

## **Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 6th December, 2018.**

**Present:-** Councillors Sharif (Chair), Kelly (Vice-Chair), Brooker, N Holledge, Matloob, D Parmar, A Sandhu and Strutton

### **Education Non-Voting Co-opted Members**

Paul Kassapian – Secondary School Representative

## **PART 1**

### **25. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Brooker declared his positions as Governor of Churchmead and Ryvers Schools. He also declared his membership of Slough Borough Council's (SBC) Foster Panel and his position as Vice Chair of the Joint Parenting Panel (JPP).

### **26. Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th October 2018**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018 be approved as a correct record.

### **27. Action Progress Report**

**Resolved:** That the Action Progress Report be noted.

### **28. Member Questions**

In response to the responses provided, the Panel asked if lessons had been learned with regards to the procurement process and the issues arising from Slough Urban Renewal's costings. The meeting was informed that these matters may not be suitable for the Panel, but could be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as appropriate (e.g. a member's question).

### **29. Section 11 Audits**

Section 11 audits were in place to ensure that local authorities were undertaking their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Compliance was judged on 8 national standards, with SBC reporting to the Pan Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The last such update was taken by the Berkshire-wide body in June 2018 and had led to several actions arising. These were tracked in Appendix A of the report, and the recent mid-term review on the progress of these actions had received positive feedback.

(At this point, Councillor Kelly entered the meeting)

## **Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel - 06.12.18**

In terms of senior management commitment, the Corporate Volunteer Policy had been approved by the Employment and Appeals Committee in October 2018. As a result, this aspect had a 'green' rating; however, the Agresso module supporting this was still being rolled out, leading to an 'amber' rating on embedding the policy. All aspects of the provision of a clear statement of SBC's responsibility were rated 'green' as the statement had been agreed with Legal and Procurement, whilst a Deed of Variation had been agreed between SBC and the Slough Children's Services Trust (SCST) and endorsed by the Department for Education (DfE).

(At this point, Councillor Brooker entered the meeting)

Clear lines of accountability within SBC had been established as part of the Corporate Volunteer Policy, leading to a 'green' rating. Similarly, the staged implementation of the Agresso module to support this led to an 'amber' rating on this aspect. Service delivery was being informed by the views of children and families given the Five Year Plan's establishment of a 'golden thread' and the use of forums such as the Youth Parliament and Youth Inspectors to receive the voice of young people.

Staff training had been refreshed and received a 'green' rating (with the Agresso element again receiving an 'amber' rating), whilst the Safer Recruitment Policy (and related training) in place in schools was being drafted for SBC and was currently out to consultation. This meant that this element was rated as 'amber', whilst governance was fully in place and rated 'green'. Inter-agency working was rated 'green' and thresholds had been revised, with the Early Help Model launched in June 2018 and applied across all agencies on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018. Training on information sharing had been put in place, leading to a 'green' rating although the Agresso implementation was 'amber'.

The Panel raised the following points in discussion:

- SBC operated its DBS checking policy in line with DfE guidelines. Whilst some Councillors (e.g. Cabinet Member for Children and Education) required such a check, this was not the case for all members. However, some members asked if the possibility of receiving casework involving children or vulnerable adults, this had safeguarding implications and the need for DBS checking. Furthermore, data management and training from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) may be needed in some areas. Officers agreed to circulate SBC's criteria for DBS checks and ICO training for members.
- Agresso was an issue that had led to 4 out of the 5 areas rated 'amber'. The HR modules of the Agresso platform are being rolled out in stages rather than through immediate implementation across all areas. However, officers had been briefed on the Agresso systems to be put in place and seen a demonstration; the next phase of implementation would expand functionality significantly. The Service Lead for Human Resources was also on the Corporate Group overseeing the matter and was thus part of the design and implementation process.

## **Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel - 06.12.18**

**Resolved:** That the Panel receive SBC's policy in relation to DBS checks and ICO training.

### **30. Joint Parenting Panel Quarterly Update**

Since the last such update, the Joint Parenting Panel (JPP) had undertaken 3 pieces of work. The first of these was a meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018, the second a training event on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and finally its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

The July meeting had not taken the usual format of a themed event; rather, it provided an overview of JPP's work. This was to prepare those new to the body for its work, and also ensure all parties had a thorough awareness in preparation for Ofsted's imminent inspection. The meeting therefore recapped the matter of corporate parenting and outlined JPP's key achievements of the previous 12 months.

The September training covered corporate parenting for all members and included presentations from SBC, SCST, foster carers and young people. The event had received highly positive feedback from those present and all JPP members had subsequently received the relevant materials (bar the young person's presentation).

Finally, the October JPP had a thematic discussion regarding health and wellbeing. As part of this it had taken the Clinical Commissioning Group's Looked After Children Annual Report, outlining the diagnostic work on young people's health across East Berkshire. The learning from this had also been applied, leading to improvements in performance. The draft Corporate Parenting Strategy had also been shared; some amendments had been proposed as a result, with the revised version to be presented to JPP on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018 for approval prior to the Ofsted inspection.

The Panel raised the following points in discussion:

- Whilst members raised the possibility of applying the rule that 3 consecutive non-attendances should lead to that individual losing their place on JPP, the meeting was advised that this was constitutionally impracticable.

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

### **31. Forward Work Programme**

Members were advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be taking an item on childhood obesity on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2019. It was also suggested that head teachers may wish to attend the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019 to discuss teacher recruitment and retention.

## **Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel - 06.12.18**

The Chair of the Panel also asked that the thanks of the Panel for David Gordon's work be noted.

**Resolved:** That members receive information regarding teaching days lost to unauthorised absence.

### **32. Attendance Record**

Noted.

### **33. Date of Next Meeting - 7th February 2019**

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.33 pm)