

**Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Education and Children's Services
Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 9th June, 2011.**

Present:- Councillors Abe, Basharat, Davis, Dar, Haines, M S Mann,
Minhas, Munawar, O'Connor, Sharif, Plenty and Smith

Education Non-Voting Co-optee;- Mr C McGeachie

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Plimmer

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor P K Mann

PART I

1. Election of Chair for the Joint Meeting

Councillor O'Connor was elected Chair for the duration of the meeting.

(Councillor O'Connor in the Chair)

2. Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Presentation of Petition

The Chair accepted a petition presented by Councillor Plimmer on behalf of residents. The petition requested the Council to "Save Horsemore Green Youth Centre". The Chair advised that a more detailed report on youth services would be submitted to the September Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel at which the petition would be taken into consideration.

4. Call-in - Questions following the report on IYSS presented to Cabinet on 14th March 2011

The Director of Education and Children's Services advised that the call-in had been received in response to a paper taken to Cabinet in March regarding Integrated Youth Support Services. The Call-in raised a number of questions to which the Director responded.

One of the parties of the jointly submitted call-in advised that historically when youth provision passed from Berkshire to Slough it was hoped that there would be more control over the youth service. Currently it was hoped that a universal service, accessible to all Slough residents could be retained. However the member felt that in the previous years the service had eroded and administration costs had significantly increased and the number of full time youth workers had decreased. It was noted that the government had recently removed significant amounts of funding from this area of work and it was therefore not possible to

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compare especially as requirements of the youth service had changed considerably.

A Member questioned how much had been taken from the budget and was advised that this was contained within the March Cabinet paper. Members asked further questions with regards to youth service provision and were advised that these issues were much broader than the originally call-in and could be addressed at the September meeting. A member advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was informed that there was an underspend of £600k on the youth services budget and asked how much of the total budget this amounted to. The Director advised that the total budget was £3.69m.

In response to the second question raised in the call-in the Director advised that centres were not being closed down but services were being delivered differently. A Member asked how much funding was being provided to the voluntary services for youth provision. The Director advised the Panel that the amount was approximately £75k. Slough would be looking at the overall provision of Council buildings and how they were utilised by different services and organisations. A Member raised concerns that once the buildings were sold off these could not be replaced if needed in the future. However it was noted by the Commissioner for Opportunities and Skills that this would form part of the Asset review and was not something that could be answered by Children's Services.

In response to the third question the Panel was advised that there was no plan to employ more street based teams. The current teams were very experienced in providing a good service and it was confirmed that this would continue to be the case. A Member asked whether, with the prospect of more focus on specialist provision, youth workers would be able to adapt to this role. The Panel was advised that it was important to have youth workers who could be versatile. With the recent cuts the youth service had been slimmed down from 112 staff to 76 but 57 frontline staff had been retained.

The Chair advised that some of the issues raised in the meeting would be picked up at the September meeting and extended an invitation to all Councillors to attend.

Resolved:-

- (a) That a report on Youth Services be brought to the September meeting of the Scrutiny Panel.
- (b) That the March Cabinet report on IYSS be distributed to Scrutiny Panel Members.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.02 pm)