

**Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Tuesday, 23rd October, 2007.**

**Present:-** Councillors P Choudhry (Chair), Dhillon, Jenkins, E Khan, Maclsaac, Mann, O'Connor and Pabbi.

**Also present under Rule 30:-** Councillors Munkley and Howard

**Education Voting Co-opted Members:-**

Pat Parker, Diocese of Northampton  
Melvin Pearce, Parent Governor Representative

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Finn, Roy Davey

**PART I**

**16. Declaration of Interest**

None were received.

**17. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd September 2007**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2007 were agreed as a correct record subject to the list of attendees being amended to include Councillor O'Connor.

**18. Minutes of the Slough Schools Forum meeting held on 19th September 2007**

The minutes of the Slough Schools Forum Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2007 were noted.

**19. Corporate Parenting**

Ellis Rivers presented a comprehensive report on Corporate Parenting which provided key information about children in the care and Children's and Family services in Slough. The report showed a clear picture of Slough's performance as a corporate parent and was intended to help Members develop an understanding of the issues for children & young people in care. The information and statistics presented were designed to address information requirements from the DfES. The report included information on a range of topics including children in care & leaving care, celebration of successes, reasons why children are in care, Education and Offending and activities for children in care.

Members raised a number of issues including:

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- What the reasons were for a large number of placements for a few children in care. Some of the children had been placed in short term care before moving onto adoption. Others were care leavers who were 'testing the water' when moving on to independence. However a few cases occurred due to the breakdown of placements, these instances were being actively addressed.
- A Member queried the ethnicity statistics breakdown – it was noted that the category of Sikh was included as it was defined as an ethnic group. A breakdown on religious grounds was possible but statistics were constrained by how they were collected by the government. The statistics showed that Asian or Asian British children are slightly underrepresented as Looked After Children based on Slough's population.
- The ages of children in care provided a wide spread. However there was a significant group of very young children – to be placed for adoption and a number of older children – reflecting the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers in Slough.
- Although the report focused on the government's measure of educational achievement. Slough had different means of recognising young peoples achievements and were due to host an achievement awards event for Looked After Children; who were given positive encouragement through excellent support and schemes. An Education Support Team had gone into schools to look at achievements and provide targets. Tutoring, after school activities, mentoring schemes and stable placements had helped to improve educational attainment.
- Care Leavers were assisted by a post 16 worker to help them remain in education or move on to work or training. Stable placements and support had meant that the numbers of these were rising.

**Resolved** - That the report be noted

### 20. Schools' OfSTED Inspections

Bill Alexander presented the latest OfSTED inspections to the panel. He clarified that Montem primary School had received a Grade 4 only because it had received a Grade 4 for achievement and therefore the schools overall effectiveness is categorised as unsatisfactory. However the school was judged as providing an acceptable standard of education.

Members raised the following points:

- The results overall were extremely good and something to be proud of but it was asked how they compared on a national scale. Slough ranked tenth nationally for GCSEs and was also high achieving for key stage 3. However the key stage 2 results needed some improving.
- Members noted the most recent high achieving OfSTED inspections reported in the local press and praised the schools involved.
- A Member asked what the reasons were for Montem's results and the measures taken to address these. There were a number of issues involved including a high number of pupils with EAL needs and high levels of mobility. The LEA had drawn up an action plan with the school

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to tackle issues raised in the report. A Statutory Action Group would meet on a monthly basis to monitor progress. OfSTED would re-inspect the school in January to assess the development.

### **Resolved -**

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That congratulations be conveyed to the schools and officers involved.

## **21. Impact of Immigration on Schools and Availability of School Places within the Borough**

The Panel heard details of the report which included information on new arrivals and the planning strategy for ensuring sufficient places. The pupil population in Slough was rising and had been for a number of years but surplus places were not spread evenly across the Borough. The main area of concern in this regard was Cippenham. A major housing developer in the area was to fund a further form of entry in one of two primary schools. The aim was to create an overall surplus of 3% of places in Slough. Current projected places should exceed demand.

A Member requested further information regarding the financial implication for schools of children moving into the area. It was suggested that a report that pulled together present and future financial information on the impact of immigration across School Services be presented to the meeting in January. An Officer commented that a major issue was that of movement within the UK and that Slough had a significantly transient population but schools funding was based on the number of pupils in a particular school at just one point in the year.

**Resolved** - That the report be noted and a further report on the financial impact of immigration on Schools be provided for the January meeting.

## **22. Information on Youth Services within the Borough**

The panel were presented a report by Ellen O'Farrell which provided information on the activities provided by Slough Borough Council for young people aged between 13 -19. There was a wide range of activities and services decided in conjunction with young people and provided at a number of different locations throughout the Borough. Various different components comprised youth service provision including schools, religious organisations and voluntary organisations. A detached team was used to reach out to those who didn't attend regular activities and a programme was devised for them.

Members asked a number of questions including:

- A breakdown of the age ranges and ethnic composition of the youth service users. The young people were generally fairly reflective of the

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ethnic diversity within Slough although this obviously varies between each venue. The bulk of users were in the 14-17 age range. The panel was informed that the service was aware of the need to reach out to the newer communities but this had to be balanced with the needs of existing users.

- A Member asked what was being done to encourage integration among different groups. A number of sporting events had taken place over the summer and at one venue two groups had been encouraged to both attend on the same evening. Further work was necessary but could be very challenging.
- There were several youth centres in the Borough but these had relatively short opening hours. Other authorities had chosen to close youth centres to offer longer opening hours. However youth centres within easy reach of young people was a priority in Slough. Opening hours were generally 6-9 p.m. - suitable for most teenagers.
- Members noted that the youth centres were not distributed evenly and there was a lack of provision on the Eastern side of the Borough. The panel were informed that different venues had been looked into to increase provision and that the extended schools agenda provided out of hours activities. This afforded a slightly better distribution. It was agreed that a further report would be submitted concerning the provision in the East of the Borough.
- A Member requested further information on the Connexions Summer timetable. The meeting was informed that there was an up to date full time table available and the Officer undertook to provide this for the member concerned.

Councillors were provided with a leaflet from the Slough Youth Service, which provided information on activities and provision.

**Resolved** - That the report be noted and that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel providing information on Youth Service Provision in the East of the Borough.

### 23. Slough Local Safeguarding Children's Board - Annual Safeguarding Report

Nicky Rayner reminded the panel of the important work of the Slough Safeguarding Children's Board. It was noted that Slough Schools had embraced the safeguarding agenda and Bill Alexander had acted as an excellent lead for schools. All social workers, foster carers and other key members of staff had received Child Protection training. Slough's aim was to increase the number of staff who attended training by 20% each year until 100% was achieved. Nicky Rayner invited feedback from Members. A Member suggested that further publicity of the Board would be beneficial in informing the public of their role. Officers agreed that further public information would also be useful in making the public aware of what to do regarding the safeguarding of children.

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

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### **24. LEA Governor Vacancy Rate**

The Panel considered the update report on Governor Vacancies.

**Resolved:** That report be noted.

### **25. Forward Work Programme**

Details of the work programme for the Panel were noted and amended to include reports on:

- Youth Service Provision in the East of the Borough.
- Financial impact of Immigration on School Services

**Resolved** - That the report be noted and additional items be added to the Forward work programme.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 p.m. and closed at 7.50 p.m.)