in 2001 and Adult Protection Committees were set up in Berkshire. Slough was a member of the East Berkshire Adult Protection Committee. The Committees had since been renamed as the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Boards and included representatives from the Local Authorities, Berkshire East PCT, Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital NHS Trust and other organisations.

Members were advised that the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) had a particular role in ensuring that standards were maintained so that they were provided safely.

It was noted that working arrangements had consistently been commended by the CSCI. Members were advised that a Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator post was created in 2007 and the postholder was responsible for coordinating and managing the response to potential abusive situations. Since April 2007 190 referrals had been received but it was noted that most of the activity related to problems with care associated with one particular Residential Home and one Nursing Home. Members noted that older people were the most referred group, followed by people with learning disability but this was mainly due to actions in relation to the residential and nursing home discussed. The Council had been involved with these two homes over the last 2 years because neither establishment was meeting the standards for dignity in care and providing a safe environment for older people. Both Homes had enforcement notices served on them by CSCI and the Council had provided assistance with the monitoring of care standards in the Homes. The Homes had been subject to Slough Borough Council's special measures in order to drive standards up and these included the regular weekly inspection by the Assistant Director and Head of Services for Older Peoples Services, more frequent inspection by CSCI and the location of Slough Borough Council staff in one of the Homes to assist with the skills required to improve the quality and standard of their service. It was noted that the impact of



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these interventions had dramatically improved the standards in the Homes. The Officer emphasised that the Council was robust in its response to allegations of abuse and its special measures and monitoring arrangements had been recommended to other Berkshire authorities by CSCI. The Officer highlighted training arrangements in place and the future work required.

The Officer concluded that the Council's policies and procedures were robust and met regulatory requirements in relation to safeguard vulnerable adults.

In response to the presentation, Members raised the following observations:-

- A Member stated that she was profoundly disturbed by the report and asked whether the police were involved when the cases of abuse were detected. The Officer advised that the police were involved but not in every case. It was noted that some investigations had concluded but others were ongoing.
- A Member asked whether a robust protocol was in place so that the accused could be suspended where necessary and the police contacted. The Officer confirmed that if a member of council staff was involved, the individual would be suspended and the police would be involved where necessary. The Interim Director advised that if criminal activity was suspected, the police would be invited to a safeguarding adult conference. A decision would then be made on whether to proceed with action and ultimately the Crown Prosecution would decide whether to proceed with prosecution. It was confirmed that in every single case the staff member would be suspended.
- A Member asked whether all staff had been CRB checked and was advised that it was a requirement that this was done before they commenced their employment. This procedure included all agency employees.
- A Member was concerned that the Panel were not aware of the issues of neglect until they had received the Committee report. In response the Assistant Director, Health and Social Care, commented that the statistics shown in the report did not tell the whole story. Some of the statistics reflected the number of investigations that had been carried out but in some cases the allegation was not proven or it had been found that there had been no evidence of neglect. The Officer commented that it was regrettable that there would always be cases where people were neglected and Care Homes had problems due to a variety of reasons. The Assistant Director emphasised that when one case of neglect was discovered, then all of the other residents in the Home would be assessed to make sure that their level of care was acceptable. He explained that the Council had no right to enter a Care Home unless it had placed an individual in that Home. If however, that Home did not adhere to CSCI standards then the Council could intervene. It was also noted that the CSCI would carry out independent checks on the Council's processes.
- A Member asked what lessons had been learned from the incidents reported in the two Homes in question. The Officer advised that experience had shown that problems often arose where there was a rapid turnover of managers in a Home. The associated lack of training often

## Health Scrutiny Panel - 03.04.08

resulted in chaos and the best staff left. It had also been found that record keeping was not always consistent and in the residential care home case the Council had installed its own staff to rectify this situation.

- A Member stated that he had on occasion raised issues of concern and was confident that the Council had dealt with these in an inappropriate manner. He added that the type of problems referred to in the report were a national issue.
- Members discussed the availability of advocacy services within Homes and the Officer suggested the possibility that Members could receive training and visit Homes on occasion to view standards of care.

### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Assistant Director considers the establishment of training to enable Members to visit Nursing Homes.
- (c) That the Assistant Director investigate the allocation of a Council funded advocate to Care Homes, subject to funding.

