

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

UPDATE ON THE RETURN OF EDUCATION SERVICES TO SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

1. **Purpose of Report**

To inform members of the progress made since the return of Education Services to the Council in December 2016

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The report is for information. Members are asked to give their continued support to the services now working within the Council to improve Education provision for Slough children and young people.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The report addresses the following priorities:

1. **Protecting vulnerable children**
all the services that have returned make a significant contribution to this objective.
2. **Increasing life expectancy by focusing on inequalities**
All services returning to the Council contribute to closing gaps and tackling inequalities for children.
3. **Improving mental health and wellbeing**
Any service associated with education makes a significant contribution to the overall well-being of children and young people.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The work of the returning services contributes to the following outcomes:

- Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives.
- Our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs.
- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit.
- Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

Prior to the return of services from Cambridge Education, the Council was spending £5.043m of general fund to deliver Education support. It is anticipated that once the Council teams are fully staffed, there will be a saving to the Council of £0.466m from the general fund for the delivery of these services.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 Between September 2016 and December 2016 a wide range of services returned to the employment and control of the Council from a 3 year contract with Cambridge Education Services. The range of services returning were as follows:

September 2016: services now called : Access and Inclusion.

November 2016: services now called :Early Years Education (including 10 children's centres)

December 2016: services now called: Education Standards and Inclusive Learning.

(see structure chart appendix 1)

Numbers of staff who transferred:138

September: 13

November: 109

December: 13

Background

- 5.2 It was decided in August 2016 that the full range of services then being delivered by Cambridge Education (CE) would return to the Council by the end of the year and not over a 2 year period, as has been previously suggested. Once decided, both CE and SBC assigned additional finance, HR and administrative staff and agreed action plans to ensure the smooth running of TUPE and legal processes for a 3 month staged return.
- 5.3 The process was pressurised by the DFE direction in October to return Early Years Services to the Council and not to SCST. SBC was in favour of the Direction and supported it, but it had to be swiftly and sensitively managed as it was the largest group of staff to be transferred.
- 5.4 It is to the credit of all concerned that by December 1st all staff had been successfully transferred and temporary leadership structures were in place. Within the first week, a welcome event for all returning staff was held on floor 2 supported by Elected Members, the Leader and the Chief Exec.
- 5.5 The new Senior Leadership Team working to the Interim Director of Children, Learning and Skills gave a clear structure to service direction and planning and the immediate priorities were established, actions planned and monitoring systems put in place. (see Appendix 2 Plan on a Page)
- 5.6 Since the transfer, there have been very few issues with staffing or services. There are still some anomalies regarding annual leave to be resolved, but staff

have been generally pleased to be part of SBC and have welcomed the stability of the temporary structures and the clear direction from Heads of Service.

Key Areas of Change:

5.7 Early Years and Children's Centres:

- Transfer of registration with Ofsted back to SBC for all 10 Centres
- Accelerated preparation for Ofsted group inspection of Centres
- Preparation to transfer the assets back to the management of SBC
- Appointment of staff to some vacant posts
- Recruitment underway for a permanent Head of Service for Early Years
- Better communication with Early Years services and schools
- Engagement in the new Early Help Strategy and Collaborative partnerships
- Responding to challenges in the maintenance of buildings.

5.8 Access and Inclusion Services:

- Focus on place planning and the challenges of high pupil turnover and increasing numbers.
- Engagement of the team in wider partnerships and school governance issues
- Successful application to Schools Forum to fund 2 additional Education Welfare Officers, one to support the MASH and one to increase the engagement with schools for vulnerable children and families and improve attendance.
- Improved partnerships with Council services for place shaping and increasing the school Estate.

Education Standards and Inclusive Learning:

5.9 This area has undergone the most change and faced the greatest challenges. The exit of key staff in leadership positions from Cambridge Education overlapped the appointment to SBC of a Head of Education post before the accelerated return of services was decided, presented difficulties and prompted a temporary restructure to secure the leadership of school improvement, school partnerships, music support, and Educational Psychology Services.

5.10 The greatest effort in the first 3 months has been on re-establishing SBC relationships with schools and Academies and preserving the delivery of the small number of services in this area.

- Re-established the Council's relationship with school leaders and governors in all Slough schools and Academies.
- Secured funding from the Forum for the appointment of officers to support safeguarding, partnership working with the Teaching Schools Alliance and school improvement partnerships.
- All schools visited personally by Head of Service
- School Improvement and Schools Causing Concern policy produced and published to include risk assessments to support school self evaluation.
- School risk assessment process established and agreed with schools
- All SBC staff working in any way with schools brought together regularly to share intelligence and support each other's work with schools

- Systematic processes established to deal with schools in difficulties and complaints
- Data management improved and data shared
- New relationship with the Teaching Schools Alliance in place to work together on school to school partnerships and school improvement initiatives.
- Funding streams for services re-aligned to ensure compliance with SBC's statutory duties for education and inclusion.
- Improving leadership of the Music Service and returning supervision to the Council.
- Improved leadership and direction of the team of part-time Consultants engaging in challenge and support to schools.

Strategic Leadership Priorities and Improvements

5.11 The Interim Director managed the return of services into a new, flatter leadership arrangement as an interim measure in order to form a team. The new SMT meets every 2 weeks and provides infrastructure and systems for the development of services and the management of change. The service now has a meaningful presence with other Council services and partners and has quickly established its identity. It has become a driving force representing the Council's commitment to putting children and young people first.

- Improve the understanding and delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities for education and inclusion.
- Improve partnerships with school leaders.
- Demonstrate leadership of the SBC commitment to children and young people.
- Improve data management and use of school intelligence.
- Improve provision for SEND in partnership with SCST.
- Prioritise Safeguarding and Health and Safety in Education settings.
- Communicate regularly with School Leaders and Chairs of Governors.
- Drive forward a renewed Communications strategy to celebrate Slough's excellence in education.
- Appoint a Head of Partnerships, Commissioning and Performance to ensure the Council embraces its relationship with SCST, monitors performance effectively and is in a position to function well in new relationships with schools and partners.
- Appoint a permanent Director of Children, Learning and Skills and ensure smooth transition to continue the progress made in the first 3 months.
- Create accountability structures for the key areas of work that have not previously existed.

6. Conclusion

6.1 All Services previously managed by Cambridge Education have been very successfully returned to the Council with minimum disruption to staff and service users. Good progress has been made in establishing leadership of the services to deliver the Council's priorities.

6.2 The joint working with the SCST is proving very successful, particularly for vulnerable children. The shared responsibilities for SEND services between SCST and the Council presents an ongoing challenge, but leaders are working

together to ensure that the separation of service provision has as little effect on service delivery as possible. Relationships with schools and partners have improved and the Council has entered into some very productive projects to support inclusion, early help and excellence in Education.

7. **Appendices Attached**

- 'A' - Service Structure Diagram
- 'B' - Section 11 Audit Action Plan
- 'C' - Service Plan on a Page
- 'D' - Report to ECS Scrutiny Panel, 8th December 2016

8. **Background Papers**

None