

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 9th February, 2017.

Present:- Councillors Brooker (Chair), Chahal (Vice-Chair), Anderson, Chohan (from 6.58pm), N Holledge, Qaseem (from 6.32pm) and Sadiq

Education Non-Voting Co-opted Members

Jo Rockall – Secondary School Teacher representative

Maggie Stacey – Head Teacher representative

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Morris and Pantelic
Hamzah Ahmed – Slough Youth Parliament

PART 1

27. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Brooker declared his daughter's previous attendance at Burnham Park Academy and his position as Governor at Churchmead School. Cllr Chahal declared his position as the Chair of Governors at a local school. Cllr Holledge declared her position as a Governor at Cippenham Nursery.

28. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th December 2016

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2016 be approved as a correct record.

29. Actions Arising

(At this point, Cllr Qaseem joined the meeting at 6.32pm).

The new permanent Director of Children's Services had been appointed. She would take her post on 1st April 2017; the current Interim Director of Children's Services would remain with Slough Borough Council (SBC) until the end of April 2017. This would allow for a transitional period and an organised handover of responsibilities.

Slough Children's Services Trust (SCST) still awaited the outcome of the bid for an Innovation Grant.

The findings of the 12 consultants who had gathered information on the situation in local schools would be included in the report to be given on 15th March 2017.

30. Member Questions

The responses to members' questions were circulated to the Panel.

31. Corporate Parenting Strategy - Progress Report

SBC had statutory duties to children in its care; the previous Ofsted inspections had highlighted a significant amount of work which was required to improve the service. SBC and SCST were working jointly to rectify these matters, and a monitoring visit from Ofsted scheduled for February 2017 would focus on the service.

The report presented to the Panel summarised the work which had taken place. This had transformed the service and both SCST and SBC were confident that demonstrable improvements were now embedded. To support this, the Joint Parenting Panel had met twice (most recently on 7th February 2017); 2 people who were previously in SBC's care attended. They discussed their apprenticeships which they were currently taking at SBC and also reflected on the improvements mentioned in the report.

Upon taking responsibility for the service, SCST had been presented with a poor picture as to the state of matters. SBC was also receptive to the message that co-operation was required, with the Joint Parenting Panel being co-chaired by SBC and SCST as one aspect of the joint working both parties realised was required. The Joint Parenting Panel is also attended by a wide range of agencies to bolster its work.

The Ofsted monitoring visit of February 2017 would revisit the areas of concern identified by their previous inspection. Despite the improvements outlined in the report, it was recognised that further effort would be needed. As one example, audits of files had demonstrated the need for recording to become more rigorous. However, as SCST had taken over the service and, in many respects, had to start from scratch all parties were realistic as to what would be required. The findings of the monitoring visit would be reported to a wide series of boards and stakeholders.

The Panel raised the following points in discussion:

- Female genital mutilation (FGM) was recognised as a corporate priority. To resolve this, SCST was committed to engagement with young people. In addition, the new Chair of the Slough Local Safeguarding Children's Board had prioritised the issue and allocated the matter to the sub group on young people's safety. Key relationships with schools, SBC's Education Department and health professionals, as well as the Improvement Board.
- Young people had reported that their voices were being more clearly heard. As a result of this, they were now receiving more of the relevant resources (in particular housing) which would help them lead better lives. SBC's recent announcements regarding housing were innovative and would support this should they be enacted. SBC's support through offering apprenticeships was also valued, whilst care leavers had recently been offered a grant of £1,200 to support their community. They had used this to provide facilities for a care leavers' drop in centre.

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel - 09.02.17

- Children previously in SBC's care who were now apprentices with SBC had gone through the standard channels. However, to encourage more to take this option, a route with additional support was being put in place. In addition, it was intended that more SBC departments would offer apprenticeships through this route.
- An offer of work experience was also made for those children in care who were not apprentices. SCST did not hold information on the outcomes for this; however, this could be found out and reported back to the Panel. In addition, a mentoring scheme had been established.
- The Virtual School Headteacher was the gatekeeper for the Pupil Premium. She was monitoring the situation; all parties were aware that the Premium had been underspent, and the Virtual School Headteacher was reporting back on progress to SCST's Chief Executive.
- The Transitions Forum had agreed a protocol between Children's Services and Adult Social Care. This would establish arrangements so that children in care could be passed to services for adults with a clear information on their histories and any needs they may have. This had been improving, and the protocol (which had yet to be signed off) should support this.
- The Panel wished their thanks for improved academic outcomes for looked after children to be noted.