## **57. 'Right Care, Right Place' Consultation - Draft Consultation**

Members considered the draft Members responses to improving local NHS services and local mental health inpatient facilities, set out in the consultation paper, 'Right Care, Right Place'. The following questions were raised:-

- A Member asked how the public consultation meetings were progressing and advised that at the first meeting she had attended there were only nine people there. In response Viki Wadd advised that the second meeting had attracted approximately 50 people and another meeting on the following day at the Centre in Slough had been well publicised and a good attendance was expected. She also advised that Slough had received a very good response to the consultation questionnaires that had been issued.

Andrew Burgess, Berkshire Health Care NHS Foundation Trust, commented that a negative article had appeared in a Slough newspaper relating to the transfer of mental health care to Upton Hospital. Dr Nazreen Bhatti advised that the options had not yet been tidied up but commented that if Upton Hospital was the preferred site then development would take place before patients were moved there. Viki Wadd added that it was hoped that if the Upton Hospital was the preferred location then it was hoped that the whole site would be kept in public ownership. The Interim Director advised the Panel that the Council supported the development of integrated facilities on the Upton site.

**Resolved –** That the Panel endorses the submitted responses.

## **58. Healthcare Commission's Annual Health Check.**

In the absence of the Scrutiny Officer, the Chair introduced a report to provide an explanation of the requirements of the Health Commission's Annual Health check.

## **Health Scrutiny Panel - 03.04.08**

Members were advised that each Health Care Trust was obliged to submit a declaration to the Health Care Commission by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and as part of this process Trusts were responsible for inviting third parties to comment on their performance, including the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Commission had published sets of criteria for NHS Trusts which set out 24 core standards for the Annual Check and these described a minimum level of service which patients had the right to expect. It was hoped that an individual response from the Council could be submitted by the first week in April 2008. Members noted the suggested issues for comments and in particular considered that the issue of car parking charges at Wexham Park Hospital had not yet been satisfactorily resolved. It was agreed that the Chair of the Panel would liaise with the Scrutiny Officer to formulate a response to the Health Care Trust on behalf of the Panel.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted and that the Chair of the Panel and the Scrutiny Officer formulate a response to the Health Care Trust.

### **59. Health Inequalities - Audit Commission Report.**

Members noted the content of the Health Inequalities Audit report 2007/2008. The progress made by the partnership was noted, together with the number of areas where action was still required. The four partners had agreed to ask the Audit Commission to look at ways in which the framework for reducing health inequalities 2008/09 could be improved. The Interim Director of Community and Cultural Services commented that the review was carried out in 2006 and as such the report was not up to date. Further work had been arranged with the Audit Commission.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

### **60. Forward Agenda Plan.**

The Panel noted the forward Agenda Plan and agreed the following additions.

- Joint Strategic needs Analysis- June 2008.
- LAA Indicators.
- Male Cancers.
- Nursing Home fees.
- Access to NHS Dentistry (particularly Orthodontics).
- Wexham Park Hospital- Update on Access Issues and Parking Charges.
- Adult Social Care- Performance Management.

### **61. Date of Next Meeting - Monday, 30th June, 2008.**

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 p.m. and closed at 10.20 p.m.)

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Overview & Scrutiny Committee      **DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2008  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** Kevin Barrett  
**(For all enquiries)** Democratic Services Manager  
(01753) 875014  
**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR DECISION**

**APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINY PANELS, ALLOCATION OF SEATS AND APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 This report seeks approval to the establishment of a number of Panels and the nomination of Members to serve on them.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Panels set out in paragraph 5.1 of this report be appointed for the 2008/09 municipal year.
- 2.2 That the Committee note the allocation of seats to the Panels (paragraph 5.2).
- 2.3 That the Committee agree the allocation of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Panels on the basis set out in paragraph 5.3 and that the Panels be invited to appoint their Chairs and Vice-Chairs at their first meetings according to that formula.
- 2.4 That Members be appointed to serve on each of the Panels in accordance with the wishes expressed by Political Groups in respect of seats allocated to them as set out in paragraph 5.4 below.
- 2.5 That the co-opted Members listed in paragraphs 5.5 and 5.6 below be appointed to the Community & Cultural Services and Education & Children's Services Panels.

**3 Key Priority Implications**

There are no implications for the Council's key priorities as this report is administrative in nature.

