

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 30th January, 2014.

Present:- Councillors Sohal (Chair), Brooker, Carter, Davis, Hussain, Malik and Matloob

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor P Mann

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor O'Connor

PART 1

33. Declaration of Interest

No declarations were made.

34. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 December 2013

The minutes of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel meeting on the 5 December 2013 were approved as a correct record.

35. Member Questions

No questions were submitted.

36. Childhood Immunisation: Progress

The Panel received an update on childhood immunisation coverage in Slough and the actions being taken to improve coverage, which they had requested following initial discussions on low immunisation uptake in the borough in July 2013. Members received evidence from Nisha Jayatilleke (Consultant, Screening and Immunisation, NHS England) and Jonathan Smith (NHS England, Thames Valley Area Team).

The Panel noted actions already taken to improve performance in terms of MMR uptake with:

- the MMR catch-up project, a joint campaign involving the Department of Health, Public Health England and NHS England. The project aimed to drive up demand for MMR vaccination nationally following a number of outbreaks of measles in England over the previous two years; and
- an audit of a small number of GP practices to investigate the potential reasons for under-recording.

The Panel discussed the key issues identified as barriers to improving performance were:

- data quality, and in particular the use of standardised software packages, a programme of work which was expected to be completed within six months;

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- increasing uptake through standardised processes for call/recall, and other approaches which would target those cohorts identified with high levels of non-immunised children, as well as the need to use local knowledge of communities; and
- sharing learning across GP practices to ensure that each contact counts in improving performance.

Resolved – to receive an update on progress made to improve immunisation uptake in January 2015.

37. Child-focused overview of messages from Ofsted Inspection and 2014 calendar year priorities

Jane Wood (Director, Wellbeing) updated the Panel on some of the messages that had come out of the Ofsted Inspection of Slough Borough Council's Children's Social Care in November-December 2013.

The key point noted by the Panel was that there were no surprises in the verbal feedback received from Ofsted; progress had been noted, but that having had a slow start much more work was needed.

Members discussed the fundamental, underlying, issue regarding workforce and the need to:

- increase the workforce to bring down workloads;
- increase the number of permanent staff; and
- improve the accommodation of staff making it more conducive to social work practice requirements.

The Panel recognised the steps that had been taken to address these issues, and that more needed to be done to change how the council sells itself to potential employees.

In addition to the Workforce Strategy, the building blocks for improving social work practice were noted as a key ongoing aspect of the improvement programme, establishing effective pathways and commissioning processes.

Resolved – to receive the full Ofsted Report at an Extraordinary meeting of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on the 19 February 2014.

38. Corporate Parenting Review and Proposals

Jane Wood (Director, Wellbeing) summarised work which would be undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Panel to develop the corporate parent role within the council, looking at: the role and focus of the Corporate Parenting Panel; the top priorities for the Panel over the coming two years; and the vision for corporate parenting in the borough.

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Members were pleased at the move towards a strategic, systemic approach to corporate parenting, and the role of champion within the wider councillor group.

Resolved – to receive the findings of the Corporate Parenting Panel's piece of work to strengthen corporate parenting at Slough Borough Council.

39. SEN: impact of changes in legislation

Jane Wood (Director, Wellbeing) set out the main elements of the transition in services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), specifically:

- the introduction of integrated single assessments across partner agencies (with a pilot project underway); and
- the move towards personal budgets which transferred control of provision to parents, and requiring detailed support around understanding the market.

The Panel discussed the main challenges with this transition, looking at the need for a stable workforce with retraining where required, and risks and opportunities around personal budgets. Members noted that there had been an approximate 65% update of personal budgets in Adult Social Care where management of the budgets had been successful, and introducing these for SEND would develop choice in the market allowing parents, and the child, to decide on their provision, improving their service satisfaction.

Resolved – to note the report.

40. Forward Work Programme

Resolved – to note the current work programme.

41. Attendance Record

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

42. Date of Next Meetings - 19 February (Extraordinary) and 12 March 2014

Resolved – that the Panel would hold the following meetings:

- 19 February 2014 (extraordinary)
- 12 March 2014

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.45 pm and closed at 8.53 pm)

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