

Slough Borough Council

Report To: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee

Date: 04 March 2025

Subject: Report of the Children's Services Engagement Task and Finish Group

Chief Officer: Sue Butcher, CEX Slough Children First and the SBC Children's Services (SBCCS) Executive Director for

Contact Officers: Colin Sweeney, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Dr Michael Edley, Scrutiny and Governance Officer

Ward(s): All

Exempt: No

Appendices: **Appendix A:** Report of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Children's Services Engagement.

1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 The attached report (Appendix A) is that of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, launched at the CISC meeting on 26 March 2024. The recommendations made by the Task Group, will contribute directly towards the Children's Services improvement & recovery, being linked to one of the ten improvement workstreams.

Recommendations:

1.2 That the Committee:

- a. **Thanks the members of the Task and Finish Group, and the officers who supported it, for their work to produce the report at Appendix A;**
- b. **Endorses the report (Appendix A) and its recommendations in Section 5; and**
- c. **Approves that the report and the three recommendations set out in the Executive Summary (Page 3) of the report, are recommended to the SCF CEX and SBCCS Director and to Cabinet for its endorsement.**

Commissioner Review

I have read both reports and I support the proposal to engage with the community, including faith groups and think the model will pay significant dividends for both residents and the Council.

2. Report

- 2.1 In accordance with this committee's work programme, a 'task and finish group' was launched on the 26 March 2024, and convened in September 2024 on the topic of 'Children's Services engagement.
- 2.2 The body of the report is in Appendix A.
- 2.3 This topic was originally proposed by the CEX of SCF and Director of SBCs Children's Services. The desired outcome was a framework for SCF and SBCCS to engage with Community, faith and voluntary groups and organisations to inform the development of services for children, young people and their families. It would compliment the Childrens Participation Strategy
- 2.5 The recommendations, arising from the work of the task group, are set out in Section 5 of the report. They are operational in nature and directed to the CEX of SCF and Director of SBC Childrens services. The Committee are asked to approve that the recommendations are submitted to the Cabinet and relevant Lead Member, for their endorsement so that implementation and progress can be monitored.

3. Implications of the Recommendations

Financial implications

- 3.1 This is not a decision-making report so there are no direct financial implications. The task group has focused measures to act as a catalyst to put in place the foundations from which the ultimate outcomes can be achieved.

Legal implications

- 3.2 The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a new political management system for local councils in England and Wales, requiring them to have a separate 'executive' in the form of a leader, or elected mayor, and cabinet. To provide a counterweight for this, the Act also introduced the concept of 'overview and scrutiny' – sometimes referred to simply as 'scrutiny' – whereby every council with an executive management structure is required to have an overview and scrutiny committee. This enables the rest of the council to scrutinise the executive by investigating their decisions and policies, and issuing reports and recommendations where any shortcomings are identified,

Risk management implications

- 3.3 Overview and Scrutiny, commonly referred to as Scrutiny, is a statutory function and is currently subject to government direction in Slough. It is important that topics selected by the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee clearly contribute to the overall improvement drivers for the council, in order to demonstrate that the conditions of the government intervention are being met.

Equality implications

- 3.4 The Task group has been conscious of the need to ensure that communities from all backgrounds are able to engage with SCF and Children's services.

4. **Appendices: Appendix A:** Report of the Children's Services Engagement Task and Finish Group