**3 Legal Human Rights and Other Implications**

4.1 The recommendations meet the requirements of political proportionality as set out in Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations. There are no other implications arising from this report.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The Committee is being recommended to re-appoint the four Overview and Scrutiny Panels for the 2008/09 Municipal Year.
- 5.2 Scrutiny Panel seat allocations have been calculated to reflect actual group membership and statutory proportionality entitlements as follows:

<b>Panel</b>	<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>BILLD</b>	<b>Conservative</b>
Community & Cultural Services Panel	9	5	2	2
Education & Children's Services Panel	9	5	2	2
Green & Built Environment Panel	9	5	2	2
Health Panel	9	5	2	2

- 5.3 The Council's Constitution states that, as far as practicable, Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Panels will in total number reflect the political balance of the Council. This equates to 4 appointments to be offered to the Labour Group, 2 to the BILLD Group and 2 to the Conservative Group. The Administration has indicated that it will be offering the four Vice-Chair positions to the opposition groups.
- 5.4 The political groups have been requested to nominate Members to sit on the Panels. Those received to date are set out below:-

**Community & Cultural Services** – Councillors Davis, Grewal, Pabbi, Qureshi and Walsh.

**Education & Children's Services** – Councillors Bal, A S Dhaliwal, Mann, Pantelic and Qureshi.

**Green & Built Environment** – Councillors Davis, Matloob, Pabbi, Rasib & Walsh.

**Health** – Councillors Chohan, A S Dhaliwal, Dodds, Matloob and Pantelic.

- 5.5 The Committee is asked to approve the appointment of the following education co-opted Members to the Education & Children's Services Panel:-

Voting Co-opted Members

Mr R Davey (Church of England)  
Mrs P Parker (Roman Catholic Church)  
Parent Governor Representatives – Two nominations awaited from Governing Bodies.

Non-Voting Co-opted Members

Head Teacher Representative – Nomination awaited from Head Teachers.  
Secondary School Teacher Representative – Mr R Daniels  
Primary School Teacher Representative – Ms S Hopkinson

5.6 The Committee is also asked to approve the appointment of Barbara Goldstein, Glynys Higgins and Heather Mason as non-voting co-opted members of the Community & Cultural Services Panel to speak on matters relating to the People 1<sup>st</sup> (Slough) ALMO.

5.7 The Committee is now requested to:

- Appoint the Panels listed in paragraph 5.2 above for 2008/09.
- Allocate seats on those Panels.
- Invite the Panels to appoint Chairs/Vice-Chairs at their first meetings according to the formula set out in paragraph 5.3.
- Appoint Members to serve on Panels in accordance with the wishes specified by Political Groups in respect of seats allocated to them (paragraph 5.4).
- Appoint the co-opted Members to serve on Panels as set out in paragraphs 5.5 and 5.6.

**6. Background Papers**

Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations.

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee      **DATE:** 5th June 2008  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** Sudhi Pathak, Head of Internal Audit & Risk Management  
[Sudhi.pathak@slough.gov.uk](mailto:Sudhi.pathak@slough.gov.uk) or 01753-875374  
**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

**BROOM AND POPLAR HOUSES REFURBISHMENT**

**1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To report to Members on the follow up of the six recommendations made in the Internal Audit report following the delay in completion of the refurbishment of Broom and Poplar Houses.

**2 Recommendation(s)/proposed action**

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to note the progress of the implementation of the six recommendations from the audit report dated 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2007.

**3 Key Policy Priorities**

Priority 5 – Maintaining excellent governance within the council to ensure it is efficient, effective and economic in everything it does.

*5.1 Improve project, performance and major project management.*

**4 Other implications**

- (a) Financial: there are no direct financial implications.  
(b) Human Rights & other legal implications: there are no Human Rights Act or other legal implications.

**5 Supporting information**

- 5.1 In September 2007, Internal Audit reported to Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a high level review of the Broom and Poplar project which focussed on:
- Relevant parties, costs and delivery times;
  - Tender Opening;
  - Tender specification and analysis;
  - Checks on the contractor;
  - Monitoring project progress;
  - Information for Members; and
  - Risk register.
- 5.2 The Committee approved the audit report and requested a follow up report and also made recommendations to Cabinet.

- 5.3 On 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 Cabinet approved the audit report recommendations. Cabinet endorsed that a report should be submitted Overview & Scrutiny Committee on working practices and lessons learned.

**6 Comments of other Committees**

None

**7 Conclusion**

- 7.1 Progress has been made and continues to be made in respect of project management. Of the six recommendations one has been implemented, four are partially implemented and one has not yet been implemented.

