

**REPORT TO: JOINT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
AND EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
MEMBER CALL-IN**

Questions following the report on IYSS presented to Cabinet 14.3.11

TO: Councillor Tony Haines & former Councillor Pat Shine

FROM: Strategic Director Education & Children's Services

Q. We believe that the administration costs associated with youth service provision has increased markedly in the time since responsibility for the funding and organisation of these services has passed from Berks County Council to Slough Borough Council.

A. We do not have data that enables us to compare the running costs of a Berkshire wide service in 1998 with a different service run in Slough in 2011. We have invested significant effort in reducing all administration costs associated with running the youth service since 2005. The only costs that have not decreased significantly since that time are the running costs of some buildings due to increases in utility bills, council tax etc. Costs of admin staff, management time and time spent on activities other than face to face youth work have decreased.

Q. We are also concerned by SBC's decision to close many centres down and centralise services in Manor Park.

A. We are not closing down centres, but as the paper to Cabinet shows, we are changing our delivery of services to focus on increased 1:1 and small group support. This means we are no longer able to support existing universal youth club provision at youth centres so some activities and projects will be ceasing. We are allocating some funding for voluntary sector groups to run youth provision, and will encourage them to use community buildings where possible. The centres themselves will continue to be available as community venues unless decisions are taken through our Capital Strategy Board to dispose of them or reallocate their usage in line with Cabinet decisions. Any decisions to dispose of buildings are agreed through this route.

We are still committed to offering local support to young people eligible for the targeted service. The only service that is being provided centrally is the young person's general advice drop-in and crisis centre which will be at Slough Young People's Centre on the High Street. This is in order to provide a central location that is close to the Job Centre and that young people can access 7 days a week.

Q. SBC say that it wants to employ more "street based teams" in order to meet the needs of people in Slough. But we wish to query whether the council has employed enough people with relevant qualification and experience (or has provision to do so) to fulfil these roles adequately. We also wish to inquire into what the budgeted hours will be for these workers in comparison with the hours put in by youth workers at present.

- A. We will not be employing more street based teams. The IYSS proposal will maintain the current levels of street-based work and slightly increase the mobile unit activity. This increase in youth bus work will be achieved by redeploying some staff that are currently delivering activities in centres. The street based teams in particular are experienced staff, many of whom have been specialising in this area of work for some years. We are aware this is a particularly challenging area of work and are confident the existing teams have the right skills mix to continue to deliver this work.

The budget for the street based teams will be essentially unchanged from the current levels in that the number of hours and mix of staff will be similar to the present levels. The overall budget for the number of hours of youth work delivery across the board will decrease as we cease delivery of some universal youth club activities.

Clair Pyper
31.5.11