Resolved: That information on the outcomes for looked after children who were given work experience would be sent to the Panel.

32. Slough Youth Offender Team Update Report

The Youth Offender Team (YOT) had remained largely unchanged since the service reported to the Panel on 26th October 2016. The main forms of criminality within their clientele were violence, theft and robbery.

The service was performing relatively well, and all 3 national key performance indicators (KPIs) were on track to be rated 'green' by the end of the year. However, it was likely that local KPIs would not fare so well, with education and employment in particular a cause for concern.

The Charlie Taylor Report (and the ensuing Government response) had been issued since October 2016. Nationally, YOTs were seen as performing well and making visible progress. As a result, radical change to the system was not being advocated. Nevertheless, greater flexibility was being encouraged, and YOT would be consulting with the Youth Justice Board and SBC officers to evaluate its actions. An action plan would be circulated in March 2017, which would be used to commence further engagement and consultation.

(At this point, Cllr Chohan entered the meeting at 6.58pm)

YOT had shrunk; instead partnership working with external agencies and the use of other available resources such as health, speech and language was being developed. Statutory partners (e.g. police) and voluntary organisations

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel - 09.02.17

(e.g. youth centres) were involved in this; all aspects of the service (from preventive work to interventions for high risk individuals) were included within the service.

YOT's main concerns regarding recent activity was the rise in sexual offences and the increasingly young profile of violent offenders. These matters were the subject of organised activity. As part of this, YOT had moved from remedial work to preventative action; 40% of its work was now preventative, when previously this would have been nearer 10%.

The Panel raised the following points in discussion:

- YOT were aware of reports regarding drug use and resulting anti-social behaviour. An event offering a presentation on young people and group behaviour was due to be presented at the Curve in February 2017. In particular, YOT were aware of the influence exerted by older brothers or other family members and how that could affect behaviour. As a result, work was targeting youngsters and their families in a systematic fashion; schools would also be involved as appropriate. The challenge would be to change the environment when those around the child in question did not want there to be a change.
- With the exception of most clients being young boys (although some girls were also amongst cases being received), no particular demographic was either dominating the caseload or absent from it. In addition, whilst some cases involved people arriving from London, this was not the root cause of any rising forms of criminal activity. It was to be welcomed that extreme cases such as murders had been avoided in Slough.
- Young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) may find themselves in this situation for a variety of reasons. Some were not sufficiently engaged with the service, others' behaviour may mean that establishments were unwilling to take them on. Employers could also be reluctant to become involved with any young people with a history of offending. Cases were discussed and possible routes out of their situations were investigated. YOT were also due to meet with Wellbeing and Community Services to pin down actions for specific cases which were proving hard to resolve; the impact of all these actions on overall statistics would be monitored.
- The performance indicator for NEETs had been red in 2015 – 16 and looked very likely to remain so in 2016 – 17. The target for young people to be in employment, education or training was 60%; at present, it was 32.3% for 2016 – 17. As a result, the Panel requested that the Panel receive an update on this once the current year was complete. This would then be an agenda item in 2017 – 18. It was also requested that this would include the priorities in the Justice Plan which were currently red:
 - Action 3: Develop qualitative practice / work with troubled families / families first.

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel - 09.02.17

- Action 17: Consider how GP representation will benefit the work of YOT.
- Action 18: Work with CACI to improve database.
- Given the changing demographics of Slough, it was anticipated that the number of young men in the area would increase. Early help work was being set up for this, and relevant organisations were being approached. YOT would not wait for people to offend, but rather identify those at risk and prevention or early intervention was being stressed.
- An increased number of clients were being identified as having special educational needs. However, it was unclear as to whether this was due to improved diagnosis or a reflection of the reality of the cohort itself. The team also had a dedicated mental health worker, who would receive references in cases where this was identified as a contributing factor.
- YOT had a mandatory duty to report to the Out Of Court Disposal Panel. There was also a YOT Management Board and presented an Annual Report to SCST's Board. However, at present it reported to no other SBC committees; the Panel may wish to consider which bodies may wish to hear from it.