**8 Appendix Attached**

- 8.1 Report on Progress in Implementing Audit Recommendations

**9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 Internal Audit report presented to Overview and Scrutiny dated 06/09/08

**BROOM & POPLAR HOMES REFURBISHMENT**  
**Follow up of Audit recommendations**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Members asked the Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management for advice as to what lessons could be learnt following the delay and budget overspend in the completion of the refurbishment of the Broom and Poplar Houses.
- 1.2 This report is a follow up of the six recommendations made in the Internal Audit report presented to Overview & Scrutiny on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2007.
- 1.3 The recommendations are outlined in the table below.

<b>Rec. No</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1.	Checks on contractor	SBC and consultants should always check the levels of satisfaction on previous engagements before awarding contracts. These checks should be documented.
2.	Checks on contractor	SBC and any consultants used should always ensure that contractors' personnel have the technical and managerial abilities to perform to the required standard.
3.	Project management responsibilities	Responsibilities in the project management process should be clear, documented and available for inspection.
4.	Reporting and Escalation procedures	Escalation procedures should be clearly defined at the outset of each major project. SBC staff should request additional checks on technical details where risks are identified.
5.	Information for Members	Members and officers should review the current policy of information provided to members in respect of contracts and projects.
6.	Risk Management	The Council staff should be closely involved in contract risk management

**2 Methodology.**

- 2.1 We took a sample of four projects valued above £1.1M from the critical projects list.
- Slough & Eton Church of England School - £7.4M
  - The Customer Service Centre (CRM) - £3.9M
  - St. Martins Place fit out works - £1.1M
  - Art at the Centre - £4.1M
- 2.2 We compared the four projects to the six recommendations made in the previous audit report by
- Identifying and interviewing the relevant project managers
  - Interviewing relevant officers

- Gathering evidence to support the implementation of the recommendations

### 3 Conclusions

- 3.1 A summary paragraph regarding the implementation of each recommendation is made below.
- 3.2 Satisfaction checks - In three out of four cases, satisfaction checks were evident as the contractors had previously carried out work for Slough Borough Council. For the Art at the Centre project the contractor had successfully completed projects in Staines and Crawley.  
**(Implemented)**
- 3.3 Financial and Technical tests - In three out of four cases, the financial and technical checks on contractors had been carried out when the contractors had previously completed work for the Council. The Customer Service Centre project contractor informed Internal Audit that checks had been carried out but these were not available as the records held do not go back to 2005 when the check was carried out.  
**(Partially Implemented)**
- 3.4 Project Management responsibilities - In two out of four cases, Art at the Centre and St Martin's Place, we were able to evidence that roles and responsibilities had been clearly defined. Although the other two projects appeared to be well planned and monitored and we were informed that each officer and contractor was aware of their responsibilities, we could not evidence that roles & responsibilities had been clearly defined.  
**(Partially Implemented)**
- 3.5 Escalation procedures - Although we found evidence of regular reporting on progress in respect of each project, the escalation procedures were not easily identifiable in all cases. The Art at the Centre project, the St Martins Place project and The Customer Service Centre use regular reports and meetings to escalate any identified problems. There is a risk that where escalation procedures are not clearly defined, projects that deviate significantly from planned time or budget are not communicated to appropriate senior officers/members.  
**(Partially Implemented)**
- 3.6 Member Information - Of the four projects Art at the Centre was presented to Members at the start of the project, the St Martins Place project was presented at regular meetings of the Officer & Member Working Group and for the Customer Service Centre, a member of Slough Borough Council attended the partnership board and reports were presented to the e-government panel. The Slough & Eton project did not have member input. Although the top 30 schemes are reported quarterly to members and departments present annually, we can find no evidence of Member or Officer review about what information is provided to Members in respect of contracts & projects.  
**(Not implemented)**
- 3.7 Risk Management - Each of the four projects was subject to a risk assessment at the start of the project. However, we could only find evidence of regular risk management in the case of Art at the Centre and St Martins Place where risks are

identified & discussed at regular meetings. For the remaining two projects we could not evidence regular risk assessments although the Project Manager for Customer Services Centre has verbally confirmed that risk is regularly updated during the progress of the project.

