

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 10th April, 2014.

Present:- Councillors Sohal (Chair), Abe (Vice-Chair), Brooker, Carter, Davis, O'Connor, Hussain, Malik and Matloob

Apologies for Absence:- Lynda Bussley

PART 1

54. Declaration of Interest

None.

55. Minutes of the meetings held on 19 February and 12 March 2014

The minutes of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel's meetings on the 19 February and 12 March 2014 were approved as a correct record.

56. Member Questions

None.

57. Slough Local Safeguarding Children Board - Ofsted Report

Paul Burnett (Independent Chair of the Slough Local Safeguarding Children Board) introduced the key findings from the Ofsted inspection of the effectiveness of the Board, which had been found to be inadequate. Paul Burnett was joined by a number of partners who sat on the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB): Chief Inspector Jim Reeves (Thames Valley Police), Jane Wood (Slough Borough Council), Kitty Ferris (Slough Borough Council) and Susanna Yeoman (Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust), along with Helen Gore (LSCB Business Manager).

The Panel joined Paul Burnett in expressing disappointment at Ofsted's findings regarding the effectiveness of the LSCB, noting that the Board's self assessment had indicated a judgement of 'requiring improvement'. Paul Burnett confirmed that the self assessment finding had been based on the Board's reading of the legislation, and that Ofsted had interpreted this differently. The Board had positioned itself as a scrutiny and challenge body, whilst Ofsted viewed it's role in relation to the effective commissioning and delivery of safeguarding services. Going forward the Board would need to reposition it's approach to meet Ofsted's expectations.

The Panel discussed the issues around engagement of partners, and were informed that there had been a lot of good work by partners, which was reflected in the Ofsted report, and that the overall finding did not appear to take this into account. However, the Board was working hard to ensure that

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the partnership working would be strengthened, through improved audit processes which all partners had signed up to, and better oversight of individual agency, and collective performance, with all partners directing adequate resources to supporting the Board's plans. The Board was also looking to revise its performance and quality management procedures.

The Panel specifically raised the issue of Thames Valley Police attendance at conferences. CI Reeves recognised this issue, informing the Panel that it was a capacity issue that was being looked at across the whole of the Thames Valley, but was unable, at this stage, to give a timeframe for when a solution might be in place.

The Panel also discussed the benefits of having two lay members sitting on the LSCB, and the community perspective they brought to discussions. Connectivity with the local community was a key issue for the Board, specifically in raising awareness of potential risks such as private tuition sessions or private fostering arrangements.

Members questioned how the Ofsted findings would sit alongside other priorities identified by the Board. Whilst the Ofsted findings would be incorporated into the Board's business plan, there were still a number of identified priorities which had come from the local context, including Female Genital Mutilation, domestic abuse, and the transitions into the Adult Social Care system. The Ofsted findings, while providing a focus, would not take the whole agenda for the year.

Members were pleased to see the recognition by Ofsted of the positive partnership working that had taken place, mentioning in particular the focus on Child Sexual Exploitation and 2011 Serious Case Review; but were keen to ensure that the Board's aim of ensuring that children of similar levels of safeguarding risk were able to access consistently similar levels of support going forward, a key aspiration for the Board.

The Panel concluded that the aspiration of ensuring that the Board would be no worse than 'requiring improvement' at the next Ofsted inspection was appropriate, although would depend to a certain degree on the improvements made across the wider provision of services for children in need, children looked after and care leavers.

Resolved –

- 1) to note the Ofsted findings and LSCB response to these; and
- 2) to programme in discussions of the improvement programme throughout the coming municipal year to ensure ongoing scrutiny and challenge which would be key to driving forward the required improvements.

58. Attendance Record

Resolved – to note the attendance record for the current municipal year.

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59. Date of Next Meeting - 15 July 2014

Resolved – that the date of the Panel's next meeting would be the 15 July 2014.

STATEMENT FROM CHAIR

The Chair thanked the Members of the Panel and supporting officers for their work throughout the municipal year.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.45 pm)