Resolved:

1. That the Panel receive an information sheet updating on progress regarding NEETs and actions 3, 17 and 18 when available.
2. That the Panel take an agenda item regarding these matters in 2017 – 18.

33. Section 11 Audits - Verbal Update

Section 11 audits were being monitored by the Corporate Management Team, with training needs being identified and requisite actions taken. Mandatory online training and personal development reviews were also used to support the improvements.

Resolved: That an agenda item on Section 11 audits be taken at the meeting on 19th April 2017.

34. Assessment and Examination Results for 2015-16

The report responded to a request to provide a breakdown of results for SEND students and by ethnic groupings. The results for Key Stage 2 results had seen all groups perform well, with the exception of white British. Whilst black African students were below national averages, their Attainment 8 results (real results against predicted results) were relatively good.

SBC's Education Department wished to note its thanks to local schools, who had maintained standards despite the change in assessment regime.

The Panel raised the following points in discussion:

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel - 09.02.17

- The exact picture of how and why white British children were under performing would be very complex and required more research. It was being recognised as a national issue, although it had been a long term trend in Slough.
- Previously, Pakistani and black Caribbean children (a definition since amended) had been identified as under performing demographics. However, these groups had now improved; could the measures to resolve this issue be translated for the current situation?
- Local schools recognised the trends in achievement and were keen to resolve any relevant issues.
- Any plans to improve the situation would need to remember that the situation for schools had changed in recent year. National strategies no longer applied, funding had been altered and academisation had changed schools' relationships with local authorities.
- In addition, the relatively recent resumption of responsibility for schools from Cambridge Education left SBC with less backdated data than may usually be the case. However, the school community was being approached to build up this intelligence and create the detailed information upon which future initiatives would be constructed.
- Parental support and the value placed on education within the child's life outside of school were also vital factors in academic attainment.
- The School Improvement Team would also be employed to analyse the situation in depth.
- In its role as champion for standards, SBC would be challenging schools to boost performance in all areas. The report on SBC's resumption of responsibilities would emphasise this role; the support of Councillors through actions such as becoming school governors was also appreciated. The local culture of knowledge sharing between schools would also assist this.
- SBC would need to consider the resourcing implications of any plans and priorities. A secondary school specialist had been appointed and a primary school specialist was currently being recruited. Meanwhile, SBC was working with the Slough Schools Alliance and hosting a meeting with key headteachers (chaired by the Head of Education) on a monthly basis.
- The service being brought back in house had raised the level of priority and activity within SBC. SBC was also investigating other methods of support it could offer schools (e.g. clerking, HR function).
- Partnerships between selective and non-selective schools were being established. Beechwood and Herschel had integrated on 1st October 2016, whilst Upton Court was working on creating a similar arrangement with Foxborough School. Multi-Academy Trusts were having an increased impact on education and needed to be communicated to members. Staff were very much part of these shared arrangements; the possibility of positions being offered in future which involved teaching at both schools was being investigated.

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel - 09.02.17

- Members were concerned that the statistics on the percentage of candidates achieving A* - C grades in GCSE English and Mathematics were not accurate. The Panel would receive an amended version.

Resolved:

1. That a verbal update on an action plan be given on 19th April 2017.
2. That a costed action plan for schools be brought back before the Panel in 2017 – 18.
3. That an item on the Beechwood and Herschel integration be taken in 2017 – 18.
4. That a map of Multi-Academy Trusts in Slough be circulated to members.
5. That an updated version of the statistics regarding A* - C grade GCSE English and Mathematics be circulated to the Panel.
6. That case studies regarding white British students and improved academic outcomes be compiled and circulated to members.

35. Overall Examination Results for KS2 and KS4

No matters arose from the information taken.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

36. Forward Work Programme

Resolved: That, in addition to the points made in previous minutes, the following changes be made to the work programme:

- The reference to education funding from Council (31st January 2017) be taken on 15th March 2017.
- Fostering and adoption item be moved to 19th April 2017.

37. Attendance Record

Resolved: That the attendance record be noted.

38. Date of Next Meeting - 15th March 2017

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.18 pm)