**(Partially Implemented)**

#### 4 Findings.

	Project	Satisfaction checks	Financial and Technical checks	Project management responsibilities	Regular reporting & escalation procedures	Members & officers review the policy of information to Members in respect of contracts and projects	SBC Involvement in contract Risk Management
Status		<b>Implemented</b>	<b>Partially Implemented</b>	<b>Partially Implemented</b>	<b>Partially Implemented</b>	<b>Not implemented</b>	<b>Partially Implemented</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Slough &amp; Eton Church of England School</b>	Contractors had been satisfactorily employed by SBC previously	Contractors had been satisfactorily employed by SBC previously	Project management responsibilities are not clearly documented. However, responsibilities are discussed at regular project team meetings	Regular reports but no escalation procedure	Project manager does not present to Members at any stage	Evidence of contract risk management at the start of the project however we could not find evidence of regular update of risks.
<b>2</b>	<b>Customer Service Centre (CRM)</b>	Contractors had been satisfactorily employed by SBC previously	Contractors had been satisfactorily employed by SBC previously	Project management responsibilities are not clearly documented however the project manager has confirmed that there are defined responsibilities	Monthly meetings of the project board	The Head of Customer Services attended the partnership project board and the e-government panel	Evidence of contract risk management at the start of the project however we could not find evidence of regular update of risks.
<b>3</b>	<b>St. Martins fit out works</b>	Contractors had been satisfactorily employed by SBC previously	Contractors had been satisfactorily employed by SBC previously	Consulting Engineers managed the contract & roles & responsibilities are clearly defined.	Monthly meetings of the project board	Regular meetings of the Officer & Member working group	There is evidence of contract risk management at the start of the project. Always discussed & a regular agenda item for their weekly meetings.
<b>4</b>	<b>Art at the Centre</b>	Had satisfactorily completed projects in Staines & Crawley	Records regarding this project are no longer available although the project manager is confident that they were carried out and were satisfactory	Roles & responsibilities clearly defined	Monthly reports sent project manager. Any problems are discussed at the regular meetings between SBC & Contractors	Designs sent to members who chose which one to use plus members approved the 3 year capital program in March	Contract risk management is discussed at the regular project board meetings and the steering group meetings.

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Overview & Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2008

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Andrew Blake Herbert, Director of Resources  
**(for all enquiries)** 01753 875300  
Rob Polkinghorne, Head of Policy and Performance  
Yvonne Harris, Director of Human Resources

**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR INFORMATION**

**FINANCIAL, PERFORMANCE & HR REPORTING FOR 2008/09**

**1 Purpose of Report**

This report outlines the proposals for the reporting of financial, performance and HR data during the 2008/09 financial year. The report also outlines the financial risks facing the Council in 2008/09 and highlights the presentation to be given on the Statement of Accounts.

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

For information.

**3 Key Priorities – Taking Pride in Slough and Making a Difference to Communities**

The budget is the financial plan of the authority and as such underpins the delivery of the Council's key priorities through the financial year.

Performance and budget monitoring throughout the financial year reflects on whether those priorities are being met and, if not, the reasons why, so Members can make informed decisions to ensure the Council remains within its available resources.

**4 Other Implications**

(a) Financial

These are contained within the body of the report.

(b) Human Rights & Other Legal Implications

While there are no Human Rights Act implications arising directly from this report, the Authority is required to set and maintain an adequate level of balances. The Council operates within a legislative framework in the recruitment, employment and management of its workforce. The provision of workforce information ensures that our performance in areas can be monitored at a strategic level across the organisation.

## **5 Performance Management Framework**

- 5.1 During the 2007/08 financial year an integrated report for Members was developed with Performance, Finance and Human Resources information being presented in one report to give Members the golden thread of reporting from Corporate and Service Plans down to individual staff appraisals; this theme will be further developed during 2008/09.
- 5.2 Considerable work will be undertaken over the next year to improve Slough Borough Council's (SBC's) corporate planning capabilities to ensure that the corporate and service plans actually drive resource allocation.
- 5.3 From a financial perspective, resources need to follow priorities. This means having sufficient resources to direct into priorities as well as clarity about where the Council wants to invest and direct its resources.
- 5.4 It is important that outcomes/actions from various plans are clear enough so that they can lead into a rational and effective strategic resource allocation process and performance management framework integrating and aligning business planning processes and resources to meet the needs of the citizens of Slough.
- 5.5 The financial strategy has to work hand-in-hand with developing a robust and integrated business planning and performance management regime and there will be a strong overlap, with key actions in the business planning framework being mirrored in the financial strategy model. This will allow SBC to operate an integrated planning process.

### **Performance Management**

- 5.6 The National indicator Set is the new national performance framework that local authorities (and partner agencies) are working towards. The old style BVPIs were formally withdrawn on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 with local authorities no longer having to report on these. Work on rolling out the NIS has been ongoing within the authority for a number of months. Upon receiving the final definitions including details of which indicators were to be 'placeholders' (indicators where baselines are not available until next year and hence limited amount of work is required) departments have been working on ensuring ownership including clarifying delivery and reporting mechanisms. There are 198 indicators in total, of which 35 have been agreed, in conjunction with GOSE, to form our Local Area Agreement. This was agreed at the Cabinet meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2008. Outturn data for relevant indicators from the NIS should be available for quarter 2.

### **Financial reporting**

- 5.7 The Council's 2008/09 net revenue budget is £98m. This excludes the schools' budget of £89m which is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 5.8 Closure of the 2007/08 accounts is almost complete and the Statement of Accounts will be taken to a special Cabinet and Council meeting later this month. The extent of work involved in the production of this document and the necessity to ensure compliance with the correct accounting treatment to meet the audit requirements means the document is not ready for the earlier Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny



meeting. The Strategic Director of Resources will therefore at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> June present the Provisional Outturn position.

- 5.9 The overall outturn position is showing a surplus for the year of £46k. This is in line to the position reported to Members at the end of the financial year.
- 5.10 Each Directorate held a special Finance Management Team meeting at the end of April 2008, where each Head of Service presented a report on their Outturn Position to the Assistant Director of Finance. As part of that report they also highlighted any pressures and risks which were likely to continue and to have an impact in 2008/09. Appendix 1, to this report highlights the pressures and risks that have been identified. Work has already commenced on analysing the risks the Council faces this year and the July monitoring report will include a full risk analysis. This will also identify any necessary steps to manage in year pressures. This schedule will be reported to every meeting with an indicator of level of risk. It should be noted that Members agreed at the end of the 2007/08 financial year that sums should be set aside as part of the closure of 2007/08 to meet specific budget pressures which it was identified that the Council would be facing during 2008/09
- 5.11 A number of the Council's services are demand led services for which budgets for 2008-09 have been set on known placements and client activity at a point in time. Clearly these areas are subject to constant review as client levels change and thus subject to pressures that are not directly controllable.

## **Human Resources**

- 5.12 HR monitoring information supports the development of policies, practices, systems and approaches to being an employer of choice, a learning organisation and ensuring employee well-being and safety, as well as influencing the development of management capability and capacity. The results are also used for external benchmarking and BVPI purposes.
- 5.13 The Council continues to maintain a workforce that reflects the ethnic diversity of the population it serves and our BME as well as our disability profile continues to rise.
- 5.14 Employee wellbeing, management of attendance and incidences of stress have been given a greater priority. HR has taken action to improve the quality of sickness absence control information which has led to a rise in sickness absence as a result of increased reporting. The HR Business Partners are working with managers to target areas of high sickness absence through greater occupational health referral and tighter application of the sickness absence procedure
- 5.15 Management information on the profile of the workforce will enable us to develop, implement and review strategies to support the recruitment and retention of staff and forecast our future workforce needs. The Council is developing a recruitment strategy that will enable us to take a planned approach to recruitment in hard-to-fill areas; modernise recruitment processes, improve access to job opportunities in the council for groups who may have had difficulty finding employment in the past; and improve the image of the council as a major employer in Slough. The strategy will reflect the use of permanent and temporary recruitment approaches to meet staffing requirements. The Council has implemented a four year Master Vendor contract

with Pertemps Recruitment Partnerships for the supply of temporary staff and is already achieving financial savings from the contract in its first 6 months of operation.

## **6 Conclusion**

Members will receive a joint summary report covering Finance, Performance and HR at each meeting in 2008/09.

The main Financial Risks for 2008/09 have already been identified and the status will be reported regularly to Members. Directorates are pulling together action plans to contain any pressures identified already on General Fund revenue budgets.

## **7. Appendices Attached**

1 Schedule of high risk and budget pressures 2008/09

## **8. Background Papers**

- '1' Finance Detailed working papers are held in Central Finance and the relevant departments.
- "2" Performance working papers are held in the Policy and Performance section
- "3" HR data is held in the HR department

## Appendix 1

### RISKS AND PRESSURES HIGHLIGHTED FROM 2007/08 OUTTURN WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE AN IMPACT INTO 2008/09

DECs	Raising achievement	Free transport entitlement	
	Children , Families & Youth		
		Foster activity	
		increase in referral activity	
CWB	Adult Social Care		additional clients
		Care packages	
		Residential provision	Client income
		Langley Day Centre	
		Joint arrangements	
	Cultural & Community Engagement		
		Library Services Book fund	
		Sports Development	
		Joint archive arrangement	
	Business resources		
		Haymill Bar	
		People 1st SLA & HRA recharges	
		Social Care IT project	
GBE	Transport & Planning		
		Concessionary fares	Under-funding from Gov
		Planning appeals	
		Accord	uplift on contract
		APCOA	parking enforcement
		Flood defence	
	Environment Services		
		Accord	uplift on contract
		Chalvey transfer station	RV increase on 1st April 08
		DAAT- alcohol related work	
Central	Resources & I&D	restructure- part year of savings only achieved	
	CSC	areas for BPR savings not identified and reallocated to services	
	HB	admin	
	Law & corporate	local land charges	
	property	accommodation strategy savings	
Corporate			

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2008

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Andrew Blake-Herbert, Strategic Director of  
Finance and Property  
Andy Algar, Assistant Director, Property Services

**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875300  
(01753) 875898

**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR CONSIDERATION & COMMENT**

**REPORT ON ACHIEVEMENTS FROM RESOURCES DIRECTORATE -  
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/08 AND TARGETS FOR 2008/09**

**1 Purpose of Report**

This report advises the Committee of the key achievements from the capital programme spent within the Resources Directorate in 2007/08. It also identifies some of the key targets for 2008/09.

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

The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and consider whether any comments/amendments should be put to Cabinet.

**3 Key Priorities – Taking Pride in Slough and Making a Difference to Communities and our Environment**

Priority 5 – Maintaining excellent governance within the Council to ensure it is efficient, effective and economic in everything it does.

**4 Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act or legal implications.

**5 Supporting Information**

5.1 Over the course of the year, each major service department reports to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee about the achievements and targets of

its capital programme. This report is part of this ongoing process.

**6 Comments of Other Committees**

None

**7 Appendices Attached (if any)**

'A' Summary of achievements 2007/08 and targets 2008/09

**8 Background Papers**

Resources working budget papers

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/08 SUMMARY OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

**RESOURCES**

<b>Achievement</b>	<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Corporate Aim</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Design for new library building has been advanced and the revised masterplan for the whole scheme was approved by Cabinet in January 2008.	1-5		Increased awareness and general support this major town centre regeneration. The Cabinet approval of the masterplan received national coverage in the trade press which was overwhelmingly positive and supports one of the scheme's aim to help change the image of the town.
E-purchasing IT system installed	5	5.3	<b>LF to advise</b>
Relocation of staff to St Martins Place.	5	5.1	Over 300 staff relocated to building with open plan offices and new ICT technology to enable more flexible ways of working. Will form the model for the planning centralisation to new office accommodation in 3-4 years time
Statutory compliance in council buildings	5	5.1	We have continued to invest to prevent and mitigate compliance issues in all council buildings (e.g. legionella, asbestos, Disability Discrimination Act and general health and safety).
Investment in ICT infrastructure (GH to advise of specific outcomes).	5	5.3	<b>GH to advise of outcomes</b>

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME KEY PROJECTS 2008/09**

**RESOURCES**

<b>Target</b>	<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Corporate Aim</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Heart of Slough	1-5		<p>It is intended that outline planning permission for the whole scheme will be obtained and that outline planning for both the new library and bus station will be approved.</p> <p>It is possible that the English Partnership's funded road works could commence this financial year.</p>
Office accommodation strategy	5	5.1	The next phase will see the remaining staff from Wellington House and some staff from the old Town Hall being relocated to St Martins Place
IT investment/customer service centre???			<b>GH to advise</b>
Statutory compliance in buildings			The ongoing programme to ensure compliance and health & safety in buildings will continue.



## CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/07 – DEPARTMENTAL SUMMARY

A	Department	IS&T (including e-gov)
B	Lead officer	Graeme Herd
C	Capital programme 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2007	£2,905,000
D	Adjusted programme 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2008	£2,905,000
E	Outturn expenditure 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2008	£2,248,690
F	Adjusted programme: Original programme (D/C) x 100%	100%
G	Outturn: original (E/C) x 100%	77%
H	Outturn: adjusted (E/D) x 100%	77%
I	Principal reasons for adjustments from original to adjusted programme	Expected impact of factors set out in J below.
J	Principal reasons for any under spend against adjusted programme.	<p><b>P292/362 – Intranet redevelopment project</b></p> <p>The project started in February 2008. The first billing milestone was achieved in April.</p> <p><b>P295 – Unix hardware</b></p> <p>Some spending on new/replacement server equipment was deferred until the existing assets go out of warranty in year 08/09.</p> <p><b>P365 – Customer Service Centre</b></p> <p>A number of pieces of work (CSC deployment 7, EDRMS, data integration) were delayed due to weak initial business cases. This has now been addressed and the scope of deployment 7 is being agreed, an EDRMS pilot has been conducted in Property Services, and a data integration pilot been agreed. Request whole</p>

		<p>underspend (£467K) is rolled forward for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• upgrade to Siebel V8.1;</li> <li>• development of deployment 7 for CSC;</li> <li>• infrastructure upgrades including a new SAN and replacement of windows servers (£550K order placed for this work in March 08);</li> <li>• development and roll-out of EDRMS across the Council;</li> <li>• Completion of e-mail archiving.</li> </ul> <p><b>P800, P801, P809, P823</b></p> <p>These cover various works to be carried out in the computer room. There was a net underspend across the four codes of £27K as we are only carrying out urgent works due to the expected demolition of the room as part of the accommodation strategy.</p>
K	<p>Main achievements from Capital Programme 2007/08 (with clear links to corporate and departmental objectives in brackets).</p>	<p><b>P295 – Unix Hardware</b></p> <p>Detailed feasibility study into the use of virtualisation of Unix hardware.</p> <p><b>P296 – Computer Hardware</b></p> <p>220 staff provided with remote working capability.</p> <p>IT infrastructure installed in St Martin's Place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full data and telephony network;</li> <li>• first Council deployment of VOIP phones;</li> <li>• Citrix users given thin client device;</li> <li>• all users with TFTs.</li> </ul> <p><b>P365</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fifth and sixth deployments of Siebel CRM expanding MyCouncil services;</li> <li>• final payment for Siebel licences (spread over 5 years);</li> <li>• Go-live, against new statutory targets, of the Integrated Adults System;</li> <li>• Revenues and Benefits BPR project completed;</li> <li>• EDRMS pilot conducted in Property Services</li> </ul> <p><b>P800, P801, P809, P823</b></p> <p>All air-conditioning in computer room updated.</p>

L	Principal targets for capital investment 2008/09.	<p><b>P292/362</b></p> <p>Complete redevelopment of Intranet.</p> <p><b>P296</b></p> <p>Continue roll-out of thin-client devices and TFTs for citrix users to support the accommodation strategy.</p> <p><b>P365</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• upgrade to Siebel V8.1;</li> <li>• development of deployment 7 for CSC including smartscript for FAQs;</li> <li>• infrastructure upgrades including a new SAN and replacement of windows servers (£550K order placed for this work in March 08);</li> <li>• development and roll-out of EDRMS across the Council;</li> <li>• Completion of e-mail archiving.</li> <li>• Completion of the web payments solution and expansion of, and enhanced uptake of, other online access</li> </ul>
M	Other comments	

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
FORWARD AGENDA PLAN 2008/09**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Policy Reviews, Etc.</b>	<b>Audit/Performance Monitoring/Other</b>	<b>Final Report Deadline (5 pm)</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> July 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress of Pertemps Contract (Y Harris) (July)</li> <li>• Haymill/Thames Valley Community Centres – Updates (A Algar)</li> <li>• Further Report on Property Disposals – Estate Shops/Windsor Road (A Algar)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Report (A Blake-Herbert)</li> </ul>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> June 2008</b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> September 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Report (A Blake-Herbert)</li> </ul>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> August 2008</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> October 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Report (A Blake-Herbert)</li> </ul>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> September 2008</b>
<b>20<sup>th</sup> November 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Report (A Blake-Herbert)</li> </ul>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> November 2008</b>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> January 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Report (A Blake-Herbert)</li> </ul>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> January 2009</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> February 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget Reports (A Blake-Herbert)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Report (A Blake-Herbert)</li> </ul>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> January 2009</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> February 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Report (A Blake-Herbert)</li> </ul>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> February 2009</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> April 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Report (A Blake-Herbert)</li> </ul>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> April 2009</b>

<p><b>Unprogrammed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes of Ombudsman case re Supported Housing Complex (N Aves)</li> <li>• Outcomes of Housing Stock and HMO Surveys (N Aves)</li> </ul>		
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